# THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

## ST. MATTHEW.

THE

# BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR:

OR,

ANECDOTES, SIMILES, EMBLEMS, ILLUSTRATIONS, EXPOSITORY, SCIENTIFIC, GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND HOMILETIC, GATHERED FROM A WIDE RANGE OF HOME AND FOREIGN LITERATURE, ON THE VERSES OF THE BIBLE.

BY

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

## ST. MATTHEW.

London:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET, W.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL.—Christianity cannot be separated from the past. It was not an accident or an afterthought, but foreknown before the foundation of the world. The Incarnation as it is seen now is the central point of all history. . . . The Gospel was no sudden or solitary message. The legend of Pallas is the very converse of the Nativity. Christianity is in one sense as ancient as the Creation, resting on a foundation wide as the world and old as time. Step by step the groundwork of the Church was laid in the silent depths, and at last, when all was now ready, it rose above the earth, that all men might consciously combine to rear the spiritual temple of the living God. What is true of the subject of the Gospel is true in a less complete degree of the record. The writings of the New Testament are not a separate and exceptional growth, but the ripe fruit of minds which had been matured through long ages of various fortunes and manifold influences. The very language in which they are written is in some sense an epitome of ancient history. For it was the will of Providence that the people whom He destined to become the special depository of His revelations should not only develop their individual character, but also by contact with Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome, assimilate the foreign elements necessary to the perfection of their work. The history of the Jews thus becomes, as it were, the key to the history of the world; and, by regarding the various stages through which it passed, it is possible to distinguish the various constituents which combined to form the character of the apostles and to prepare men for their teaching. It follows, as a necessary consequence, that the Old Testament is itself the Divine introduction to the New. In the records of the religious life of the Jews, in the settling of worship and the widening of hope, it is possible to see the foreshadowings of apostolic doctrine, while the vicissitudes of their national history exhibit most clearly the growing purposes of God. . . . A retrospect of the manifold vicissitudes of their history will show the rich variety of discipline by which the Jews had been moulded, and the work which they were fitted to perform in the apostolic age. The spirit of the law and the prophets had been embodied in every great typical form. The several phases of partial and independent development were now completed. Judaism had existed in the face of the most varied nationalities, and had gained an elasticity of shape without losing its distinctness of principle. But each concrete system which was substituted for the faithful anticipation of the Messianic times led in the end to disappointment and confusion, and the scattered exiles were unable to spiritualize the nations among whom they sojourned. The hierarchy which seemed so full of life in the age of Ezra, at last degenerated into a mere sect. The kingdom which had been thought to herald the final triumph of the nation ended in a foreign usurpation. The alliance with Greek philosophy had led on the one hand to an Epicurean indifference, on the other to an unpractical mysticism. But meanwhile the principles which lay at the basis of these partial efforts had gained a substantive existence, and were silently working in the whole people. The truths which had been felt once, still lived even under

the ruins of the systems which had been reared upon them. Law, freedom, thought, an intense national pride, and a world-wide dispersion, a past bright with the glories of a Divine presence, a present lost in humiliation, a future crowded with pictures of certain triumphs, combined to fashion a people ready to receive and propagate a universal Gospel. A missionary nation was waiting to be charged with the heavenly commission, and a world was unconsciously prepared to welcome it. (*B. F. Westcott, D.D.*)

THE NAME—NEW TESTAMENT.—The term, "New Testament," is unquestionably connected with the institution of the Lord's Supper. The Lord Himself designates the Eucharist the New Covenant in His blood, and this name is strictly correct. The New Testament fellowship of believers reconciled to God by Christ, which, so to speak, commences in, and is introduced by baptism, is completed and appears outwardly in the Holy Supper. In the Eucharist the Lord carries out that New Covenant with the Church which is founded upon His holy life and His Word, upon His atoning death, His victory, and on the conversion of individual believers. While the celebration of the Eucharist is a remembrance of the first foundation of the Church, it ever inaugurates anew the formation of the Church, and also serves for its manifestation. Hence the writings which record the foundation of this new and eternal Covenant are themselves called the New Covenant, the New Testament. Lastly, this designation indicates the connection and the contrast between these writings and those of the Old Covenant. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*)

THE NEW TESTAMENT.—The New Testament is not one book, but seven and twenty pieces by eight or nine authors, writing at different times, nearly always for different readers, for the most part under differing circumstances, and so from different points of view. Not until nearly the end of the fourth century do we find a list of New Testament books exactly corresponding with that in our Bibles. During that period these writings had been circulated singly, or in special collections of a few pieces together; but in A.D. 397, at the Council of Carthage, the whole volume as we have it received recognition as the authoritative literature of Christian revelation. When our Lord ascended, His apostles and disciples began to preach and to form Christian congregations, at first in Palestine, then in more distant countries. It was for the guidance of these infant congregations that the earliest writings of the New Testament were composed. The first in date are almost certainly some of St. Paul's Epistles. The historic part of the volume would not be needed till a later time. (*J. R. Lumby, D.D.*)

RELATION BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.—I. THE NEW IS A CONTINUATION OF THE OLD. Not two separate trees of life, but one and the same, with the Pentateuch for its deep roots, and then a grand old trunk of history, from which go out strong boughs of Hebrew poem and prophecy. It had a time of rest, during which it added nothing to its growth; but then it began again to spring upwards in a solid stem of the history of Christ and the early Church, and to throw out new branches of apostolic teaching, till the loftiest point was reached in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and so the Scripture was complete. Through Holy Writ, from Genesis to Revelation, run the same great thoughts—God a just God and a Saviour—man a sinner, man a saint—angels of God, the devil and his angels—sin, death, righteousness, life—the peace and strength of faith—the sovereignty of grace—sacrifice, priesthood, redemption by blood, prayer, love, hope, obedience, holiness—judgment to come. In treating of these, the New Testament is not a beginning of revelation, but strictly a continuation, while not a repetition, of the Old. II. STRUCTURAL RESEMBLANCE. 1. Look at the arrangement of each. (1) Histories. (2) Reasonings and teachings. (3) Prophecies and visions. From all the sacred books of the East, the Bible is distinguished by the large proportion of narrative in each of its grand divisions, so that all its reflections, arguments, and

admonitions rest on a basis of veritable facts. 2. We find something quite unique in the way of Divine expression throughout the Scriptures; the same voice of majesty—the same method of teaching by history and biography rather than by argumentation—the same calmness and unflinching fidelity of narrative—the same sounding forth of mercy and of judgment—and the same fearless reproof of all unrighteousness and ungodliness. III. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS AN ADVANCE UPON THE OLD. 1. As respects the messengers of God. It may be that Luke is no greater than Samuel, or Peter than David, or Paul than Isaiah, or John than Ezekiel or Daniel; but their writings have a certain advance in dignity, from the fact that they followed the manifestation of the Son of God, and were composed to publish the preciousness and develop the teachings of Him who spake as never man spake. 2. In the light and fulness of the revelation itself (2 Cor. iii). Shadows have given place to substance; elements and rudiments to perfection; minute regulations to profound principles; patterns of heavenly things to heavenly things themselves. In the old time, there was dimness as of light coming through a veil; in the new time we have unveiled faces, and God's own marvellous light. The heavens seem to open more fully and brightly over us; and, because Jesus is there, we can look steadfastly up into heaven. Herein is implied no disparagement of the Old Testament, but simply the recognition of the fact that the Bible is a progressive book, and that the second division, containing more advanced and developed truth, is to rule our interpretation and use of the first division; not the first to determine the meaning of the second. There has been a bettering as well as a lengthening of revelation regarding theology, ethics, and worship. God is the same God in both Testaments; but in the New, God is more known—duty more exalted—holiness in principles and motives based on fellowship with God in light—love is shown to be the sphere in which the God of light and the children of light abide—and worship is through free access to the Father, by one Spirit, through Christ Jesus. (*Donald Fraser, D.D.*)

FORMATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—A distinct conception of the spirit of the apostolic age is necessary for a right understanding of the relation of the Gospel to the Gospels—of the Divine message to the lasting record—at the rise of Christianity. Experience has placed in so clear a light the fulness and comprehensiveness of the Christian Scriptures that it is natural to suppose that they must have occupied from the first the position which the Church has assigned to them. But this idea is an anachronism both in fact and in thought. The men who were enabled to penetrate most deeply into the mysteries of the new revelation, and to apprehend with the most vigorous energy the change which it was destined to make in the world, seem to have placed little value upon a written witness to words and acts which still, as it were, lived among them. They felt, as none else ever can feel, the greatness of the crisis in which they were placed, and the calm progress of common life appeared to be for ever interrupted by the spiritual revolution in which they were called to take part. The "coming age" to which they looked was not one of arduous conflict, but of completed triumph. The close of the old dispensation, and the consummation of the new, were combined in one vision. The outward *fashion of the world*—the transitory veil which alone remained—was *passing away*. The long development of a vast future was concentrated in the glory of its certain issue. But while everything shows that the apostles made no conscious provision for the requirements of after times, in which the life of the Lord would be the subject of remote tradition, they were enabled to satisfy a want which they did not anticipate. . . . It was most unlikely that men, who had been accustomed to a system of training generally, if not exclusively, oral, should have formed any design of committing to writing a complete account of the history or of the doctrines of the Gospel. The whole influence of Palestinian habits was most adverse to such an

undertaking. The rules of scriptural interpretation, the varied extensions of the law, and the sayings of the elders, were preserved either by oral tradition or perhaps, in some degree, in secret rolls, till the final dispersion of the Jewish nation led to the compilation of the Mishna. Nothing less than the threatened destruction of the traditional faith occasioned the abandonment of the great rule of the schools. "Commit nothing to writing," was the characteristic principle of the earlier Rabbins, and even those who, like Gamaliel, were familiar with Greek learning faithfully observed it. Nor could it be otherwise. The Old Testament was held to be the single and sufficient source of truth and wisdom, the reflection of Divine knowledge, and the embodiment of human feeling. The voice of the teacher might enforce or apply its precepts, but it admitted no definite additions. . . . Tradition was dominant in the schools, and from the schools it passed to the nation; for the same influence which affected the character of the teachers must have been felt still more powerfully by the great mass of the Jews. In their case the want of means was added to the want of inclination. . . . To descend one step further: the art of writing itself was necessarily rare among the peasantry, and the instinct of composition proportionately rarer. If, then, the first Christians were writers, it could only have been by the providential influence of circumstances, while they were oral teachers by inclination and habit. (*B. F. Westcott, D.D.*)

TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.—We might have expected, had we been framing the history of a revealed religion according to our wishes or *à priori* assumptions, that, so far as it depended on written records, those records would be preserved through successive ages as an authentic standard of appeal. Facts are, however, against all such theories of what ought to have been. Not a single autograph original of any book is known to exist now, nor does any writer of the second or third century say that he had seen such an original. Failing this, we might have fallen back on the notion that each transcriber of the books would be guarded by a supernatural guidance against the usual chances of transcription; that each translator would be taught how to convey the meaning of the original without error in the language of his version. Here also we have to accept facts as we find them. There has been no such perpetual miracle as this theory would require, extending as it does extend, when pushed to its logical conclusions, to the infallibility of every compositor in a printer's office who had to set the type of a Bible in any language. Manuscripts vary, versions differ, printed Bibles are not always free from error. Here also we trace the law in things spiritual which we recognize in things natural.

"The Father, from whose gift all good things flow,
No easy path hath oped His truth to know."

Here, also, the absence of any immunity from error has tried men's faith and roused them to labour, and labour has received its reward. Accepting probability as the only attainable result, the probability which they have actually attained is scarcely distinguishable from certainty. Experience shows that, had they begun with postulating infallibility somewhere, and accepting its supposed results, inquiry would have ceased, criticism would have slumbered, and errors would have crept in and multiplied without restraint. Dealing, then, with facts, we have to realize to ourselves in what way copies of the books of the New Testament were multiplied. It is obvious that, prior to the invention of printing, two methods of such multiplication were possible. A man might place a MS. before him, and copy it with his own hand, or he might dictate it to one or more writers. The former was probably the natural process when Christians were few and poor, when it was a labour of love to transcribe a Gospel or an Epistle for a friend or a church. The latter became natural, in its turn, when the books were in sufficient demand to be sold by book

sellers, or when Christian societies were sufficiently organized, as, *e.g.*, in monasteries, to adopt the methods of the trade. Each process had its own special forms of liability to error. Any one who has corrected a proof-sheet will be able to take a measure of what they are in the former. Any one who has had experience of the results of a dictation lesson can judge what they are in the latter. We may assume that in most cases, where the work was done systematically, there would be a process for correcting the errors of transcription, analogous to that of correcting the errors of the press now. MSS. of the New Testament, as a matter of fact, often bear traces of such correction by one or more hands. (*Dean Plumptre.*)

ENGLISH VERSIONS.—Our Saxon forefathers, like the rest of Western Christendom, had only portions of the Bible in the vernacular. The Vulgate was in the hands of the clergy, the lay people knew mainly the Psalms and the Gospels in their native speech. It was not till Wycliffe's Bible appeared (*circa* 1383) that the whole of either the New or Old Testament was given to the English in one uniform version. This Bible (like all the Saxon and English versions which preceded it) was a translation from the Latin of the Vulgate, and of course bears many marks that it is the version of a version. Being made a full century before the invention of printing, it was never circulated except in MS. Before, however, the new art, which should multiply copies without limit, was half a century old, God raised up one who has stamped his impress on the English Bible so completely that no time seems likely to efface it. William Tyndale, born about the time when the first printed book came forth in England, early conceived the thought of making a new translation of the Bible. At first he tried to compass the work in his own land. But there was no place for him there. So, driven abroad, he laboured successively in Hamburg, Cologne, and Worms, at which last-named city he put forth two editions of the New Testament in 1525. He published afterwards various other Old Testament translations, and six editions of his New Testament were issued during his lifetime. The next translator was Miles Coverdale, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, who had been a fellow-worker with Tyndale. He completed his version in 1535, and issued it with a dedication to Henry VIII. A second edition was published two years later, and this was followed in the same year by a composite version, under the name of T. Matthew, but really the work of Tyndale's friend, John Rogers. In this Bible was incorporated all that Tyndale had left unprinted of the Old Testament, his New Testament of 1535, and only the remaining portions of the Old Testament and Apocrypha printed from Coverdale. This was a great advance on all the editions before it, but the mind of Cromwell, the king's vicegerent, longed to bring the English Scriptures to still greater perfection. And no less anxious was Coverdale. So, at Cromwell's request, he undertook to revise Matthew's Bible; and his work, printed partly in Paris, and the remainder in London, appeared in 1539, and is known as the Great Bible. A copy of this was, by royal injunction, set up in every church of the kingdom. In the same year was sent forth another revision of Matthew's Bible, made by a learned lawyer named Taverner, but the Great Bible soon threw it into the shade. After this we have no English Bible put forth for a long time. The exiles from England at Geneva issued, in 1557, a New Testament, which appears to have been the work of Whittingham, Calvin's brother-in-law, and the whole Bible was completed by him and his fellow-labourers in 1560. This Geneva Bible was popular for home reading, as it was furnished with a marginal commentary. In 1568, through the exertions of Archbishop Parker, was published what is known as the Bishops' Bible, because several prelates took part in this revision; and in 1611 there appeared what we speak of as the Authorized Version, prepared at the instigation of King James I. Since then no public revision was put forth for 270 years, till the Revised New Testament was issued on 17th May, 1881. (*J. R. Lumby, D.D.*)

THE ORAL GOSPEL.—Both from the nature of their charge and the character of their hearers, the apostles sought other means of fulfilling their great commission than such as books afforded. Their Master enjoined on them during His presence and at the moment of His departure to *preach the Gospel*. And while they fulfilled the office for which they were fitted no less by habit than by the effusion of the Holy Spirit, they could not have felt that more was needed for the permanent establishment of the Christian society. "How shall men believe without a preacher?" is the truest explanation of the feeling and hope of the apostles. They cherished the lively image of the Lord's life and teaching without any written outline from His hand; and they might well hope that the Spirit which preserved the likeness in their hearts might fix it in the hearts of others. . . . It must not, however, be supposed that this tendency to preach rather than to write was any drawback to the final completeness of the apostolic Gospel. It was, in fact, the very condition and pledge of its completeness. Naturally speaking, the experience of oral teaching was required in order to bring within the reach of writing the vast subject of the life of Christ; and it cannot be urged that any extraordinary provision was made for the fulfilment of a task which is now rightly felt to have been of the utmost importance. The Gospel was a growth, not an instantaneous creation. The Gospels were the results, and not the fonndation of the apostolic preaching. The wide growth of the Church furnished the apostles with an adequate motive for adding a written record to the testimony of their living words; and the very form of the Gospels was only determined by the experience of teaching. The work of an evangelist was thus not the simple result of Divine inspiration or of human thought, but rather the complex issue of both when applied to such a selection of Christ's words and works as the varied phases of the apostolic preaching had shown to be best suited to the wants of men. The primary Gospel was proved, so to speak, in life, before it was fixed in writing. Out of the countless multitude of Christ's acts, those were selected and arranged during the ministry of twenty years which were seen to have the fullest representative significance for the exhibition of His Divine life. The oral collection thus formed became in every sense coincident with the "Gospel"; and our Gospels are the permanent compendium of its contents. . . . . Even in the sub-apostolic age the same general feeling survived, though it was modified by the growing organization of the Christian Church. The knowledge of the teaching of Christ and of the details of His life was generally derived from tradition and not from writings. The Gospels were not yet distinguished by this their prophetic title. The Old Testament was still the great storehouse from which the Christian teacher derived the sources of consolation and conviction. And at the close of the second century Irenæus, after speaking of the Scriptures—the sum of the apostolic teaching—as "the foundation and pillar of our faith," speaks of "a tradition manifested in the whole world," and "kept in the several churches through the succession of the presbyters." In one respect the testimony of Irenæus—the connecting link of the east and west—is extremely important, as distinctly recognizing the historic element in the apostolic tradition. The great outlines of the life of Christ were received, he says, by barbarous nations without written documents by ancient tradition: and this combination of facts and doctrine existed from the first. "The Gospel"—the sum, that is, of the oral teaching— in the language of Ignatius represents "the flesh (σάρξ) of Jesus." The Saviour's personal presence was perpetuated in the living voice of His Church. At a still earlier time the writings of the New Testament contain abundant proof that the "Gospel" of the first age was not an abstract statement of dogmas, but a vivid representation of the truth as seen in the details of the Saviour's life. The Acts of the Apostles and the apostolic letters—the first preaching and the subsequent instruction of the Churches—show that the facts of the life of Christ were the rule by which the work of the Christian teacher was measured. (*B. F. Westcott, D.D.*)

ORAL TEACHING AS THE SOURCE OF THE GOSPELS.—From the day of Pentecost the apostles began the work of preaching the Gospel, which was in a short time to overspread the world; but it is certain that for many years not one of the four Gospels existed out of which they might preach. So zealous were the apostles in their work that they divested themselves of the labour of ministering to the poor, in order that they might "give themselves continually unto prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi.). Prayer and preaching were the business of their lives. Now, their preaching must in great part have consisted, from the nature of the case, of a recital of the facts of the life of Jesus Christ. They had been the eyewitnesses of a wonderful life, of acts and sufferings which it concerned the world to know. Many of their hearers had never heard of Jesus; many others had received false accounts of One whom it suited the rulers of the Jews to denounce as an impostor. The ministry of the Lord had taken place chiefly in Galilee, but the first preaching was in Judea. It would, therefore, be necessary to lay a groundwork of facts, before there could be inferences from, and applications of, those facts. The preaching would be more akin to the daily lessons in a modern service, than to the sermon (See, *e.g.*, Acts x. 34–43; xiii. 16-41). Now, there would be a tendency to preserve one form and order in this historical preaching. The account of some miracle would be told again and again in one form of words, and the narrative of a journey would follow the same order of events, and the events selected would be always the same. Thus there would grow up a body and form of preaching, preserved, at first, only in the memory of those who preached and heard, of which the life and words of Jesus formed the subjects, and which tended to be, not merely in substance but in details, one and the same everywhere, with a resemblance closer and more marked in proportion as the words and events were more important. (*Archbishop Wm. Thomson.*)

THE UNWRITTEN GOSPEL.—It may be looked upon as an ascertained result of criticism, that the Gospels were all written within the first century; none earlier than about A.D. 60, none later than about A.D. 80. This historical fact will seem strange to certain modern notions. Consider for a moment how the matter really stands. Let us put ourselves in imagination back to Pentecost. In those her bridal days, the young Church was filled, not with new wine, but with a holy and heavenly enthusiasm. The light of the everlasting morning had not yet ceased to flood her spires and battlements. Her tabernacle was yet on the holy hills, and the cry rose to her lips, "Lord! it is good for us to be here." With loins girded and lamps burning, she waited for her Lord's coming, and strained her eyes towards the eternal dawn. She was the "Pilgrim of Eternity"; and the song which she rolled out strong and grand against the winter sky was, "Arise we and depart: for this is not our rest." It may be that she had not special days of commemoration, Christmas or Good Friday, Easter or Ascension. But she lived upon her Lord's birth and death, upon His resurrection and ascension. She needed no book of His λόγια, of His discourses, or His works. There were those with her who had seen Him on the mountain of Transfiguration; who had heard Him say, "Peace be unto you," on the great Easter Sunday; and had felt joy deepening within them, as they looked upon the atoning wounds. . . . It seems to be as certain as anything of the kind can be, that an unwritten traditional life of Jesus, graven upon the living heart of the Church, preceded the written life. In this, startling as it seems at first hearing to some, there is no derogation from the honour of the written word. No ark of the New Covenant overlaid round about with gold kept in its side the book of the New Law. There was not, as in Bacon's fine romance of Atlantis, the pillar and cross of light, breaking up and casting itself into a firmament of many stars, and the branch of palm covering the ark of cedar which floated upon the calm mysterious sea, with the volume of the Gospels shrouded in its depths. Yet the Holy Spirit

guided the memories, and freely used the intelligences of apostles and their disciples, that His Church might know the certainty of those things wherein she had been instructed; and that across the gulf of ages, and the mists of history, down to the end of time, the eyes of Christians might see the authentic lineaments of the King in His beauty. (*Bishop Wm. Alexander.*)

ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.—Two things may be regarded as certain in the history of our religion: first, that it spread with extraordinary rapidity—that within twenty or thirty years of our Lord's death the Gospel had travelled far outside the borders of Palestine, so that there were Christians in widely separated cities; and secondly, that the main subject of the preaching of every missionary of the Church was Jesus Christ (Acts v. 42, xi. 20; 2 Cor. iv. 5). Whatever were the dissensions in the early Church, of which we now hear so much, they did not affect this point (Phil. i. 15). The zeal of the first disciples made every Christian a missionary into whatever town he went; and the work of the missionary was to preach a Person. Consequently the preacher must have been prepared to answer the questions, Who was this Jesus whom you preach? What did He do? What did He teach? And since the preachers could rarely answer these questions from their personal knowledge, it was a necessity for their work that they should be furnished with authentic answers resting on a higher authority than their own. We cannot doubt, then, that the first age of the Church must have had its Gospels. (*George Salmon, D.D.*) The earliest account of the origin of a "Gospel" is that which Papias has given on the authority of the Elder John. Papias was himself a "direct hearer" of this John, and John was "a disciple of the Lord" (if the text of Papias be correct), or, at any rate, contemporary with the later period of the apostolic age. "This also the Elder used to say. Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered (*or* that he [Peter] mentioned: ἐμνημόνευσεν); though he did not [record] in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him; but subsequently, as I said, [attached himself to] Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants [of his hearers], but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down some particulars just as he recalled them to mind (*or* as he [Peter] narrated them). For he took heed to one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statement in [his account of] them." (*B. F. Westcott, D.D.*)

THE TRANSITION FROM THE EARLIEST ORAL GOSPEL TO THE SPECIFIC FORMS WHICH IT AFTERWARDS ASSUMED IS CAPABLE OF BEING EASILY REALIZED. The great steps in the process are still marked in the Gospels themselves. The Gospel of St. Mark, conspicuous for its vivid simplicity, seems to be the most direct representation of the first evangelic tradition, the common foundation on which the others were reared. In essence, if not in composition, it is the oldest; and the absence of the history of the infancy brings its contents within the limits laid down by St. Peter (Acts i. 21, 22) for the extent of the apostolic testimony. The great outline thus drawn admitted of the introduction of large groups of facts or discourses combined to illustrate or enforce some special lesson. In this way the common tradition gained its special characters, but still remained a tradition, gaining fixity and distinctness till it was at last embodied in writing. For the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke represent the two great types of recension to which it may be supposed that the simple narrative was subjected. St. Luke presents the Hellenic, and St. Matthew (Greek) the later Hebraic form of the tradition, and in its present shape the latter seems to give the last authentic record of the primitive Gospel. Yet in both these a common tradition furnished the centre and basis on which the after works were built up. The original principles of combination regulated the later

additions, and clear resemblance of shape remained in the fuller narrative. In this way the successive remoulding of the oral Gospel according to the peculiar requirements of different classes of hearers furnishes a natural explanation of the general similarity in form and substance between the several Gospels, combined with peculiarities and differences in arrangement and contents. The assumption of a common oral source is equally capable of explaining the phenomena of the language of the Gospels. The words of the Lord and the questions proposed to Him would necessarily first be fixed, while the narrative by which they were introduced remained more free. Single phrases would be impressed with peculiar force; and the recurrence of strange words in the same connection in the different evangelists, even when the construction of the sentence is changed, seems scarcely to admit of a simple explanation except on the admission of a traditional record. And while the free development of common materials gave full scope for variations in detail, as well as for interpolations of fresh matter, it included the preservation of language hallowed by long use in its well-known shape. Nor is it an unimportant fact that in this respect also St. Mark occupies the mean position between the other evangelists, as would naturally be the case if he represents most closely the original from which they started. (*Ibid.*)

To consider the Four Gospels as regular Biographies of our Lord is an error which has logically led to serious consequences. The Gospel is, in the strictest sense, one *εὐαγγέλιον τετράμορφον*. But the four evangelists represent that great life, as four painters might represent a vast range of mountains from four different points of view. Each, having his materials fully before him, arranges and moulds them according to certain leading thoughts, certain fundamental conceptions. (*Bishop William Alexander.*)

The Central Figure.—The Bible centres in the story of a life which was so filled with the Holy Ghost that this Man became the symbol of the Most High, the sacrament of His Being and Presence, the sacred shrine of Deity. As when the long-drawn travail of instrumentation labours through the opening movements of the ninth symphony, with a strain too fine for any voicing save by man, there bursts at length upon the tumultuous storm of sound the clear, high song of joy from human lips; so from the mounting efforts of a nation's insufficient utterance there rises at last a voice which takes up every groaning of the spirit in humanity into the perfect beauty of a Human Life Divine. The life of the Son of Man is the light of men—light for our minds and warmth for our hearts. In the power in whom we live, and move, and have our being, we see "Our Father who art in heaven." In the laws of life we read the methods of His schooling of our souls. In the sorrows of life we receive His disciplinings. In the sins that cling so hard upon us we feel the evils of our imperfection, from which He is seeking to deliver us through His training of our spirits. In the shame of sin we are conscious of the guilt that His free forgiveness wipes away, when we turn saying, "Father, I have sinned." In death we face the doorway to some other room of the Father's house, where, it may be just beyond the threshold, our dear ones wait for us! In Christ Himself we own our heaven-sent Teacher, Master, Saviour, Friend; our Elder Brother, who in our sinful flesh lives our holy aspirations, and, smiling, beckons us to follow Him, whispering in our ears—"To them that receive Me, I give power to become the sons of God." The power of the Bible is—Christ. (*R. Heber Newton.*)

Titles of the Gospels.—Renan observes that the formulæ "according to Matthew," "according to Mark," &c., indicate that the earliest opinion was, not that these stories were written from one end to the other by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but only that they contain traditions emanating from these respective sources and guaranteed by their authority. But, assuredly, if that had been what

was intended by the phrase "according to," the second and third Gospels would have been known as the Gospel according to Peter and the Gospel according to Paul. The account of Papias, that Mark did nothing but record narrations of Peter concerning our Lord, was received with general belief by the early Church. And it was just as generally believed that the third Gospel rested on the authority of St. Paul. Some ancient interpreters even understand the phrase "according to my Gospel" (Rom. ii. 16, xvi. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 8; see also 2 Thess. ii. 14), to refer to the Gospel according to St. Luke. Clearly, then, if the phrase "according to" had been understood to imply anything less than actual authorship, the Church would never have been content to designate these Gospels by the names of those who transmitted the tradition at second-hand, but would have named them more honourably after the great apostles on whose authority they were believed to rest. It is plain, then, that the phrase indicates only the Church's sense of the unity of the fourfold narrative, the same good tidings being contained in all, only presented differently by different hands. Hence it follows that the titles of our Gospels afford internal evidence of their antiquity. They must, in any case, be earlier than Justin Martyr (A.D. 150). In Justin's time the word *Gospel* had acquired its technical meaning; for he uses it in the plural number, and says that the memoirs of the apostles were called Gospels. The titles, on the contrary, bespeak a time when the word Gospel had acquired no such technical meaning, and when the appellation "evangelist" was not confined to the authors of four books. All the apostles and other preachers of the new religion had the same message of good tidings to deliver. Whatever might be the diversity of form in their teaching, all preached "the Gospel." Further, these titles regarded in another point of view prove their own historic character. If they had been arbitrarily chosen, we may be sure that persons of greater distinction in the history of the Church would have been selected. Matthew is one of the least prominent of the apostles, and the dignity of apostleship is not even claimed for Mark and Luke. It would have been so easy to claim a more distinguished authorship for the Gospels, that we have the less right to refuse credence to what is actually claimed: namely, that the two evangelists just named, though not apostles, and possibly not even eye-witnesses themselves, were in immediate contact with apostles and eye-witnesses. (*George Salmon, D.D.*)

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES: THEIR SCOPE.—The Gospel of Jesus Christ is contained in four books, each giving His Gospel "according to" a particular writer. The books have come to be called in common speech *the four Gospels*. . . . No attempt at a complete biography, in the modern sense of the word, has been made in any of the cases. Of the first thirty years of Christ's life on earth, and of His training for His brief ministry in that time, there is hardly any record. Evidently the writers did not consider that a continuous record of growth and training, of youthful aspirations and of self-consecration to a future work, belonged to their purpose. With the baptism of Jesus commences the more complete narrative of His life. . . The Gospels present a history of the salvation of mankind by Jesus Christ the Son of God, and not a minute and exact life of the Saviour. Not a complete life; but the life as it bore on the belief and convictions of the people of God. (*Archbishop Wm. Thomson.*)

THE NUMBER OF GOSPELS—FOUR.—I daresay you have heard of the reasons given by Irenæus why there are exactly four Gospels, neither more nor less. He argues that the Gospel is the pillar of the Church; the Church is spread over the whole world; the world has four quarters; therefore it is fitting there should also be four Gospels. Again, the Gospel is the Divine breath, or wind of life, for men; there are four chief winds; therefore, four Gospels. He builds another argument on the fourfold appearance of the cherubim. The cherubim, he says, are fourfold, and

their faces are images of the activity of the Son of God. The first beast was like a lion, signifying His commanding and kingly dignity; the second like a calf, signifying His priestly office; the third like a man, denoting His incarnation; the fourth like an eagle, denoting the Holy Spirit flying over the Church. Like these are the Gospels. John, who begins with the Godhead and descent from the Father, is the lion; Luke, who begins with the priesthood and sacrifice of Zacharias, is the calf; Matthew, who begins with His human genealogy, the man; Mark, the eagle, who commences with the announcement of the prophetic spirit—"the beginning of the Gospel as it is written by Isaiah the prophet." You are aware, I daresay, that this is not the appointment of the four beasts to the Gospels which ultimately prevailed in the West, John being usually represented as the eagle; Matthew as the man; Luke as the ox; and Mark as the lion. But Irenæus goes on to say that Christ's dealings with the world are fourfold. To the patriarchs the word of God came directly; to those under the Law through the priestly office; Christ Himself came as man; since then He has dealt with the Church by His Spirit overshadowing the Church with His wings. Thus the Gospel also is fourfold, and those destroy its fundamental conception who make the number either greater or less; either desiring to seem to have found out more than the truth, or rejecting part of God's dispensation. . . . We are not concerned with the validity of his mystical explanations; . . . but, at any rate, they prove that towards the end of the second century the Church held the belief that the *four Gospels* are to be venerated as inspired records of our Saviour's life, and that no others can be placed on a level with these. (*George Salmon, D.D.*)

---

## *INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.*

**Author.**—In the lists of the apostles of Jesus (Matt. x.; Mark iii.; Luke vi.; and Acts i.) there is an apostle of the name of Matthew; in Matt. x. 3 he is called a "publican." There is every probability that the account of the calling of Matthew (Matt. ix. 9) refers to the same person who bears the name of Levi (Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27). The facts are the same, and occur in the same connection, in all three narratives. He may have been called Levi before he became an apostle, and Matthew afterwards: there is nothing unusual in the assuming a new name on some important change of position; Peter and Paul are examples of this. . . . There is not a word about the later life and ministry of Matthew in the *Acts*, nor in any other part of the New Testament. . . . Clement of Alexandria says that he was given to ascetic practices, and that he preached the Gospel to the Hebrews for fifteen years after the ascension. Eusebius mentions that he then went to other parts of the world. (*Archbishop Wm. Thomson.*)

**The details of St. Matthew's life which have been preserved are very scanty.**—There can, however, be little doubt that the Matthew of the first Gospel is the same as the Levi of the second and third, though the persons were distinguished even in very early times. The change of name, which seems to have coincided with the crisis in the life of the apostle, and probably bore some reference to it, finds a complete parallel in the corresponding changes in the cases of St. Peter and St. Paul, even if it appear strange that no passing notice of the identification occurs in the catalogues of the apostles. According to the present text of St. Mark (ii. 14), Levi (Matthew) is called the *son of Alphæus;* and in the absence of any further mark of distinction, it has been usual to identify this Alphæus with the father of James; in which case St. Matthew would have been nearly related by birth to our Lord. His occupation was that of a collector of dues (ὁ τελώνης) on the sea of Galilee; and this alone shows that he cannot have observed the traditions of the Pharisaic school. At a

later time he is described as a rigorous ascetic, living on seeds and fruits and herbs without flesh, as if by a natural reaction he had exchanged the licence of his former life for the sternest self-denial; but this austerity, which was rather that of an Essene than of a Pharisee, appears as part of his practice and not of his teaching; nor can it have been without influence on the progress of the Christian faith that the Hebrew evangelist was one who, if it was only on the narrow stage of a Galilean town, had yet ventured beyond the strict limits of national hope. St. Paul, who was trained in the most straitest sect of his religion, when once convinced, hastened to the opposite pole of truth: St. Matthew, passing to the new faith by a less violent transition, naturally retained a firmer hold on his earlier belief. His apostolic commission tended to strengthen this feeling; for, according to a very early tradition, he remained at Jerusalem with the other apostles for twelve years after the death of the Lord, busy among his own countrymen. When this work was ended he preached the gospel to *others;* but no trustworthy authority mentions the scene of his missionary labours, which in later times were popularly placed in Ethiopia. The mention of his martyrdom is found only in legendary narratives, and is opposed to the best evidence, which represents him to have died a natural death. These notices, however slight, yet contribute in some measure to mark the fitness of St. Matthew for fulfilling a special part in the representation of the Gospel. The time and place at which he wrote further impress upon his work a distinctive character. The Hebrew Christians, during a succession of fifteen bishops, outwardly observed the customs of their fathers, and for them he was inspired to exhibit in the teaching of Christ the antitypes of the Mosaic law, to portray the earthly form and theocratic glory of the new dispensation, and to unfold the glorious consummation of the kingdom of heaven, faintly typified in the history of his countrymen. (*B. F. Westcott, D.D.*)

MATTHEW WAS A "PORTITOR."—The Roman taxes being usually in the hands of Roman knights, these high personages farmed the customs out to local men, "portitores," who, having to pay a fixed sum for the privilege of collecting, squeezed as much as they could in addition out of the people. The police winked at the extortion; there was seldom any redress, but the "portitor," or collector, was generally hated. He was employed by the knight much as the hangman is employed by the sheriff, to do the dirty work. His prey were the rich and middle classes—out of the dregs of the people he could not raise very much. He was glad, probably, at times to take refuge with them, and they would be flattered by the attentions of a richer man, however looked askance at by his social equals. At any rate Matthew had a certain following among the lower orders, and a good many of them rose up and followed him when he rose up from the receipt of custom and followed Christ. What became of him afterwards we can but vaguely conjecture. To the end, if we are to judge by a certain bias in the Gospel which bears his name, he remained a Jew, with a double conscience—full of Jewish ardour, respect for the Temple, attentive to ceremony, though disliking the Pharisees—indeed, they may have suffered from his exactions, and reciprocated his hatred—wholly changed in heart, he was but half changed in mind. He records with reverence many sayings which must have remained strange and unintelligible to him. Although writing or editing after Paul's death, he probably had no idea of Paul's importance. To him Christianity is still the work of the twelve. He is the type of the transition period between Judaism and Christianity, and his value lies wholly in his memory and the abundance of Logia which early passed current under his name, and have found a place in the Gospel which is sealed by it. We shall associate Matthew of Capernaum, in Galilee, most correctly with the inner circle at Jerusalem—the friends and family of Jesus. He may have left the doomed city in their company, and taken refuge with the saintly little group at Pella, beyond Jordan. There, in converse with the

mother of Jesus, who kept so many sayings in her heart, with Nicodemus, and Cleophas, and Nathaniel, and now and then one or more of the twelve, Matthew may have collected sundry "libelli," or booklets, and formed a record supplemented from his own memory. Living mostly with Jews, he would recognize in Jesus the Jewish Messiah, and lay special stress on that; but the value of the Gospel is not in its theory, which is ill-defined, or its incident, which is largely derived from Mark, but in its words—they are spirit and they are life—they inspire the real Gospel according to Matthew. (*H. R. Haweis, M.A.*)

TIME.—The ancient authorities tellus that it was written while Peter and Paul preached in Rome (Irenæus), and that Matthew wrote first of all (Origen, and Clement of Alexandria). . . . There is nothing in the Gospel to hint to us that Jerusalem had already fallen, that the temple was destroyed. The flight of the disciples (Matt. xxiv. 15–20) had not yet taken place. In the great prophecy of Jesus, wherein the typical destruction of Jerusalem appears hardly distinguishable in point of perspective of time from the judgment of the whole world, there would surely be some word of comment from the evangelist, if one great portion had been completed, and had passed out of prophecy into history, whilst the other remained yet unfulfilled. On the other hand, it is probable that the destruction of the city was not far off. A considerable time between the events of the Lord's life and the writing must have elapsed, or there would be no force in the words, "until this day" (Matt. xxvii. 8; xxviii. 15). . . . Upon the whole, we are pushed by probabilities on either side towards a date somewhere about 63–65. (*Archbishop Wm. Thomson.*)

STATE OF PALESTINE WHEN THIS GOSPEL WAS WRITTEN.—The social and political condition of Palestine at that time (63–65) threatened a great crisis. Society was fast declining into anarchy, and there seemed no help from any quarter. There was cogent reason for desiring to secure in a permanent form, for the Jewish converts, the Gospel facts which had so long been preached to them from oral tradition, and perhaps from separate and fragmentary narratives. After the death of Claudius, it needed no great foresight to discern the peril that beset the Jewish nation. Felix, "amidst every kind of cruelty and lust, exercised the royal office with the soul and spirit of a slave." Long years of mutual distrust between the conquerors and a proud and sullen race, had made government almost impossible. Two years of honest endeavour on the part of Festus (60–62) could do little to recall Judea from this anarchy. His successor Albinus (62–64) was a mere robber, bent on getting gold from any quarter by any means. When he was recalled, he opened the doors of all the prisons, and "left the prisons empty, but the land filled with thieves." As the candle flame casts a shadow from the lime-light, so did the villany of Albinus appear dull by the light of his successor's misdeeds. Gessius Florus (64–66) was a mere brigand, who had crept into the kingly seat. Josephus can hardly find words to describe his conduct. The misery of the people under this evil succession must have been great: their endurance taxed to the utmost. It was impossible that this should last. The clouds were gathering so thick that they must at last explode in thunder, and the bolts of heaven must fall. It was probably in this time of feverish expectation that the Gospel before us was brought into a written shape. With a society about to part asunder, with the constant fear of persecution, the disciples must have become convinced that the precious deposit of the Gospel must no longer be trusted to tradition alone. Matthew is departing; others have gone. And therefore the apostle gathers into a Gospel the treasure of preaching that the Church possessed. (*Ibid.*)

LANGUAGE.—From the first half of the second century downwards, it was the general belief that Matthew wrote for his own people, a Jew for the Jews, and that he wrote in the Aramaic, or late Hebrew, language. There are, however, strong

reasons to question this . . . The general conclusions that seem warranted at present are, that the existence of a Gospel according to the Hebrews, attributed to St. Matthew, is assured by the general voice of ancient tradition; that this Gospel was seen, in one of its two forms, by Jerome, and by him translated into Greek; that the tradition as to its authorship is mainly traceable to Papias; that, so far as this Gospel is known to us, it is not the same as our St. Matthew; that it is probably a secondary work, and possibly a translation from Greek sources: that, whatever be the case with the Hebrew Gospel, we have in the canonical St. Matthew a work that has been received from the earliest times as the writing of the apostle, and that it is not a translation from any Hebrew source. The Gospel, then, was written in Greek. (*Ibid.*) There is not the least difficulty in believing that Matthew might have written a Gospel in Greek, even on the supposition that he intended it only for the use of the Christians in Palestine; and the first Gospel contains internal evidence that it was meant to have a wider circulation. On the other hand, the proof to be derived from Josephus of the literary use of the Aramaic language in his time makes it equally easy to accept evidence of the existence of an apostolic Hebrew Gospel, if only decisive evidence for its existence were forthcoming. But it does not appear that any of the witnesses had themselves seen such a Gospel, and there is no evidence of the existence of any Greek text but the one which was universally regarded as authoritative. Cureton imagined that he could gain evidence for the Hebrew original of St. Matthew from the Syriac version which he published, and which he contended had not been made from Greek, but from the original Aramaic. I cannot help thinking that if there had existed in use among Hebrew-speaking Christians what was known to be the real original Gospel written by St. Matthew, such a corrupt version of it as that circulated among the Nazarenes could not have gained acceptance; and that the origin of the latter Gospel is more easily explained if we suppose that it was in Greek the facts of the Gospel history had been authoritatively published, and if we regard the Nazarene Gospel as an attempt made by one not very scrupulous about accuracy to present these facts to those who spoke Aramaic. For these reasons, and on account of the signs of originality which are presented by the Greek Gospel, I am disposed to pronounce in favour of the Greek original of St. Matthew. (*George Salmon, D.D.*) All early writers agree in affirming that St. Matthew wrote in *Hebrew* (Aramaic), and owing to them this belief gained universal currency till the era of the Reformation. At the same time all equally agree in accepting the *Greek* Gospel as the Gospel of St. Matthew, without noticing the existence of any doubt as to its authenticity . . . But on the other side, it is argued, from internal evidence, that the present Gospel bears no marks of being a translation, that several details in it point to a late and not to an early date, and that there is no evidence to show that any one who mentions the Hebrew original had seen it. The last objection is evidently unreasonable. Till it can be shown that the writers quoted are untrustworthy generally, it is purely arbitrary to reject their statement because it is not sufficiently explicit. The two other facts are perfectly consistent with a belief in the Hebrew original and in the Greek St. Matthew. The oral Gospel probably existed from the first, both in Aramaic and in Greek, and in this way a preparation for a Greek representative of the Hebrew Gospel was at once found. The parts of the Aramaic oral Gospel which were adopted by St. Matthew already existed in the Greek counterpart. The change was not so much a version as a substitution; and frequent coincidence with common parts of St. Mark and St. Luke, which were derived from the same oral Greek Gospel, was a necessary consequence. Yet it may have happened that as long as the Hebrew and Greek churches were in close connection, perhaps till the destruction of Jerusalem, no authoritative Greek Gospel of St. Matthew, *i.e.*, such a revision of the Greek oral Gospel as would exactly answer to St. Matthew's revision of the Aramaic, was

committed to writing. When, however, the separation between the two sections grew more marked, the Greek Gospel was written, not indeed as a translation, but as a representation of the original, as a Greek oral counterpart was already current; and, at the same time, those few additional notes were added which imply a later date than the substance of the book (Matt. xxviii. 15). By whose hand the Greek Gospel was drawn up is wholly unknown. The traditions which assign it to St. John or St. James are without any foundation in early writers. (*B. F. Westcott, D.D.*)

CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE.—The work is carefully constructed. Apart from the account of the childhood, the ministry falls into two portions—the official life in Galilee and the preparation for the Crucifixion—the Baptism being the introduction to one of these, and the Transfiguration to the other. Each of them begins with a formal announcement of the evangelist: "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (chap. iv. 17); and "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (chap. xvi. 21). The one of these stages leads naturally up to the other. Jesus teaches long, and works wonders of love, and then takes account with the apostles of the result of all this activity before He unfolds the history of His suffering. "Whom do men say that I am?" During the latter stage, that of the cross, the activity and the preaching recede before the shadow of the coming events. In the former stage the Sermon on the Mount is put out of its place (comp. Luke), and made the opening of the ministry, for it is the new law of the new "kingdom of heaven," and must be brought into the most prominent place. Then follow (chaps. viii. and ix.) proofs of His wonder-working power; then the sending forth by the Shepherd of the people, the apostles to the children of Israel, to whom the new kingdom was offered (chap. x.) The effect of His work on various classes and places now shows itself: John is in doubt (chap. xi. 1–6); the people are perverse (chap. xi. 18, 19); Chorazin and Bethsaida are harder to convince than Tyre and Sidon (chap. xi. 20–22); the Pharisees, cramped and confined by the glosses of the law, cannot understand the Gospel liberty even a little (chap. xii.). Now a group of parables of the Kingdom of God seems to be the opening of a fresh period, the structure being somewhat the same. First, these parables, answering to the Sermon on the Mount; then, new miracles, and even more conspicuous—the two feedings of the multitudes with a little bread (chaps. xiv., xv.); and, lastly, a fresh account of the results of the teaching, as shown by various minds: "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (chap. xvi. 13). "But whom say ye that I am?" (chap. xvi. 15). This second section has probably for its chief scene a new missionary circuit round Galilee. St. Luke places the parable of the Sower in the beginning of such a journey, when, accompanied by the twelve, and now by certain women also, who had been healed of evil spirits, He passed through the land, carrying with Him the glad tidings of God (Luke viii. 1–5). Throughout the first great section (chaps. iv.–xvi.) the purpose never flags or changes: this kingdom of Messiah is preached to the Jews who were its heirs: thus it was preached, thus it was enforced, and thus received by the ungrateful people; whilst of the darker lessons of the second part the disciples understood nothing at the end of the first. "Be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall not be unto Thee" (chap. xvi. 22). The second section, opening with the Transfiguration—the witness from heaven—has its sermon too; but this time the circle is narrower to which it is addressed; the disciples who now learn the doctrine of suffering and the cross, are to learn the ethics of suffering also: in the child's humility (chap. xviii. 3, 4); in the tender consideration for the smallest and weakest (chap. xviii. 10–14); in the constant forgiveness of wrongs (chap.

xviii. 21–35)—the strength of His ministers would lie. Miracles follow (chaps. xix., xx.), but they are not so prominent now in the narrative. Again and again the gloomy prophecy of His death is pressed home to the disciples (chaps. xvi. 22; xvii. 22; xx. 17–19; xxvi. 1, 2); until at last the fulfilment comes. All the world of Judea passes, for a kind of judgment, before His judgment seat; scribe and Pharisee, and the doomed Jerusalem, wherein these rule so perversely, are utterly condemned (chap. xxiii.); and through the smoke and fire of the city's destruction may be seen the grand lines of a greater judgment (chaps. xxiv., xxvi.). (*Archbishop Wm. Thomson.*)

Leading Ideas.—This Gospel follows two fundamental conceptions. 1. It is the Gospel of the Discourses. Many chapters are filled with the record of Christ's teaching. I need only indicate the Sermon on the Mount; the instruction to the apostles on their first Mission; the cluster of the parables of the Kingdom; the eightfold woe in chap. xxi.; the eschatological predictions and parables in chaps. xxiv. and xxv. A brief answer may suffice to certain questions which have been asked, apparently for the purpose of disturbing simple Christians in the quiet enjoyment of their Master's words. How do you know that it is, indeed, the very echo of His voice which comes to you across the gulf of time? Was there a reporter in the apostolic company who could write short-hand, and take sufficient notes? Are not these Discourses like the speeches in Thucydides or Livy? As Christians, we are satisfied with that sentence, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall teach you all things"—that is, all things not of the first creation, which is the object of science, but of the second, which is the object of revelation:—"and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." There is no tablet like a loving memory, no remembrancer like God the Holy Ghost. 2. It is the Gospel of Types in history, in law, in worship, accomplishing themselves, unrecognized by those to whom they specially pertained. It is the Gospel of Prophecy, accumulating and interweaving its marvellous coincidences (sometimes in dark sayings, like those of the thirty pieces of silver—chap. xxvii. 9, cf. Zech. xi. 12, 13, and of the going before the disciples into Galilee—xxvi. 31, 32, cf. Zech. xiii. 7), round the birth and life, the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the Gospel of the Christ, crowning the aspirations of saints and seers, but not the carnal expectations of the Jews. It is the Gospel of true Judaism, as opposed to the corrupt Judaism of priests and scribes, of Pharisees and Sadducees. This is written on its forefront: "The Book of the Generation" (chap. i. 1); not "the History of the Childhood," but the "Liber de Originibus Jesu," Jesus the Messiah, the Child of Abraham, in whom all families are to be blessed; the Royal Heir of David's throne, yet rejected by the Jews. (*Bishop Wm. Alexander.*)

This Gospel is not the life of a dead man. It is the specimen of an Eternal Life manifested upon earth for a while, by which we came to know in some measure what He is who is our Lord. This is why it is that to leave off reading the daily lesson or chapter is to forget Christ, and with Him home and goodness. This is why men in the evening of their days, as they look back with bitter self-accusation, remember that the time which they most deplore coincided exactly with the time when, by shutting up their New Testament, they shut out Christ's presence from their lives. Yet, thank God, we know Him, or we may know Him. We may know Him as the leper knew Him; as Peter did, when, with the spray in his hair and the storm-light on his face, he cried, "Lord! save me"; as Galilee knew Him, when He went about doing good. Still above the clouds that hang over the Church and the world, He is the Light, the Dawn and Morning Star of each new era, until the final revelation, when, over the last clouds going up from a burning world, the Sign shall appear. (*Ibid.*)

# THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

## ST. MATTHEW.

### CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1–15. **The book of the generation.**—*The lessons of Christ's genealogy* :—1. It is a proof of the reality of Christ's humanity. 2. It suggests the relation of Christ's work to the whole human race. 3. It marks the importance of the birth of Christ as a historical epoch. Let it remind us also (1) Of the shortness of human life; (2) Of the subserviency of persons of every class and character to the purposes of God's moral government. (*G. Brooks.*) *The double use of genealogies* :—1. A profane use for ostentation. 2. A holy use (1) For the observing of judicial laws; (2) For the distinguishing the church from those without; (3) For the setting forth the pedigree of the Messiah, lest it should be thought that He were some obscure or secret person. (*R. Ward.*) *The old and new in Jesus* :—The first record is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ. What does this signify? 1. A man's beginnings, a man's ancestors, have something to do with both his character and his life. 2. Christ was the sacred heir of all the ancient world. 3. The genealogy reminds us how all the past was preparing for Jesus. 4. But more than all, the generations of Jesus Christ show us the birth of the new world, and the new time, and the new institutions, which are to end in the perfect glory of the Father and the perfect blessedness of the race. (*W. H. Davison.*) *The genealogy of Christ* :—1. There is much in good lineage. 2. Sin has tainted the blood of the best races of men, and frequently makes itself manifest. 3. God's grace can flow through very crooked human channels. 4. No man stands alone. *Lessons of Christ's genealogy* :—1. This table of our Lord's genealogy, inserted in the beginning of the gospel, invests the book with an air of naturalness and reality, which probably nothing else could have done so well. No man writing fiction would have ventured to preface it with a dry list of obscure names. 2. It connects Jesus and His teachings with all God's revelations and promises which had been given before. It binds up, as in one sheaf, all generations of the church in one uniform moral system. 3. The Lord's ancestral roll serves to identify Him in closer connection and sympathy with the race whom, as their God, He came to redeem. 4. The account of those who were Christ's ancestry before His first advent suggest the anxious inquiry, whether our names are written in the Book of Life as members of His spiritual family. (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *Very man* :—1. He is a man. 2. He is a Jew. 3. He is a king. (1) God's purpose is to bless by a man; (2) To teach by a man; (3) To judge by a man; (4) To rule by a man; (5) To link earth and heaven together by a man. (*Dr. Bonar.*) The text appears at first sight like a valley of dry bones without any life or fertility, or a rugged pass that leads to green pastures. Nevertheless, there are important lessons in it respecting the human race and its relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. I. It shows THE COMMON ORIGIN OF THE RACE. St. Luke traces the ancestry of Jesus to Adam—the head of the race. II. THE PHYSICAL CONNECTION OF THE RACE. Having sprung from a common head, there must be a physical connection between the various members. (1) War seems doubly barbarous and unnatural. (2) Men ought to sympathize with and promote one another's welfare apart from Christianity, &c. III. THE COMMON SAVIOUR OF THE RACE. IV. THE MORAL DISTINCTION OF THE RACE. What a mixture of good and bad there is in the genealogy! (*W. Edwards.*)

Vers. 16, 17. **Joseph the husband of Mary.**—*Jesus the seed of the woman*:—1. Jesus is the Christ. 2. He has a human ancestry. 3. He has a Jewish ancestry. 4. He has a Gentile ancestry. 5. He has a royal ancestry. 6. He has a lowly ancestry. 7. He has a holy ancestry. 8. He has an imperfect ancestry. 9. He has a mortal ancestry. 10. He has an immortal ancestry. (*Dr. Bonar.*) Joseph and Mary were one thing by right of inheritance, another by present condition. They were successors to the kingdom of Israel, but were poor. Why does God permit the righteous to be deprived of their right and to be brought to poverty? 1. Because thus He will prove them. 2. Because worldly abundance is not so fit for them. 3. That He may crown them with future blessedness more abundantly. 4. That He may let us see how careful He is of us when we are in need. 5. How content were Joseph and Mary in their low estate. 6. The way to heaven is by adversity. (*R. Ward.*)

Vers. 18-20. **A just man.**—*An honest man's dilemma*:—I. THAT TROUBLES ARE IRRESPECTIVE OF CHARACTER. II. That the mental perplexities of the good arise often FROM THE WANT OF INSIGHT INTO THE DIVINE MOVEMENTS. The cycles of God's providence are too vast for our limited capacities. III. That God graciously REMOVES THE HONEST SCRUPLES OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Joseph's mental difficulties were removed (1) By an angelic communication; (2) By revealing the dignity of Christ's birth; (3) By showing the nature of His mission. Jesus was the only man born with special mission in reference to sin. IV. That this mysterious conception and noble birth came to pass IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROPHETIC PREDICTION (Isa. vii. 14–16). V. Joseph's belief in the angelic communication, and OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE COMMAND. Faith essential to willing and unreserved obedience, and to the removal of mental difficulties. (*W. Edwards.*) *Joseph*:—1. His natural suspicion. 2. His merciful determination. 3. We need the tempering of justice with mercy, and mercy with justice. (*R. Ward.*) Nothing so clearly discovers a spiritual man as his treatment of an erring brother. (*Augustine.*)

Vers. 21, 22. **Jesus.**—*The design of our Saviour's coming*:—I. Consider SIN AS AN ENEMY. 1. Behold sin with regard to God. 2. Behold sin in its names. 3. Behold the effects of sin. 4. That Christ derives from this work His highest title. II. Consider IN WHAT MANNER HE SAVES HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. 1. He redeems them by price. 2. He saves them by power. 3. He saves from the guilt of sin. 4. He saves from the love of sin. (*W. Jay.*) In old times God was known by names of power, of nature, of majesty; but His name of mercy was reserved till now. (*Bishop J. Taylor.*) *The name and work of Jesus*:—I. HIS NAME. II. HIS WORK. 1. Whom He saves—"His people." 2. From what He saves—"their sins." 3. How He saves. By His atonement He saves them virtually; by His spirit, vitally; by His grace, constantly; by His power, eternally. Remarks: (1) Jesus as a suitable Saviour; (2) a willing Saviour; (3) an all-sufficient Saviour. (*E. Oakes.*) *Christ a Saviour*:—I. THE WORK HE IS TO ACCOMPLISH is a most great, glorious, and blessed one. "He shall save." Another Scripture says, He shall destroy. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." These characters are consistent. He demolishes the works of Satan because they stand in His way as Saviour. 1. He saves His people from the penalty of their sins. 2. From the dominion and practice of sin. 3. In the end He saves from the very existence of sin. 4. And from the painful remembrance of their sins. II. THE NAME OUR LORD IS TO BEAR IN CONSEQUENCE OF THIS WORK OF SALVATION. Learn from this—1. The character in which God most delights to regard His Son. 2. It shows us that He would have us regard Him chiefly as a Saviour. 3. This name may have been given to Christ to endear Him the more to our hearts. 4. We see here beyond all dispute the real nature and design of Christ's religion. (*C. Bradley.*) *The name of Jesus*:—I. THE NAME OF JESUS. 1. The signification of the name. 2. The appointment of the name. Not left to men's choice. II. THE REASON FOR THE NAME. Some would rather that He had come to save them from poverty, pains, death; not knowing that to save from sins is to save from all these. (*J. Bennet, D.D.*) I. A WORK OF MOST BLESSED PURPOSE. 1. Sin is itself the greatest of all miseries. It is (1) deeper; (2) vaster; (3) more abiding; (4) the source of all other miseries. II. A WORK OF VAST MAGNITUDE. Its magnitude realized by dwelling—1. On the multitudes of the saved. 2. On the nature of the salvation. 3. On the fact that this salvation is wrought by

Jesus personally. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Jesus the Saviour*:—I. WHAT THE GOSPEL SHALL BRING—Salvation from sins. II. JESUS IS THE SAVIOUR, AND HIS WORK CONSTITUTES OUR SALVATION. 1. This word teaches us that salvation is Divine. Because Divine it is (1) sufficient; (2) unchangeable; (3) infinite. It is illimitable, as the air to the bird. 2. He who gives this salvation stands in solitary grandeur —"He." Nowhere else can we find salvation. 3. The name gives an immutable pledge that we shall be saved. III. The text informs us OF WHAT THIS SALVATION CONSISTS. "From their sins." Not from the wrath of God primarily. 1. From the guilt, curse, condemnation of sin. 2. From our love, habit, practice of sin. 3. It is not salvation from an abstraction, but from selfishness and self-will. IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. His people; peculiar, chosen, royal. Are you saved from sins? (*J. Denovan.*) *Jesus the Saviour*:—I. Jesus is an OMNIPOTENT Saviour. 1. The presumption of the fact from the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, who never provides a cause unequal to the effect. 2. The declaration of the fact, "He is able to save them to the uttermost," &c. II. Jesus is a WILLING Saviour. III. Jesus is a LIVING Saviour. IV. Jesus is a PRESENT Saviour. V. Jesus is a PERSONAL Saviour. VI. Jesus is a SYMPATHIZING Saviour. (*G. H. Smyth.*) I. Let me call your attention to the SAVIOUR. Jesus is Divine; He saves His people from their sins. Not the word, not the ordinances, but Jesus Himself saves. II. Look at the SALVATION. 1. Jesus saves from sin by bestowing forgiveness—full forgiveness, free, immediate. 2. Jesus saves His people from the pollution of sin; not in their sins, but from their sins. III. Let us look at the SAVED. "He shall save His people." Who are His people? They must have been at one time in their sins. Therefore no one need despair. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

*Jesus only worthy of trust as a Saviour.*—A Christian Hindoo was dying, and his heathen comrades came around him and tried to comfort him by reading some of the pages of their theology; but he waved his hand, as much as to say, "I don't want to hear it." Then they called in a heathen priest, and he said, "If you will only recite the *Numtra* it will deliver you from hell." He waved his hand, as much as to say, "I don't want to hear that." Then they said, "Call on Juggernaut." He shook his head, as much as to say, "I can't do that." Then they thought perhaps he was too weary to speak, and they said, "Now if you can't say 'Juggernaut,' think of that god." He shook his head again, as much as to say, "No, no, no." Then they bent down to his pillow, and they said, "In what will you trust?" His face lighted up with the very glories of the celestial sphere as he cried out, rallying all his dying energies, "Jesus!" *The name of Jesus.*—"This name Jesus," said St. Bernard, "it is honey in the mouth, harmony in the ear, melody in the heart." "This name Jesus," saith St. Anselm, "it is a name of comfort to sinners when they call upon Him;" therefore he himself saith, "Jesus, be my Jesus." This name is above all names: first, for that it was consecrated from everlasting; secondly, for that it was given of God; thirdly, for that it was desired of the Patriarchs; fourthly, for that it was foretold of the Prophets; fifthly, for that it was accomplished in the time of grace, magnified in the Apostles, witnessed of Martyrs, acknowledged and honoured shall it be of all believers unto the world's end. This name Jesus, it is compared to "oil poured out;" oil being kept close, it sendeth not forth such a savour, as it doth being poured out; and oil hath these properties, it suppleth, it cherisheth, it maketh look cheerfully; so doth this name of Jesus, it suppleth the hardness of our hearts, it cherisheth the weakness of our faith, enlighteneth the darkness of our soul, and maketh man look with a cheerful countenance towards the throne of grace. (*Christopher Sutton.*)

*Salvation from sin.*—You must be saved *from* sin, not *in* sin, as some seem to imagine. The latter is like saving a man from drowning by keeping him under the water which is destroying him; or like recovering a man from sickness by leaving him under the malady which constitutes the complaint. (*W. Jay.*)

Vers. 23–25. **Child.**—I. We remember that God came to us in that child. "God with us." This should remove all dread of God. II. That God can come to us in the smallest things. III. That the whole of life is sacred, and should be consecrated to God. IV. That great endings have little beginnings. (*B. Preece.*) **Emmanuel.**—*Emmanuel*:—I. Christ came AS GOD WITH MAN. 1. To live with man. 2. With man, to die for him. 3. With man, to rise from the dead for him. 4. With man, to ascend and intercede for him. II. GOD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE. 1. He is with them in their lives. 2. In their labours. 3. In their trials and afflictions. 4. In their worship. 5. In death and in glory. (*C. H. Wetherbe.*) *The birth of*

*Christ*:—1. The IMPORTANCE OF THE EVENT to which Isaiah looks forward, and which the evangelist describes as fulfilled. 1. The occurrence was of a preternatural character. To raise us from degradation Christ Himself must be sinless. Evil had descended. How was this fatal entail to be cut off? The virgin birth was the answer. 2. Christ's birth marked the entrance into the sphere of sense and time of One who had existed from eternity. 3. No other birth has ever involved such important consequences to the human race. II. The CONTRAST between the real and the apparent importance of Christ's birth. The kingdom of God had entered into history without observation. Cæsar's palace seemed to be more important to the world than the manger. The apparent is not always the real. III. What is the PRACTICAL MEANING of this birth to us, and what relation have we to Him who, for the love of us, was born of the virgin? (*Canon Liddon.*) *Jesus Christ the centre of history*:—I. The world expected an Emmanuel. II. God was preparing the world for the coming of Emmanuel. III. The world could not produce the Emmanuel. IV. As the Emmanuel was the goal of ancient, so He is the starting-point of modern history. (*J. C. Jones*). *At an earlier age the Incarnation would have been meaningless.* The mariner's compass has been known in China for thousands of years; nevertheless, for the most part of that time it was but little better than a toy—the Chinese mind was not educated enough to estimate its value. Only a few centuries ago the compass became a blessing to mankind, because only a few centuries ago we attained the intellectual state requisite to apprehend its usefulness. And did the Incarnation take place in the days of Abraham, or of Moses, or of David, it would have been an idle, purposeless miracle, so far as its human aspect is concerned, and Christ would have died in vain. (*Ibid.*) *The Man Christ Jesus*:—1. Humanity needed a Saviour. 2. The Mediator was to come in the purity and the power of sinless human character. 3. We, as a part of the human world, must join in this longing of human hearts for a Christ. 4. When this yearning of mankind was taken up into the guidance and inspiration of God it became prophecy. 5. These things are a declaration of the one fact which lies, central and life-giving, at the heart of all our Christian thoughts and hopes. 6. We come short of the full grandeur of the gospel when we take the clause, "God with us," as signifying only one among us—a Deity moving among individuals, outside of them all, and, however friendly and gracious, still an external Person, saving them only by a work wrought all above them. 7. Then, too, it will begin to appear what Christ's own people may be, acknowledging their membership, confirmed and alive in His body. (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) Let Him be one of us, that we may be one in Him. (*Ibid.*) *Emmanuel, God with us*:—I. We know, in consequence of the revelations made by Christ, that God is so with us, so near to us, that OUR VERY EXISTENCE IS EVERY MOMENT UPHELD BY HIM. We exist not by chance, &c.; but whatever subordinate causes may be employed, they all derive their efficacy from Him. II. We know, too, from the incarnation and doctrine of Christ, that God is with us, not as individuals merely, BUT WITH OUR WORLD, and that also in the way of special grace. He is in the world, not to exhibit His power merely, but that the world of men may be redeemed, &c. III. In Christ we see that God was with us, IN OUR VERY NATURE, to accomplish our redemption. IV. Though ascended into heaven, HE IS STILL "GOD WITH US," by the invisible but mighty influence which He exerts. V. God is with us, in condescension and special grace, DURING THE WHOLE COURSE OF DISCIPLINE to which He subjects us. Is Christ our Emmanuel? (*R. Watson.*) *Influence gained by oneness of condition*:—A Moravian missionary once went to the West Indies, to preach to the slaves. He found it impossible for him to carry out his design so long as he bore to them the relation of a mere missionary. They were driven into the field very early in the morning, and returned late at night with scarcely strength to roll themselves into their cabins, and in no condition to be profited by instruction. They were savage toward all of the race and rank of their masters. He determined to reach the slaves by becoming himself a slave. He was sold, that he might have the privilege of working by their side, and preaching to them as he worked with them. Do you suppose the master or the pastor could have touched the hearts of those miserable slaves as did that man who placed himself in their condition, and went among them, and lived as they lived, suffered as they suffered, toiled as they toiled, that he might carry the gospel to them? This missionary was but following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who took on Him the nature of men, came among them, and lived as they lived, that He might save them from their sins. (*Beecher.*)

In what sense is Christ GOD WITH US? In His incarnation united to our nature—

God *with* man—God *in* man. He is God with us to comfort, enlighten, protect, and defend us in time of temptation and trial, and in the hour of death, and God *with* us, and *in* us, and we *with* and *in* Him to all eternity. (*A. Clarke, LL.D.*) Behold at once the deepest mystery and the richest mercy. By the light of nature we see the eternal as a God above us: by the light of the law we see Him as a God against us; but, by the light of the gospel, we see Him as a God with us, reconciled to us, at peace with us, interested for us, interceding in our behalf. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! (*Dr. Hughes.*)

## CHAPTER II.

VER. 1. **Wise men from the East.**—They were wise, not so much for their learning, but because they sought God diligently. Wisdom does not make unbelievers, but folly. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *Philosophy and the Babe*:—I. The wise men SEEKING Christ. 1. They are presented to us here as seekers. 2. They were earnest seekers. 3. They sought Christ reverently. 4. God assisted them in the search. II. The wise men FINDING Christ. 1. They were seeking a person. 2. That person must be a king. 3. They sought a king and found a child. 4. Having found the child their seeking came to an end. 5. They worshipped Him. (*J. C. Jones.*) Jesus was the beginner of a new era, the founder of a new kingdom, hailed as a King alike at His birth and on His cross. I. THE SEEKERS. Magi, not magicians; astronomers, not astrologers; scientists, not wizards. The coming of these wise men prophetic of the time when all the trophies of science should be laid at the Saviour's feet. II. THE SIGN. "His star." Various conjectures. God never lacks the means to guide earnest inquirers. III. THE SEARCH. Earnest. Gave up friends and home, and took a wearisome journey. Every follower of Christ must have the same spirit. No earthly joy is entirely satisfactory. Men will not earnestly seek Christ till firmly convinced of the unsatisfactory nature of other things. Persevering: many discouragements. IV. THE SUCCESS. Not where they expected it, in the capital; not even in the best place in Bethlehem, yet where their soul-hunger was satisfied—the "house of bread." They came not empty-handed, but presented first themselves, then their gifts. The typical nature of these gifts. Around the manger was gathered a prophetic group. (*Richard Roberts.*) *The Sages, the Star, and the Saviour*:—I. THEIR INQUIRY, "Where is He?" &c. 1. Interest awakened. 2. Belief avowed. 3. Ignorance admitted. 4. Information entreated. 5. A motive declared. II. THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. To see His star was a great favour. 2. It was a great responsibility. 3. They did not regard it as a matter to be rested in. 4. They did not find satisfaction in what they had themselves done to reach the child. III. THEIR EXAMPLE. 1. They saw the young child. 2. They worshipped Him. 3. They presented gifts. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Eastern Sages led to Jerusalem*:—I. THE WISE MEN HERE REFERRED TO. The gospel sometimes triumphs over the world where it is most influential, and reduces the wise, rich, and great into a willing subjection to Christ. II. THE COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY CAME. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THEY WERE CONDUCTED TO BETHLEHEM. How great are our advantages compared with theirs; they had a star, we a sun. IV. THE LIGHT WHICH IS THROWN BY THIS PASSAGE ON SOME OF THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD. 1. On His wisdom, particularly in adapting means to an end. 2. On His power as seen in the star. 3. On His faithfulness as seen in the prophecy now fulfilled. 4. On His knowledge as displayed in revealing the true intention of Herod. 5. A remarkable illustration of God's superintending providence. The hearts of kings are in His rule; God provides for the safety of His servants. (*D. Rees.*) *The illustrious seekers*:—1. Their title was illustrious. 2. Their pursuit was illustrious. 3. Their wealth was illustrious. 4. Their character was illustrious. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) I. A MODEL OF SOUND WISDOM FOR ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS. Examine the character of their faith. 1. In its commencement: promptitude to follow the call of heaven. 2. In its progress: in their well-supported constancy when the star disappeared. 3. In the perfection of their faith. II. A PORTRAIT OF THE BLIND WISDOM OF WORLDLY MEN, AS SEEN IN HEROD'S PERSECUTION OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. This false wisdom is at

enmity with God. 2. God is at enmity with this reprobate wisdom. What did the new-born Saviour to Herod:—1. He troubled him. 2. Made him odious. 3. Confounded his counsel. 4. Made him, in defiance of himself, subservient to the designs of providence. (*Bourdalone.*) *Intellect and Christ:*—1. That men of intellectual culture have inquired earnestly for Christ. 2. Men of intellectual culture have encountered difficulties in finding Christ. (1) A long journey; (2) A difficult journey; (3) A dangerous journey. 3. Men of intellectual culture have been led to Christ by the strangest agencies. 4. Men of intellectual culture have rendered the most devout homage to Christ: (1) Intelligently, (2) devoutly, (3) practically. (*J. Woodhouse.*) *The star guiding the wise men to the Babe in Bethlehem:*—1. Christ is owned by some in the higher orders of life. 2. They who are desirous of finding Christ will not miss Him for want of direction. 3. We should deem no difficulties too great to encounter, no sacrifices too great to make, in seeking after Christ. 4. We are to be concerned to honour Him as well as to be saved by Him. (*W. Jay.*) *The magi are commended:*—1. For their prerogative of a deeper wisdom. 2. For their fervid searching. 3. For their constant asking of the place. 4. For the sweetness of their spiritual joy. 5. For their devotion of humble adoration. 6. For the value of their gifts. 7. For the prudent caution of their return. (*J. M. Ashley.*) *The fulness of the faith is gained:*—1. By asking light from God. 2. By wisely seeking knowledge. 3. By pressing forward in holiness. (*Ibid.*) *The visit of the wise men of the East to Christ:*—I. THE DESCRIPTION AFFORDED OF THESE VISITANTS AT BETHLEHEM. 1. The power of God over the human mind. 2. A fulfilment of prophecy. II. THE STAR WHICH CONDUCTED THESE WISE MEN TO CHRIST. 1. The condescension of God—He often meets man in man's own paths. 2. The greatness of God—He often puts much honour on Christ by the means which He makes use of to lead sinners to Him. 3. The compassion and care of God—He adapts His guidance to our needs. III. THE CONDUCT OF THESE MEN. 1. Their faith. 2. The moral greatness they exhibited. 3. Their devotedness to Christ. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The nativity of Christ:*—These wise men were assisted in their hopes by an inward inspiration. The solicitation of grace worked within them. (*G. Bateman, M.A.*) *Wise men from the East:*—1. That despisers of Jesus are doubtless to be viewed as despisers of Him whom His Heavenly Father delighteth to honour. The song of the angels. 2. That Jesus is to Gentiles as well as to Jews a Prince and a Saviour. 3. That the Christian faith is not to be viewed as exclusively embraced by the poor and illiterate. 4. As to the enjoyment of external advantages we are more highly favoured than these men. (*A. Telfer.*) *The Epiphany goodness:*—1. In the largeness of the plan of His salvation, Christ not only breaks over all the narrow notions of national, family, and social prejudice, but He permits every heart to come to Him, in spite of its imperfections and errors, by the best light and the best feeling it has. 2. At every step forward in the Christian life, each disciple's amount of privilege or blessing is generally in proportion to the growth of his faith up to that time. 3. After all, wherever the starting-point, whoever the travellers, whatever the gentleness that forbears to quench our feeble life, and however merciful the long-suffering that waits for us, there is an end of the whole way, at the feet of the Lord. (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) I. THE PERSONS. 1. Their country. 2. Their condition. II. THEIR JOURNEY. They saw, understood, and set out. III. 1. Let us evermore give thanks to our Lord God for the revelation of that great mystery of mercy, the restoration of the Gentiles to that Church, from which they had been for so many ages excluded, or rather, we should say, they had excluded themselves. 2. Diligence is generally rewarded with the discovery of that which it seeks after—sometimes of that which is much more valuable. 3. Let us learn to be watchful and observant of those lights, which at sundry times, and in divers manners, are vouchsafed to us. (*Bishop Horne.*) *The Epiphany:*—I. HOW THE MAGI SOUGHT AND FOUND THE LORD. 1. Who they were. 2. They sought with the utmost assiduity. 3. They were ultimately directed to Him by the written Word. 4. From first to last they were divinely guided. II. THE FEELINGS WITH WHICH THE MAGI CONTEMPLATED HIM. 1. With exceeding great joy. 2. With devout adoration. 3. They presented most costly offerings. Lessons: (1) Except we thus seek and find the Saviour we perish. (2) Do you know and feel that you have not sought Him? (3) Are you greatly discouraged in seeking Him? (*F. Close, M.A.*) This visit of the wise men shows us:—I. HOW VARIOUSLY GOD SPEAKS TO US,—how many are the voices whereby He calls us, if we will, out of darkness, whether of mind or of heart, into His marvellous light. He uses a language to each, which each can understand. The Universal Father sooner or

later has a word, a star, for all of us. II. How TRUTH, IF IT IS TO BE GRASPED IN ITS FULNESS, MUST BE EARNESTLY SOUGHT FOR. These wise men had a little stock of truth to start with, but they made the most of that which had been given them. Some word, some example, some passing, inward inspiration, may be the star in the East, bidding the soul hope and persevere. III. This history teaches WHAT IS THE REAL OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS INQUIRY. Worship is the joint result of thought, affection, and will, rising upward towards God, and then shrinking into the very dust before Him. It is much more than mere religious thought, it is the soul seeking the true centre of the spiritual universe with all its powers. (*Canon Liddon.*) His birth-place, as in everything else belonging to Him, is a living parable. I. It was a FOREIGN COUNTRY. In Judæa, not in Galilee. To teach us that this world is an alien land to us, although we may have grown old in it. Jesus Christ was only a stranger and a sojourner in it; and we in like manner are sojourners. II. It was a SMALL VILLAGE. The King of kings is born in an obscure place, and the Lord of might, of lowly parentage. God reverses the judgment of this world concerning many things. III. It was in BETHLEHEM. In Bethlehem, "the house of bread," was born the Living Bread. Before Christ was born, the world was full of starving men, hungering after pleasures, riches, and honours. He Himself satisfies all men's hunger. IV. It was a village BY THE WAY. Showing that our present life is the way to death. May we follow Jesus Christ from Bethlehem to Zion. (*William of Auvergne.*)

*Good men found outside the pale of privilege; or Christian knowledge in unlikely places.*—Well, the last year I passed that old church, I noticed something which was very interesting. The tower is standing pretty entire, and the spire of it is standing pretty entire also. It is a little shaken and riven with the weather and the strokes of time; but there it stands. And what do you think is climbing up the side of the spire? Why, a little tree that has got its roots in a little crevice of the spire, and it is covering the bare stones with beautiful green. Now, that tree to me is like the wise men of the East. You see, God in Judæa had a garden, and all the trees there were planted by prophets and people that were sent to do the work. But now, how did He plant these trees in Chaldea—how did He plant that tree in the spire of the church? "Whence came the seed there?" you say. It was not a man that went up and planted it there; it was not planted as you plant a tree in the garden. But then, God says sometimes to the little birds, "Take a seed and plant it up in the rock, and let it clothe the rock." Or, He says to the winds, "Waft the seed up to that little crack in the spire of the old church, and let it become a living tree." (*J. Edmond.*)

*In search of a great man.*—In the annals of the Celestial Empire, there is historical evidence of Ambassadors or "wise men" having been sent towards the West in search of the "Great Saint who was to appear." The following from the *Annals* narrates the circumstance:—"In the 24th year of the Tchao-Wang, of the dynasty of the Tcheou, on the 8th day of the 4th moon, a light appeared in the south-west which illuminated the king's palace. The monarch, struck by its splendour, interrogated the sages, who were skilled in foretelling future events. They then showed him books in which it was written that this prodigy signified the appearance of a great Saint in the West, whose religion was to be introduced into this country. The king consulted the ancient books, and having found the passages corresponding with the time of Tchao-Wang, was filled with joy. Then he sent the officers Tsa-yu and Thsin-King, the learned Wang-Tsun, and fifteen other men to the West to obtain information." So sensible were these "wise men" of the time and place of the Saviour's birth, that they set forth to hail the expected Redeemer. The envoy encountered in their way the missionaries of Buddhism coming from India announcing an incarnate God; these the Chinese took for the disciples of the true Christ, embraced their teaching, and introduced them to their fellow-countrymeu as the teachers of the true religion. Thus was Buddhism introduced into China in place of Christianity.

*A curious Russian tradition.*—The Russian peasantry have a curious tradition. It is that an old woman, the Baboushka, was at work in her house when the wise men from the East passed on their way to find the Christ-child. "Come with us," they said; "we have seen His star in the East and go to worship Him." "I will come, but not now," she answered; "I have my house to set in order; when this is done I will follow and find Him." But when her work was done the three kings had passed on their way across the desert, and the star shone no more in the darkened heavens. She never saw the Christ-child, but she is living and searching

for Him still. For His sake she takes care of all His children. It is she who in Russian and Italian houses is believed to fill the stockings and dress the tree on Christmas morn. The children are awakened by the cry of "Behold the Baboushka!" and spring up hoping to see her before she vanishes out of the window. She fancies, the tradition goes, that in each poor little one whom she warms and feeds she may find the Christ-child, whom she neglected ages ago, but is doomed to eternal disappointment.

Ver. 2. **Seen his star.**—*The guiding star:*—It was revealed to the shepherds and then to the wise men. 1. The Jews had the priority of time, so also they had a superiority in the manner of the declaration. To one a living angel; to the other an inanimate star. 2. To the shepherds it was done much more feelingly than to the magi, it was loving, joyous, confidential, minute. "Fear not," &c. 3. To the Gentile the intimation was distinct, sufficient, but it was a silent finger. But to the shepherds there were voices, "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God," &c. We all have a great amount of truth floating in our minds; what we want is, to have it made definite, and brought to a focus. That the "star" did for them. Probably it so drew them, that they could scarcely resist its attraction. We cannot be too thankful to God for it, that truth as such is fascinating. Every one who has once lost and then recovered a Christian hope will understand the joy of the magi when they saw the star again. As they went, where did they look? Not at the road, nor at their feet, but at the star high up above them. How many go doubtingly, slowly, heavily, wearily, wrongly, because they look at their feet and not at the star. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Saviour's star:*—1. Shine like that star. 2. Speak like that star. 3. Lead like that star. (*G. T. Coster.*) *The star of grace:*—Seen—1. In its creation; 2. In its position; 3. In its motion; 4. In its brightness. Let us follow the guidings of this star. (1) Diligently; (2) Lovingly; (3) Hopefully. (*J. M. Ashley.*) *The star and the wise men:*—1. Science helps religion. 2. Nature needs revelation. 3. Knowledge requires action. (*T. R. Stevenson.*)

*Faith a heaven-born insight.*—There was not much in the appearance of that single star, but it spoke volumes to those men. You know what it is to be walking by the side of some man, and suddenly he leaps aside from you with an exclamation of pleasure, and dives down into some little obscure corner or hedge, and brings up some choice botanical specimen: you know what the feeling is; you have a kind of deep sense of inferiority; your own nature tells you that he possesses some secret knowledge and power that you do not. It is the insight of natural science. Well, the insight is analogous here. Men go through the world, and they see nothing of God, nothing of Christ; or what they do see is merely the building in which Christ dwells—a great deal about His Church, a great deal about His Word, but very little about Himself. The insight is in the Christ-born, the Christ-taught men who perceive Christ in everything. They take Him at every turn, they find Him lurking in every spot, because He is ever in their hearts. These men saw the star. There were thousands about them who looked upon the same star, and saw no meaning in it. It led them through the long desert to kneel before the Satisfier of their hopes. A picture that I once saw will illustrate what I mean. It represented the sea-shore, and standing beside it the great discoverer of the far-off continent of America; in his hand an image, rough-hewn and coarsely coloured; dawning through his eyes a keenness of observation, thought, and reflection—a dawning of some noble purpose. Behind him was the sea, broken by a brisk wind into little, fleecy waves. Beside him was his wife, half indifferent, half curious, looking on almost perplexed at the interest that he manifested. It showed that out of that strange little rough-hewn god there was born the thought of a far-off world to which he would go. But it told more than that. It told of a purpose that was graven in upon his spirit; and though the danger was great, though the sacrifice was the leaving of the wife who leant upon him, yet still, because of the deep thought which had been struck into his soul, he must perforce go, borne by the spirit of enterprise, till he had put his feet upon the far-off land. It is this insight of enterprise which God gives to His children. The star shot the thought of Christ into the hearts of the wise men, as the rough-hewn image shot into the heart of Columbus the story of the undiscovered continent beyond the seas. So is it with Christ's children in this world. They see by an insight of faith what other men do not see. Christ's religion vindicates itself by the spiritual insight. (*W. B. Carpenter. M.A.*)

*Silent speech.*—Or, if you were at sea, and saw a lighthouse, you know it would

say, "Keep away from the rocks." Its light through the dark night would speak that to you; or if you lived on a dangerous part of our coast, and heard the signal-gun fired by the coastguard men, you would know that that said, "A ship is coming on the rocks. Come and help, men of the life-boat, come and help!" Or if you saw flags flying from the church tower and many houses, you know that would speak of glad news, perhaps the birthday of the Queen, or the marriage of one of her children, or the coming of some great man to the town. So the star spoke to the wise men, and it told happy news. (*G. T. Coster.*)

*The joy of a guiding light.*—I was many years ago travelling among the Pyrenees. Our carriage had to go over a mountain, by a road which ran for a great part of the way along the edge of a frightful precipice. The rocks descended to a vast depth, and the river roared below out of sight. There was no wall or hedge on the side of the road. At the post-house at the bottom of the pass we were given horses and a postman to drive them, and we started. Night fell before we reached our destination, black with heavy clouds, obscuring the stars. The horses were wild, unbroken-in colts, and they plunged from side to side. Whether the driver had been drinking or had lost his head in the excitement I cannot say, but he was perfectly unable to control the horses. They dashed from side to side of the road, and the carriage rocked, and the wheels grazed the edge. Every moment we expected one of the horses or the carriage to roll over the edge, when we should all have been dashed to pieces. I was then a little boy, and I sat on my mother's lap. My father, not knowing the danger, had walked on from the post-house by a short cut over the mountains, to the inn at the top of the pass, where we were to spend the night. My mother prepared for her end. The horses were plunging and racing about, so that it was impossible to descend from the carriage. She kissed me, and bade me say my prayers, and her lips moved in prayer also; I felt a shudder run through her at each sway of the carriage towards the edge. All at once, above us, shone out a bright light. The postman shouted, the horses seemed to become less restive. A strong hand was laid on their reins, the carriage was stopped, and my father's voice was heard. He had arrived at the top of the pass long before us, and, uneasy at the delay, had walked down to meet us. The light we saw was in a window of the post-house, set as a guide to travellers. I cannot describe to you the relief, the joy, that rose in our hearts when we saw that guiding light, and when we heard the voice. We knew then that we were safe, following the ray of light we should reach our place of rest, guided by the firm hand on the bits of the untamed horses, we should be safe from being flung down the abyss. Our course, through life is like that mountain journey. These wild undisciplined horses, ready to bring us to destruction, are our passions, the driver is conscience, the light is revealed truth, and He who meets us on our way and guides us is our Heavenly Father. (*Baring-Gould.*)

*A boy who followed the star of right.*—When Whitefield (the great preacher) went to America (he went five times), he stood on the steps of the Court-house in Philadelphia, and preached to the people; and there was amongst the crowd a little boy. The little boy saw that Mr. George Whitefield could not see to read his Bible very well, so he got his lantern, and lit it, and held the lantern for Mr. Whitefield to see to read by. Mr. Whitefield was very much obliged to him. The little boy listened—with all his might and main—to Mr. Whitefield's preaching. He listened so much, that he let the lantern tumble down, and it was broken all to pieces. Many years afterwards Mr. Whitefield came back again to America, on his fifth journey. He stopped at the house of a minister, who said to him one day: "Do you remember, sir, preaching once in Philadelphia, and a little boy, who was holding the lantern, dropped it, and broke it?" "That I do," said Mr. Whitefield, "and I would give anything in the world to know what has become of that little boy." The minister said, "I was the little boy, sir. I held the lantern. I listened to you. I let it drop. Your preaching made me what I am, a Christian minister." He "followed the star." (*J. Vaughan.*)

*False lights.*—Of olden times on the coast of Cornwall there were wreckers. These men tied a lantern on the head of an ass, and drove the animal along the heights that fringe the shore. Ships at sea saw this light, and thinking them to be guides where open water was, ran towards them, fell on rocks, and were dashed to pieces. Then the wreckers came down to the shore, and took from the wrecked ship all that could be saved. There are a host of these false signals about in the religious world, leading men to destruction. What, then, are we to do? Look to the lighthouse of the Church, built by the hands of Jesus Christ. In it He has set the clear, steady light of revealed truth. (*Baring-Gould.*)

Ver. 3. **Herod.**—*Herod:*—1. Blind. 2. Luxurious. 3. Revengeful. 4. Flattered. 5. An habitual sinner. (*J. M. Ashley.*) 1. The shortness of kingdoms. 2. The fear of an evil conscience. 3. Various uses of Holy Scripture. 4. The disposition and temper of the world. 5. The conditions of an acceptable offering. The magi offered (1) their best gifts; (2) sincerely opened their treasures; (3) of their own substance; (4) with humility, without pomp; (5) their hearts with their gifts; (6) the care and prudence of God; (7) the firmness of God's counsels. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 4. **Priests and scribes.**—*Near in privilege, far from piety.*—Some that are best acquainted with the gospel are practical strangers to it. They are like one who should pore over a map, mastering its geography; marking each sea, lake, river; understanding the position of every range of mountains; learning the names of all the localities indicated, but never visiting them. A living author, describing his journey to the falls of Niagara, says: "I met with a gentleman who told me that he had walked from Boston, a distance of seven hundred miles, to see Niagara. When within seven miles, he heard what he thought might be the roar of the torrent, and asked a man who was at work on the road if this was so. The man replied that he didn't know; it might be, but he had never been there himself. Yet he had lived within sound of it all his life!" Wonderful stupidity, this! Who does not reprobate such folly? Nevertheless, it is nothing—absolutely nothing—compared with the direr folly which may be witnessed any day that we choose to look around us. Numbers are within sound of "the river of the water of life" without an actual, personal experience of its benefit. (*Rev. T. R. Stevenson.*) Like in this to those who built the ark for Noah, providing others with a refuge, themselves perished in the flood; or like to the stones by the road that show the miles, but themselves are not able to move. (*Augustine.*)

Ver. 6. **A Governor.**—*Messiah's government:*—I. The CHARACTER of the Governor. 1. His dignity (Rom. ix. 5; Col. ii. 9; Jer. xxxiii. 6; Isa. xlv. 18, 24; Rom. xiv. 11, 12; John i. 1, and others). Suitably sustained by His attributes. 2. His condescension (Phil. ii. 5–8). 3. His fidelity—to Him by whom He was appointed (Matt. xxii. 37, 38, v. 17-19; Luke ii. 49; Matt. iii. 15; John iv. 31–34); to them for whom He was appointed (John xvi. 12, 13, 33; Eph. iv. 7–13; Luke xii. 50; Heb. ii. 14–18, vii. 25). 4. His clemency. Ever ready to pardon, &c. II. THE CHARACTER OF HIS SUBJECTS. III. THE CHARACTER OF HIS GOVERNMENT. 1. Divine and spiritual (Luke x. 18; Col. i. 13; Heb. i. 14; Eph. i. 18; Col. ii. 2, 3). 2. Mild and equitable. Rules without coercion (Psa. cxix. 32). 3. Vigorous and effective (2 Chron. xvi. 9; Psa. xi. 4-7, xxiv. 7–10, ciii. 19–21; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14; Rom. viii. 34–39). 4. Staple, prosperous, everlasting (Heb. xii. 28; Isa. ix. 7; Daniel vii. 27; Heb. i. 8). Application: Let the enemies of this government tremble (1 Cor. xv. 15; Psa. ii. 9; Rom. ii. 4, 8, 9); submit and find peace (Psa. ii. 10–12). Let the subjects of this government rejoice in anticipation of its progressive and rapid conquests, and its final triumph (Psa. ii. 7, 8; Rev. vii. 9–12). (*Zeta.*)

Ver. 7. **Search diligently.** I. Wicked men often CLOAK THEIR EVIL DESIGNS under the appearance of religion. They attempt to deceive those who are really good, and to make them suppose that they have the same design. But God cannot be deceived, and He will bring them to punishment. II. Wicked men often MAKE USE OF THE PIOUS to advance their evil purposes. Men like Herod will stop at nothing if they can carry their ends. They endeavour to deceive the simple, allure the unsuspecting, and to beguile the weak, to answer their purposes of wickedness. III. The plans of wicked men are OFTEN WELL LAID. They occupy a long time; they make diligent inquiry; and all of it has the appearance of religion. But God sees the design; and though *men* are deceived, He cannot be (Prov. xv. 3). (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) *A king frightened by an infant:*—I. That men may be interested in Christ, and inquire about Him from different motives — some to worship, some to murder. 1. The motive of the wise men. 2. Herod's motive. II. That inquiry about Christ does not produce the same results in all. 1. The wise men rejoiced. 2. Herod was troubled. III. That all opposition to Christ and His cause must end in failure and overthrow. (*T. Kelly.*)

Ver. 11. **Worshipped Him—Gold and frankincense and myrrh.**—*Action, Prayer, Sorrow:*—I. Gold may be taken as representing our substance, our goods, our

material wealth. All work, all material, have their worth in gold. This oblation represents the efficiency of that which is external to us, and can be detached from us. II. The frankincense is a substance which, once kindled, sends up sweet clouds to the sky. It is the symbol of religious thought directing itself lovingly and longingly towards God. It typifies what is inward. There is a life of contemplation as well as of action. III. The last offering completing the text is myrrh. This stands for sorrows; in this we are equal before God. We can offer to Him our pains and repentance. (*M. Dix.*) *The character of their worship*:—1. Devout. 2. Believing. 3. Self-sacrificing. 4. Intelligent. 5. Obedient (ver. 12). (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *Give the best you have to Jesus*:—It matters not how poor the offering be, if it is the best you can give. A legend tells us how once a little boy in church had no money to place among the offerings on the altar, so he gave a rosy apple, the only gift he had to offer. Presently, when the priest removed the alms from the altar, he found there an apple of pure gold. The simplest gift is in the eyes of God as pure gold. (*H. J. Wilmot Buxton.*) A Christmas-tide address—*Gifts for the child Jesus.* From this visit of the magi has grown up our idea of keeping Christmas *with gifts.* We will try to see the inner meaning of the good old custom. I. Our chief idea in keeping Christmas is to make everybody happy. Jesus came to make us all happy — blessed of God. II. Making everybody happy can be done best by giving gifts. All sorts needed — should be adapted — make everybody happy because they bless both him who gives and him who takes. III. In giving gifts we remember especially the little ones. Because we think of Jesus as a *child*, &c. Show how suggestive are the magi's gifts. IV. Then we rise beyond the little ones to all those whom Jesus taught us to think of as His brethren. Those who are poorer than ourselves, &c. Every child may make somebody a little happier with their love-gift to-day. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*)

Ver. 13. **Flee into Egypt.**—*The duty of parents to their children*:—I. CHILDHOOD IS EXPOSED TO IMMINENT DANGERS. "Herod sought the young child's life." Evil is never so active or persistent as when it seeks the ruin of the young. II. ON WHAT CONDITIONS THE SAFETY OF CHILDHOOD DEPENDS. 1. The first of these is parental love. See the love and fidelity of Joseph and Mary. Nothing more natural than that parental love should seek at any cost the safety of a child. 2. Parental love wisely directed. The parents of Jesus did not trust to their own wisdom. 3. The Divine direction given to parents respecting their children is to be followed in obedience and faith. Joseph and Mary obeyed the will of God. (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *The truth of God and the trials of its friends*:—I. THE TRUTH OF GOD. 1. Earth's opposition to the truth. 2. Heaven's interest in the truth. 3. Man's guardianship of the truth. II. THE TRIAL OF ITS FRIENDS. (*Dr. Thomas.*) *Obedience and Divine guidance*:—I. That God can use not only the extraordinary, but even THE TRIVIAL EVENTS OF LIFE IN THE RESCUE AND GUIDANCE OF HIS PEOPLE. "In a dream." 1. He puts Joseph on his guard. 2. He keeps His eye on Herod. 3. He points out a place of safety. II. That at all times, especially in peril and perplexity, IT IS THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE OF GOD'S CHILDREN TO OBEY. Obedience may call for—1. Prompt action, "Flee." 2. It may call for sacrifice of friends and home—"Into Egypt." 3. It sometimes calls for patient waiting—"Be thou there." 4. It always brings God's further direction and blessing—"I bring thee word." (*T. Kelly*). *The flight into Egypt*:—1. That when God brings forth good, evil is sure to oppose. 2. God permits wicked and lawless tyrants to be supreme for a time. 3. That cross-handed providences often bring our greatest mercies. 4. That while self is always in a hurry to display itself, real greatness is content to wait its time. (*W. P. Balfern.*) *The flight into Egypt*:—I. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. II. THE MASSACRE OF THE INFANT CHILDREN AT BETHLEHEM. Herod may be considered as an example of the infatuating influence of sin and its power to stultify the most obvious conclusions of a rational intelligence. Herod never thought of our Lord as a human opponent, but as the Messiah. He did not disbelieve the star or the prophecies interpreted by the priests and scribes. He was fighting against God; He thought the prophecies might fail at the last. III. THE RECALL OF THE HOLY FAMILY. Egypt has often been the asylum of persecuted goodness; Abraham, Joseph, Jacob. (*D. Moore, M.A.*)

*God takes care of little children.*—I remember reading a story of a baby—a wee child—that travelled by railroad. Away whirled the coach very fast; but it soon knocked against something, and all were thrown out—men, women, mothers and

babes. Some were pitched here, some there; heads were broken, hands cut off. In the midst of the confusion, a voice was heard crying—"Where is my baby? Oh! my dear baby! I cannot find him anywhere. Did nobody see my sweet baby? What shall I do?" One man lost his leg; another his hand; another his eye; but the mother did not mind them, but was going about, wringing her hands, and crying—"Where is my baby?" After much search for it, and for a great while in vain, at length a man went over to a place where was a bandbox. He took up the bandbox, and what do you think he found under it? The baby, fast asleep! Now, if God takes care of common babies, surely He would take care of His own child, Jesus. (*J. Gregg.*)

*The efforts of a mother for the safety of her child.*—A slave-mother who had been faithful under the very worst usage remained so until told that her child was to be severed from her and sold in New Orleans. It was midwinter, yet at midnight she started for the Ohio, determined to live and, if need be, die with her child. As she reached the bank no boat was near, and along the water masses of broken ice drifted. Trusting to heaven, she put her feet on the treacherous element, and, with it bending and breaking beneath her, she boldly pushed on from cake to cake until she safely landed on the Ohio shore. Five minutes sooner, and she must have perished; two minutes later, and she would have met with a watery grave, for, before she had proceeded twenty steps, the ice behind her on the Kentucky side had broken, and was scattered ere she reached the river. "Thank God, you and your child are safe!" exclaimed the hard-hearted master, rejoicing that he had escaped the responsibility of their death. "Brave woman," said a Kentuckian, who had witnessed her escape, "you have won your freedom, and you shall have it." The mother and child were kept together in liberty and love, and in a humble but happy home.

Ver. 14. **Departed into Egypt.**—I. THE NATURAL SEED of Israel, as called out of Egypt. II. THE DIVINE SEED, the man Christ Jesus. III. THE CHOSEN SEED that shall be brought out of Egypt. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 16. **Slew all the children.**—*The holy innocents:*—The narrative presents sharp contrasts of character and history. I. Christ the terror of the tyrant even when a helpless babe. II. The tyrant's utmost endeavours are all in vain against the child. III. Our richest blessings are often baptized with blood. IV. The children of Bethlehem were unconscious martyrs for Christ. V. The holy innocents died for Christ's sake. (*S. Mease, D.D.*) I. How strongly the scene of our Lord's nativity WAS GUARDED. 1. From the gusts of popular commotion, which were above all things to be prevented, in order that full scope might be left for the gradual development of the Redeemer's ministry with its attendant evidences, all which would have been hindered and disturbed by any sudden tumult excited in the body of the Jewish people. 2. It was guarded also by securing to it such decisive and indubitable marks of the certainty of that which was transacted, as never could be brought in question, or disputed. These points discover to us in the plainest character the wisdom and control of Providence in all the work which was effected. The first stone laid was thus deeply placed and immovably fixed where it stands to this day. II. THREE SORTS OF HANDS WERE EMPLOYED ON EARTH TO SET THEIR SEAL to that witness which was borne from heaven, and to commend it to perpetual regard. 1. Friends. The shepherds of Judæa were of all persons the fittest from their solitary and sequestered lives to bear that part which belongs to friends, and to become the first-called witnesses of the truth of those events which took place at our Lord's nativity. They raised no clamour. They possessed no influence. And yet a simple heart and unsuspected tongue form no inconsiderable properties in any witness whose word is to be taken for the truth and reality of what is seen and done. 2. Strangers. Men clear of just suspicion. They came from afar and took their first measures in concert, not with friends, but with those who were soon to fill the place of foes and to stand forth as virulent opponents. 3. Enemies. Herod. He laid traps to ensnare the strangers, causing them to depart the land by another course. The word of prophecy was exactly brought to pass by the cruel stratagem which he devised and executed. By his relentless act of mingled cowardice and cruelty he lent his own hand, polluted as it was, to the confirmation of the truth. Herod's cruelty at Bethlehem stands recorded both by friends and foes. Not only is it related in the sacred page, but it is also transmitted to us by writers of that age, whose undisputed works confirm the truth. (*Archdeacon Pott.*) *Holy innocents:*—1. We may notice in connection with this transaction very great

opportunities, and very satisfactory information, very perversely employed. 2. What a treacherous thing is the indulgence of malignant passion and self-seeking. 3. We are reminded of the estate of Christ and of those who come within His circle, in relation to the present world. (1) Learn not to be unduly alarmed for the ark of the Lord. Jesus in His cradle is mightier than Herod on his throne. (2) Not to be unduly grieved at our losses and sufferings for Christ's sake. The cause is safe. (3) Learn the importance of having our children in close relation to Christ. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The slaughter of the innocents:*—Glance at the history. Herod's the most striking instance of open opposition to God. He knew the prophecies, yet fought against their fulfilment. Some surprise that God permitted this slaughter. I. It is not necessary to the vindication of God's dealings that we should always be able to give reasons for their every part. There are reasons which will tend to remove surprise that Herod was not restrained from murder. 1. This murder would fix Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Christ. Prophecy had announced this. Herod's sword corroborated this. 2. This murder would enable Jesus to live in obscurity until thirty years of age. Brought up at Nazareth, He was regarded as a Nazarite. The slaughter of the innocents would prove His birth at Bethlehem. Herod supposed his object gained, so the infant Christ was allowed to rest in obscurity. 3. God was leaving Herod to fill up the measure of his sin. 4. God was unquestionably disciplining the parents by the slaughter of their children. II. The consequences of the slaughter as far as the innocents themselves were concerned. Dying before they knew evil from good, they were saved by the virtue of Christ's propitiation. Not best to die in infancy; better to win the victory than be spared the fight. They are reckoned amongst the martyrs of the church. Teaching for those who bury their children. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Instances of infantile murder:*—It has been too often the cruel policy of the despots of the East to consolidate the foundation of their thrones by the slaughter of all who had claims or power to dispute their authority (2 Kings x. 1–14). The history of Abyssinia furnishes an instance of a tyrant ordering the destruction of about 400 children. Niebuhr mentions an Arabian prince who murdered all the remotest descendants of his predecessors he heard of; and Sir Thomas Roe states, that a king of Pegu, in order to destroy a nephew of his own, whose claims interfered with his possession of the crown, and who was secreted by his partizans among a vast multitude of the children of the grandees, commanded the whole to be slaughtered, to the number of 4,000—a massacre much more terrible than Herod's, in which it is thought that not more than fifty infants fell a prey to the tyrant's jealousy. (*Dr. Jamieson.*)

## CHAPTER III.

VER. 1. **John the Baptist.**—I. THE SPECIAL MISSION OF THE BAPTIST. 1. He was the herald of the Messiah. 2. He belonged, properly, neither to the Mosaic nor to the Christian dispensation. His was a transition ministry. 3. He was appointed to prepare for, as well as to announce, the introduction of the Gospel. A spiritual economy, demanding a process of moral and religious preparation. 4. His character corresponded with his office—stern. II. The chief SUBJECT OF HIS PREACHING. 1. The nature of repentance. 2. The duty of repentance. 3. The connection of repentance with faith in Christ. 4. The evidences of repentance. Learn (1) The necessity of repentance; (2) What are the hindrances to the progress of the gospel in the world. (*R. Watson and D. Moore.*) *John the Baptist:*—1. His work. 2. His qualifications. 3. His message. 4. His Divine appointment. 5. His unworldliness. 6. His popularity. 7. His courageous utterances. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) **Wilderness.**—I. IN HIS SOLITUDE HE DID BREATHE MORE PURE INSPIRATION. 1. Heaven was more open. 2. God was more familiar and frequent in His visitations. 3. In the wilderness his company was angels. 4. His employment, meditation and prayer. 5. His temptations, simple and from within. 6. His occasions of sin as few as his examples. 7. His condition such, that if his soul were at all busy, his life could not easily be other than the life of angels. II. IN SOLITUDE PIOUS PERSONS MAY GO TO HEAVEN BY THE WAY OF PRAYERS AND DEVOTION. 1. In society, by the way of mercy, charity, and dispensations to others. 2. In solitude

there are fewer occasions of vices. 3. But also the exercise of fewer virtues. 4. Temptations though they be not from many objects, yet are in some circumstances more dangerous. 5. Because the worst of evils, spiritual pride seldom misses to creep upon those goodly oaks, like ivy, and suck their heart out. 6. As they communicate less with the world, so they do less charity and fewer offices of mercy. III. MANY HOLY PERSONS HAVE LEFT THEIR WILDERNESS AND SWEETNESSES OF DEVOTION IN RETIREMENT TO SERVE GOD IN PUBLIC, by the ways of charity and exterior offices. IV. John the Baptist UNITED BOTH THESE LIVES; and our blessed Saviour . . . for He lived a life: (1) common; (2) sociable; (3) humane; (4) charitable; (5) and public. From both we are taught that—I. Solitude is a good school. II. The world is the best theatre. III. The institution is best there, but the practice here. IV. The wilderness hath one advantage of discipline. V. Society hath opportunities of perfection. VI. Privacy is best for devotion. VII. Publicity for charity. (*Jeremy Taylor.*)

*Wilderness of Judæa.*—Everything in this desert is of one colour—a tawny yellow. The rocks, the partridges, the camels, the foxes, the ibex, are all of this shade, and only the dark Bedawin and their black tents are distinguishable in the general glare. . . . From a very early period this horrible wilderness appears to have had an attraction for ascetics, who sought a retreat from the busy world of their fellowmen, and who thought to please God by torturing the bodies which He had given them. Thus the Essenes, the Jewish sect whose habits and tenets resembled so closely those of the first Christians, retired into this wilderness and lived in caves. Christian hermits, from the earliest period, were also numerous in all the country between Jerusalem and Jericho, and the rocks are riddled with caves in inaccessible places where they lived. . . . Lifeless and treeless though it be, nature prepares every day a glorious picture, quickly-fading but matchless in brilliance of colour; the distant ranges seem stained with purple and pink; in autumn the great bands of cloud sweep over the mountains with long bars of gleaming light between; and for a few minutes, as the sun sets, the deep crimson blush comes over the rocks and glorifies the whole landscape with an indescribable glow. (*Lieut. Conder, R.E.*) *Solitude sometimes conducive to usefulness.*—The Baptist did not rush from the society of his species into the solitudes of Judæa to hide his candle for ever under a bushel, as modern and ancient asceticism has done; but he resorted thither only from an unselfish and most expanded motive, namely, in order that his candle might all the more brightly, and widely, and publicly shine, when he issued forth at length to preach, in the midst of mixed crowds, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (*R. Jones.*) *Solitude necessary to inward realization.*—Only in quiet, in solitude with God, in unbroken questioning with his own soul, can a prophet of God discover what God is saying to his spirit. (*S. Brooke, M.A.*)

Ver. 2. **Repent ye.**—*The forerunner* of Jesus was distinguished as a prophet. I. The PREACHER. Powerful and faithful. II. The DUTY enforced. "Repentance.' III. The PLEA by which it is enforced. The kingdom of heaven is nigh. (*T. Heath.*) *Preparing for Christ:*—I. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CHARACTER, OFFICE, AND MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST. It was preparatory to setting up the gospel kingdom. II. The appropriate CONNECTION BETWEEN REPENTANCE AND ANY PART IN THE KINGDOM of heaven, between spiritual conviction of sin and the realized advent of Him who is to deliver us from its guilt and power. The results of such preaching:—1. Humiliating convictions of sin. 2. It makes ready for the reception of saving faith. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) I. The CHARACTER OF THE PERSONS to whom John's exhortation was addressed (Luke iii.) Many of them were soldiers and publicans, or Roman tax-gatherers, generally notoriously wicked. But many of them were brought to a temporary repentance (Luke iii. 10–14). The bulk of them were professedly members of the Jewish Church (Luke iii. 15), and among them many of their two great sects—Sadducees and Pharisees. II. WHAT THIS EXHORTATION IMPLIES. Repentance—after-thought and consideration; hence arises conviction, humiliation, &c. A change of mind and heart (Matt. iii. 7–10; Luke iii. 7–14; 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11). This doctrine is equally necessary to be inculcated upon us. III. The MOTIVES by which the exhortation is enforced. The gospel dispensation is come (Luke i. 78, 79). And thus is a foundation laid for repentance. Jesus is exalted to give repentance (Acts v. 31). (*Joseph Benson.*) *Repentance:*—1. Repentance is generally made the child of fear; both John and Christ pressed people to repent because something good and happy was coming. This is true to our nature; men would rather turn their conduct by an expectation of good than by

denunciation of evil. Fear is repellent, hope is an attraction; coldness hardens, warmth softens. Let man see a future near he likes and he will leave the past. 2. What God means when He says "Repent." It is not remorse, sorrow, conviction, but a change of mind. You want a great change before Christ comes. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) His sermon was an exhortation to repentance and a holy life. I. REPENTANCE IS THE first INTROMISSION INTO THE SANCTITIES OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION. The Lord treads upon no paths that are not (1) hallowed and made smooth by the sorrows and cares of contrition; (2) cleared of the impediments of sin by dereliction, and the succeeding fruits of emendation. II. HIS BAPTISM DID SIGNIFY by a cognation to their usual rites and ceremonies of ablution and washing Gentile proselytes, that the Jews had so far receded from their duty and that holiness which God required of them by the law, that they were in the state of strangers. 1. To be treated themselves as Gentile proselytes (2) by baptism (3) and a new state of life (4) before they could be accepted by the Messias (5) or admitted to His kingdom. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *Repentance should be*:—I. SINCERE. Though God is merciful He is not fallible, nor will He take the odour of sacrifices, or the incense of words in lieu of a solid, laborious virtue. 1. It is absolutely necessary to abandon the vice. 2. The thought of heaven should bring moral fortitude. The repentant soul should be great in purpose, rapid in action, unshaken in constancy. II. TIMELY. It must take place at such a period as will enable us to make a real sacrifice of unlawful enjoyment to a sense of Christian duty. 1. Satiety is often mistaken for repentance. Many give up the offence when they have lost all appetite for its commission. 2. Change of body is mistaken for change of mind. He who quits a vice that has become unnatural to his period of life deems himself a progressive penitent, and believes he is receding from pleasure because pleasure is receding from him. III. CONTINUOUS. If only a year of life remains let that be a whole year of repentance. IV. JUST. In making (1) restitution or (2) compensation for the injuries committed. V. The soul of a penitent man should be as FIRM AGAINST FUTURE RELAPSE as it is sorrowful for past iniquity. (*Sydney Smith.*) I. TRUE SIGHT OF SIN IS REQUISITE TO TRUE REPENTANCE. 1. A man that does repent must see and know his sins. 2. Must be grieved and humbled for them. 3. He must loathe himself. 4. He must be ashamed of his sin. So long as a man walks in the dark, he does not blush, he is not ashamed, though his clothes be ragged and torn, because he is in the dark; but if he come to the light, then he blushes. 5. He must acknowledge his sins. 6. He must labour to undo his sins. II. REPENTANCE IS A FRUIT OF FAITH. 1. Tears of repentance flow from the eye of faith. 2. So also repentance flows from love. Love is the cause of grief. III. IT IS ONE THING FOR A MAN TO BE PRICKED IN HEART, AND ANOTHER FOR A MAN TO REPENT. 1. A man, a malefactor, when he sees what shall become of him, wishes that he had never done it. 2. A man may be broken down with the weight of sin, yet his soul may not be thawed or melted. When you take a staff and break the ice with your hands, though you break it in one place, it freezes in another; but when there is a thaw, it melts and breaks everywhere. 3. A man may have more sorrow, grief, repentance in the ore, yet have none that is well refined. 4. It is one thing for grief, sorrow, and repentance to be more in view, sense and noise; and another thing to be more in spirit, and in profit. (*Wm. Bridge.*) *John the Baptist a storm-centre.*—Sometimes, nay, often, a church or a nation lies like a ship becalmed on the tropic sea. The air around it is heavy with pestilence and with death. The heat and the stagnation bring forth a brood of contemptible vices. Then some rushing storm-centre comes sweeping across the waters, and gathers into its bosom all the thunders of the lurid sky, lashes into fury the lazy elements, torments the putrescent waves into spray and foam, whirls the ship along with the noise of waterspouts, kindles electric fire upon its masts, making the ship's crew pale their features with fear—drunken, or slumbering, or careless as they are. And even such a storm-centre of moral force was St. John the Baptist. For a brief time he cleared the air of a religion heavy with imposture, but it was too late. A few pure souls prepared by him had listened in the hush which followed to the voice of Christ; but the heavy pall of formalism and insincerity fell again upon the nation, fold by fold, and when the hurricane burst upon it once more, it was not the purifying storm of spiritual regeneration, it was the tornado of final destination. (*F. W. Farrar.*)

*Reverie of repentance.*—There are thousands of persons who are given to what may be called the reverie of repentance. There are thousands of persons who feel sad that they are such wicked creatures. Really they feel that it is too bad. They

at times fall into a minor key. Perhaps, if they are educated to music, they sit down to the piano, and play touching airs, and sing of the wickedness of the heart till tears flow down their cheeks. They pity themselves that they are so pitiable. How much repentance is there in all this? Is there any definiteness in it? Does the man say, "I am as proud as Lucifer?" Not a word does he utter on that subject. Does the man say, "I am meanly selfish"? Oh, no; he only says, "I am sinsick." Does the man say, "I am unscrupulous, I am untrustworthy, I give way to debauch in this direction, and to animal appetites in that"? Does the man follow the example of that surgeon who, when called to dress a wound, probes it in all directions, and cleanses it thoroughly before he binds it up? Does he sit down and explore his heart with a searching, minute examination? No; he does not want to go particularly into it. He merely wants to have a feeling of regret in view of his general sinfulness. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 3. **Prepare ye the way.**—*Preparing the way*:—When the Pacha of Magnesia went to take possession of his new appointment at Aleppo, he was attended by a large retinue of horse and foot soldiers, and other attendants, to the number of 2,000 persons. The road had been recently repaired for the passage of the Pacha to his government; affording a striking illustration of the Scripture, "He shall prepare the way before Him." The rough places were attempted to be made plain. (*Arundel's discoveries in Asia Minor.*) *The Forerunner*:—John was Christ's forerunner, as the ploughman goes before the sower. Before good work can be expected, there must be excitement. The turf-bound surface of communities must be torn up, the compacted soil turned to the air and light. Upon the rough furrows, and not on the shorn lawn, is there hope for the seed. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 4. **Raiment of camel's hair.**—We read of John the Baptist "having his raiment of camel's hair," and many have supposed that the dress of Elijah was similar. The hair of the camel, especially the coarser woolly tufts about the hump and back, is in some places torn off, but more generally, as I have observed, closely shorn once a year, and used for weaving into a coarse thick fabric by the Arab women. It is of this material that the "black tents of Kedar" are generally constructed, as it is much thicker and stouter than woollen stuff. It was very harsh and rough to the touch, and thus his dress was in accordance with the austerity of the rest of the Baptist's mode of life. (*Canon Tristram.*) The modern Bedawin dress simply, their attire consisting of a cotton shirt, sometimes white, but oftener blue, whose loose folds descend to the ankles, and which is confined with a leathern girdle about the loins. Besides this girdle, both sexes wear from infancy a leathern girdle around the naked waist, adorned with amulets, and also with shells. . . . A woollen cloak of camel's hair, in broad stripes, brown and white, is thrown loosely over the shoulders of the desert Arab, and is his only covering at night (Exod. xxii. 26, 27). . . . A thick cord of brown camel's hair binds their handkerchief head-dresses around their heads. . . . The Bedawin generally go barefooted, or else make sandals of camel's skin, which they bind with thongs around their feet. These sandals are always made after one model, and appear to derive their form from high antiquity. (*Dr. Van-Lennep.*) **Locusts.**—These insects are found at all times, and in every part of Western Asia, in Arabia, and in Northern Africa. The full-grown locusts are from two to three inches in length, and differ from the common grasshopper in their regularly elongated bodies, their reddish colour, and the length of their wings, which enable them to rise to a considerable height above the ground, and to pass over a distance of several miles, by sailing before the wind. The statement that John the Baptist's food while in the wilderness chiefly consisted of "locusts and wild honey," best describes the habitual fare of those who at the present day lead a life of isolation and poverty in the same region, and we know that the Mosaic law allowed the Hebrews to eat the locust (Lev. ii. 22). The full-grown insect is extensively eaten by the poorer classes, . . . particularly by the Bedawin of the desert. When the locusts come down upon the face of the earth, crowds of people go forth and collect vast numbers of them in bags, even loading horses and cattle with the booty. They are roasted and eaten as butter upon loaves of bread, resembling shrimps in taste, or they are boiled in water with a little salt, dried in the sun, and, being deprived of their wings and legs, are packed in bags for use. They are also beaten to a powder, which is mixed with flour and water, made into little cakes, and used as a substitute for bread when flour is scarce. Dried locusts are generally exposed for sale in the markets of

Medina, Bagdad, and even Damascus. (*Ibid.*) **Wild honey.**—The frequent description of Palestine as a land "flowing with milk and honey," points out the fact that the honey-bee, and, as a concomitant, wild flowers too, abounded in it anciently, as at the present day. The flowers are so various in Western Asia, that the honey of different districts assumes very marked peculiarities. The honey of Kirk-Aghai, near Pergamus in Asia Minor, chiefly made of the flower of the cotton plant, it is said, so closely resembles butter in appearance, that it can only be detected by the taste. The honey of Mount Hymettus is dark and disagreeable to persons unused to it; the Athenians prefer it to any other. In some parts of Asia Minor the hives which are kept in the villages are transported at a certain season of the year to the slopes and high plains of the mountains, where the bees feed upon the blossoms of the pine and of the mountain plants. Orientals are very fond of honey, and usually eat it in the comb. (*Ibid.*) When the Egyptians on the Upper Nile find that their bees obtain no more honey around their villages, they take their hives on boats, and sail down the river, stopping at every green spot to let the bees collect honey from the flowers on the shore; so that by the time they reach Cairo, which is their market, their hives are full of honey. (*Pococke.*)

Ver. 5. **All the region round about Jordan.**—This would include the whole length of the river valley, and would therefore take in parts of the Peræa, Samaria, Galilee, and Gaulonitis. (*Rev. E. H. Plumptre, D.D.*) *The Jordan Valley* is not only the most remarkable feature of Palestine, but one of the most curious places in the world. It has no counterpart elsewhere, and the extraordinary phenomenon of clouds sweeping as a thick mist 500 feet below the level of the sea is one which few European eyes have seen, but which we witnessed in the early storms of the spring of 1874. The Jordan rises as a full-grown river, issuing from the cave at Baniâs, about 1,000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. . . . In twenty-six and a half miles, there is a fall of 1,682 feet, or more than sixty feet to the mile. . . . The Jordan Valley was now one blaze of beautiful flowers, growing in a profusion not often to be found, even in more fertile lands. The ground was literally covered with blossoms; the great red anemone, like a poppy, grew in long tracts on the stony soil; on the soft marls, patches of delicate lavender colour were made by the wild stocks; the retem, or white broom (the juniper of Scripture), was in full blossom, and the rich purple nettles contrasted with fields of kutufy, or yellow St. John's wort. There were also quantities of orange-coloured marigolds, long fields of white and purple clover, tall spires of asphodel and clubs of snap-dragon, purple salvias and white garlic, pink geraniums and cistus, tall white umbelliferous plants, and large camomile daisies, all set in a border of deep green herbage which reached the shoulders of the horses. Jordan's banks were covered with flowers, while brown turfali or tamarisks and canebrake line the rushing stream, and the white marl banks stood out in striking contrast. (*Lieut. Conder, R.E.*) But certainly, of multitudes that will run to the word, and, possibly, particularly flock after the ministry of some for a time, there may be many, as doubtless were then, that are but light stuff, carried with the stream as corks and straws are. Men should examine well even such things as seem to speak some love of religion in them, whether they be real or not. (*R. Leighton, D.D.*)

Ver. 6. **Baptized of Him.**—I. In baptism we are ADMITTED to the kingdom of Christ. 1. Presented unto Him. 2. Consigned with His Sacrament. 3. Witnessing a good confession. 4. Undertaking a holy life. II. In BAPTISM we (1) give our names to Christ; (2) are matriculated and adopted into our Father's house. III. Baptism IS (1) the gate of the Church; (2) the first entrance of saints to an eternal conversion with God and the Church; (3) the sacrament of initiation; (4) investiture of them that enter into religion. IV. Baptism is ADOPTION into the (1) covenant; (2) a new birth; (3) our sins are pardoned now; (4) and we are put into a state of pardon for the time to come. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) *Baptism*:—1. An initiatory rite. 2. A leading ordinance. 3. A confirmatory rite. 4. An instrument of regeneration. 5. A representative ordinance. 6. A sealing ordinance. (*T. Watson, M.A.*) **Confessing their sins.**—*The nobility of confession*:—1. Confession of sin should not be made to every one we meet; it should be discriminating. 2. It should be honest. 3. The moment a man attempts to be honest with himself in respect to his moral character, and to make confession before God, everything that is in him rises up against him:—1. Reason. Reason suborned by his feelings

refuses to investigate. It returns false reports. 2. Pride. How on the proud man do the evidences of sin beat as hailstones on a slate roof, and never penetrate. The mouth of pride has the lockjaw, when it is a question of confessing wrong. 3. Vanity. Vanity teaches men to regard more the opinions of men than of God. 4. Conscience. When ready to confess, conscience says, "Stop, insincere hypocrite." 5. Prudence. "Let well alone." Let the past alone. 6. Yet is there anything nobler than confession of wrong done? It is a way of pleasantness and peace. 7. Do not be afraid to confess your sin to Jesus. It is easy for sorrow to confess to love. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

*Confession without extenuation.*—Men's faults lie like reptiles—like toads, like lizards, like serpents; and what if there is over them the evening sky, lit with glory, and all aglow? All the gorgeousness of the departing day, shining down on a reptile, leaves it a reptile still. Men think, "I am generous; I am full of fine feelings; I am endowed with superior taste;" but what of that? Down in the very thicket; down where men do not love often to go—there their faults lie nestling. (*Ibid.*) *Confession should realize the nature and peril of sin.*—Ah! the bank is breaking away. A craw-fish has pierced it. The stream is working, and working and working. The engineer is sent up to see if all is safe. He sees that a stream is running through the bank, big as his finger. He looks at it, and waits to see if the stream enlarges. Soon it is as big as his two fingers. He waits a little longer, and it is as big as his hand. It is wearing on either side the opening, and the waters are beginning to find it out, and slowly they swirl on the inside towards this point. It will not be many hours before the bank will be so torn that it will give way, and the flood will pour through the *crevasse*. But the engineer goes back and says, "Well, there was a little rill there. But it was a very beautiful place: I never saw a prettier bank than that. The trees that grow in the neighbourhood are superb: and the shrubbery there is very fragrant and charming; and the moisture which finds its way through the bank seems to nourish all vegetation near it." "Well, but the *break!* How about that?" "It was something of a break; but, as I was saying, it is a beautiful spot. And right there is a fine plantation; and the man that owns it—" "But how about the *crevasse?*" "Yes, there was a little *crevasse;* but, as I was saying, all things conspire to make it a lovely scene." What kind of a report is that, of an engineer sent out to investigate, when it is a question of impending ruin? What kind of a report is that, when the elements are at work which will soon launch desolation on the neighbourhood? Send the engineer Reason into a man's soul, and ask it to report concerning the habit of drinking in the man. It comes back and says, "Oh! well, he takes a little for the oft infirmities of his stomach; but he is a good fellow, he is a strong man, and his heart is in the right place." "But what about his *habit?*" "He takes a little now and then; but, as I was saying, he is a generous fellow. If you had heard of his kindnesses to that family when they were in distress—" "But what about his *habit?*" (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 7. **Wrath to come.**—I. The MEANING wrapt up in John's message. 1. Danger. Future retribution has become to many a kind of figment. 2. The importance of confession. 3. The necessity of a renewal of heart. "Behold the Lamb of God!" II. THE BAPTIST'S ASTONISHMENT at his own success. What was the secret of his power? Character of John's life, and his hearers. A ministry of terror—different from Christ's. Men felt he was real—secret of all success. The classes of men on whom his influence told (Luke iii.). Neither of these isms will satisfy the conscience. (*F. W. Robertson.*) I. THAT THERE IS WRATH CONNECTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT, CHARACTER, AND DISPENSATIONS OF GOD. God has made all men. Hence they must be governed by His laws. Obedience must be enforced by sanctions. Man has broken the law. Reward therefore has become inapplicable to man. God is "angry with the wicked every day." The facts of history bear this out—war, famine, disease. Nature speaks the same truth. II. THAT THE WRATH THUS CONNECTED WITH THE CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT OF GOD IS RESERVED ESPECIALLY FOR THE FUTURE. III. THAT MEN OUGHT MOST EARNESTLY TO SEEK FOR A REFUGE FROM THIS WRATH. "Flee from the wrath to come." 1. If it overtakes you, you are lost for ever. 2. You should do this because the means are given for avoiding it. IV. THAT IT DEVOLVES UPON THOSE WHO OCCUPY PUBLIC STATIONS IN THE CHURCH, EARNESTLY TO BESEECH MEN TO FLEE FROM THIS WRATH TO COME. 1. By warnings. 2. By encouragements. (*J. Parsons.*) I. WHITHER ARE WE TO FLEE? II. FROM WHAT ARE WE TO FLEE? III. HOW AND WHEN ARE WE TO FLEE.

1. Now. Opportunities pass away like clouds. 2. Earnestly. For Divine displeasure pursues us. 3. Looking to Jesus. Eager for relief (Psa. cxxiii.). (*Anon.*) Never did any preacher address to his hearers a more startling question than this I. THE OBJECTS FROM WHICH WE ARE WARNED TO FLEE, and in what flight from it consists. 1. As sinners we are exposed to wrath. Wrath against sin required by Divine holiness. Manifold revelations of the wrath of God. Declarations of Scripture (Numb. xii. 9; Psa. vii. 11; Rom. i. 18). In the cross we behold the clearest and most awful evidence of His determination to punish sin. Yet it is "wrath to come" (Eccles. xii. 14; 2 Thess. i. 7-9; 2 Pet. iii. 7; Rev. xx. 11, 12, 15). Is it surprising that we should be exhorted to escape? 2. The flight enjoined. There must be anxiety, hope, and promptitude. II. To "flee from the wrath to come" is SUPREMELY IMPORTANT. Its terrors. Shortness of the period allowed for our flight. If we perish, it will be aggravated by reason of the abundant provisions made for our escape. 1. Hear the voice of warning. 2. Flee to Christ the only refuge. 3. Be in earnest. Keep close to the place of shelter. (*John Johnson, M.A.*) This wrath is:—I. Divine; II. Deserved; III. Unmingled; IV. Accumulated; V. Eternal. (*Bradley.*) *A warning.*—In former days, when a military company was to be called out, the notice delivered to each of the members was called "the warning." An officer, who was a Christian, having given the warning to a young man, was playfully accosted by another young man, who was not a member of the company, with a question, "Have you not a warning for me too?" The officer replied, "Yes, I have a warning for you: *I want you to flee* from the wrath to come." This unexpected reply proved an arrow from the Lord's quiver, and to it the young man ascribes his conversion. (*Anon.*)

Ver. 8. **Fruits meet for repentance.**—*Repentance a fructifying energy. Fruits for repentance:*—Hear a story, or a parable. In a delightful bit of country, early one summer morning, I walked out to be refreshed by the pure sweet air, the sight of fields and woods, grasses and flowers, beasts and birds, when, presently, I came upon an orchard, into which I entered. The trees were beautiful to behold, the air was fragrant, and fruit was abundant. I wandered on almost enchanted, until, to my great wonder, I came upon a tree having neither bloom nor fruit. I was so painfully impressed that, without any thought of hurting or giving offence, and as to myself, I said, "You poor, lost tree, what can you be doing here? I marvel you are not removed." Upon which, to my astonishment, this tree replied, not without tartness, "Oh, indeed, sir; indeed! No doubt you think you are wise, wise above your fathers. You think you know much about things, I dare say, but you are in a great mistake. I am neither poor nor lost." "Well," I said, "you have neither leaves nor fruit, and, I should judge, no sap." "What has that to do with it?" it broke out. "Your ignorance is inexcusable. You seem not to know that a great Saviour of trees has been down here, and I have believed His gospel, and am saved by grace. I have accepted salvation as a free gift, and, though I have neither leaves nor fruit, I am saved all the same." I looked at it with pity and said, "You are a poor deluded tree; you are not saved at all. You are only a dead, good-for-nothing tree, despite all your talk about grace and redemption. The only salvation you can ever know is to be made living and fruit-bearing. Life, that is salvation. When I come and see you laden with fruit, or even showing signs of leaves, I shall say, 'Ah! that poor tree is saved at last; it has received the gospel and is saved by grace.'" As I turned away, I heard it saying, "You are not sound; you do not understand the gospel." And I thought, so it is, as with trees so with men; they talk as if grace and salvation were something God keeps for them outside themselves, and will not understand nor believe that he who is saved, he who takes Christ fully, and rests on His atoning work alone, "is made free from sin," and "has his fruit unto holiness." (*W. Hubbard.*) *Repentance a moulding energy.*—And it ought not to be a mere partial sorrow; but it should permeate the entire constitution of man. You have most likely seen water falling in drops from a rock. There it is dropping—dropping—dropping, summer and winter, during many a century;—but the rock remains a rock still. There are many who shed tears which seem to be those of repentance, but whose hearts remain as hard as an adamantine rock. Their tears are those out of a rock—a rock that never crumbles. True repentance does with man as the furnace with the metal. There is the metal cast into the furnace; and there it is heated and melted so as to be shaped and coined according to will. The whole of man should be completely melted by repentance, so as to be purged of all the dross of sin and be remodelled by the plastic influences of God's Spirit, and

made to bear anew the Divine image. (*R. Hughes.*) *Repentance a purifying energy.*—Repentance hath a purifying power, and every tear is of a cleansing virtue; but these penitential clouds must be still kept dropping: one shower will not suffice; for repentance is not one single action, but a cause. (*Dr. South.*) *Repentance fruitful in amendment.*—Repentance without amendment is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks. (*Palmer.*) *Repentance fruitful in restitution.*—Thomas Olivers was an itinerant cobbler, who spent his time working, carousing, and contracting debts. He congratulated himself on his skill in defrauding his creditors. This reprobate Welshman was at last rescued by Methodism, and became one of Mr. Wesley's itinerant corps. So great had been his wickedness, that his friends thought he must have had some terrible fright. His uncle said to him, "Thou hast been so wicked, thou hast seen the devil." His conscience was awakened. Of his old debts he said, "I feel as great sorrow and confusion as if I had stolen every sum I owed." He resolved to pay the last cent from money due to him from the estate of one of his kindred. With part of his money, he bought a horse, and started on his memorable journey from town to town, preaching Christ, and paying his debts. He went to Whithurst to pay a sixpence. Before his strange pilgrimage was ended, he paid about seventy debts, and had to sell his horse, saddle, and bridle, to finish his payments. Such fruits of repentance were followed by great religious prosperity and usefulness. (*Anon.*)

Ver. 9. **Abraham to our father.**—*Trees marked for falling*:—I. THAT GOD'S TEST OF ALL MORAL LIFE IS PRACTICAL, NOT THEORETIC, NOR CIRCUMSTANTIAL. His demand is for fruitfulness. Jews could boast:—1. Their national lineage. The true element in this: (1) great moral influence descends from a pious progenitor, and more or less imbues our life and feeling; (2) the traditions of a pious ancestry are precious; (3) some importance is to be attached to the prayers of a pious ancestry. The untrue element is to think that God will merge all considerations of a personal character. The true conception of a pious ancestry is obligation. 2. Another substitute for fruitfulness upon which the Jews relied was ecclesiastical prerogative. 3. Another substitute upon which they relied was doctrinal orthodoxy. II. THAT GOD PUTS US UPON OUR PROBATION IN RESPECT OF THESE PRACTICAL THINGS TO SEE WHETHER WE WILL DO THEM OR NOT. (*H. Allon.*)

Ver. 10. **Axe is laid.**—*The axe lying at the root*:—I. THE KIND OF FRUIT WHICH GOD REQUIRES FROM US—"good fruit." II. THE MEANS WHICH GOD EMPLOYS TO RENDER US PRODUCTIVE of this kind of fruit, and which show how reasonable it is that He should expect it from us. 1. God has endowed you with a capacity to produce this kind of fruit. 2. In order to enable you to bring forth good fruit, God has supplied you with the gospel of His Son, which contains the means, motives, and influences of fruitfulness. 3. God has visited you with various dispensations of providence, and with various convictions of conscience. III. THE CONTINUED UNFRUITFULNESS OF SOME PERSONS, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE MEANS WHICH THE GOD OF MERCY HAS EMPLOYED. 1. Some of these unfruitful persons are sensual and profane. 2. Some are intellectual, moral, and amiable. 3. Some are professors of the gospel. IV. THE AXE WHICH IS LYING AT THE ROOT OF SUCH UNFRUITFUL PERSONS. 1. The axe which is lying at your root reminds you of the patience and long-suffering of God. 2. It reminds you of the critical circumstances in which you are placed. 3. It has sometimes admonished you of its being there. V. THE AWFUL CONDITION TO WHICH SUCH UNFRUITFUL PERSONS ARE DOOMED. 1. The nature of this condition is indescribably terrible: "He is hewn down." The certainty that this condition will be incurred: "He *is* hewn," &c. (*J. Alexander.*) I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE AXE? 1. It may denote temporal judgments. 2. It may denote church discipline. 3. It may denote eternal wrath and vengeance. The axe laid to the root of the tree seems to imply its utter destruction. II. BY WHOM IS THE AXE LAID? 1. Ministerially, by preachers of the Word. 2. By the inflicting of temporal judgments. 3. By God Himself. Whether it be an act of mercy or of judgment, He directs, strengthens for, and assists in it. III. THE AXE IS LAID. I. God's judgments are certain and inevitable. 2. They are near at hand when least expected, least prepared for. 3. These judgments already begin to operate. (*B. Beddome.*)

Ver. 11. **And with fire.**—*The fiery baptism*:—I. THE HOLY GHOST IS FIRE.

Baptism with the Holy Ghost is not one thing and baptism with fire another, but the former is the reality of which the latter is the symbol. II. CHRIST PLUNGES US INTO THIS FIRE. What a grand idea is conveyed by the metaphor of the completeness of the contact with the Spirit of God into which we are brought! How it represents all our being as flooded into that transforming power. Christ's personal agency in effecting this saturating of man's coldness with the fire from God. III. THE FIERY BAPTISM QUICKENS AND CLEANSES. 1. Fire gives warmth. It comes to kindle in men's souls a blaze of enthusiastic Divine love, melting all the icy hardness of the heart, &c. For a Christian to be cold is sin. Marked absence of this "spirit of burning" in the Christian Church. 2. This baptism gives cleansing by warmth. Fire purifies. The Spirit produces holiness in heart and character. All other cleansing is superficial. The alternative for every man is to be baptized in fire or to be consumed by it. (*Dr. MacLaren.*) *The Baptism of the Spirit:* — 1. The NATURE of the promised baptism. John's baptism was introductory and transitory—Christ's was to be *spiritual, quickening, searching.* Analogy between water in the natural world and the Spirit's influence in the moral world. The baptism of the spirit includes all other blessings (Luke xi. 13, with Matt. vii. 11). II. The PLENITUDE of the promise. A baptism, repletion, fulness, &c. Like torrents of rain poured on the thirsty earth (Ezek. xxxiv. 26; Joel ii. 28; Hos. xiv. 5; Mal. iii. 10). On the day of Pentecost there was THE baptism of the Holy Ghost. What abundant communications of Divine influence we should expect! III. The NEED of the promised baptism. 1. In the time of John. 2. In our time—now. The low and languid piety of many. The comparatively small success of the various agencies for the conversion of sinners. Church agencies can only be spiritually useful as they are charged with Divine force. Have you received *this* baptism? "Ye must be born again." (*A. Tucker.*) *Baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* John's baptism was outward washing merely, significant, but no inward grace. It was only a symbol. Christ's would be the same in outward appearance, as water was employed, but there shall be an inward reality, a living, glorious, inward grace in His baptism. When was the Baptist's prediction fulfilled? Though Christ never baptized with His own hands, yet it is *He* who baptizeth when His authorized ministers baptize. Theirs are the hands, but His the grace. Like Elijah, they pour the water on the sacrifice, but He gives the fire. It refers to Pentecost, cloven tongues. *It is important to realize the double aspects in the gifts of God.* The Holy Ghost would be in every heart a Spirit of fire—fire for death or life, to purify or to destroy. God's presence in man's heart is His greatest gift; how truly it may be called a fire! It separates good from evil. It purifies. It tests. Our duty in life is to cherish and obey this awful fiery Spirit. To burn in the spirit, to have a glowing zeal for God. The spark is blown into a flame by prayer. (*G. Moberly, D.C.L.*) *The influence of fire* (1) softens; (2) purifies; (3) sanctifies; (4) is a solace. The Holy Spirit is a Comforter through (1) grief; (2) sorrow; (3) tribulation; (4) poverty. (*H. T. Day.*) I. The NATURE and importance of this baptism. II. The CHARACTER AND DIGNITY OF THE PERSON who baptizes. Not a mere man—the SON OF GOD. He dispenses this blessing as the fruit of His mediation. III. The PERSONS WHO MAY PARTAKE of this baptism (Luke iii.). IV. On what TERMS, or in what way they may have it conferred. Repentance towards God. Faith in Christ. 1. Consider the necessity of this baptism, &c. 2. If you have received it, "Quench not the Spirit," &c. (*Joseph Benson.*)

*The fiery baptism continuous.*—To all, sooner or later, Christ comes to baptize them with fire. But do not think that the baptism of fire comes once for all to a man in some terrible affliction, some one awful conviction of his own sinfulness and nothingness. No; with many—and those, perhaps, the best people—it goes on month after month, and year after year. By secret trials, chastenings which none but they and God can understand, the Lord is cleansing them from their secret faults, and making them to understand wisdom secretly; burning out of them the chaff of self-will and self-conceit and vanity, and leaving only the pure gold of righteousness. (*Charles Kingsley.*) *The kindling, warmth, and effect of the fiery influence:—The manner in which the Holy Spirit enters the heart resembles the manner in which fire is kindled.* This manner is not always uniform. Sometimes a spark lies smothered for a while, and only after a long interval bursts out and begins to burn. So with the Holy Spirit. The spark may have reached the heart, and may remain there, but the deceitfulness of worldly cares or pleasures, or the

remains of unsubdued sin, stifle it, till at length some providential circumstance occurs which fans the spark into a flame. Another effect of fire is, *to communicate its warmth to all that come within its reach.* And such is also the effect of the Holy Spirit upon the soul. The heart of man is by nature cold—cold towards God, and cold towards his fellow-creatures. Not so the man whose heart has been touched by the Holy Spirit. I shall only carry this comparison one step further. We all understand *the effect of fire in restoring comfort to the body.* We approach closer to it when we have been made uneasy through the chilling influence of cold, and the genial feelings of health and warmth revive within us. So, likewise, the Holy Spirit cheers the heart and re-animates the languid feelings; gives new life to the zeal and piety, which, without it, would sicken and decay. (*J. B. Sumner, M.A.*) *The fiery influence sometimes gentle.*—But there is also a fire that, like the genial heat in some greenhouse, makes even the barren tree glow with blossom, and bends its branches with precious fruit. (*Dr. Maclaren.*) *The fiery influence purifying.* —Did you ever see a blast-furnace? How long would it take a man, think you, with hammer and chisel, or by chemical means, to get the bits of ore out from the stony matrix? But fling them into the great cylinder, and pile the fire, and let the strong draught roar through the burning mass, and by evening you can run off a glowing stream of pure and fluid metal, from which all the dross and rubbish is parted, which has been charmed out of all its sullen hardness, and will take the shape of any mould into which you like to run it. The fire has conquered, has melted, has purified. So with us. Love "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us," love that answers to Christ's, love that is fixed upon Him who is pure and separate from sinners, will purify us and sever us from our sins. Nothing else will. All other cleansing is superficial, like the water of John's baptism. Moralities and the externals of religion will wash away the foulness which lies on the surface, but stains that have sunk deep into the very substance of the soul, and have dyed every thread in warp and woof to its centre, are not to be got rid of so. (*Ibid.*) *The analogy between these two baptisms:*—1. They are both *sudden.* Whitefield was once preaching on Blackheath, and a man and his wife coming from market saw the crowd, and went up to hear. Whitefield was saying something about what happened eighteen hundred years ago, and the man said to his wife: "Come, Mary, we will not stop any longer. He is talking about something that took place more than eighteen hundred years ago. What's that to us?" But they were fascinated. The truth of God came to their hearts. When they were home, they took down the Bible and said: "Is it possible that these old truths have been here so long, and we have not known it?" Ah! it was in the flash of God's Spirit on Blackheath that they were saved—the Spirit coming mightily, and suddenly, and overwhelmingly upon them. So it was that God's Spirit came to Andrew Fuller, and James Harvey, and the Earl of Rochester, and Bishop Latimer — suddenly. 2. They were *both irresistible.* Notwithstanding all our boasted machinery and organization for putting out fires, the efforts that were made did not repulse the flames last December one single instant. There was a great sound of fire-trumpets, and brave men walking on hot walls; but the flames were baulked not an instant. So it has been with the Holy Spirit moving through the hearts of this people. There have been men here who have sworn that the religion of Jesus Christ should never come into their households; they and their children kneel now at the same altar. 3. They are both *consuming.* Did you ever see any more thorough work than was done by that fire last December? The strongest beams turned to ashes. The iron cracked, curled up, destroyed. So the Holy Ghost has been a consuming fire amid the sins and habits of those who despise God. 4. They were both *melting.* If you examined the bars, and bolts, and plumbing work of the Tabernacle, after it went down, you know it was a melting process. The things that seemed to have no relation to each other adjoined—flowed together. So it has been with the Spirit of God, melting down all asperities and unbrotherliness. Heart has flowed out towards heart. 5. *The fiery influence qualifying for work.*—If God baptized us with fire, it is because He means to fit us for hot and tremendous work. (*Dr. Talmage.*)

Ver. 12. **Whose fan.** — *Christ a sifter.* — Humanity yields its twofold crop, its wheat and chaff, and keeps its terrible capacity of mixing chaff and wheat together, making them look alike. *A sifter needed.*—Something, *then, is wanted to lift the cover, to unveil the reality, to expose the things that we do and the persons that we are.* Whether we want Him or not, He comes "whose fan is in His hand."

*A sifter needed for the sake of the truth.* — Realize, too, that the sifting work must be done not only for the truth's sake and for God's sake, but for the sake of the foolish people themselves — for the welfare of the world. Otherwise the world, cheated by the delusion, would go from bad to worse, and be deluded to destruction. *Life foreshadows a sifting process.* — Christ prepares the way for His own great reckoning to come, by setting foreshadows of His sifting work around us where we are. *Life* itself moves on with the fan in its hand. So into this medley where you live there springs suddenly some new-comer. It is a providence of God. A contagious disease escapes quarantine and breaks out in the town. There is a wreck on a reef off the shore. On a Western river great waterfloods sweep away scores of houses and lives. A hundred human bodies are crushed and burned in a mass in some building. You are not hurt; but as the report strikes man after man in the neighbourhood, if you could look underneath the masks which some people from pride or policy keep over their real selves, would you not see always two sorts of men revealed? In one there is apathy, and in another there is sympathy. Here are the two sorts of men disclosed. Before, you could not have told which was which; all looked alike; but in the threshing-floor of God the winnowing has begun. *Adversity a sifting process.*—One family that you know, overtaken by misfortune, is paralysed or embittered, and goes down. Another, struck by the same blow, summons its interior strength, is sweet-tempered, hopeful, and courageous, and as it descends in style rises in spiritual stature. The reason why prosperity seems to enlarge some persons and belittle others is not so much that it actually alters their dimensions as that it publishes what their dimensions are. It is a shaking of the fan. *Public questions sift.*— Now and then a sharp question of right or wrong is thrust in upon a whole community in palpable shape—a question of public justice or oppression, of fair dealing between capital and labour, of chastity in literature or decency in art, of commercial honour, temperance in drinking, political integrity. Everybody must take sides, openly in act or virtually in secret choice or feeling. *This new truth has the fan in its hand.* It sifts your gay society, getting souls in position for their judgment. At certain historical epochs *great characters arrive.* They utter one of these great truths, and stand out or fight for it. They are not judges of men, but sifters of men. Every one of them has a fan in the hand. *Character cannot permanently be concealed.*—There is no privacy for character in the universe. The righteousness of God has arranged it that we shall live surrounded by a system of detectives and exposures, and all the uniforms and costumes and cosmetics and masks and escapes of that public stage, society, will not baffle them. This life is the beginning, though not the end, of judgment. *Truth a dividing power.* —It is inwrought benignantly into the silent and steady operation of the truth. Truth itself is a dividing power. *Discrimination a law of nature.* — To me it establishes faith, and makes the awful doctrine of retribution reasonable, to see the law wrought into the whole fabric of Nature around us and the very constitution of man. Even in the orchards and gardens there is a visible economy of discrimination, of rejection, of judgment. Bad fruit drops off and is cast away by the same hand that gathers and garners the good. Sow chaff and grain together if you choose; the chaff rots, while the vital seeds sprout and grow and yield "some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred." Why not so when we come up to the immortal wheat? (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) 1. Christ is the universal Judge; "His fan is in His hand." He possesses *authority*, *discrimination*, and *impartiality*, —the three grand qualifications for this office. (*M. Henry.*)

**Wheat—chaff.**—I. In the Christian Church there is a MIXTURE of nominal and real Christians. Parable of the Tares. Of the Wedding Garment. Judas. Ananias and Sapphira. The false are the careless or indifferent. The self-righteous or sentimental; the hollow-hearted or hypocritical. The true are penitents, believers, new creatures. II. The Head of the Church KNOWS THE TRUE CHARACTER OF ALL its members. Seven churches of Asia. "I know thy works." Intimate and exact knowledge of His own people. III. The Head of the Church WILL SEPARATE the precious from the vile. By His doctrine—providential dealings —Satanic temptations—fire of persecution. IV. THE FINAL DOOM of all the members of the Church will correspond to their character. The wheat to the garner. The chaff to the fire. 1. Examine yourselves. 2. Prepare for judgment. (*Anon.*) I. The TWO GREAT CLASSES into which the world is divided. Two only. In the eyes of men many. Either believers or unbelievers. No third class. II. WHEN THESE

TWO CLASSES WILL BE SEPARATED. Not yet. When Christ comes! III. The PORTION OF CHRIST'S PEOPLE. IV. The portion of those WHO ARE NOT CHRIST'S. (*J. C. Ryle.*) *The wheat and the chaff.*—By the wheat is evidently intended those whose characters are useful; by the chaff those who are worthless. Wheat is valuable because it answers the purpose of the cultivator, which is to produce food for himself and others; so those persons are useful who answer the ends for which God has placed them here. God has placed us here to glorify Him:—1. By our exercising suitable dispositions towards Him; 2. By cultivating every virtue; 3. By our doing good to others. From this description of the wheat we may easily infer the character of those who resemble the chaff. 1. If those are the wheat who exercise suitable dispositions towards God, those are the chaff who are without such dispositions. 2. If those are the wheat who are seeking the perfection of their nature, then those are the chaff who neglect to seek it. 3. If those are the wheat who labour for the temporal and spiritual welfare of their fellow-creatures, those are the chaff who live chiefly to please themselves. 4. If those are the wheat who glorify God by believing in Christ, then those are the chaff who remain in unbelief. 5. To which of these two classes do we belong? (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) Good and evil are really different in kind, absolutely and intrinsically, essentially and in the nature of things: I. By the free choice of will, and the practice consequent upon such a choice, real virtue or vice can be acquired. II. Every man is as to his moral character what his own behaviour and practice make him. By as certain and determinate a distinction as wheat and chaff are, by their real and proper natures, different from each other. III. God in all His commandments really desires to bring men by the habitual practice of virtue to a state by which they can become capable of His eternal happiness in the enjoyment of His unchangeable favour. Therefore the good must be separated from the evil surely and thoroughly, if we would win salvation. (*Samuel Clarke, D.D.*) *Similarity between real Christians and hypocritical.*—And let me remind you how like the chaff is to the wheat, how like the mere professor is to the saint. Of what colour is the chaff? Precisely the same as that of the wheat. And what is its form? Exactly that of the wheat. And where is it found? Not blowing about the highway, but in close contact with the wheat. It is upon us that this sifting trial is to pass; and it matters not how perfect may be our resemblance to the saints, if there be a resemblance and nothing more. (*P. B. Power.*)

*Sect distinctions obliterated in destiny.*—I have seen a field here, and a field there, stand thick with corn—a hedge or two has separated them. At the proper season the reapers entered; soon the earth was disburdened, and the grain was conveyed to its destined resting-place, where, blended together in the barn or the stack, it could not be known that a hedge had ever separated this corn from that. Thus it is with the Church. Here it grows, as it were, in different fields, and even, maybe, by different hedges. By and by, when the harvest is come, all God's wheat shall be gathered into the garner, without one single mark to distinguish that once they differed in outward circumstantials of form and order. (*Toplady.*)

Ver. 13. **Baptized of him.**—*The baptism of our Saviour:*—I. The circumstance of TIME. 1. Seasonable. Men were at this time being baptized and confessing their sins. People were expecting the Christ (John i. 19). Let man be diminished, but let God arise. The truth is revealed that the servant may not rob the Master of His honour. 2. This adverb of time points to the age of Christ. Mature age. He taught the need of well-seasoned timber to make pillars for the Church of God. As Christ attained perfect age in nature, His servants should be perfect in grace and glory. II. After WHAT MANNER HE WOULD BE BAPTIZED. 1. Upon what ground did John begin this new ceremony? It betokened the end of the old ceremonies. Superstitions turned into a blessing. Heathen used washings. Turned into an immortal laver. 2. The dignity of John's baptism. It was the baptism of repentance. It did not lack grace. But Christ's ministry is better than man's. Distinctions between the two baptisms. 1. John baptized in the name of the Messiah. Christ bade His disciples use another form. 2. They differ in extent—John baptized in the regions of Judæa, Christ bade His disciples to except none. 3. Christ's baptism transcends John's in the variety of persons. 4. Christ's baptism is more operative since He has gone to His Father. 5. John's baptism was good, Christ's is necessary to the end of the world. (*Hacket.*) 1. John was jealous of our Saviour's honour. 2. He confesses his vileness and inferiority. (*Ibid.*) Faith is nothing else but a long-continued astonishment, which knows not how to utter

itself, because the Lord hath done such marvellous things for us. (*Ibid.*) *Christ baptized* :—What so Divine an instigation to press us all to come unto the flood of living waters, to thirst for that immortal spring of grace than this, that the Son of God Himself did not decline to be partaker of the baptism of repentance. To make the sacrament virtuous and powerful for them that should take it after Him. That by His example, to undergo a new rite and ordinance, men might be drawn from old customs to newness of life. (*Ibid.*) *The baptism of Christ no degradation* :—As Cæsar did not lessen his own dignity, because he would both command as General, and yet work in the trenches like the meanest pioneer, *Dux consilio, miles exemplo;* and as Helen, the mother of Constantine, was not under the honour of a princess, because she would dress the blains and ulcers of poor cripples in the hospital; so the mighty Son of God was not diminished in His glory, because He put Himself into the rank of abject ones by His own yielding and accord, not by compulsive necessity. (*Ibid.*) I. We should sincerely FEEL THE WANT OF A DIVINE REDEEMER. When Jesus demands baptism of John, the latter publicly declares: "I have need to be baptized of Thee." II. WE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE WISE COUNSELS OF GOD. III. WE SHOULD ADMIRE THE GRANDEUR AND MAJESTY WITH WHICH JESUS WAS ENCOMPASSED. We behold our Saviour encompassed by a glory which transcends the most enchanting pageantry of nature. (*From the Danish of Dr. Balle.*) *The baptism of Jesus by John* :—I. The office of John was to awaken the conscience of mankind. II. John had a ministry of separation. III. John was a forerunner in pointing to Christ. IV. John was to identify Christ. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*)

*The significance of our Saviour's baptism.*—We can only allude to meanings which have been discovered in it; all of them, it may be, parts of its largest import. It was to ratify the mission of John; it was to purify the water of baptism. Christ was ceremonially unclean, as representing sinners. St. Bernard sees in the baptism the exhibition of perfect humility; and Meyer, of perfect obedience. Still others look upon the baptism as an inaugural announcement, a formal identification, of His Person as the Messiah—an inauguration of His Messianic ministry. It is important to notice certain respects in which the baptism was unlike that of the people. 1. It was at the close of the day. He waited until all the penitents of that day had been baptized; in this, as in all else involving sin, separate from sinners. 2. John did not treat Christ as a sinner. He gave Him the remarkable testimony, "I have need to be baptized of Thee." 3. At Jesus' baptism there was no confession of sin. In the place of confession was a prayer. 4. The promised token, the descent of the Spirit as a dove, which abode upon Him, while a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 15. **Then he suffered Him.**—When the pilot of a ship will not turn his sail to the winds, nor observe how to let a turbulent wave pass by him, he splits his vessel; therefore the conclusion of the point shall be with Solomon, A haughty spirit goes before a fall; and it savours much more of a Christian mildness to be easily drawn off from our own imaginations than to hold a stiff opinion in our teeth, in despite as it were of all wise persuasions. (*Hacket.*)

Ver. 16. **Heavens were opened unto Him.**—*This great sight* :—1. Great in the Object. 2. Great in the Person. 3. Great in the Mysteries. *Trinity Sunday* :—I. THE THREE PERSONS IN THE HOLY TRINITY. 1. Jesus of Nazareth. 2. The Holy Ghost miraculously exhibited. 3. The Holy Father. II. A VIVID REPRESENTATION OF GOSPEL SALVATION. 1. Here was salvation embodied in Jesus Christ. 2. The Holy Ghost falls on Him. 3. The Holy Father's solemn attestation of the sufficiency of Christ and His salvation. III. THE PRIVILEGE OF BELIEVERS HERE CONFIRMED IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. We view Him as our Federal Head and Representative. 2. In this capacity He received the Holy Ghost. 3. In this character the Father delighted in Him, and also in His people. (1) What a practical view of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. (2) Have we a personal interest in this great work? (3) Let the power of these truths be seen in our lives. (*F. Close, M.A.*) *Divine testimony to the Tri-unity of the Godhead* :—I. Demonstrate from Scripture the Tri-unity of the Godhead. II. Prove Christ's perfect union in the Godhead, as the true ground of Christian faith. III. HOW GREAT A BLESSING THIS GLORIOUS DOCTRINE IS FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE. There may be mines of precious wealth, of minerals, gold, silver, jewels, in a domain only partially known; so with this doctrine. God the Father planned the way of redemption. God the Son willingly

came to accomplish our salvation. And God the Spirit guides us into all truth. The whole Trinity joins in man's salvation. 1. How great the condescension of Jehovah thus to reveal the nature and perfections of mercy. 2. How much all revelation testifies of God the Father's delight in His beloved Son. 3. How God is well pleased in the soul's salvation by Christ. (*J. G. Angley, M.A.*) *Christ's baptism*:—I. Christ's SUBMISSION to the ordinance of baptism. 1. Jesus humbly waits upon the Baptist. The fortitude with which to meet publicity. 2. He is privately discovered to John. 3. The Saviour meekly persists in His obedient resolution. How lovely this conflict of humility! 4. Jesus at last receives the sign from His forerunner. II. The HONOURS Christ received at His baptism. 1. The opening of the heavens. 2. The descent of the Spirit followed. 3. The proclamation of the Father closed the scene of wonders. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) I. HERE IS A DECLARATION OF THE DIGNITY AND ENDEAREDNESS OF THE SAVIOUR, "My beloved Son." 1. The dignity of His Person. 2. The endearedness of the Son. II. THE FATHER'S COMPLACENCY IN THE SON. Complacency takes place. 1. In Creation: "All things were made by *Him*." 2. In redemption: "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." 3. The Father is well pleased with Christ in His incarnation and mediation. 4. He is well pleased with Him in all His people. (*H. Budd, M.A.*) Here we have (1) the rising of the morning star, John the Baptist; (2) The more glorious rising and shining of the Sun of Righteousness Himself; (3) A messenger from heaven. The Spirit of Christ is a dove-like Spirit. The dove was the fowl offered in sacrifice; so Christ offered Himself without spot unto God. (4) A voice from heaven. As the Holy Ghost manifests Himself in the likeness of a dove, so God the Father in a voice. This voice speaks God's favour to Christ. 1. Expresses the relation He stands in to Him. 2. Expresses the affection the Father hath to Him. Observe God's favour to us IN Him. He is My beloved Son, IN whom I am well pleased. Consider what God is out of Christ, and what God is IN Christ. I. WHAT GOD IS OUT OF CHRIST to the sinner. (1) An angry God; (2) a threatening God; (3) a dishonoured God; (4) a distant God. II. WHAT GOD IS IN CHRIST. (1) A reconciled God; (2) a promising God; (3) a glorified God; (4) a near God. (*Ralph Erskine.*) *The arithmetic of heaven.*—A gentleman, passing a church with Daniel Webster, asked him, "How can you reconcile the doctrine of the Trinity with reason?" The statesman replied by asking, "Do you understand the arithmetic of heaven?" The application is evident. (*Anon.*) The heavens are never shut while either of the sacraments is duly administered and received; neither do the heavens ever thus open without the descent of the Holy Ghost. (*Bishop Hall.*) 1. The Person that did bear witness. 2. The manner how He testified to the honour of His Son. 3. The authority of that voice from heaven. 4. The Person to whom the witness is borne. 5. What is witnessed of Him in respect of Himself. 6. What is witnessed of Him in respect of our consolation, we the beloved in Him. (*Hacket.*) As the Father sent His voice from heaven to earth, let our lips be full of prayers, that we may send our voice from earth to heaven. (*Ibid.*)

## CHAPTER IV.

VER. 1. **To be tempted of the devil.**—*The possibility and necessity of the temptation*:—I. If our Lord had not become incarnate He would never have been tempted, for temptation is not possible to God. God is above the possibility of temptation; the beasts are below it. The possession of an animal nature is not the only source of temptation, or the "angels who kept not their own principality" could never have fallen. The conditions of any moral goodness possible to a creature involve the possibility of its opposite. Was not Christ too good to be tempted? 1. *All human goodness needs the strain of temptation to reveal its reality and depth.* Even when that goodness, as in the case of the Man Christ Jesus, and in His case alone, is absolutely without fault or imperfection, temptation is still required to prove its strength, and by the proof to reveal the depth and solidity of its foundations in the soul. The ship that lies at anchor in the harbour when hardly a breath of wind ripples the surface of the water, may hold to her moorings, but this is no proof of the strength and soundness of her cable, for no strain has been put upon it; but if she is out at sea, and caught in a furious storm, and drifting fast on to a lee

shore, and then lets go her anchor, and it holds, there is proof enough of the quality of her cable. *But temptation strengthens goodness by assaulting it.* There are some shells which cling to the rocks in spite of the continual buffeting of the tides, but those shells are thickest and strongest where the tide has smitten them with its fullest might, and so the defences of the soul against evil are strong in proportion to the evil which has been resisted. And this is why *no human character becomes stable or strong in goodness until it has been exposed to temptation.* Shield it from all the fierce blasts of temptation, preserve it in a forced isolation from the world, and it will remain as unstable as water beneath a summer sky: but let the rough frosts of winter fall on it, and the biting winds lash it, and it will slowly knit itself into compact and solid strength, and, like the ice, will defy the storm which has only given it strength by attacking it. But we have not exhausted the meaning of our Lord's temptations. 1. They had a *representative* as well as a personal significance—He was the Head of the human race. 2. It was the first great act of the redemption of the race from sin. 3. The shame and reproach of our first parents are rolled away, as the Son of Man returns from this conflict victorious. (*G. S. Barrett, B.A.*) *The reality of the Temptation*:—1. The evangelists were thoroughly convinced of its reality. 2. The other references to it in the New Testament point in the same direction (Heb. iv. 15, ii. 18). 3. Assuming the existence of Satan he is not likely to have engaged our Lord in any unreal way. *What is meant when it is said it was impossible for Christ to have sinned?* Certainly not that it was a physical impossibility, as when we say that it is impossible for a man of luxury to feel the temptation a starving man feels to steal. It was a moral impossibility; He would not elect to yield. We are certain of Christ's immovable loyalty to righteousness. *Temptation is not in itself an admission of moral imperfection*, so was not inconsistent with the holy character of our Lord. All Christ's temptations came to Him from without, not from within Him. An inward bias to evil is not essential to temptation; temptation may appeal to what is best within us, to satisfy lawful appetites by unlawful means. Thus the reality of Christ's temptations remain unbroken. *The practical results of this admission*:—1. The reality of Christ's temptations affects their entire moral significance. We feel the moral sublimity of His character. 2. It affects us as well as Himself: His sympathy with us and our realization of His sympathy with us. *The Instrument and the Divine ordering of the Temptation*:—1. We may learn that it is never the will of God we should voluntarily enter into temptation. 2. We ought to pray that God would not "bring" us into it. 3. But should God lead us, as He led Christ, into temptation, then we may confidently appeal to God for grace to overcome. (*Ibid.*) *The Tempter's power limited*:—1. By the fact that he is a mere creature. 2. By the providence of God. 3. By man's will. 4. We ought not to exaggerate the power of Satan, let us beware of underrating it. (*Norman Macleod, D.D.*) *Reasons why our Lord was led to be tempted*:—1. In order that the reality and glory of His Sonship might be made manifest. 2. That He might redeem man from the evil to which he was subjected by the fall of the first Adam. 3. That He might become experimentally acquainted with the evil of sin. 4. The temptation of our Lord was a chief element in His sufferings for us as our Mediator. 5. Evil is compelled to glorify God. (*Ibid.*) *What Satan knew of Christ*:—1. There seems little reason to doubt that Satan knew Jesus to be the promised One, whose advent the prophets had foretold. The artful use he made of Scripture upon the pinnacle of the temple sufficiently shows his acquaintance with Holy Writ. 2. Satan also supposed, apparently, that Christ possessed superhuman powers. 3. But although Satan was thus far in possession of the truth respecting Christ, it does not follow that he knew the whole truth respecting Him. 4. If Satan had no just view of the person of Christ, of His true divinity, he would necessarily have imperfect views of His perfect holiness. Even if this view be not admitted, if any person should still believe that Satan did understand the divinity, and consequently the immaculate purity, of our Lord, it is not incredible nor surprising, even on this supposition, that he should attempt to lead Him into sin. For it is possible that he was judicially blinded, that he might not see the hopelessness of his attempt. (*L. H. Wiseman.*) *The entrance into Temptation*:—I. The TIME of the temptation. Immediately after our Lord's baptism. The time reveals one object of the temptation—the unveiling of the tactics of the Evil One; it was "for a precaution to us." The opening of heaven from above was followed by the opening of hell from beneath. We have to guard the treasure of grace after it is given. When we are expecting peace and joy we have suddenly to enter into struggles, darkness, and desolation.

God has an object in permitting the assaults of Satan at such a time; to keep the soul low when from the presence of Divine favour there may be risk of self-exaltation. II. The INFLUENCE under which Christ was led to the scene of conflict—"led up of the Spirit." 1. The source of the influence. The Holy Spirit. This in accord with other notices of His relations with the incarnate Lord. Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost; preached under His guidance. 2. The extent of the Spirit's influence. A stronger term is used by St. Mark—"The Spirit driveth Him." We must not enter into temptation unless it be under the guidance of the Spirit of God in the way of providence. The Spirit's movements are often to be known by their contrariety to our inclinations, and should lead to solitude, mortification, &c. III. The PLACE whither Christ was led. Christ called to meet the tempter in the wilderness, that by His unassisted might the victory should be won. Thus He sanctified times of retreat and states of retirement. They should form a part of the preparation for the ministerial office. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *The Personality of Satan*:—I. The PERSONALITY of the Evil One. Influence is that which flows out from personality. In proving the existence of God arguments from design are used; so it would be difficult to reconcile the condition of the world in its misery with the Divine goodness unless some other agent be at work in it. All nations in the past have borne witness to a belief in spiritual beings. The evil of the inner life bears the same testimony; no mental law accounts for it. Made clear by revelation. Christ's words and work proclaim existence of the Evil One. The writers of the New Testament testify to the personality of Satan (Acts v. 3). The temptation makes this clear. II. His QUALIFICATIONS for the office of Tempter. 1. Skill; he has an angelic nature; great experience. 2. Power; (1) rule, power; (2) does not stand alone in his work; (3) the third source of power lies in that mysterious relation between fallen man and the Tempter which necessitated redemption, and which justified the expression, "Prince of this world." 3. Malice: with skill and power is combined unceasing hostility to God and man. But while we note the extent of Satan's power we must not forget its limits. As a creature he possesses finite capacities. His knowledge is restricted in two ways: he cannot discern our thoughts, nor by himself read the future. True, he has acquired a conjectural knowledge. Also limits placed upon his power: on the Divine side there is the law of permission; on our side, of free will. Formidable as the enemy is, there is no ground for despondency, nor excuse for failure in the conflict. In the history of the Tempter see an instance of the fearful way sin may be permitted to run its course. (*Ibid.*) *Study the Enemy*:—Among military rules there is one in all authors which brings some advantage with it to study the nature and condition of our enemy. (*Hacket.*) *The temptation of Christ*:—I. A FEW GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS UPON THIS SUBJECT. 1. That we are to understand the account of the Evangelist as the history of an actual occurrence. 2. It may assist our thoughts to be reminded of the true character of our Lord's person. 3. That this history represents one great being, as the head of others, employed in the work of tempting men, and frustrating the designs of God. 4. Did Satan know the Person he assaulted? and could he have any hope of success? He knew something of our Lord's character, as appears from the question, "If Thou be the Son of God." But wicked minds often commit great blunders and engage in hopeless tasks. II. GREAT PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH THE TRANSACTION APPEARS DESIGNED TO TEACH. 1. The deep humiliation of our Lord. 2. The variety of those temptations by which men are assaulted. (1) They are subject to necessities. (2) They are tempted to presumption. (3) Temptations to the worldly spirit. 3. We see here the means of effectually resisting temptation. 4. That temptation simply considered is not sin. (*R. Watson.*) *The temptation*:—I. The CIRCUMSTANCES under which it took place. 1. Time when happened. 2. Influence by which directed. 3. Place where enacted. 4. Exercise by which prefaced—"Fasted." II. The PARTICULARS of which it consisted. 1. Distrust. 2. Presumption. 3. Apostacy: to renounce His allegiance to God. (1) The vision. (2) The offer. (3) The condition. III. The CONSEQUENCES. 1. Satan defeated. 2. Jesus comforted. Uses: 1. Warning. 2. Direction. 3. Encouragement. (*H. Parr.*) *The temptation of Jesus*:—I. WHY was Jesus tempted? 1. Because He was a man. 2. Because He was the Messiah. II. WHAT is the significance of the several temptations? 1. In the first, Christ is urged to satisfy hunger by working a miracle. Christ refused, because miraculous power must not be used simply for personal advantage. Christ recalls the great fact that God feeds man with spiritual food. 2. Satan perceives Christ's frame of mind: Is Christ filled with confidence in His

Father? From the Temple roof Christ is asked to cast Himself down. The act urged would have been presumptuous, ostentatious, and untimely. The third temptation was to sacrifice principle to policy. All His suffering might be prevented by a momentary act. III. LESSONS. 1. Temptations ply us through the constitutional avenues of our being. 2. Scripture may be misapplied to lead us into sin. 3. Resistance of temptation is aided by familiarity with God's Word. 4. A Divine peace follows the resistance of temptation. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *Christ tempted of the devil in the wilderness*:—I. WHY our Lord was tempted. 1. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest," &c. 2. To convey to all His people an assurance that there is a limit to the power of Satan. II. How our Lord was tempted. 1. The time selected. 2. The circumstances skilfully adapted to the temptation. III. HOW TO OVERCOME temptations. 1. To have God's Word in our hearts. 2. To have God's fear before our eyes. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Christ tempted in the wilderness*:—I. THE PERSON TEMPTED. 1. See here the depth of our Lord's abasement. 2. See the height of His love. II. THE PART WHICH GOD TOOK IN OUR LORD'S TEMPTATIONS. "Led by the Spirit." III. THE TIME OF OUR LORD'S TEMPTATIONS. 1. It was immediately after God had put on Him special honour. 2. Just before He entered upon His great ministerial work. IV. THE PLACE where the Lord Jesus was tempted. Look on the exalted Jesus as the once tempted Jesus. (*C. Bradley.*) *The temptation of Jesus*:—I. The sons of God are NOT EXEMPTED FROM TEMPTATION. Many new converts cherish false expectations concerning the peace which, in the Word of God, is promised them. II. Temptation is NOT THE SAME THING AS SIN. To be tempted may cause us much pain and sorrow, but it is not sin. III. Temptations are DIVINELY ORDERED, both as to time and measure (ver. 1; Job i. 12, ii. 6). IV. After a season of special grace, we may expect a season of special trial. "Then" (ver. 1). It is not the vessel in ballast, but the vessel richly laden that is in danger from pirates. V. Satan ADAPTS HIS TEMPTATIONS to our character and circumstances. Hence our watchfulness must be intelligent and comprehensive. VI. THE HOLIEST THINGS MAY BE PERVERTED BY SATAN into instruments of temptation (vers. 3, 4, 6). VII. Though temptations are varied in form, they are FEW IN KIND. Jesus was tempted to three things. "Then the devil leaveth Him," because he had exhausted all his means of assault. VIII. VICTORY ITSELF MAY EXPOSE US TO ASSAULT. We must not think we are rid of him when we have beaten him off. Watch. IX. In the Word of God we have A SUFFICIENT ARMOURY OF DEFENCE (vers. 4, 7, 10). X. In the stress and agony of the conflict, when we are tempted to yield by the fear that resistance is hopeless, let us remind ourselves that GOD HAS PROMISED GRACE TO SUPPORT US in the struggle, and a glorious reward when the victory is won. (*Anon.*) *Moral testing*:—I. The necessity for some moral testing at the outset of life. II. Preparations for testing come in our outward circumstances. III. Such testings, or temptings, take a great variety of forms. IV. The essence of all such testing is the finding out whether we really mean to live for *Self* or to live for *God*. V. The force to resist evil lies in having our will set on God. VI. The weapons with which to resist evil are *God's Word*. *Learn*:—1. Well-taught childhood prepares for the temptations of life. 2. Early decision for Christ is the best safeguard against the tempter's power. 3. Temptations come to men still in the same three forms as they did to Jesus (1 John ii. 16). 4. We only conquer as we are strong in God and in His Word. 5. A first conquest of evil should not lead us to think that the Tempter is conquered, nor make us cease to "watch and be sober." (*W. O. Simpson.*) *Satan tempts those who are*:—I. BEGINNERS WITH DIFFICULTIES; II. PROGRESSORS WITH LANGUOR. Satan makes out the way of holiness to be—(1) Long; (2) rough; (3) uncertain; III. THE PERFECT WITH SCRUPLES AND ANXIETIES. Satan destroys—(1) Tranquillity of soul; (2) All spiritual joy; (3) All sense of progress. A scruple is metaphorically derived from a small stone, which, getting inside the shoe or sandal, causes pain to the feet at every step. (*James Marchant.*) *Our great adversary*: His—I. POVERTY. He had nothing to offer Jesus Christ sufficient to allure Him. II. IMPUDENCE. Repelled once, he returns to the attack. No sense of defeat or shame. III. WEAKNESS. He did not cast our Lord down. He had no power to force. IV. CRAFTINESS. He attacks our Lord's weakness by fasting. He graduates his temptations. V. IS FALSE. 1. Promises that which he cannot give. 2. That which he has no intention of giving. (*Matthias Faber.*) *The retirement of our Lord into the wilderness teaches*:—1. Humility when most favoured by God; when most illumined and blessed by His Spirit. 2. The necessity of preparation

for every work done for God, if that work is to be really fruitful. 3. All missionary and ministerial work is to be begun with self. 4. Preparation is necessary against the temptations of the Evil One. (*S. Baring-Gould, M.A.*) *Temptations*:—I. Temptations of Satan are to be FEARED: (1) For the skill and method with which he tempts; (2) Because his warfare is spiritual. II. Temptations are SUCCESSIVE and variable. Satan (1) changes the objects and manners of the temptation; (2) Not tempting in more than one particular at a time. III. Temptations are preserved by Satan in order and METHOD. 1. With pleasure, then with vainglory. 2. With riches and ambition. IV. Temptations and their purposes are often HIDDEN. The serpent is seldom seen in its entire or full length. V. Temptations are set LIKE SNARES. There are many social questions on which he suggests an inversion of God's moral laws. VI. Temptations are often MADE IN SECRET. They lose their power if divulged. Many a plot is overthrown by discovery. VII. Temptations are SUITED TO OPPORTUNITY. There are certain moral qualities nearly allied to certain vices; as harshness to cruelty and pride; as softness to luxury and dissipation. VIII. Temptations have OPPOSITE METHODS. Gentle persuasion first, violent constraint afterwards. IX. All temptations are ALIKE IN EFFECT. 1. Some strike the tempted one, laying him low by unexpected occurrences. 2. Others creep into the mind little by little, killing while resisting by soft suggestions. X. Temptations are INTERMITTENT. The devil departs for a season, but returns to be victorious when least expected. (*Claude de Lingeirdes.*) It is not enough for Him to fulfil the law, but He suffers Himself to be tempted to break it. (*Farindon.*) *How we are to overcome our temptations*:—I. WE ARE ALL TEMPTED. Satan is behind all temptations. II. SOME OCCASIONS ARE MORE SUITABLE TO THE TEMPTER'S PURPOSES THAN OTHERS. Moments of joy, sorrow, or unwatchfulness he often seizes. III. THE TEMPTATION TO SIN FOR THE SAKE OF BREAD IS COMMON, and many are misled by it. Many who shrink from dark ways are guilty of distrust in their temporal circumstances. What an affluence of victorious power there is in that, "Hence, Satan." (*Dr. J. P. Lange.*) I. Though the devil come not in person to us, as he did to Christ, yet HE COMES BY HIS INSTRUMENTS. Balak sent to Balaam. II. There be some that will say THEY WERE NEVER TEMPTED WITH KINGDOMS. It may well be, for it needs not, when less will serve. The devil need never carry us so high as the mount, the pinnacle is high enough; yea, the lowest steeple in all the town would serve the turn. Let us but stand in our window, or in our doors, if he will give us but so much as we see there, he will tempt us thoroughly. We will accept it, and thank him too. III. In temptation there IS BOTH FIRE TO CONSUME OUR FAITH, AND A DART TO WOUND OUR CONSCIENCES. (*Bishop Lancelot Andrewes.*) *The temptation of Christ, and its subjective results*:—1. Succour. 2. Sympathy. 3. Example. (*T. McRae, M.A.*) *The temptation of Jesus*:—1. Divinely permitted. 2. Humanly conditioned. 3. Diabolically caused. 4. Cunningly planned. 5. Successfully resisted. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*)

*Analogy confirms the doctrine of a tempter*:—Do not men tempt each other? Sinners entice. Some men are public tempters; tempters of a nation, of an age, to bad feelings, principles, and practices. A Voltaire is a tempter by his wit; a Hume, by his sophistry; a Rousseau, by eloquence; a Byron, by the splendours of poetic genius. Every bad man in an elevated situation is a public tempter. (*R. Watson.*) *Satan an indirect tempter as the corrupter of our nature*:—Green wood will not burn; dry wood soon takes fire; he then who, although he does not act the part of an incendiary, dries the wood in order that it may the sooner ignite, has a real share in the cause of the conflagration. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *The soul must select a guiding influence*:—As when a ship nears land, various pilots are sometimes seen to approach and bid for her guidance; then one, and then another, comes up to the vessel till the terms are settled, after which the successful applicant may be watched as the ship is towed out of the channel into the river. So the soul must agree to accept some guiding influence amongst the different ones which beset her, and to be controlled and conducted afterwards by it. (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual delight varied by severe temptation*:—This mingling of contraries runs through all our history. The scenery of a human life, like the scenery of nature, has its fertile plains, its grim ravines, its bleak and barren hills. Now it is bathed in the sunlight of a great joy, again it is overcast and saddened by the sorrows whose memory will never fade. (*H. Shaw.*) Close to those sunlit heights there yawn downwards at our feet black and awful precipices, and one false step may be fatal. (*G. S. Barrett, B.A.*) *Christian maturity a safeguard against temptation*:—The smallest bird can pick off the blossoms of a tree; if that blossom be not nibbled away, but grow a fair apple, the hurt is small that the fowls of the air can do unto it: so the firstlings

of a godly life are in the greatest danger; Satan wants no sagacity to observe his advantages, but is aware that if the camp put their spade into the ground for a few days, and cast their trenches, they will hardly be displanted. (*Hacket.*) Christ is no sooner out of the water of baptism than He is in the fire of temptation. (*Burkit.*) *Temptation a ministerial qualification:*—Ministers should not only be men of science, but of experience. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Temptation a test of ability for special work:*—This is not without the good providence of God, who hereby will prove His servants, to whom He will commit some special work. (*Ibid.*) *The tempter seeks to destroy eminent men:*—If Satan can foil the leaders, the bands are soon overcome; smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; cast down cedars, and they will crush many shrubs with their fall. (*T. Taylor.*) *Temptation no evidence of Divine disfavour:*—Jesus was not less the well-beloved Son of God in the wilderness of Judæa, than when He had just come up out of the waters of Jordan. (*D. Bagot, B.D.*) *The tempter seeks to frustrate eminent grace:*—The unfurnished house is safe; danger is to be apprehended only when the dwelling is well-stocked with money, plate, or jewels. The traveller may proceed with immunity, whose empty purse presents no attraction to the robber. (*T. Smith.*) *The wicked insensible to temptation:*—The bird that is captured by the fowler's snare, or overspread by his net, is unaware of her thraldom so long as she lies still, or continues feeding on the earth; but no sooner does she try to soar aloft and seek the heavens, than her perplexity begins, and the more she strives, the more she feels herself ensnared. (*Ibid.*) *Temptation conducive to strength:*—No man was ever worth much who did not pass through some severe ordeals. A mushroom or a cucumber may be raised in the summer-house: not so the oak. When you want that to grow you plant it on the mountain slope, where it strikes its roots deeper into the soil, and becomes more compact in its fibre, because of the resistance it offers to the passing storm. The human frame, if it is to acquire strength, must not be wrapped for years in swaddling clothes, but trained to run in the race, and wrestle in the strife. The good soldier is not made in time of peace. (*Dr. Landels.*) *Inward purity the best defence against temptation:*—Put a burning match to tinder or gunpowder, and it will kindle presently; but put it to water, and it will quench it straight: so it fareth in temptations. Our corrupt hearts, like tinder, do easily suffer corruption to kindle in us; but Christ's most holy heart did presently quench the evil of Satan's motions. And thus we see how Christ was tempted, and yet without sin. (*W. Perkins, D.D.*) *Solitude favourable to temptation:*—The lonely tree stands more exposed to the tempest than that which is encircled by its fellows. (*Ibid.*) *Temptation conducive to beauty:*—The pebble cannot be polished without friction, nor can the graces of the Christian be fully developed without trials. (*L. H. Wiseman.*) A Christian tempted in business is like a ship in a gale; occupation and necessary duties are the friendly windward headlands which break the force of the gale, under whose shelter the vessel may ride in safety; but he who is tempted in solitude is like the ship which has to encounter the full fury of the hurricane in the unsheltered open sea. (*Ibid.*) *Divine sympathy the outcome of Divine temptation:*—We read that when King Richard I. had been on the sea near Sicily like to be drowned, he recalled that ancient and barbarous custom whereby the goods of shipwrecked men were escheated to the crown, making provision that those goods should be preserved for the right owners. (*Dr. Taylor.*) *The tempter's allies within the soul:*—If we had no enemies to batter down our walls and holds without us, we have inward and domestic rebels and traitors which continually betray us. *The tempter first seeks to gain a little advantage:*—As a cunning thief, if he can find room but for the point of a wrench, will quickly make strong doors to fly open. (*T. Taylor, D.D.*) *The tempter ignored is the tempter assisted:*—Some deny the existence of Satan. He knows that he can often work most effectually where his presence is least suspected. As a perfect orator wholly forgets himself, being absorbed in his subject, so Satan, as a consummate tempter, is willing to be himself forgotten, if his ends be accomplished. A thief never wishes to make himself conspicuous. Accordingly, the most subtle and dangerous temptations are precisely those which we least imagine come from the devil. (*L. H. Wiseman, M.A.*)

Ver. 2. **Fasted.**—*Temptation:*—I. Satan has the WORST DESIGNS UNDER THE MOST FRIENDLY APPEARANCES. II. When Satan tempts, HE CAN APPEAR TO BE INVISIBLE, as suits him best. He tempted Christ invisibly, and then appeared (Luke iv. 2, and text, vers. 2, 3). III. Satan tempts us TO DOUBT SOME THINGS MOST PLAIN AND CERTAIN. IV.

When temptations are well suited, they are sometimes VERY PLAUSIBLE. To Jesus—to prove His Sonship; for food, being hungry. V. Things lawful in themselves become SINFUL BY CIRCUMSTANCES. VI. It is an encouragement to the tempted to see HOW GOD HAS APPEARED FOR OTHERS. To Jesus, to Elijah, &c. (Deut. viii. 3, 4). VII. He that would prevail against temptation must STAND ON SCRIPTURE GROUND. (*Skeletons of Sermons.*) *Sundry motives for religious fasting*:—1. Shall Christ fast for us and not we for ourselves? 2. Shall the Pharisees fast twice a week in hypocrisy, and we not once in our lives in sincerity? 3. Can we cheerfully take us for our bodily health to fasting, and will we do nothing for our soul's health? 4. Can worldly men, for a good market, fast from morning to evening, and can Christians be so careless as to dedicate no time to the exercising of fasting and prayer, to increase the gain of godliness? 5. Is not this a seasonable exhortation? hath not God sounded the trumpet to fasting? (Matt. ix. 16.) When the bridegroom is taken away it is time to fast. (*T. Taylor, D.D.*) This was the true, the model fast. Fulness of bread, abundance of luxury, makes God's work impossible; but look to it that the fasting be not the substitute for, but the handmaid of, the devotion—not the end, but the means. (*C. J. Vaughan, D.D.*) *The fast*:—I. The LIMITS of Christ's fast. His fast lasted the same length of time as that of Moses and Elias; thus we may see in Christ the end and explanation of the Old Testament. How often in Scripture this number "forty" occurs. But not simply the length but to the limit of Christ's fast we direct attention. We are not told that our Lord practised austerities, except in the desert. The universality and perfectness of Christ's life did not admit of its being contracted into a single idea or type of holiness. He too would thus have lent support to the idea that holiness is in external practices; whereas it was His great purpose to point to states of mind and heart as the pith of perfection. Christianity must not in all cases be modelled upon a forbidding asceticism; we must remember the limits of the fast, and that He who sanctioned austerity was present at the marriage festival. II. The PURPOSES of Christ's fast. 1. Its purpose in reference to the past. The first sin was the violation of the law of abstinence; His fast was an expression of sorrow for that transgression, and for the sins of intemperance which have resulted. Fasting may be a natural effect of sorrow, but this of rare occurrence in a soul burdened with grievous sin. 2. Christ's fast had also relation to the present. He fasted as an example to teach us one of the means for vanquishing the tempter. 3. Christ's fast sanctified fasting also in relation to the future, as a means for increasing illumination. Coming before His public ministry He sanctioned it as calculated to produce an accession of light in the soul. It will be seen that light springs from mortification if we observe how darkness is the result of self-indulgence. III. The CONDITIONS of Christ's fast. 1. It must be a real self-denial. The first degree of mortification is the ceasing to gratify fallen inclinations; then the surrender of superfluities; then the withdrawal from the concerns of life; finally it touches even the necessaries of life. 2. It was in secret, in the depths of the desert. It should not be vainglorious. 3. With the enlargement of the motives of fasting, there was also an importation of brightness into the practice. Our Lord was led by the Spirit, and where the Spirit is, there is joy, peace, &c. There is danger of losing sweetness of temper unless the fast be sustained by the Spirit. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *Storming the inward city of sin*:—The root of sin is within. You may take a city by siege as well as by direct attack; fasting is the weakening of the enemy by the former process—by the withdrawal of supplies. (*Ibid.*) **An hungred.**—*Temptation through the bodily appetites*:—In warm weather vast numbers of wasps and other insects are caught by bottles of syrup, into which they are easily enticed by the sweet and tempting fluid, but are unable to escape, and so are drowned. Temptation often assails us through our lawful appetites. Christ, whose temptations were types of ours, was invited by Satan to make bread to satisfy His hunger. . . . As a cunning fowler sets his limed ears of corn to catch sparrows in a hard frost or great snow, when they are ready to starve. (*Diez.*)

Ver. 3. **If Thou be the Son of God.**—His object is to shake Christ's confidence in the Fatherly character of God. (*Dr. Macleod.*) Tempted to distrust the Divine Providence. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *As the devil laboureth most against our faith, so should we most labour in fortifying it*:—Policy teacheth men to plant the most strength at that fort or part of the wall where the enemy plants his greatest ordnance, and makes the strongest assault. And nature teacheth us to defend all our parts, but especially our head and heart, and such like vital parts. (*Dr. Taylor.*)

*Faith determines victory* :—If Satan take away our root, how can our branch flourish? If he break our band, all that is bound up will shatter in pieces. If he cut off our anchor, our vessel will be driven upon the rocks. If he overcome our trust in God, he will subdue all unto himself, for this is the victory that overcometh the world (1 John iv. 5).

Ver. 3. **Command that these stones.**—Implying in these few words: 1. That it is an easy thing—say the word. 2. That it is now fit; here is an object ready, here be stones, *these* stones. 3. That it is harmless, only a proof of the power of the Son of God. 4. That it is a necessary thing; is it not necessary for a man that is ready to starve to eat and procure bread? 5. That it is a glorious thing to command *stones*. 6. That it is a work of special use, not only for the use of Thyself in this want, but to satisfy me. 7. That it is not unreasonable; to command a few stones to be made bread will be no hurt to any man. 8. The Son of God should demean Himself as the Son of such a Father, therefore by this action manifest that which Thy estate doth not. (*Ibid.*) *An inducement to satisfy lawful needs and desires by unlawful means* :—What is the safeguard against this peril? 1. Not by denying the legitimacy of the desires of the bodily organization. 2. By showing that man's present life was not the gratification of a bodily need, but the satisfaction of the hunger of the spirit in God. (*G. S. Barrett, B.A.*) Let us beware of acting the devil's part by discouraging those whom God has afflicted. (*L. H. Wiseman.*) *Why would it have been improper had He turned a stone into a loaf?*—1. He would have by that act placed an impassable gulf between Himself and His brethren. 2. It was important that Christ's miracles should be free from suspicion, that they were not for the gratification of His own wants. 3. The motive constitutes an action good or evil, the circumstances in this case would have determined it wrong. 4. It would have been inconsistent with the whole recorded life of Jesus. (*Ibid.*) *The cunning of Satan in this temptation* :—1. He skilfully chooses his time. 2. He suggests nothing which appears to be a great sin. 3. He presents this to Christ as an act of necessity. 4. The plea he employs is one which Jesus could not reject. 5. In the proposal there was no appearance of pampering the body, but only of providing for absolute need. *Reply to the first temptation* :—1. In this answer Satan is left unsatisfied. Uneducated disciples are not bound to answer all Satan's questions. 2. The snare was avoided. 3. Patience in enduring hunger till God send Him a supply. 4. When we have bread we must still live by the Word of the Lord. 5. When we appear to be without bread the Word of the Lord can sustain us. (*Ibid.*) *The first temptation* :—I. The VISIBILITY of the tempter. The Evangelists seem to imply that the tempter presented himself before the eyes of Christ. It is objected to this view :—1. That while good angels are permitted to address men under visible forms, evil angels are not recorded to have done so. 2. That Satan by undisguised appearance would have no prospect of success. But he addressed our first parents under a visible form. The second objection assumes that the visible form of Satan is necessarily unsightly. II. SATAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. Satan was not *certain* about Christ's Divine Sonship; hence he sought to find out if Christ could create or change substances. III. The LIMITS of the temptation. 1. It has been said that Christ's temptation differs from ours in that His were only external, and ours internal also; that Christ had no susceptibility to temptation, but simply heard what Satan had to say without any inward excitement of desire. This takes from it its essence and removes it from us. We would not limit the temptation to an external trial. 2. We would not reduce it to the general idea of suffering, on account of contact with the tempter. We maintain that each temptation appealed to a desire in the heart of Christ, which His will restrained and refused to gratify. The true limits of the mystery :—1. Christ was absolutely sinless. 2. Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, no taint of the Fall was permitted to intermingle with the foundation of His human life. There was a certain impossibility of His sinning; but this must not be so explained as to destroy the faculty of free will, which is a constituent element of human nature. We must not so interpret impossibility to sin as not to permit susceptibility of temptation to co-exist with it. Upon the exercise of free will in Christ depends His merits, the reality of His temptation, the force of His example. IV. The REALITY of the temptation. If we subject temptation to analysis we find five ingredients. (1) Desire; (2) Law; (3) Opposition between desire and law; (4) Suggestion; (5) Free will. Desire may be simply natural, the movement of pure nature; or when some morbid quality has been imported into it, which gives it a

wrong direction. The former was in Christ; but not the latter. There are two kinds of laws—positive and moral—the natural desires may be restrained by the former, the corrupt desires by the latter. The craving, whatever it be, must come into collision with the law. In the case of a pure creature the clash must be with a positive law; with a corrupt creature it will be also with the moral law. Now in Christ the desire of the body was in opposition to the Divine will; the pure desire of nature was contrary to what He knew to be the Father's will. In this sense His was inward and real temptation. Several truths must be taken into calculation in comparing Christ's temptation with ours. 1. That the desires which are original and form part of our nature are, in the long run, the more intense. 2. The finer sensibilities of His uncorrupt nature. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) 1. If every good Christian were satisfied at all times with temporal blessings we should appear to serve God for our profit. 2. God does not always give bread to him that is his son, that he may loathe this world and look for reward in heaven. 3. The good man shall fill his bosom with better fruits. (*Hacket.*) *Christ and the Christian alike in temptation:*—The struggle, as far as possible, was the same as in us. The lifeboat must brave the same storm, and plough through the same foaming billows, which threaten to engulph her, as the wrecked vessel to which she bears relief; and though so constructed as to be able to bear up against the fury of the waves, she needs the careful steerage, persevering efforts, ay, and courage, of those who venture forth to save the sinking ship. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*)

Ver. 4. **It is written.**—*The infallible book:*—The uses to which it may be put. Christ used it:—1. To defend His Sonship; 2. To defeat temptation; 3. As a direction to His way; 4. For maintaining His own Spirit. How to handle the word:—1. With deepest reverence. 2. Have it always ready. 3. Understand its meaning. 4. Learn to appropriate Scripture to yourself. 5. Stand by the Scriptures, whatever they may cost you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Bible a moral defence.*—We read that Oliver Cromwell had in his army one regiment—a fine, strong regiment—called "The Ironsides." They were very religious men. And it was quite the custom for almost every soldier to carry his Bible to battle with him. They used to carry their Bible under their dress; and more than once, in a battle, the soldier would have been shot through the heart but for his Bible. The bullet went through his Bible, or it would have gone through his heart. The Bible saved the heart! (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Bible a victorious power:*—This is the sickle which cuts down all the tares which Satan sows among the good wheat; this is the ark of God before which all the idols of the Philistines fall flat to the ground; this is the trumpet of Joshua whose noise overturneth the walls of Jericho. (*Hacket.*) **Bread alone.**—*The bread of life:*—I. There is THAT CONDITION OF BEING IN WHICH MAN LIVES BY BREAD. 1. It represents man as utterly subservient to material necessities. The springs of man's noblest life are planted in necessity. How beautiful is this requisition for labour! A consequence of this law of effort is mutual service. An awful thing when man is reduced to a mere machine for getting bread. The wickedness of systems which tend to intensify such a condition. Such a man lives for something outside himself—for some interest which bread represents. Living by bread alone he estimates everything by the bread standard. II. Let me URGE UPON YOU THE HIGHER LIFE. "Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "I have bread to eat that ye know not of." 1. Every good man does not live by bread alone, but by that God from whom it comes. 2. He realizes that he is not a mere instrument, but an end in himself. 3. He has a different standard of valuation from that of the mere bread standard. He thinks of utilities in a larger and nobler sense than other men. He values the true in the light of its truth, and not of its profit. 4. How we live upon traditions, upon the mere say-so of other people, the current of popular conviction, instead of coming and taking the word out of the mouth of God! III. The point of the most fearful temptation is WHEN MEN ARE TEMPTED TO SACRIFICE THE INTERESTS OF THE HIGHER LIFE TO THE CLAIMS OF THE LOWER. You may lose fortune but gain goodness; you are made one with Christ. (*E. H. Chaplin.*) *Literally true that man does not live by bread alone:*—Do we think of the bread alone when it is placed on our tables? Are we not reminded from whence it comes—what wondrous mysteries have conspired to bring it there—the fair sunlight that shone upon the soil—the heavenly dew that moistened the earth—the mysterious processes of nature that brought forth, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear?" Does man live by bread alone, or by Divine wisdom, power, and goodness, which

conspire in the wondrous loom of nature to weave the result and form the agency by which we get that bread? (*Ibid.*) *Mentally, man does not live by "bread" alone:*—Sometimes people go to a rich man's house and wonder that he pays so much money for a picture. The money they think might bring in interest or might be applied to purposes of utility, and they consider it a waste to expend five or ten thousand dollars for a work of art. Little do they imagine how that picture enriches and refines that man's soul, elevating it to a higher conception of all beauty; how it enables him to understand why the swamp mists become festoons and upholsteries of glory before the setting sun; why the grass is green, the heavens blue, and the rolling waves of the sea are interlaced with threads of sunlight; because, viewing them as proceeding out of the mouth of God, he comprehends them, and says, "The money that I have given for it, that could not make me richer, because it perfects me, and helps form me for an end." (*Ibid.*) *The poverty of the "bread" standard of life:*—He discerns as much the glory of God in the miniature world revealed in a single drop of water, as in a great planet. One man is overawed by the solemn aspect of the mountain, and the glory of the forest waving with the breath of the summer breeze. Another wonders how many hundred acres of land there are and how much timber in it. That is all the universe is to him. So the characters of men are revealed according to their standard of valuation; and, I repeat, if a man's life is wholly down to the bread standard of life, he sees merely the material interests of this world. (*Ibid.*) *Life in nature needs varied elements for sustenance:*—It is like saying that a tree cannot live merely upon water. It needs other elements which the rich earth must give. (*Phillips Brooks.*) **Every word.**—*Man's spiritual food:*—I. Man has a spiritual as well as a corporeal nature—a spiritual nature which requires food. II. The Word of God is the true food of the soul of man. It is spiritual food adapted to man's spiritual nature, and also to its condition as guilty and impure. (*Studies for the pulpit.*) *Word of God compared to food:*—I. The PROPRIETY of the metaphor. As it is essential to the life of the soul, and the source of strength. II. Its peculiar CHARACTERISTICS. Heavenly and Divine, superabundant, endless variety, gratuitous bestowment, universal communication. III. Our DUTY WITH RESPECT TO IT. We should thankfully receive it, believingly feed upon it, grow and improve by it, constantly apply it. (*Dr. Burns.*)

Ver. 5. **Pinnacle of the temple.**—Tempted to self-destruction. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The second temptation:*—I. SATAN'S DOUBT. "If Thou be the Son of God," &c. II. HIS PURPOSE. He urged on Christ an act of self-destruction. He was from the beginning the cause of death in all forms. III. The ARGUMENT with which he supported it. A quotation from Scripture. IV. The PASSION to which he appealed. The pride of the human heart, to display. V. It was a REAL temptation; it contained desire, collision between desire and law, suggestion, and free will. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *Temptations on the pinnacle:*—I. VIEW THE TEMPTATION ITSELF. 1. The place of this temptation. It was high; it was holy. 2. The first effort of the devil was to sap the foundations of the Saviour's strength with a doubt—"If Thou be the Son of God." The point of attack was our Lord's Sonship. 3. The cunning tempter has paved the way for the Satanic suggestion, "Cast Thyself down." 4. The suggestion was backed up by a text of Scripture. He misquotes the text and omits "in all thy ways." God does not promise to keep us in ways of our own choosing. 5. The answer which the Saviour gave. II. A FEW CONSIDERATIONS DEDUCED FROM THE WHOLE. 1. Jesus was tempted as I am. 2. Jesus was tempted, but Jesus never sinned. 3. Jesus not only did not fall, but He triumphed gloriously. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) The devil may suggest: compel he cannot. (*St. Chrysostom.*) It appeals to the trust which had been triumphant over temptation a moment before. Not even trust in God can expect God to save it from the consequences of presumption and disobedience; it must conform to the laws of God. *Subordinate lessons:*—The apparent teaching of any isolated text of Scripture always needs to be interpreted and limited by the whole of Scripture. 2. There is often the exaggeration and distortion of virtue. Trust becomes presumption. Strike any one note of human goodness and you will be sure to hear its accompanying discord. (*G. S. Barrett, B.A.*) *Practical reflections:*—1. No place is so sacred as to be free from the devil's intrusion. 2. The difference between God's miracles and Satan's prodigies. 3. How different is the guidance of our Saviour from the guidance of our adversary; He casts down and then lifts up. 4. Ye who dwell in lofty places remark that Satan is ever near to take advantage of your unwatchfulness and give you a shameful fall. 5. The

limitation of his power. (*L. H. Wiseman.*) *Elevation in order to destruction*:—On the rocky shore of Cornwall you may see the black cormorant seizing its prey, a shell-fish, flying up with it in the air, and then letting it fall upon some rock, that the shell may be broken in pieces. The great destroyer sometimes deals with those who serve him in a similar way. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 6. **Angels charge.**—*The angelic ministers of the good*:—I. Commissioned by God. They are "His angels"—obey His behests, carry out His purpose. II. Exercised for the godly as individuals. God does not overlook the individual in the multitude (1 Kings xix. 4–8; Dan. vi. 22; Acts xii. 7–10). . . . III. By means of the exercise of this angelic ministry the godly are enabled to surmount all the hindrances and conquer all the foes that beset their way. 1. Encouragement to trust in God. 2. The dignity of the godly. (*W. Jones.*)

Ver. 7. **Not tempt the Lord thy God.**—I. The essential DIFFERENCE between faith and presumption. II. The POSSIBILITIES of presumption. 1. When we undertake to settle questions which are beyond our range. 2. When we look for bodily health without obeying the laws of nature. 3. When we expect sufficient means without sufficient labour and moderation in enjoyment. 4. When we hope for admission into the kingdom of God, and postpone earnest application for entrance. 5. When we expect steadfastness and growth, while we neglect the sources of spiritual strength. III. Its heavy PENALTIES. (*W. Clarkson, B.A.*) *Proving* God is different from *tempting* Him. (*Wiseman.*)

Ver. 8. **Again, the devil.**—*The third temptation*:—I. The PREPARATION for this temptation. Satan suits the external circumstances to the temptation, and draws his snare from them. All the senses may be sources of temptation, but chief amongst them is the eye. It is more closely allied to the imagination than the other senses, and feeds it with objects. II. The OFFER. 1. The altered form of the temptation. He did not preface his assault with the confession of doubt or flattery, "If Thou be the Son of God." Perhaps he felt the incongruity of such a form of address when the condition he proposed was an act of adoration to himself; or he no longer explored Christ's Divinity. 2. The passion appealed to—the most powerful—the inordinate love of possessing. Satan offered to resign his power in this world and the next. III. The CONDITION. IV. This is a REAL temptation to Christ. 1. A warning against worldliness. 2. That such an act should be suggested to Christ may prevent those who are troubled with horrid thoughts from despair. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *The persistency of Satan*:—As an enemy that besiegeth a city will go about it, and espy where the wall is weakest, and most fit for his entrance, and there will be sure to give his strongest onset; and as a man that would strike fire with a flint will turn it about in his hand, to see what part is fittest, even so the devil: he goes about a man, and, as it were, turns him to and fro to spy out his weakness, and to what sins he is most inclined; and there he will be sure to try him often, and to assault him with the greatest violence. *Example*: If a man be impatient of poverty, he will seek to carry him to picking and stealing; if a man be prone to covetousness, he will provoke him to fraud and oppression; if he be inclined to ambition, Satan will puff him up with pride and vainglory. (*W. Perkins.*) *Successive temptations*:—Like the wave that falls over upon the sea shore, only to be followed by others, perhaps of more encroaching violence. (*E. Scobell, M.A.*) *The subtlety of Satan*:—Satan, by the subtlety of his nature and long experience, knoweth our estate, our temper, our hunger, our chief desires; and, accordingly, setteth on us. For though he know not the heart directly, yet he knows our corruption in general, as we are men. Further, by our outward behaviour and gesture he can gather our especial corruptions, as a physician, by outward signs in the pulses and the like, can judge of the particular disease within. Besides, his experience giveth him much light into our weakness, so as like a cunning angler, he can bait his hook, so as he hath experience the fish will take; and though he see not the fish in the water, yet by his gule and cork he can tell when he is taken. So Satan hath for sundry men sundry baits, and can tell by the eye, hand, speech, gesture, whether the man be or will be taken. (*T. Taylor, D.D.*) *Defeat made subservient to victory by Satan*:—It is said of the Duke of Wellington, that he knew how to extract from defeat the means of victory. The prince of darkness is well skilled in this art. (*L. H. Wiseman.*) **Kingdoms of the world.**—His aim was to induce Jesus to seek universal dominion in an easier way than the prophets had

foretold, and which the Father had marked out. (*Ibid.*) *Satan's delusive offer of the world:*—Satan cannot offer us similar greatness; but he tempts by ruling ambition; as in the case of Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon. And how the poor fools were betrayed! Alexander dies of drunkenness; Cæsar was stabbed in the Senate-house by a friend; and Napoleon died in exile at St. Helena. He tempts also by mere ordinary worldly blessings. (*R. Watson.*) He concealed their vanity. *Reflections on the third temptation:*—1. The danger attending worldly prosperity. 2. It is a constant device of Satan to present to us a partial and false view of the world. 3. In the example of Jesus we have a perfect instance of deadness to the world. 4. The example of our Lord rebukes covetous and worldly ambition. 5. That Satan is after all a hard master; under the guise of liberality he solicits severe conditions. 6. Our Lord reveals to us the true riches. 7. The Church is destined for universal dominion. (*L. H. Wiseman.*)

Ver. 9. **Will I give.**—Abraham, when the king of Sodom offered him some part of his spoils, refused to take so much as a shoe-latchet of him, that the king of Sodom might not say another day that he had made Abraham rich; that men might not say that Abraham had been made rich, not by God's blessing, but by the king's means, and that he might thank the king of Sodom for what he had. So a godly man will not gain, or desire to gain, so much as a shoe-string or a shoe-thread by profaning the Sabbath with the Sidonian merchant, by fraud or deceit, by oppression or extortion, by biting usury, the devil's brokery, by rifling and plundering, or by any other unlawful or indirect means, that the devil may not one day say that he hath made him rich, as he said sometime to our Saviour. (*Gataber.*) He never keeps his promises. (*Wiseman.*)

Ver. 10. **Worship the Lord thy God.**—*Divine worship:*—I. Divine worship is A HUMAN INSTINCT. Among all the living occupants of the earth, man is the only worshipper. Man feels after the Divine. Hence, in different ages, different evidences of man's worshipfulness—sacred grove, mosque, synagogue, temple, church. Man's natural tendency has never been not to worship; but to worship too many objects. Paganism divided and weakened worship. Christianity concentrates and gives life, force, and unity to the worship. II. Christian worship ENNOBLES THE WORSHIPPER. "The Lord thy God!" In the worship of such a God, man's own intellect is ennobled, and his heart purified. His whole humanity is raised. III. The worship and service of the Christian religion are UNENDING. "Thou shalt worship," &c. There are no limitations to that command in the Book; none in the human heart. The moral aspirations of the soul are enduring as itself. (*Nevison Loraine.*) *The object of worship:*—I. The qualifications necessary to constitute a being a proper object for Divine adoration. II. What is the worship God requires? III. Why we should worship God. He commands. Is our Creator, &c. In it consists our happiness. (*Anon.*) *Worship and service:*—I. WE MUST WORSHIP. 1. A man can never be too reverent to God. 2. Our religion must be uncovered. 3. The wandering eye must learn to be fastened on Him. 4. Jacob, though he were not able to stand or kneel, yet leaned upon his staff, and worshipped God. 5. This must be done as duty due to God, and in regard of those that be strangers. II. WE MUST SERVE. 1. Bow the soul when we bow the body. 2. We must serve God with our sacrifices. 3. Not with our sins. 4. Not with our iniquities. 5. God must be above all: and of whomsoever a man is overcome, to him he is in bondage. (*Bishop Lancelot Andrewes.*)

Ver. 11. **The devil leaveth him.**—*The end of the temptation:*—I. Satan's departure ON THE SIDE OF CHRIST. Christ had repelled Satan in the third temptation in quite a different way from that in the previous contests (Luke iv. 8). A coercive and indignant dismissal. II. Satan also WITHDREW WILLINGLY. He had exhausted his temptations. All the varied forms of temptation are reduceable to three—pride avarice, and sensuality. Three root-passions (1 John ii. 16). So Christ tempted in *all* points as we are. Had Satan remained he had no more weapons to try. At the fitting moment Christ revealed His hatred of sin. This overthrow was a new experience. III. How far this WITHDRAWAL WAS TEMPORARY. Satan returned in the Passion, but indirectly through others. He entered into Judas. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *Primarily temptations few.* They are like languages which, though many, are divided into groups or families, and are traceable to a few primitive sources. (*Ibid.*) *Temptation productive of good:*—Thus it may prove with us as with

the oyster, which stops with a precious pearl the hole in its shell which was originally a disease; as with the broken limb, which having been set, *may* be stronger than if it never had been broken. It may fare with us as islanders of the Southern Ocean fancy that it fares with them; counting, as they do, that the strength and valour of the warrior whom they have slain in battle passes into themselves as their rightful inheritance. The strength which lay in the temptation has shifted its seat, and passed over into the man who has overcome the temptation. (*R. C. Trench.*) *Christ the Captain of the tempted:*—In the old Roman times, there was a great Roman general to whom one of his soldiers said: "Oh! the enemy are so many. We are not half so many as the enemy! The enemy is twice as many as we are." The general said to him, "*How many do you count me for?*" Do you understand? There are "more with us than there are against us." Jesus is with us. How many do you count *Him* for? (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The victory:*—1. It was complete. 2. It was not final. 3. It was the precursor of other victories, even that of the cross. 4. He has not endured one temptation more than was necessary. 5. The propriety of the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." 6. It was obtained through self-sacrifice. 7. It supplies an antidote to doubt and despair. 8. It was watched in heaven. (*L. H. Wiseman.*) **Angels came.**—*Ministering angels:*—1. Thoughts. 2. Friends. 3. Children. 4. Books. 5. Flowers. *Angels came:*—1. To congratulate Christ after His victory. 2. From a disinterested love of us. 3. Because of their love for Christ. 4. To honour God. 5. To teach us the dignity of human nature when faithful in temptation. 6. Christ by this victory had formed a fresh link with the angels—they had passed through trial. 7. Human nature stands between heavenly and Satanic influences. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*)

Ver. 16. **Sat in darkness.**—*Darkness and light:*—I. The DEEP DARKNESS which envelops the world without the gospel. "Darkness" and "the region of the shadow of death," striking emblems of error, ignorance, sin, guilt, misery, danger. 1. The heathen world is in this darkness (Rom. i. 18–32). 2. In the very midst of Christendom there is this darkness. Home heathenism, &c. The condition of all unregenerate men. II. The UPRISING OF A GLORIOUS LIGHT for the transformation of the darkness. There is no redeeming principle in man's apostate nature. But for the prospects opened by the gospel, there must be the darkness of final and absolute despair. Materialism, &c., are as powerless as the ancient systems to reach the conscience and renew the heart (Isa. xxxviii. 17, xlv. 8, and others). But glorious is the view in the text, &c. Concerning this light, observe—1. Its source. The gospel is "light," and this marks its divinity. "God who commanded," &c. 2. Its adaptation: To every stage of human society; to the common wants of man—instruction, comfort, &c.; to every order of mind; to every possible condition, &c. The gospel offers pardon for the guilty, &c. 3. Its diffusiveness. A "great light"—penetrating. Progress of the gospel in apostolic times, &c. In how many dark places has "light sprung up," &c. 4. Its efficacy. Not a dead letter, but "the power of God," &c. It will finally prevail—"All the ends of the earth shall see," &c. 1. Has the light arisen upon your soul? 2. Are you manifesting it in your life, &c.? 3. Are you doing what you can to communicate it to others? (*A. Tucker.*) *Light for those who sit in darkness:*—I. SOME SOULS ARE IN GREATER DARKNESS THAN OTHERS. 1. The darkness of ignorance. 2. The darkness of error. 3. The gloom of discomfort and sorrow, attended with fear. 4. Hopelessness, "sat in darkness." 5. In the region of death. II. For those who are in a worse condition than others THERE IS HOPE AND LIGHT. 1. In barbarous nations Christ has won great victories. 2. In the worst hearts Christ has dawned. 3. When these have beheld the light, they frequently become eminently useful to others. 4. The conversion of the deplorably dark brings the highest degree of glory to God. III. The true light for a soul in darkness is ALL IN CHRIST. 1. There is light in Christ's name for a troubled sinner. 2. In His person and nature. 3. In His offices. 4. In His character. IV. The poor soul in darkness need not despair, FOR LIGHT IS ALL AROUND YOU. It has already "sprung up." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 17. **Jesus began to preach.**—*The scientific art of preaching:*—I. I would insist upon the prominence given to preaching in the Church of God: the text marks the introduction of A NEW SCIENCE. 1. Our Lord might have instituted this agency without preaching Himself. He might have sent an angel; but He set us the copy of this new science Himself. Three Greek words are used in the New Tes-

tament, and translated "preach" in connection with our Lord's ministry. One is "evangelize," which means to declare good tidings; the next word means "to declare as a herald;" a third word implies argumentation. Here, then, we have the science of preaching defined. 2. From these historical facts, in the description of which we gain these words, it will not be difficult to deduce the underlying principles of this Divine science of preaching, that it is the announcement of glad tidings, the presence of an ambassador as the one announcing and pressing upon men by arguments which address the conscience, will, affections, and understanding. II. The text gives us the inauguration of A NEW ART. Preaching was original with Jesus Christ. 1. Show that this is a new science. Preaching did not exist in patriarchal times: it was not a Jewish institution: it was not practised among the Gentiles. 2. It was original, because until Jesus lived and died there was no good news to be told. III. This was a new RESPONSIBILITY. 1. That preaching is the sole agency for man's salvation. 2. It is the unlimited privilege of all believers. (*S. H. Tyng.*) **Repent.**—*Repentance*:—I. ITS ORIGIN. 1. It is of gospel parentage. 2. It is of gracious origin. II. ITS ESSENTIALS. 1. Illumination. 2. Humiliation. 3. Detestation. 4. Transformation. III. ITS COMPANIONS. 1. Faith. 2. Confession. 3. Holiness. 4. Peace. IV. ITS EXCELLENCIES. 1. Pleasantness. 2. It is sweet to God as well as to men. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Repentance and the kingdom of God*:—I. REPENTANCE SIGNIFIES A CHANGE OF MIND. 1. There is conviction of sin. 2. Sorrow for sin. 3. Confession of sin. 4. Amendment of life. II. REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. The phrase, "kingdom of heaven," is used only by St. Matthew. Jews did not want a spiritual kingdom. National quiet brings ruin. Our Lord gave Jews an opportunity to repent. (*A. Jones.*) *Repentance*: — I. THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE. 1. The commencement of repentance is a deep sorrow for sin. 2. The utter forsaking of sin. 3. A continuation of the good work begun. 4. The adding on to the whole train of Christian virtues. II. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. The glorious gospel was to be preached. III. THE NECESSITY OF REPENTING. (*E. Thompson, M.A.*) *Repent*:—I. Repentance is a necessary QUALIFICATION TO FIT US FOR GLORY. 1. Be it never so troublesome and painful a work, it is richly worth our while. 2. Reward is the life of action. 3. The encouragement of industry. II. Repentance does not only give us a future evidence for heaven, but PUTS US INTO ACTUAL POSSESSION. 1. It instates us into our happiness. 2. Is an earnest of future glory. Thus grace is the incohation of glory, and glory is the consummation of grace. III. What CONTENT must this needs be, to enjoy the morning of our eternity, even in this life; and through the crannies of our mortality to have a glimpse of that broad day of glory, which, unlike our longest days, will never have an end. IV. If every penitential tear were a diamond, and thou didst nothing all thy lifetime but shed tears of liquid pearl, the kingdom of heaven would still be a CHEAP PURCHASE. Thou shouldst never have cause to complain of thy bargain. (*Adam Littleton, D.D.*) *Repentance*:—This definition may be divided into three parts. I. A SORROWING for our sins. 1. This only is the penance whereto all the Scripture calleth us. 2. This penance do I now call you all unto. 3. This must be continually in us, and not merely for a Lent-season. 4. This must increase daily more and more in us. 5. Without this we cannot be saved. II. EXAMINING our sins. 1. Outward evil springs out of inward corruption. This must be perfectly and spiritually understood if we will come to the true knowledge of our sins. 2. Therefore let us get God's law as a glass to look in, and that not only literally, outwardly, or partly, but also spiritually, inwardly, and thoroughly. For, as St. Austin saith, it is a glass which feareth nobody; but even look what a one thou art, so it painteth thee out. III. A trust of pardon. IV. A purpose to amend, or a CONVERSION TO A NEW LIFE. Let your sorrowing for your evils demonstrate itself by departing from the evils you have used. Let your certainty of pardon of your sins through Christ, and your joy in Him, be demonstrated by pursuing the good things which God's Word teacheth you. 1. Repent your sins. 2. Believe in God's mercy for pardon. 3. Earnestly pursue a new life, bringing forth worthy and true fruits of repentance. (*John Bradford.*) All who sincerely obey, and do what He hath commanded, may be properly said to serve Him (1) By acknowledging the justice and goodness of His laws, and (2) His power and authority over them; (3) By loving, fearing, trusting, and believing on Him; (4) By being sober, temperate, for the honour of His image enstamped on you; (5) By being meek, patient, and thankful in all conditions, in whatsoever happens to you; (6) By being humble and lowly in your own eyes; (7) By being bountiful, kind, and merciful to

others; (8) By being just and righteous in all your dealings. (*William Beveridge, D.D.*) **Kingdom of heaven is at hand.**—*The kingdom of heaven is at hand:* —1. Daily. Somebody dies every day; folks are travelling in and out of this great Inn, the world, continually. 2. Death may suddenly come to your door. Though he hath passed by often without calling, he will knock at last, and when he summons, thou must away. As the angels did with Lot, while thou lingerest he will lay hold upon thy hand, and hasten thee away even against thy will. Therefore— I. Think often of thy own end, which is to thee the end of all things. When thou art gone, all is gone. II. Then it will be found that the best pillow to lay a dying head on will be a good conscience. III. Thou must then bid adieu to earth's spangled glories. Honours and estates will prove but weak cordials. IV. A thousand worlds will then be bid for one hour's respite; and it cannot be bought so, if thou hadst them to give. (*Adam Littleton, D.D.*)

Ver. 18. **Sea of Galilee.**—The New Testament shows us that *the Sea of Galilee* was well stocked with fish, as it still is, and that a considerable portion of the people dwelling on its shores were fishermen. The modes of catching fish were the same as are still in use in all parts of Western Asia. They are taken with the hook, or with a scoop-net fastened around a hoop, and suspended from the end of a pole. . . . Fishing on a larger scale is done by means of a long net, some three or four feet in width, with pieces of lead attached along one side to sink it, and of cork on the other to keep it afloat. The operation is performed by men occupying two boats. To one of these is made fast one end of the net, while the remainder is piled up in the other boat. The latter is rowed rapidly off in a curved line, while one of the crew gradually drops the net into the water. The net is now spread, resting in a perpendicular position in the water. The two boats then, holding each end of it, row quickly to the shore. The fishermen jump into the shallow water, and holding the net-ropes, drag it to shore, where they sit down and slowly and carefully collect all the fish, shell-fish, and refuse, which their net has scooped up, "gathering the good" into their baskets, and "casting the bad away." (*H. G. Van-Lennep, D.D.*) *Christ by the Sea of Galilee*:—I. THAT TO THE EYE OF CHRIST THE CHIEF OBJECT IN NATURE WAS MAN. 1. He was unlike those who view it in a merely mercenary spirit. 2. Or those who view it in merely sentimental mood. He regarded man as chief in nature—(1) Because man is the highest representation of God on earth; (2) Because he is the only intelligent appreciator of God on the earth; (3) Because he is the only voluntary servant of God on the earth. II. THAT THE CHIEF OBLIGATION OF MAN IS TO FOLLOW CHRIST. 1. The simplicity of His claim. 2. The Divine authority of His claim. 3. The powerfulness of His Word. III. THAT THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST QUALIFIES A MAN TO RESCUE HIS FELLOW-MAN. The text is an argument against underrating human nature; against mysticism in religion; against indolence in the cause of Christ. (*U. R. Thomas.*)

Ver. 19. **Follow Me.**—*Follow Me*:—1. Follow Christ as your Teacher. 2. As your Example. 3. As your Friend. 4. If you see to the following what will Christ do? (*D. B. Hooke.*) 1. These heavenly fishermen follow Christ personally. 2. They follow Him circumstantially. 3. They follow Him singly, with a single eye. (*H. Cole.*) The great lesson of the text may be summed up in this—that successful work for Jesus must spring out of a devout imitation of Him. "*Follow Me*," &c. In the example of Christ there are two points which it is important to look at. I. The estimate Jesus Christ gave to humanity in contrast with all the other objects that engaged His attention. In comparison with the claims of man, everything else was regarded as subsidiary. II. His whole career was evolved from this central conception in regard to humanity. *To save men*—that was His mission. *I must work*—that was His motto. These thoughts were always present to His mind. Our grand central controlling purpose must be the imitation of the Master, in striving to become the servant of all. 1. Christian work must so far resemble Christ's work as to be inspired with the soul of earnestness. 2. The possession of yearning pity and interest in humanity. 3. The cultivation of a spirit of large self-denial. 4. Persistency in effort. 5. Prayer. Does this command stir your soul to nobler work and better service, &c.? What is your response? (*W. Kelynack.*) *Follow Me*:—I. WHOM? Not simply a human teacher, but Jesus, who qualified Himself by His earthly life, with its temptations, toil, and suffering, to be the efficient leader of men. II. How? We cannot follow His person as the disciples did; but we may—Obey His precepts and copy His example. III. WHY? We cannot

direct our own course—there is no leader equal to Christ—if we follow Him we shall be in good company. Only thus can we escape spiritual danger and eternal death. IV. WHITHER? To God: "I am the way," &c. To heaven: "In My Father's house," &c. V. WHEN? Now. Always. (*Seeds and Saplings.*) *The attractive face of Jesus:*—In lower human forms this magnetic attraction of man on man is not unknown. It is the orator's power. The orators of revolutions—men like Mirabeau—are full charged with it; they are like jars laden with electric fire; there is that in their words which flashes out, and stirs, sways, and rules mankind. Christ constitutes in a still higher form the great Captain's power. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*) **Fishers of men.**—*Ministers fishers of men:*—I. The APPROPRIATENESS of the figure. The world is the sea, the scene of their labours. II. The DUTY TO BE DISCHARGED. This net must be employed—constantly, diligently, skilfully. 1. Let the Christian fisherman rightly understand his net, and the appointed way of using it. 2. Let success be the grand object of attention. 3. Be cheerfully devoted to the work. 4. Our resources are infinite and exhaustless. (*Dr. Burns.*) *Fishers of men:*—1. To fish well, it is necessary to study the peculiarities of fish. 2. You must go *to* the fish. (*Beecher.*) *Scientific knowledge not enough for the preacher:*—It is necessary to know more than the science of ichthyology. What a book can tell a man about fishing is worth knowing, but it is little that a book can do towards making a man a true fisherman. If a man is going to fish for *fish*, he must become their scholar before he becomes their master; he must go to school in the brook, to learn its ways. And to fish for men, a man must learn their nature, their prejudices, their tendencies, and their courses. A man, to catch fish, must not only know their habits, but their tastes and their resorts; he must humour them according to their different natures, and adapt his instruments according to their peculiarities—providing a spear for some, a hook for others, a net for others, and baits for each one, as each one will. To sit on a bank or deck, and say to the fishes, "Here I am, authorized to command you to come to me and to bite what I give you," is just as ridiculous as it can be, even though it does resemble some ways of preaching. The Christian's business is not to stand in an appointed place and say to men, "Here am I; come up and take what I give you as you should." The Christian's business is to find out what men are, and to take them by that which they will bite at. (*Ibid.*) *Fishers of men:*—Christ came upon these men when they were busy at their everyday work. He saw them casting a net into the sea. His eye is upon us in all the work we do in the world. And as He looks upon us, so He calls us. It is true we may be so absorbed in other pursuits as not to hear the call. I. What was His call? They were to leave their work that they might engage in higher work. II. How shall we hope to be successful? 1. We must follow Christ. 2. We must submit to His teaching and influence. 3. Christ only can qualify us for the work. (*A. Thomas.*) *Industry an indication of worth:*—Whether, as He watched them putting out the net, He saw signs, which were indications to His penetrating and prophetic eye of fitness for the higher work to which they were to be called, we cannot tell. It is possible. For a very small thing will serve as a revelation of character to those who are keen-sighted, and who understand how the little is allied to the great. Just as a student like Owen will construct the entire skeleton if you give him a single bone, so the master, in the study of the human nature, will often be able to give a fair judgment of the whole character if he sees only what many would regard as casual and meaningless acts. (*Ibid.*) *Men miss the call of Christ through over occupation:*—You cannot attend to many things at once. There may be a glow of heavenly light on the mountain-top, but it will be nothing to the man whose eyes are fixed on the path along which he is painfully toiling. There may be the sound of sweet music carried on the night breezes; but it will be lost upon those who are disputing loudly and striving angrily with each other. (*Ibid.*) 1. A fisherman must be acquainted with the sea—we must know the locality in which we have to work. 2. A fisherman must also know how to allure fish. 3. The fisherman must be a man who can wait with patience. 4. A fisherman is one who must run hazards. 5. The fisherman must be one who has learned both how to persevere and how to expect. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A fisherman must also know how to allure the fish.*—I saw on Lake Como, when we visited Bellagio, some men fishing. They had torches burning in their boats, and the fish were attracted to them by the glare of the light. You must know how to get the fish together. You know there is such a thing as the ground-bait for the fishes. You must know how to allure men. The preacher does this by using images, symbols, and illustrations. You must know how to catch the fish, throwing

out first. (*Ibid.*) *The Church enriched from the ranks of poverty.*—A few years ago, on a wintry morning, a boy in the habiliments of poverty entered an old school house among our western mountains, and avowed to the master his desire for an education. There was poverty laying one of her richest gifts on the altar of religion, for that boy was Jonas King. On his humble shoemaker's bench, Carey laid the foundation of British Baptist Missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was then glowing with new-born love to Christ. He took him to John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, whose piety, and whose beneficence increased together. They educated him, and that boy became Claudius Buchanan, whose name India will bless when the names of Clive and Hastings are forgotten. John Bunyan was a gift of poverty to the Church. Zwingle came forth from an Alpine shepherd's cabin; Melancthon from an armourer's workshop; Luther from a miner's cottage; the apostles, some of them, from fishermen's huts. These are the gifts of poverty to the Church. (*Dr. J. Harris.*)

Ver. 21. **He called them.**—Jesus calls *all* to follow Him. When engaged in their ordinary occupations. By His Word—Providence—Spirit. I. THE CALL. 1. Who calls? Jesus, the Saviour. His right to do so. His love in doing it. 2. The action. A call. Does not compel. 3. The purpose. To bring from toil to rest, from danger to safety, from nature to grace. II. THE OBEDIENCE. Immediate—no delay. Thorough. They left, renounced, gave up, not to return: forsook, parted with possessions, relations. The reason was to follow Him—imitate, save. Through humility to glory. What remarkable faith! What ready obedience! (*J. R. Tait, M.A.*) *The character of St. James.* I. His THOROUGHNESS. II. His readiness. III. His devotedness. (*Prob. Griffith, M.A.*) *Forsaking all and following.* I. Consider THE DEMAND made upon the men called. 1. It involved the sacrifice of (1) Domestic ties; (2) Property; (3) Their means of livelihood. 2. It secured (1) Ridicule; (2) Persecution; (3) St. Andrew's cross. Such was the prospect. II. Contemplate THEIR OBEDIENCE manifested. 1. It was thorough. (1) They forsook all; (2) They followed Him—everywhere. 2. It was constant. III. Now, as regards YOURSELVES. 1. You have been called to follow Christ—(1) In your baptism; (2) Preaching; (3) Warnings of Providence. 2. You are called to—Renounce evil ways. 3. You are called as they were, to endure loss, pain, death. Test your proceedings:—Sunday—how do you keep it? church—do you value its services? Holy Communion, &c. (*G. Venables.*)

Vers. 23–25. **Healing all manner of sick.**—*Moral healing*:—I. Christ is able to cure ALL SORTS of sins. Fever of lust, dropsy of drunkenness, stone in the heart, &c. II. Christ healed INCURABLE sinners—people who had diseases which were beyond the physicians' skill. There is hope for incurable sinners. III. Jesus healed diseases FROM ALL COUNTRIES, and so He can heal sinners of *all lands* (vers. 24, 25). He is able to save without any distinction of race, or clime, or time, or place. IV. Jesus Christ healed sinners without ANY LIMITATION IN NUMBERS—"multitudes." Christ is as able to save a multitude as to save one. V. HE RECEIVED NOTHING for all that He did, except the fame, and the honour, and the gratitude of their loving hearts. So to-day, poor sinner, Jesus will take nothing at thy hands, and it is a mercy for thee, for thou hast nothing to give. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Healing for all*:—I remember, when the Master Street Hospital, in Philadelphia, was opened during the war, a telegram came saying, "There will be three hundred wounded men to-night; be ready to take care of them;" and from my church there went in some twenty or thirty men and women to look after these poor wounded fellows. As they came, some from one part of the land, some from another, no one asked whether this man was from Oregon, or from Massachusetts, or from Minnesota, or from New York. There was a wounded soldier, and the only question was how to take off the rags the most gently, and put on the bandage, and administer the cordial. And when a soul comes to God, he does not ask where you came from, or what your ancestry was. Healing for all your wounds. Pardon for all your guilt. Comfort for all your troubles. (*Dr. Talmage.*)

## CHAPTER V.

VERS. 1-2. **And taught them.**—*The Disciples:*—I. WHO they are, not the rich, gay, self-asserting, satisfied. II. Their peculiar FELICITY. 1. Secure. 2. Manifold. 3. Ever-enlarging. III. Their beneficent INFLUENCE. 1. One effect of such a character is to provoke resistance. 2. But there comes out a more pleasing effect, "salt," "light." 3. Is your character such as the Saviour describes? (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The Preacher:*—Jesus Christ was every way ennobled and qualified for the work of the ministry. I. Christ was an INTELLIGENT preacher. He (1) had the spirit without measure (John iii. 34); (2) Knew how to speak a word *in due season*, when to humble, when to comfort. He (3) understood what doctrine would best suit with them; as the husbandman can tell what sort of grain is proper for such a soil. II. Christ was a POWERFUL preacher. He (1) spake with authority; (2) could set men's sins before them, and show them their very hearts. (3) He preached to the conscience; (4) breathed as much zeal as eloquence; He often touched upon the heart-strings. III. Christ was a SUCCESSFUL preacher. 1. He had the art of converting souls. 2. Many believed on Him. IV. Christ was a LAWFUL preacher. (1) He had His unction from His Father, so (2) His mission. (*Thomas Watson.*) *The Pulpit:*—Christ expounds on the mount. From whence observe that Christ's ministers, according to His pattern, must embrace every opportunity of doing good. I. THEIR COMMISSION. (1) God hath entrusted them as ambassadors. As an ambassador waits for a day of audience, and then faithfully and impartially delivers the mind of his prince, so (2) Christ's ministers, having a commission delegated to them to negotiate for souls, should be glad when there is a day of audience, that they may (3) impart the mind and will of Christ to His people. II. THEIR TITLES. 1. God's *seeds-men* (1 Cor. ix. 11). Therefore they must upon all occasions use the blessed seed of the Word. 2. *Stars:* therefore they must shine by word and doctrine, in the firmament of the Church. 3. Christ calls them the *light of the world* (Matt. v. 14), therefore they must be always giving forth their lustre. (*Ibid.*) *The occasion:*—I. Christ's ministers must catch at all occasions of doing good to others, in regard of the work they are about, and that is, saving of souls. 1. The soul is a flower of eternity, here in the bud, in heaven fully ripe and blown. 2. It is one of the richest pieces of embroidery God ever made; the understanding bespangled with light; the will invested with liberty; the affections, like musical instruments, tuned with the finger of the Holy Ghost. 3. The soul is Christ's partner, the angels' familiar. Oh, how zealously industrious should Christ's ministers be to save these souls! II. Christ's ministers, seeing the multitude must ascend the mount, because so many emissaries of Satan wait to subvert souls. 1. Ministers must not only be pastors, but præliatores; in one hand holding the (1) bread of life, and feed the flock of God; in the other hand they must hold the (2) sword of the Spirit, and fight against error. III. Christ's ministers should wait for all opportunities of soul service. (1) Never did pilot meet with so many euroclydons and cross winds in a voyage as the (2) spiritual pilots of God's Church do, when they are transporting souls to heaven. (*Ibid.*) *The Sermon:*—I. Some hearers have bad memories like leaking vessels; all the precious wine of holy doctrine poured in, runs out presently. Ministers cannot find a truth so fast as others can lose it. 1. How many truths have they been robbed of which might have been so many death-bed cordials! (2) If the Word preached slides so fast out of the memory, ministers had need go oftener up the preaching mount, that at least some truth may abide. II. The ears of many hearers are stopped with cares of the world, that the Word preached will not enter. (1) If a man be in a mill, though you speak never so loud to him, he doth not hear you for the noise o fthe mill. (2) We preach to men about matters of salvation, but the mill of worldly business makes such a noise that they cannot hear. (3) Therefore ministers need often ascend the mount, and lift up their voices like a trumpet, that the deaf ear may hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. III. Others have a stone in their hearts. Ministers must, if possible, pierce the heart of stone. When the earth is sun-scorched, it is so hard and crusted together that a shower of rain will not soften it; there must be shower after shower before it will be moist or fertile. So the hardened heart oft needs precept upon precept. Our doctrine must distil as dew, &c. (Deut. xxxii. 2). They that are teachers shall shine—not as lamps or tapers, but as stars; not as planets, but fixed stars in the firmament of glory for ever. (*Ibid.*) *Introductory:*—I **The** ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONAGE introduced to us. 1. He is wonderful in Person. 2.

His extraordinary condescension. 3. His deep humiliation. 4. The work He came to accomplish. II. The INTERESTING OBJECTS which attract His attention. "The multitudes," &c. Many circumstances rendered them interesting. 1. They were God's creatures. 2. They were of the human race. 3. They were endowed with rational faculties. 4. They were immortal creatures. 5. They were the creatures He came to SAVE. III. The LINE OF CONDUCT which our Lord pursued. 1. "He went up into a mountain;" convenient for Him, and free from noise. 2. "He sat down." The priests of the Mosaic economy sat down to deliver their instructions. 3. He opened His mouth and taught." (1) What did He teach? Purity of worship; pure morality. (2) How did He teach? With simplicity; with authority; with tenderness. Give attentive ear to all our Lord has taught; be doers of the Word. (*J. Jordan.*) *Christ a Teacher*:—I. The CHARACTER of Jesus as a Teacher. Greater than the prophets or the angels. He possessed infinite knowledge and wisdom, holiness and truth, goodness and love, condescension and patience. He enforced and ratified all by Divine power and authority. II. The SUBJECTS of His instructions. They were all important, chiefly practical, perfect and abiding. III. The CLAIMS of Christ as a Teacher. Profound reverence, intense attention, highest gratitude, prompt obedience. (*Types and metaphors.*) *A concise view of the beatitudes*:—They all agree in three things. 1. They are all spiritual. 2. They are all unpopular. 3. They are all present. (*F. Wagstaff.*) I. HAPPINESS. Nine of these verses begin with "blessed." The meaning of that word. Jesus came to bring happiness (Luke ii. 14). "How to be happy" is everybody's question. Jesus answers it in these "beatitudes." II. True happiness IS WITHIN. Not in pleasure, wealth, &c. III. This happiness is endowed with many PROMISES. IV. This happiness may CONTINUE IN ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES (vers. 10-12). V. Such happiness is DIFFUSIVE (vers. 13-16). (*W. O. Simpson.*) *The Christian character*:—I. CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, OR THE PROPER DISPOSITION FOR CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. II. THE INFLUENCE WHICH SUCH CHARACTER IS SURE TO EXERT. III. THE PERSECUTIONS WHICH SUCH CHARACTERS MUST EXPECT TO MEET WITH. IV. THE EFFORT WE MUST MAKE TO SECURE THE EXERTION OF GOOD INFLUENCE. *Learn* (1) That the world may honour the strong and self-asserting, but Christ honours the meek; (2) that only the penitent and the humble can receive forgiveness; (3) that those who are forgiven will want to be made pure and righteous; (4) that they must not wonder if earnest piety brings outward persecution; and (5) that if we have won any graces and virtues we must earnestly watch over them, and nourish them, lest they should be lost.

Ver. 3. **Poor in spirit.**—*Poor in spirit*:—I. Examine the CHARACTER here spoken of. 1. We should not confound the poor in spirit with the poor in worldly circumstances. 2. We are not to associate the mean-spirited with the poor in spirit. 3. We are not to understand that the poor in spirit are poor in spirituality. Poorness of spirit involves—(1) Humility; (2) Contentment; (3) Submission; (4) Gratitude. II. In what their BLESSEDNESS consists. 1. Theirs are the privileges of the Church on earth; reconciliation; illumination; communion; joy. 2. The felicities of the Church in heaven. (*J. Jordan.*) *The blessedness of the poor in spirit*:—I. By the poor in spirit are meant THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CONVINCED OF THEIR SPIRITUAL POVERTY. All without Christ are wretched, blind, naked, poor. They are sensible of their wants; the higher their attainments, the deeper their humiliation. Have high thoughts of Christ. We are not to understand the poor in this world; not the poor-spirited or cowardly in the service of Christ; not the excessively timid and poor-spirited. II. IN WHAT DOES THEIR BLESSEDNESS CONSIST? By whom was this assurance given? By Him who is the source of all blessings. They are heirs of the kingdom of peace, righteousness, and joy. (*D. Rees.*) *Poverty of spirit*:—1. Do not misjudge a Christian's expression of lowliness, for these are genuine expressions of poverty of spirit. 2. So far as you find restfulness and complacency in your own attainments, you may doubt the reality of your growth. 3. Poverty of nature rather than poverty of spirit may be revealed by censoriousness. 4. The Holy Spirit alone can correct self-ignorance; from His illumination will result genuine poverty of spirit. (*J. T. Duryea, D.D.*) *A few considerations which may serve to cherish this spirit*:—I. Let us think much on the character of God as shown to us in His Holy Word. II. Let us be careful to separate any good intentions which we may find springing up in our hearts from ourselves, and ascribe them to God's Holy Spirit. III. Let us be watchful against occasions of pride. IV. Another great step to the attainment of humility, is to forget those things which are behind, and press onward to those before. V. We must be ever looking

at the Cross. (*H. Alford, M.A.*) *The blessedness of the poor in spirit*:—1. The promises of the gospel belong to them. 2. They enjoy the means of grace. 3. In the Christian conflict the humble man has all the advantage. (*Ibid.*) *The poor in spirit*:—I. SOME THINGS WHICH MUST BE REJECTED as not intended by Christ. It is not a mere peculiarity of temperament—not the obsequiousness and meanness often associated with poverty—not the simple fact of being poor—not voluntary religious poverty. II. THE FEATURES of spiritual poverty. 1. The conditions: In a spiritual sense all are poor. 2. The state of mind—poor in *spirit*, implying great humbling—difficult of attainment, so repugnant to the flesh, so opposed to our fancied excellence. III. THE BLESSING PROMISED. It is the spirit in which the kingdom is to be received (Matt. xviii. 1–5). Is the spirit of the Master (Phil. ii. 1–12). Blessed with all the titles and riches of the kingdom (James ii. 5). Is the essence of a filial spirit. (*W. Barker.*) Blessedness is the perfection of a rational creature; it is the whetstone of a Christian's industry; the height of his ambition; the flower of his joy; the desire of all men. I. Let us so deport ourselves that we may express to others that we do believe a blessedness to come, by seeking after an interest in God, and that our union with God and the chief good makes us blessed. II. Let us proclaim to the world that we believe in blessedness to come, by living blessed lives; walk as become the heirs of blessedness. Let us lead blessed lives, and so declare plainly that we seek a country (Heb. xi. 14). (*Thomas Watson.*) You may as well expect fruit to grow without a root, as the other graces without this; till a man be *poor in spirit* he cannot *mourn*. I. Till we are poor in spirit we are not capable of receiving grace. 1. God doth first empty a man of himself, before He pours in the precious wine of His grace. 2. None but the poor in spirit are within Christ's commission. II. Till we are poor in spirit, Christ is never precious. (1) Before we see our own wants we never see (2) Christ's worth. (3) He that wants bread, and is ready to starve, will have it, whatever it cost; bread he must have, or he is undone; (4) So to him that is poor in spirit, that sees his want of Christ, how precious is the Saviour! III. Till we are poor in spirit we cannot go to heaven. (1) The great cable cannot go through the eye of the needle, but let it be untwisted and made into small threads, then it may. (2) Poverty of spirit untwists the great cable; (3) Makes a man little in his own eyes, and now an entrance shall be made unto him. (*Ibid.*) I. He that is poor in spirit is weaned from himself. 1. The vine catcheth hold of everything that is near, to stay itself upon. There is some bough or other, a man would be catching hold of to rest upon; how hard it is to be brought quite off himself. II. He that is poor in spirit is a Christ-admirer. 1. He sees himself wounded, and, as the wounded deer runs to the water, so he thirsts for the water of life. 2. "Lord," saith he, "give me Christ, or I die." III. He that is poor in spirit is ever complaining of his spiritual estate. 1. He ever complains, "I want a broken heart, a thankful heart." 2. He mourns he hath no more grace. IV. He that is poor in spirit is lowly in heart. 1. Submissive. 2. He blusheth more at the defects of his graces, than others do at the excess of their sins. V. He that is poor in spirit is much in prayer. 1. Ever begging for spiritual alms. 2. Will not away from the gate, till he have his dole. VI. The poor in spirit is content to take Christ upon His own terms. 1. Sees himself lost without Christ. 2. Willing to have Him upon His own terms. VII. He that is poor in spirit is an exalter of free grace. 1. He blesses God for the least crumb that falls from the table of free grace. 2. He magnifies mercy, and is thankful. (*Ibid.*) *Poverty of spirit*:—Christ begins with this, and we must begin here if ever we be saved. Poverty of spirit is the foundation stone on which God lays the superstructure of glory. There are four things may persuade Christians to be poor in spirit:—I. This poverty is your RICHES. 1. You may have the world's riches, and yet be poor. 2. You cannot have this poverty, but you must be rich. 3. Poverty of spirit entitles you to all Christ's riches. II. This poverty is your NOBILITY. 1. God looks upon you as persons of honour. 2. He that is vile in his own eyes, is precious in God's eyes. 3. The way to rise is to fall. 4. God esteems the valley highest. III. Poverty of spirit doth sweetly QUIET THE SOUL. (1) When a man is brought of himself to rest on Christ, what a (2) blessed calm is in the heart! IV. Poverty of spirit paves a causeway for blessedness. 1. Are you poor in spirit? You are blessed. (*Ibid.*) *The kingdom for the poor in spirit.* Here is comfort to the people of God. I. God hath provided them with a kingdom. 1. A child of God is oft so low in the world that he hath not a foot of land to inherit; he is poor in purse, as well as poor in spirit. 2. Here is a

fountain of consolation opened. 3. The poorest saint who hath lost all his golden fleece is heir to a kingdom. II. This kingdom excels all the kingdoms and principalities of the world. III. The hope of this kingdom, saith Basil, should carry a Christian with courage and cheerfulness through all his afflictions; and it is a saying of Luther's "The sea of God's mercy, overflowing in spiritual blessings, should drown all the sufferings of this life." IV. What though thou goest now in rags! Thou shalt have thy white robes. What though thou art fed like Daniel, with pulse, and hast coarser fare! Thou shalt feast when thou comest to the kingdom. Here thou drinkest the water of tears; shortly thou shalt drink the wine of paradise. Be comforted with the thoughts of a kingdom. (*Ibid.*) I. WHO ARE MEANT by the poor in spirit? To the poor in spirit, or those that possess a spirit of poverty, the text annexes a blessedness, and promises a reward. II. What are THE PROPER VIRTUES of a poor and low estate, such as every man, whether high or low, rich or poor, is bound to endeavour after? (1) Humility; (2) Patience; (3) Contentment; (4) Trust and hope in God. (*Bishop Ofspring Blackall, D.D.*) *Virtues taught by a state of poverty of spirit are* :— (1) Industry. They that want nothing think it needless to labour; (2) Temperance; (3) Frugality; (4) Contempt of the world. (*Sir William Davies, Bart., D.D.*) Neither indigence nor wealth in itself has the least connection with real religion. I. Poverty of spirit consists in A DEEP CONVICTION OF GUILT and depravity, before a pure and holy Being. (1) By the entrance of God's Word into the mind, and the (2) triumph of His grace in the soul, we become "poor in spirit." (3) When conviction flashes in the conscience of a sinner, when he sees the (4) number of his sins, (5) strength of his corruptions, and (6) weakness of his resolutions, then this disposition is implanted in him. Already he hathe beginning of blessedness in his breast. II. Poverty of spirit consists in HUMILITY through every stage of the Christian's pilgrimage. 1. It commences with a deep sense of sin, guilt, and desert of punishment. 2. It is the vital principle of the believer's spiritual constitution. 3. It grows with his grace. 4. Increases with the increase of his knowledge in God. 5. As he becomes a father in Christ, he will become a little child in his own estimation. 6. The most eminent Christian is the most humble. 7. His humility exalts him, and makes him great. III. Poverty of spirit includes CONTENTMENT with the allotments of Providence. 1. It is opposed to the restlessness of ambition, and the haughtiness of pride. 2. It turns away from that "covetousness which is idolatry." 3. It does not eagerly and improperly desire the honours and riches of this world. 4. "Having food and raiment," it has learned to be contented therewith. Such an elevation of soul should be acquired, and such a spirit of cheerful contentment should be cultivated by all who have taken on them the Christian name. (*J. E. Good.*) *There may be pride in poverty as well as in wealth.*—There was a story in old times told of a severe, cynical philosopher, visiting the house of one who was far his superior in genius as in modesty. He found the good philosopher living in a comfortable house, with easy-chairs and pleasant pictures round him, and he came in with his feet stained with dust and mud, and said, as he walked upon the beautiful carpets, "Thus I trample on the pride of Plato." The good philosopher paid no attention at first, but returned the visit, and when he saw the ragged furniture and the scanty covering of the floor of the house in which the other ostentatiously lived, he said, "I see the pride of Diogenes through the holes in his carpet." Many a one there is whose pride is thus seen by his affecting to be without it; many a one whose poverty, whose modesty in spirit, can best be appreciated by seeing how the outward comforts and splendour of life can be used by him without paying any attention to them. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Poverty of spirit conducive to prayer.* Never pauper pleaded more at your gate for some gift of charity than he does. And because he has nothing but what he receives, therefore *he is always asking.* (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Ver. 4. **They that mourn.**—*The mourners who are not entitled to the blessings here named*:—I. Those who indulge the sorrow of discontent. II. The inordinate sorrow for worldly losses. III. Sorrow for wounded pride. IV. A despairing spirit as to their acceptance with God. Those who are blessed:—1. There is a mourning arising from a sense of having offended God. 2. Those who mourn under the afflicting dispensations of God's providence. 3. A few words to those who enjoy worldly contentment: you are no mourners. 4. May God give us grace to mourn so as to be comforted. (*H. Alford, M.A.*) *Spiritual mourning*:—I. What we

are to UNDERSTAND BY THE MOURNING mentioned. 1. It is not the mourning of a melancholy disposition. 2. It is not sorrow over temporal distress. 3. It is not sorrow in adversity. 4. It is not sorrow because of disappointed hopes. It arises purely from religion. II. What are the CAUSES of this mourning? 1. Sin is one—(1) Because it dishonours God; (2) Because it cleaves to himself. (3) The prevalence of sin causes him to mourn (4) because of the punishment it shall receive. 2. Another cause of his mourning is the absence of spiritual joys. 3. Another cause is the imperfect and afflicted state of the Church. III. The import of the GRACIOUS PROMISE made by the Saviour. 1. Spiritual mourners shall be comforted by an assurance of their personal interest in Christ. 2. By the assurance that the causes of their present mourning shall be removed. 3. By the expression of Divine approbation. 4. If the Christian be thus comforted here, what must be his comfort in heaven? To conclude. 1. How mistaken is the world in its decisions! It supposes the mourner miserable; he only has joy. 2. Are you a spiritual mourner? (*J. Jordan.*) *The blessed mourners*:—I. THEIR CHARACTER. We do not say that piety is never clothed in the garb of sorrow. The things which excite grief in the ungodly cause it in the godly. But while the sorrow is common, they do not mourn in the same *spirit*. Sorrow for sin chiefly meant in the text: no source of sorrow equal to this. Mourn for the sins of others; their own small attainment in grace. 1. Their sorrow is sincere. 2. It is bitter, not superficial. 3. It is godly. 4. They mourn in faith. II. THEIR BLESSEDNESS. 1. They may think that they are far from being in a blessed state. 2. By whom shall they be comforted? By God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 3. How shall comfort be imparted to them? By clear views of Christ and of His grace, &c. 4. By what means does God usually comfort the mourners? Prayer, worship, work, converse, sacrament. (*D. Rees.*) *The blessedness of sanctified sorrow*:—I. WHAT THAT MOURNING IS WHICH CHRIST THUS PRONOUNCES BLESSED. Not every kind of mourning. There is the sorrow of the world that worketh death:—1. Such is the mourning that springs from a bad source. From pride or discontent. 2. Such is the mourning that is the expression of a bad spirit. But (1) Blessed are they who mourn for themselves; (2) Who mourn for their Christian brethren; (3) Who mourn for the Church; (4) Who mourn for the world. II. WHAT IS THE BLESSEDNESS OF THAT COMFORT WHICH THE REDEEMER HERE ASSURES US IS ATTACHED TO THIS MOURNING. 1. It is present and positive. 2. There are comparative and contrasted blessings connected with this sorrow; the situation of such is less dangerous than that of others. 3. It is less equivocal than that of others. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." 4. This blessedness is peculiar to themselves. (*Dr. T. Raffles.*) *Zion's mourners comforted*:—Administration of Divine comfort to the subjects of godly contrition, the benevolent purpose of Messiah (Isa. lxi. 3; Luke iv. 18). Immediately on entering His ministry the prediction was accomplished. I. The mourners addressed. The nature, cause, and evidences of their sorrow. II. The consolation promised. Spiritual, seasonable, abundant, gracious (2 Chron. xxx. 9; Isa. lv. 7–9; Hosea vi. 1; Zech. i. 3, 4; Luke xv. 7–10, xvii. 21, 24, 32). (*Anon.*) I. The mourning intended. Not murmuring, natural sorrow, or grief, but the sorrow connected with sin—"godly sorrow"—the mourning in the house of affliction, and mourning in Zion—sighing over the abominations of the people, &c. II. The blessing promised. The sorrow, whatever its nature, shall not overwhelm. The comfort is certain. (*W. Barker.*) I. WHAT IS THE SORROW that is blessed? Not the vulgar sorrow that every man feels, &c. But—1. Sorrow at the recollection and the sense of sin—for *sin* rather than for the *consequences*—secret sins—sin seen in the light of Christ's countenance—"godly sorrow." 2. Sorrow because of the sins that we see around us (Jer. ix. 18; Psa. cxix. 36). Sins of the world, and sins of the Church—inconsistency, &c. 3. Sorrow because of the little progress of Christianity. 4. That we are able to do so little. 5. Sorrow that makes one sometimes long to be "absent from the body," &c. II. They who sorrow thus shall be COMFORTED. There is a comfort in such sorrow, as well as beyond it. Such sorrow is blessed in its endurance, and at the close of it. It is Divine, complete, unalloyed comfort. (*Dr. J. Cumming.*) The mourning here intended is that which arises from the due consideration of our own sins, and the sins of others. I. Such was the godly sorrow of David (Psa. li. 4). 1. The same kind was that of the woman who "was a sinner," and whose conversion is briefly related by St. Luke (chap. vii.). 2. Peter mourned when his Lord looked on him after his cruel denial. He went out and 'wept bitterly." 3. Such was the sorrow of the Corinthians (2 Cor. vii. 11). II. The generous spirit of the Christian deeply mourns the sins of others. 1. Thus

saith the pious king of Israel: "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved," &c. 2. Such was the lamentation of Jeremiah (Jer. ix. 1, 2). 3. The most perfect illustration of holy sorrow is seen in our Lord (Luke xix. 41, 42). (*J. E. Good.*) The mourning which will entitle a man to blessedness hath *these qualifications*:—I. It is SPONTANEOUS and free. 1. It must come as water out of a spring, not as fire from flint. 2. Tears for sin must be like the myrrh which drops from the tree freely, without cutting or forcing. II. It is SPIRITUAL, that is when we mourn for sin more than suffering. We must mourn for sin as it is (1) An act of hostility and enmity that (2) affronts and resists the Holy Ghost; (3) An ingratitude, in its unkindness against God; (4) A privation that keeps good things from us, and hinders our communion with God. III. It SENDS THE SOUL TO GOD. When the prodigal son repented, he went to his father. IV. It is FOR SIN IN PARTICULAR. There must be a particular repentance before we have a general pardon. V. It is WITH HOPE. Believing that though our tears drop to the earth, our faith must reach heaven. VI. It is JOINED WITH SELF-LOATHING. VII. It must be PURIFYING. Our tears must make us more holy. The waters of holy mourning are like the river Jordan, wherein Naaman washed, and was cleansed of his leprosy. VIII. It must be JOINED WITH HATRED OF SIN. We must not only abstain from sin, but abhor it. The dove hates the least feather of the hawk; a true mourner hates the least motion to sin. IX. It is JOINED WITH RESTITUTION. If we have eclipsed the good name of others, we are bound to ask them forgiveness; if we have wronged them by unjust, fraudulent dealing, we must make them compensation. X. It must BE SPEEDY. XI. It must be CONSTANT. The waters of repentance must not overflow in the morning, at the first hearing of the gospel; and at mid-day, in the midst of health and prosperity, grow cold and be ready to freeze. It must be a daily weeping, a daily mourning. (*Thomas Watson.*) *Spiritual comforts* are pure. They are not muddied with guilt, nor mixed with fear—they are the pure wine of the Spirit; what the mourner feels is joy, and nothing but joy. The comforts God gives His mourners are—I. SWEET. The love of God shed into the heart is said to be better than wine (Cant. i. 2). II. They are HOLY. Divine comforts give the soul more acquaintance with God. III. They are SATISFYING. They fill the heart and make it run over. IV. They are POWERFUL. Strong cordials. 1. They strengthen for duty. 2. Support under affliction. V. They are ABIDING; abound in us, and so abide ever with us. Worldly comforts are still upon the wing, ready to fly. The comforts of the Spirit are immortal and eternal. Oh, how rare and superlative are these comforts! (*Ibid.*) *Mourners comforted*:—I. The GRIEF which is here specified. It will be proper:—1. To ascertain its cause. (1) He is led to view the immense debt of obedience due to the blessed God as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. (2) The awful consequences attending the non-payment of this debt. (3) His utter inability to make restitution. 2. To ascertain its character. (1) It is voluntary and sincere; not forced or artificial. (2) It is deep, not superficial. (3) It is evangelical and spiritual. (4) It is characterized by a hatred and an abandonment of sin. II. The CONSOLATION with which it is associated. "They shall be comforted." This intimates certainty as well as the futurity of the comfort. But some may ask—1. What is this consolation? It arises from the satisfaction Christ has made; none so rich, free, and satisfying as this. 2. Whence does this comfort proceed? From the free favour of God. 3. How is this comfort applied? It is the work of the Holy Spirit. (*R. May.*)

Ver. 5. **The meek.**—*Christian meekness*:—I. A general IDEA OF THIS CHRISTIAN VIRTUE. It is not that mildness of temper which is natural to some people. This amiable disposition is manifest (1) In the closet; (2) In the family; (3) In the Church; (4) In the sanctuary; (5) In the world. II. Reasons why we should attend to the CULTIVATION of this virtue. 1. In order to be conformed to the example of the Son of God. 2. In order to refute the calumnies of the infidel. 3. In obedience to the Scriptures. III. The INHERITANCE which is connected with its possession. 1. The meek shall inherit the present earth, and be happy in it. 2. They shall inherit the new earth. (*J. Jordan.*) *Benedictions, or the blessed life*:—I. What constitutes a meek spirit? Not a natural quietness of character—amiableness. A meek spirit is a spirit of goodwill and clemency: is placid and calm amidst the vexations and cares of life (1 Peter iii. 4); is tractable and submissive; forbearing and forgiving; bows to the rod of affliction. II. The blessedness of this spirit. It is an evidence of our union to Christ—a unity with the spirit of the noble sufferers and martyrs of the past: enjoy the benefits of Divine providence—"inherit the earth," in a mystic sense, far superior to worldly possessions;

enjoy a superior measure of the Spirit of God: shall in the end literally enjoy the earth. (*W. Barker.*) There is a twofold meekness—towards God and towards man. Towards God implies two things. I. SUBMISSION to His will. 1. Carrying ourselves calmly, without murmuring, under the dispensations of Providence. 2. Let God do what He will with me, I will submit. II. FLEXIBILITY to His Word. 1. He is spiritually meek who conforms himself to the mind of God, and doth not quarrel with the instructions of the Word, but the corruptions of his heart. 2. How happy it is when the Word which comes with majesty is received with meekness. Meekness towards man consists in three things. I. Bearing of injuries. II. Forgiving of injuries. III. Recompensing good for evil. (*Thomas Watson.*) I. CONDITIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. In prosperity a meek, quiet, and humble spirit is not puffed up. 2. Does not esteem himself better because of his position. 3. Looks upon the good things he possesses as a gift from God. 4. Not as the reward of his own merit. 5. Not as the purchase of his own industry. He will consider that as much as he excels others in these outward gifts of fortune, so much they may excel him in the inward gifts of grace, in knowledge, in wisdom, in piety, and in virtue. II. 1. In ADVERSITY, being of a meek and humble spirit, he will be contented with his condition. 2. Easy and quiet under all misfortune and affliction. 3. Will not envy those who are in a more flourishing condition: rather will rejoice thereat. 4. Though in want or pain, he will be glad that others are at ease. 5. Would rather be miserable alone, than have sharers in his misfortune. 6. Will gladly accept and thankfully acknowledge help and relief from others. III. A meek man WILL BEHAVE HIMSELF IN RELATION TO GOD, IN A HUMBLE SPIRIT. 1. Willing to be instructed by God. 2. Yielding a ready belief to all Divine revelations. 3. Cheerfully obedient to Divine command. 4. With prompt submission of self to the wisdom and will of God. 5. Patiently enduring inflictions and dispensations of God's providence towards him. IV. Meekness IN RELATION TOWARDS MEN consists in (1) Owning the authority and dominion of our *superiors;* (2) In acknowledging the equality of our *equals;* (3) In thoughtfulness and care for our *inferiors;* (4) In being free from malice towards those who have wronged us. V. BLESSED are the meek. 1. In that they have command over their passions. 2. In that they possess valour and fortitude. 3. In that they have everlasting peace of mind. (*Bishop Ofspring Blackall, D.D.*) *Christian meekness:*—I. It is the fruit of that humbleness of spirit and sorrow for sin of which the preceding beatitudes speak. (1) It flows from Christian humility and (2) penitential sorrow. It is (3) acquiescence with God's ways; (4) Resignation to His will; and (5) Subjection of the mind and judgment to the revelation He has made of His character and grace. II. It is not only meekness in relation to God, but also meekness in relation to man. (1) It is kindness to adversaries; (2) Gentleness to foes; (3) Submission for the sake of peace, on all occasions where principles are not required to be compromised, or the conscience violated; (4) It is a principle of Christianity; and (5) the existence of vital, solid religion in the heart. (*J. E. Good.*) *The chief adversaries of meekness:*—1. That irritableness which comes from untrained or overspent nerves. 2. Pride is an indefatigable enemy of meekness. 3. Conscience is a great adversary, as the world works, of meekness; it finds conscience in its way. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

*Meekness not insensibility.*—There is no discord possible on the bassviol to a string that does not exist, or that has not been brought to any tension. (*Ibid.*) *Meekness more effective than severity.*—Behold the barren field. Everything sleeps or is dead. Call, now, to the winds in January. Call now, to the sheeting snows in February to redeem the field and the forest, and all their violence falls short. Call for nature's rudest forces, that walk the earth invisible in rugged power, or storms and winds, and what change can violence work upon the dead field and the waking forest? Yet there is a prophecy of silence in the south, and there are winds that wander, run before the coming sun. Now the morning comes earlier and the evening lingers later. Now milder heavens; now come birds, singing victory; more light, longer days, gentler heat, and, behold, death is slain and June is here, and in her lap all falls. The storms can no longer touch, nor frosts destroy. And so shall be the advancing forces of love and meekness, but not in January nor in February, nor in the March, in which the world is now living, but in June and summer. (*Ibid.*) *Meekness generally successful.*—Look at it. A very proud father has a son. He naturally governs him with rigour and peremptoriness. He finds out that the boy has, in his visitations, allied himself prematurely with a family with which it is very desirable there should not be a connection. On hearing

of it he rages and storms; and his wife says to him, "My dear, don't you know that if you undertake to oppose this thing in that way, you will do more harm than good? Don't you know that if you are violent with the boy, you will only ratify him in his determination?" He recognizes that fact, and calms down. He goes to the boy and says pleasantly, "Well, my son, how is it with you? I hear that you have been visiting." "Yes," says the boy, "I have." "Well, I am very glad of it; where have you been?" "In Mr. So-and-So's family." "Ah! there are many excellent things in that family. I suppose you have become acquainted with the young people?" "Yes, sir." "And it is very natural that young people should become attached to each other." So he goes on with the conversation in a spirit of sweetness and gentleness, till, by and by, he has brought the young man round, and drawn him away from these dangerous grounds and connections. (*Ibid.*)

*Anthony Blanc's meekness.*—Anthony Blanc, one of Felix Neff's earlier converts, was very earnest in winning souls to Christ. The enemies of the gospel were angry at his success, and used alike scoffs and threats against him. One night, as he was returning home from a religious meeting, he was followed by a man in a rage, who struck him a violent blow on the head. "May God forgive and bless you!" was Anthony's quiet and Christian rejoinder. "Ah!" replied his assailant, furiously, "if God does not kill you, I'll do it myself!" Some days afterwards Anthony met the same person in a narrow road, where two persons could hardly pass. "Now I shall be struck by him again," he said to himself. But he was surprised, on approaching, to see this man, once so bitter towards him, reach out his hand, and say to him, in a tremulous voice, "Mr. Blanc, will you forgive me, and let all be over?" Thus, this disciple of Christ, by gentle and peaceful words, had made a friend of an enemy. *Inheritors.*—A poor Christian man, illustrating this text, said, "I went through my lord's park, and the great house looked *so* grand. Well, I said, 'Bless the Lord, it *is* a fine house.' I didn't envy it, bless the Lord! but I seemed so to enjoy the great house. I said, 'That's mine, surely; I enjoy it, I do.' Then the sheep looked so nice, and the cattle and the horses; and I said, 'Bless the Lord! they are all my Father's, and they are all mine.' I didn't want to *have* them, but I did enjoy them so. And the trees, and the grass, and the plantations, all looked *so* beautiful, I appeared to enjoy them so. I said, 'Lord, they are all Lord ——'s; but they're all mine, too.'" And so they were. Well indeed would it have been for their proprietor, an unconverted man, had he been capable of enjoying them in the same sanctified manner. A missionary in Jamaica was once questioning the little black boys on the meaning of this text, and asked, "Who are the meek?" A boy answered, "Those who give soft answers to rough questions." (*Anecdotes.*) How different from the teaching of Christ is that of the great apostle of infidelity—David Hume! "Nothing," says the latter, "carries a man through the world like a true, genuine, natural impudence." The *religion* of a man whose morality is loose like this, could scarcely assume any other character than that of an unblushing scepticism and licentiousness.

Ver. 6. **They which do hunger and thirst.**—*Righteousness desired:*—I. A few FEATURES OF THE DISPOSITION here commended. The term righteousness is variously used. 1. Sometimes it signifies rectitude. 2. Sometimes imputed righteousness. 3. Sometimes personal righteousness. But here it means—(1) A death unto sin; (2) A renunciation of the world; (3) A deliberate choice of God. II. Trace this disposition to ITS LEGITIMATE SOURCE. III. Attend to the GRACIOUS STATEMENT made respecting the possession of this disposition. 1. It implies that their desires shall be satisfied. 2. It implies a plenitude of satisfaction. 3. The text implies the stability of the promise, that this satisfaction is sure. To conclude —1. Is the disposition possessed by us? 2. Have you an ardent desire for righteousness. (*J. Jordan.*) *A test of heavenly citizenship:*—I. AN OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN DESIRE—righteousness. This is conformity to God's will. God is righteous. 1. Personal purity. 2. It also takes the form of doing right. II. THIS OBJECT IS A MATTER OF DESIRE. 1. The desire for righteousness is present more or less in most men. 2. The attention is not drawn to its possession, but to the desire for it. III. THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS OBJECT. They shall have righteousness. 1. The desire for righteousness is met by the actual presence of sin. Jesus died that sin might be removed. 2. The desire for righteousness is met and apparently hindered by the moral feebleness of our moral nature. The Holy Ghost is given to him. IV. THE POSSESSION OF THIS OBJECT IS HAPPINESS. (*W. Butcher.*) I. The VASTNESS AND INTENSITY of the religious life. Hunger and thirst are primitive appetites:

they cover life. II. The GLORY of the religious life. We assimilate the strength of what we feed on. III. The PROGRESSIVENESS of the religious life. IV. The SATISFACTION of the religious life. (*T. T. Sherlock, B.A.*) *Heart-cravings*:—1. Man may be measured by his desires. 2. Righteousness a supreme object of desire. 3. The desire is the measure of the supply. 4. A real desire culminates in action, hunger drives to work. (*G. Elliot.*) *The want of spiritual appetite*:—1. Desire is a condition and prophecy of religious attainments. 2. This law of desire explains our spiritual poverty. 3. This want of appetite for righteousness is the curse of mankind. (*Am. Hom. Monthly.*) *Longing for righteousness*:—1. He who would have the blessing promised in the text, must WANT righteousness—as a hungry man wants food. This tests the value of our superficial professions. In order to this longing he must perceive the intrinsic worth of the thing desired. II. WHAT IS HERE MEANT by righteousness. 1. It is not the single virtue of justice or rectitude. It implies the essence of the thing, a state of mind and heart; a soil out of which all single virtues grow. 2. It is not merely a desire to see righteousness prevailing in the world at large. 3. It is a desire not merely for doing righteously, but for being righteous. III. THE RESULT. I fear some are not hungering for righteousness, but for the rewards of righteousness. Worldly good cannot fill man. Intellectual attainment cannot. Goodness will satisfy. There is no condition where we cannot be satisfied in the enjoyment of righteousness. Goodness does not forsake a man. (*E. H. Chaplin.*) I. THE STATE OR CONDITION described. 1. What righteousness is it? God's justifying righteousness. The necessity for it is deeply felt. This hungering is a special condition of mind, an indication of healthy, spiritual life. II. THE BLESSEDNESS of this state of mind. Satisfied because it quenches the desire of sin. A mark of the Divine favour. Security and permanency of the blessing. Identical with that of the glorified in heaven. (*W. Barker.*) I. WHAT IS THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS? II. WHAT IS IT THAT LEADS PERSONS THUS TO HUNGER AND THIRST? A sense of insufficiency and dissatisfaction in all created things; a sense of guilt; a perception of the utter inefficacy of all human prescriptions to remove sin or supply righteousness; a discovery of that righteousness which is "unto all and upon all that believe." III. Those who thus hunger and thirst ARE PRONOUNCED BLESSED. Because it is the evidence of a new nature—acceptance with God. They are drawn off from the disappointing and perplexing pursuits of the things of this world; they are "filled"—satisfied—with righteousness, happiness, and finally with the likeness of God, &c. We learn that real religion is a matter of personal experience. (*Dr. J. Cumming.*) See here at what a low price God sets heavenly things; it is but hungering and thirsting. I. Do but HUNGER and you shall have righteousness. (1) Hunger less after the world and (2) more after righteousness. (3) Say concerning spiritual things: "Lord, evermore give me this bread." (4) Hunger after that righteousness which delivereth from death. II. If we do not THIRST here, we shall thirst when it is too late. (1) If we do not thirst as David did (Psa. xlii. 2), (2) we shall thirst as Dives did, for a drop of water. (3) Oh, is it not better to thirst for righteousness while it is to be had, than to thirst for mercy when there is none to be had? (*Thomas Watson.*) What an encouragement is this to hunger after righteousness! Such shall be filled. God chargeth us to fill the hungry (Isa. lviii. 10). He blames those who do not fill the hungry (Isa. xxxii. 6). And do we think He will be slack in that which He blames us for not doing? God is a fountain. If we bring the vessels of our desires to this fountain, He is able to fill them. The fulness in God is:—I. An INFINITE fulness. (1) Though He fill us, yet He hath never the less Himself. (2) As it hath its resplendency, so (3) its redundancy. It is inexhaustible and fathomless. II. It is a CONSTANT fulness. 1. The fulness of the creature is mutable. It ebbs and changeth. 2. God's fulness is overflowing and everflowing. 3. It is a never-failing goodness. III. God fills the hungry soul with—1. Grace. Grace is filling because suitable to the soul. 2. Peace. Israel had honey out of the rock; this honey of peace comes out of the rock Christ. 3. Bliss. Glory is a filling thing. When a Christian awakes out of the sleep of death, then he shall be satisfied. Then shall the soul be filled brimful. (*Ibid.*) I. WHAT IS HERE MEANT BY RIGHTEOUSNESS. 1. Actual and inherent righteousness; living a life in sincere and perfect obedience to all the laws of God. 2. Imputed righteousness. II. WHAT IS IT TO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS? 1. To contend fiercely and fight manfully against our spiritual adversaries. 2. To desire ardently and intensely for spiritual sustenance. 3. To discharge our duty in every point to the best of our skill and power. 4. To willingly suffer hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness,

and the want of anything necessary for the support and comfort of life, rather than knowingly transgress any point of duty. (*Bishop Ofspring Blackall, D.D.*)

*Soul starvation a sad and guilty thing.*—The utter starving of the soul, if we could see it as we see other things, would strike us as one of the saddest of things. When the shepherd, over in New York, had a house for the reception of orphan children, and on inspection it was found that the soup was very thin, that there was but little of it, that the food was most stingily dealt out, and that these children were gradually coming to be skin and bones by starvation charity, the whole city flamed with indignation. They threw open the door of the cell, and seized him by the throat, and pitched him in ignominiously. But look into your own soul and see how the things that are nearest to God are shut up in you. While your awakened appetites and passions are fully clothed, and are walking up and down the palace of your soul, having their own way, I hear a faint cry in some remote chamber thereof. It is conscience moaning and pleading for food; and I hear the thundering rap of passions on the door as they say, "Hush! Be still! Are you never going to sleep? Will you never die?" In another quarter I hear the soul crying for food. "What ails you?" is the response; and a bone is thrown in for it to gnaw on. (*Beecher.*) *Righteousness many-sided.*—It is not merely the single virtue of justice or rectitude—in fact, no virtue is absolutely single, if we look at it closely. A man cannot really have one virtue, and but one, genuine and complete. He cannot have one without having all virtues and all graces, for no one virtue or grace is complete without the intermingling of the life and reciprocal action of all the rest. We make a great mistake if we suppose otherwise. There have been men who could play delightful music on one string of the violin, but there never was a man who could produce the harmonies of heaven in his soul by a one-stringed virtue. Can a man be thoroughly and strictly honest, and at the same time be a selfish man? Can he be temperate. Suppose a man, for instance, pursuing a course of virtue, a course of temperance, or of rectitude, has the promise that he shall be wealthy, and that he shall have long life—shall make a fortune, and shall be respected. This is all very good; but what is the essence of all this? It is in being righteous; that is the great blessing. So that if you have a long life, it is a righteous life; and if you have wealth, it is righteous wealth, as you make a righteous use and disposition of it. With this, any condition is blessed; without it, no condition is blessed. So the essence of all promises is in the possession of this intrinsic righteousness. (*E. H. Chaplin.*) *Moral hunger a developing energy.*—Now, the same law prevails in the mind. That is to say, outward activity grows from some sort of inward uneasiness or impulse. Hunger existing in the body works outwardly, first, into that industry which supplies it, and then enlarges gradually, and inspires a more complex industry. And so almost all of life in its upper sphere proceeds from a kind of hunger which exists in the soul. Some yearning, or longing, or action, or some faculty developing itself and working to produce its appropriate gratification—this is the analogue; and the character, as formed by the faculties, answers to the industrial creations produced by sensations of hunger and thirst in the body. (*Beecher.*)

Ver. 7. **The merciful.**—*Christian mercy:*—I. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MERCY? 1. Its nature. 2. Its objects. 3. Its author. 4. Its design. II. HOW IS IT EXEMPLIFIED? 1. In the forgiveness of enemies. 2. In various acts of kindness. 3. In deep concern and effort for the spread of the gospel. III. WHAT IS THE BLESSING WHICH CHRISTIAN MERCY INSURES? 1. He will have mercy shown him from the subjects of his bounty. 2. A merciful Providence will attend the merciful Christian. 3. Mercy shall be shown him at the last day. IV. A FEW OBSERVATIONS TO EXCITE YOU TO CHERISH A MERCIFUL DISPOSITION. 1. The more you abound in mercy, the more you are conformed to the precepts of the Scriptures. 2. The more you abound in mercy, the more will you resemble God. 3. The more we abound in mercy, the more eminently we appear to possess the spirit of Christ. (*J. Jordan.*) *The blessing of mercifulness:*—I. What is the CHARACTER of this mercifulness? It is a quality exercised between man and man, independent of written law, and which is not so much certain acts of forgiveness as a temper of the soul. It is a temper which makes him who has it not so much sorry that he has been injured, but sorry that the injurer should have the heart to do the wrong. All memory of wrong fades from him. II. THE REWARD. Christ did not mean a man to be merciful for the sake of obtaining mercy, but as a necessary result he would obtain it. Mercy is the reward of mercy. (*S. A. Brooke.*) *The sin of cruelty to animals:*—1. It is

inconsistent with any just idea of the place assigned to man upon earth, and of the power granted to him over the other creatures, who occupy the same scene with himself. 2. It is out of harmony with the feelings and graces of character which ought to belong to all who profess the Christian faith. 3. It has a manifest tendency to pervert the entire moral nature of him who indulges it. 4. It is seen to be odious when we consider that the creatures against whom it is directed are those to whom man is most indebted for valuable service. (*A. Goldie.*) I. What is implied in being merciful, and to whom does this character properly belong? II. What is the blessedness promised? III. The obligation we are under to be merciful. (*Joseph Benson.*) The very first grace that grows, like a beautiful spring flower, on the ground of righteousness, is the grace of mercy, or compassion. I. WHAT IS MERCY, or compassion? It is sorrow at the suffering of a fellow-creature, rational or irrational; and, along with that sorrow, an earnest desire, if possible, to relieve it. It does not ask the question, "Is the sufferer of my nation, sect, party, or Church; does the man deserve relief?" It simply asks the question, "Does he suffer?" We are to go farther and to pity the sufferer as a sinner, and to show mercy to him simply because he is a sinner. This mercy is frequently enjoined in Holy Scripture, and always represented as the characteristic of the loftiest nature. This grace is obligatory upon all. In order to exercise it, let us think of the mercy we have received. II. THE BENEDICTION pronounced upon it. Conscious joy. Special benedictions (Isa. lviii. 6). Blessed because they are God-like. "They shall obtain mercy"—from others in this world, and from God, even in this world, and at "that day." (*Dr. J. Cumming.*) Let me exhort you to deeds of mercy, let your fingers drop with the myrrh of liberality, sow your golden seed, and ye shall reap an abundant harvest. I. *In* Christ: labour that your persons may be in Christ. 1. The best works not springing from faith are lost. 2. That fruit is most sweet and genuine which is brought forth in the Vine (John xv. 14). 3. Out of Christ all our alms-deeds are but the fruit of the wild olive; they are not good works, but dead works. II. *For* Christ: for His sake, that you may testify your love to Him. Love mellows and ripens our alms-deeds, it makes them a precious perfume to God. III. All works of mercy are to be done in humility. As the silkworm, while she weaves her curious works hides herself within the silk, and is not seen, so we should hide ourselves from pride and vainglory. (*Thomas Watson.*) I. Are we wanting in this grace of mercy? Let us compare ourselves with God. God's mercy is changeless, ours is fitful. God's mercy is provident and thoughtful, ours capricious and thoughtless. II. How may we hope to have this mercy supplied to us? In the redemption of the fallen world by the Son of God. This thoughtful, universal, and provident mercy is unblurred by a single line. III. Are we merciful in judgment of others? In our speech? Do we not take pleasure in sharp criticism? Are we merciful in consideration for others? Are we merciful employers? (*Dr. Chalmers Smith.*) The exercise of mercy chiefly consists of two things. I. To prevent any evil or mischief which we apprehend our neighbour to be in. (1) By abstaining from all acts of cruelty or unmercifulness towards anybody or creature; (2) By using our dominion or authority over others with tenderness and moderation; (3) By considering our neighbour's case as our own. II. To endeavour to deliver others from difficulties, or at least to ease others of their burdens. (1) By warning our neighbour; (2) By friendly admonition. Thus preventing our neighbour falling into evil or mischief; (3) To comfort others in sickness, sorrow, reproach, or disgrace; (4) To disperse slanders and aspersions; (5) To help the needy, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and take care of the poor. (*Bishop Ofspring Blackall, D.D.*)

*Mercifulness a quality of the entire man.*—Mercifulness, then, is a quality of the whole nature; a certain soft, sweet, tender, gentle, gracious atmosphere in which the whole man lives and breathes; in which he continually acts toward injury and wrong; and under its warm and sunny rays injury and wrong melt away day by day, like icebergs that come floating down into the tropical stream. And those are blest who have it. They live in soft sunshine of their own making, and in it all the simple charities of life, which are like the common flowers that adorn and make sweet the woods and fields, flourish until the whole world rejoices in the life of those who live by mercy. And their speech is delightful as the songs of birds, and their daily acts like the soft murmur of such streams as gently flow through meadows. In all this inward beauty of soul they are blest indeed, for mercy blesses him who gives it. (*S. A. Brooke.*)

Ver. 8. **The pure in heart.**—*Purity of heart:*—I. Purity of heart DEMANDS OUR ATTENTION. 1. It implies a change of heart. 2. It implies that the faculties of the soul are purified. 3. It implies the purity of the affections. 4. It implies the purity of the thoughts and desires. 5. It leads to purity of worship. 6. It leads to purity of life. II. THE BLESSEDNESS PROMISED to the pure in heart. 1. What is denoted by seeing God. 2. This vision will constitute the blessedness of the pure in heart. (*J. Jordan.*) *The blessedness of the pure in heart:*—I. Inquire into THE MEANING OF PURITY OF HEART. 1. The words carry us into the inner regions of man's being. At first sight they only suggest the absence of the impure. But there is no purity apart from the absolute authority of God in the affections. Man is not made by negatives. II. PURITY OF HEART GIVES THE VISION OF GOD. The phrase "see God" does not refer to any manifestation of His glory visible to the eye of sense. It is to the far deeper sight of the soul that Christ refers. Your best friend is not seen by the eye of the body; you see him spiritually, his qualities of mind and heart. 1. None but the pure in heart can see Him. It is useless to tell the selfish about the beauty of unselfishness; you might as well tell the blind about the glory of colour. 2. That to the pure in heart the full glory of the Divine nature reveals itself. God is light and love. These are seen by the pure soul. III. THE VISION IS ITS OWN EXCEEDING BLESSEDNESS. 1. It is blessed because to see God satisfies the longings of the heart. 2. Because it clothes life in glory. 3. Because it is the dawning of immortal hope. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) I. Let us try to ascertain WHAT THIS PURITY IS which is here so extolled. It was in Adam by nature—it is in us by grace, &c. In us it is as seed cast into the soil, &c. It is a living principle, ever powerful, ever resisted, yet never beaten, growing daily in aspirations and likeness, until it is made perfect by seeing Christ as He is, when we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. Constantly enjoined. Is true beauty. The qualification for heaven. The Holy Spirit its author. The heart its seat. Manifest in the outer life. Will ever be ready to disclose itself to God in prayer. II. Such persons are BLESSED. In having this characteristic. Evidence of being amongst the people of God. To them all things are pure. "Shall see God"—in life's trials, life's prosperity, providential dealings, in all creation, in the sacred page, in ordinances, and, above all, in glory—transforming, satisfying, joyful. "Create in me," &c. (*Dr. J. Cumming.*) By the "heart" we are to understand the inward part of man, comprehending the mind and soul with all their faculties and affections, purposes and inclinations, the secret recesses into which mortal eye cannot penetrate. I. The foliage and branches are of the same kind with the stock that bears them. 1. Before we can bring forth good fruit we must be renovated. 2. There may be the semblance of purity in the life when there is no real principle of holiness in the heart. II. Purity is (1) the mind renewed, the (2) disordered spirit restored, and (3) conformed to the "image of God," in righteousness and true holiness. III. From the definition of the principle there are three things which it includes. 1. Frank and genuine sincerity in opposition to dissimulation and deceit. 2. Spiritual worship in opposition to that which is formal. 3. A holy and heavenly mind, in opposition to one that is polluted and sensual. (*J. E. Good.*) I. A great privilege proposed by our Saviour to His followers. "They shall see God"—in this life and in heaven. II. The qualification required for this enjoyment—purity of heart. Nature and necessity of heart-purity. 1. Try your hopes of heaven by this rule. 2. Follow after purity—heart and life. (*Henry Grove.*) See here what is the beauty that sets off a soul in God's eye: *purity of heart.* I. Thou who art never so beautiful, art but a spiritual leper, till thou art *pure in heart.* 1. Therein God sees His own picture drawn. 2. Holiness is a beam of God. II. Thou who art pure in heart hast the angel's glory in thee, and the embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost upon thee. III. The pure heart is God's paradise, where He delights to walk; it is His lesser heaven. The dove delights in the purest air; the Holy Ghost, who descended in the likeness of a dove, delights in the purest soul. How may this raise the esteem of purity! This is a beauty that never fades! (*Thomas Watson.*) I. Purity of heart stands in direct opposition to that external affectation of purity which is the offspring of hypocrisy. 1. Actions are the outward symbols or expressions of virtue and vice, not virtue and vice themselves. 2. Actions when separated from their motives are indifferent, but it is the disposition of benevolence by which the mind is actuated in which the virtue lies. 3. Words, like actions, when separated from their motives, are indifferent; but it is the inward malignity of soul from which the words proceed, in which the vice consists. 4. The form of purity, like that of godliness without its power, is only a

delusive counterfeit. 5. All external services and sacrifices are of no value without this internal purity. II. Purity implies the absence of moral grossness. Whatever is defiled is essentially repugnant to the spirit of purity. (1) By the law of nature clouds darken the face of the sky, fogs and vapours stagnate and corrupt the air (2) By the law of conscience and religion, moral blots and corruptions stain the beauty of the soul, and cast a shade upon its brightness. III. Purity is an active and vigorous disposition, which incessantly prompts the soul in which it resides, to (1) admire what is amiable; (2) To approve what is excellent; (3) To relish what is delicate; (4) To pursue what is refined. Purity is the only way to blessedness—purity is blessedness itself. (*David Lamont, D.D.*)

*The man of heart blessed.*—So came these peaceful words of Jesus: *Blessed, not the man of force, but the man of heart.* (*E. J. Haynes.*) *A pure heart uses God's creatures without injury.*—We stood, the day we left home to begin life for ourselves, amid all the "creatures" of God, as stands the druggist's clerk on the first morning of his apprenticing, not knowing which is sweet, or sour, or would kill, or would make alive; aye, and with a perverted impulse for the wrong use of all. Behold that tree which nods at the church window. Sometimes there is too much moisture in the air; sometimes too much heat; poisons are at its root, its leaf, its stock. Yet so "pure" is the tree, so does it follow just God's law, that it chooses and uses, not abuses, but fructifies by all. So amid all nature will be the really pure in heart; not that pure heart is all-wise, but it is so in harmony with God's law, so far as it is instructed, that it uses all things according to the Creator's intention. How? For beauty, purity, peace, and joy. (*Ibid.*) *A pure heart is blessed in the feeling of security.*—He says, "I am not conscious of any desire within which shall go half-way to meet the allurements of sin; no little rivulets of half-indulgence which have eaten the sand from under my walls." Oh, how weak is guilt, how strong is purity! I have seen the hawk flap out of the top of tall hemlocks at my coming in the pasture. "Why, hawk, I'll not shoot you; it is but a walking-stick I carry in my hand." "Ah! yes, but *I* think it may have a ball in it." And he sails high above the village steeple. "Nay, hawk," says the steeple, "I'll not hurt. I'm but the finger pointing to your Maker." "Ah! but *I* think you are a trap." He even parts company with the harmless sparrow, for the sparrow "may be a snare." Not so the dove. It lives in the cornice of men's dwellings, and nods good morning to the children in the chamber crib; it touches the foot of the housemaid as she shakes her cloth of crumbs; it rests up in the steeples of old churches, and the Sabbath bell, far from being a fright, is but the signal for the cooing chorus to begin. *The man of pure heart is blessed with peaceful self-respect.* He is not happy who cannot respect himself. And no man can respect himself who is living in *more or less constant communion with bad thoughts and evil pictures of imagination.* Suppose we grant that we are not altogether responsible for our thoughts, but, by the complications of daily life, before we know it we have planned a sin; or, by Satan's foes beleaguered, we are thrust upon by pictures of iniquity. Still my proposition is true, that no such life could be a happy one. Could the master of a strong house be at peace, even if bolts and bars and granite strength kept all his foes at bay; if, ever and anon, the mob thrust the death's head at his windows? Aye, more, could he respect himself if, now and then, as impure hearts do, he showed a face for parley, or cautiously, yet surely, invited one of the red-shirted horde within, to see how he looked near by? The sunflower might say of wasps, and hornets, and bees: "Why do they pester me, and so hang about?" and the wasps would reply: "You entertain us, sir; you have what we love." And so the judge within man, true to his heaven-given instinct, makes reply to him pestered by bad thoughts: "There's something, sir, about you that these buzzards love!" I saw by Lake Leman the old castle of Chillon. Up above, the royal, tapestry-hung apartments of the Duke of Savoy and his gay bride; down below, the dungeon where Bonnivard was chained; where creeping things crawl forth to ogle at the visitors, and instruments of torture are; and I wondered if never, in some scene of revelry above, the groans of martyrs rose to stir the arras on gorgeous walls. There are those we meet in social life, the rooms of whose souls which are open to friends are fair as a palace. But alas! who shall tell us of the secret kept unseen? Not so pure heart. I do not pretend to say that ever on this earth we are freed from all solicitations of evil; but there is many a soul so "blessed" that, when winged thoughts of sin come flying to the windows, *God's angel rises up, and draws the shutters to;* when disturbing thoughts of hate, revenge, avarice, and pride draw near, God's angel meets them at the *outer gate*, and bids them all begone. (*Ibid.*) Pure heart is "blest" *in his re-*

*lations with his fellow-man.* Pure Heart is blest because *he knows no envy of another's success, jealousy at another's praise.* Dear, simple old heart. It never occurs to him that there is any less of summer's sun for him because a million others bask in its beams. O King Great Heart! thyself no man's enemy, thou thinkest no man thine, but dost beam upon the world like the October sunset upon the harvest fields. "*He shall see God.*" How? Thus. Mozart and his friend, the royal huntsman, went forth arm-in-arm to the fields. The wind came up heavily through the copse of trees. "Look!" says the hunter, "it will startle a hare!" "Listen!" says Mozart, "what a diapason from God's great organ!" A lark rose on soaring wing, with its own sweet song. "Look!" says the gamester, "what a shot!" "Ah!" says Mozart, "what would I give could I catch that thrill!" There be dull souls who cannot see nor hear. Are they sick? "Oh! what misfortune!" Are they bereaved? "Some enemy hath done this!" Are they well and prosperous? "Good luck!" Not so Pure Heart. He *can see God's hand in every sorrow chastening for good; God's face in every blessing; God's smile in the morning light, the blossoming harvest, and the evening shade. His heart is attuned.* (*E. J. Haynes.*) *Vision of God in heaven*:—I. God is a pure Spirit, and invisible. It cannot be with our bodily eyes that we shall see Him. II. They shall *see* Him. This word expresses immediate intuition of what is plainly offered to view. Now we see through a glass, darkly. Wilt thou see God's wisdom, power, love, holiness, glory? 1. This is an appropriating vision. 2. It is an assimilating vision. 3. It is a satisfying vision. III. How excellent the soul of man which is capable of such felicity! IV. If such be the nature of the future blessedness, then a change of heart is requisite to enable us to enjoy it. V. What gratitude do we owe to that God who has provided such a felicity for His children. VI. What a source of consolation under the afflictions of life. VII. This subject calls us to mourn for the folly of the children of men, who for toys barter away glory and immortality. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *They shall see God*:—1. In the work of creation. 2. In the ordinances of the gospel. 3. In the dispensation of Providence. 4. In the day of judgment. 5. In heaven for ever. (*J. C. Edwards, M.A.*)

*Purity an unmixed motive.*—A thing is pure when there is nothing in it out of harmony with its nature. Water is pure, air is pure, when they contain only their constituent elements, and in the right proportion. Gold is pure when it has been separated by fire from all foreign matter. The diamond is pure, the crystal is pure, when there is nothing in them which hinders the refraction and reflection of light. It is thus with the heart, which is the emotional part of the soul. It is pure, when it loves only that which it ought to love. (*The Abbé Bautain.*) *Spiritual sight conditioned by purity*:—1. It may be easily understood that impurity of heart hinders the soul from seeing God. Under the power of perverse affections the mind sees nothing aright—nothing in its just relations and proportions. Least of all can the mind thus blinded in its highest faculties see God aright; it gets no inspiring and attractive perception of His glory. As earthly vapours, condensed into clouds and darkening the world with storms, hide from the outward sense the beauty and glory of the visible heaven, so sensual passions, grovelling affections, and the dominion of sin in the soul, all the habits of an impure and unbelieving mind, intervene as with impenetrable clouds, to shut off from the view and reach of the spiritual faculties the grand realities of that upper sphere, where the eternal relations of duty are and where God is. 2. This is further illustrated by remembering distinctly that the normal or right state of the mind—the state in which its faculties and susceptibilities are properly adjusted in relation to each other and in relation to their objects—is just what our Saviour means by purity in heart. As the normal condition of the eye is not when the optic nerve is paralysed or otherwise diseased, nor when the surface is covered by a film, nor when inflammation or a mote under the eyelids makes the light painful, but only when all obstruction or disease is absent, so the normal condition of the mind, as made for the knowledge of things invisible and eternal, is not when its sensibilities are perverted by selfishness, not when sin reigns within, but only when the heart is pure. We may now inquire, What is the blessedness of thus seeing God? 1. To see God is to see the central light which reveals the order and beauty of the universe. The unity of all created things is found only in their relation to God's power, to His love and wisdom, to His plan and government. 2. To see God is to see the fountain of all blessedness. Such intuition of God's glory is identical with the peace of God that passeth all understanding. 3. Such an intuition of God as this promise assures to the pure in heart is that for which the soul was created. It is the soul's chief end, and therefore it is the highest blessedness of which the soul is capable. (*L. Bacon.*)

Ver. 9. **The peacemakers.**—*Peacemakers* :—I. HOW GREAT A BLESSING IS PEACE. 1. It is the preserver of life. 2. It is the preserver of prosperity. 3. It is the preserver of happiness. 4. They are not easily offended. 5. If offended they are not irreconcilable. 6. They exert themselves to reconcile contending parties. 7. Their great effort is to reconcile sinners to God. II. THE REWARD WHICH AWAITS THEM. 1. They are the children of God by regeneration. 2. By adoption. 3. By their relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. They shall be acknowledged as the children of God. (*J. Jordan.*) *Peacemakers* :—I. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PEACEMAKERS. They are heavenly: this seen from the Great Peacemakers—the God of Peace; the Prince of Peace; the Spirit of Peace. All the Divine Persons are active for peace. Many things operate to disturb this peace. II. THE WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE SHOWN. 1. To compose differences which may exist between ourselves and others. 2. By striving to bring others to a knowledge of Jesus, that they may know the true peace. 3. In the endeavour to make peace between others. (*W. Reeve.*) *The peacemaker* :—I. He must understand what things have the capacity of agreement. II. He must understand the true cause of disagreement. III. He must take a deep interest in the contending parties. IV. He must obey the Divine call for interposition. V. He must believe that God has made provision for pacifying the world. (*Caleb Morris.*) *Peacemakers* :—I. VIEW GOD AS A PEACEMAKER. 1. He is a Lover of peace. 2. He is a Maker of peace. II. DELINEATE CHRISTIANS AS PEACEMAKERS. 1. They love peace. 2. They make peace. 3. They promote peace. III. THEIR BLESSEDNESS. 1. They are pronounced God's children. 2. They have the inward happiness of self-approval. 3. They look forward to being rewarded by God. (*T. G. Horton.*) I. Before they can become true peacemakers and be entitled to this beatitude, they must seek and obtain inward peace for themselves (Eph. ii. 13–17). II. It then becomes their duty to promote peace and restore it where lacking—between man and God, and man and man—in the Church, in the community, in the world at large. III. The means to be employed. To obtain peace for ourselves and lead others to its possession, we must use the means of grace. To reconcile man to man, we must set an example of peace (Rom. xii. 18). IV. Then we shall be blessed. 1. In the enjoyment of peace (John xiv. 27; Jas. iii. 18). 2. In being known as the children of God, &c. (*L. O. Thompson.*) The world is full of peace-breakers. *Peacemakers* :—I. In the FAMILY. II. In SOCIETY. III. In the CHURCH. IV. In the STATE. (*J. Mackay, B.D.*) This is the seventh step of the golden ladder which leads to blessedness. The name of peace is sweet, and the work of peace a blessed work. I. The peace a godly man seeks is not to have a league of amity with sinners, though we are to be (1) at peace with their persons, yet we are to have war with their (2) sins. (3) Grace teacheth good nature; we are to be civil to the worst, but not twist into a cord of friendship; that were to be brethren in iniquity. II. We must not so far have peace with others as to endanger ourselves. 1. If a man hath the plague, we will be helpful to him and send him our best receipts, but we are careful not to suck his infectious breath. 2. So we may be peaceable towards all—nay, helpful. 3. Pray for, counsel, and relieve them, but let us take heed of too much familiarity, lest we suck their infection. 4. We must so make peace with men that we do not break our peace with conscience. III. We must not so seek peace with others as to wrong truth. 1. Peace must not be bought with the sale of truth. 2. We must so seek the flower of peace as not to lose the pearl of truth. 3. Truth is the most orient gem of the Church's crown. IV. We must not let any of God's truth fall to the ground. 1. We must not so be in love with the golden crown of peace as to pluck off the jewels of truth. 2. Rather let peace go than truth. (*Thomas Watson.*) *Blessed are the peacemakers* :—I. 1. They that are desirous to preserve peace among their neighbours. 2. They that avoid and endeavour as much as they can to discourage and prevent in others those practices which are the usual means of raising quarrels and contentions among men. 3. They who avoid backbiting, tale-bearing, slander, detraction, and the like. II. 1. The peaceful man, if there be any dissension already begun among them, will endeavour to incline parties to coolness and moderation. 2. If his neighbours will not be subdued by his good words and entreaties, he can at least in a great measure allay the dissension. III. By promoting peace we (1) do a work pleasing to God, (2) and for which we shall receive abundant reward. (*Bishop Ofspring Blackall, D.D.*) *Children of God* :—Peacemakers are the children of the Most High. I. By eternal generation: so Christ is the natural Son of His Father (Psa. ii. 7). II. By creation: so the angels are sons of God (Job i. 6, xxxviii. 7). When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. III. By participation of dignity: so kings and

rulers are said to be children of the High God (Psa. viii. 2, 6). IV. By visible profession: so God hath many children. Hypocrites forge a title of sonship (Gen. vi. 2). V. By real sanctification: so the faithful are particularly and eminently the children of God. (*Thomas Watson.*) Let us carry ourselves as becomes the children of God. I. In obedience. (1) Obey God out of love; (2) readily; (3) every command of His. II. In humility. Look in the glass of God's Word, and see thereiu our sinful spots. III. In speech. 1. Grace must be the salt that seasons our words. 2. Sobriety must govern our actions. Error is a spiritual intoxication. IV. In fidelity. Faithful in all things. V. In sedulity. We must labour in a calling: God will bless our diligence, not our laziness. VI. In magnanimity. 1. Must do nothing sordidly. 2. Must not fear the faces of men, but be brave-spirited as Nehemiah. VII. In sanctity. Holiness is a diadem of beauty. In this let us endeavour to imitate our heavenly Father. VIII. In cheerfulness. Why do the children of God walk so pensively? Are they not heirs of heaven? IX. Let us carry ourselves as the children of God in holy longings and expectations. Children are still longing to be at home. There is bread enough in our Father's house. Oh, how we should ever be longing for home! (*Ibid.*) There is a fulness of meaning in the term as it stands in the Scripture, which includes both the effort to make peace, and the disposition of the mind towards it. I. A man may be officially or otherwise employed in composing a difference that exists between two families or two individuals, without possessing the spirit and disposition of peace which the word includes. (1) No one can be the peacemaker of the text without he (2) possesses a peaceable and conciliatory disposition. II. The duty combines the attempt to reconcile men to God, through the peace-speaking blood of the cross, with the effort to heal the breach of friendship which has been made among individuals. (1) This of all labours is the most noble and Divine. (2) We overlook the most essential part of making peace if we confine our endeavours to the composing of differences among men, while we (3) pass by multitudes around us who are "contending with their Maker." (*J. E. Good.*) *The peacemaker:*—I. DESCRIBE the peacemaker. 1. He is a citizen. 2. He is a neighbour. 3. He is a Christian. II. Declare his BLESSEDNESS. 1. He is blessed of God. 2. He is one of the children of God. 3. They shall be called the children of God. III. Set the peacemaker TO WORK. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

*How the Rev. John Owen restored peace between the Rev. Robert Hall and the Rev. Charles Simeon.*—A pleasing instance of a successful effort to restore peace is related in the life of the Rev. John Owen. The Rev. Charles Simeon and the Rev. Robert Hall were offended with each other, and in their anger declined intercourse. After several friends had tried to restore peace, and failed, Mr. Owen wrote the under-mentioned lines on two cards, and then left one at the house of each person:—

> "How rare that task a prosperous issue finds,
> Which seeks to reconcile discordant minds!
> How many scruples rise to passion's touch!
> *This* yields too little, and *that* asks too much.
> Each wishes each with other's eyes to see:
> And *many* sinners can't make *two* agree;
> What mediation, then, the Saviour showed,
> Who *singly* reconciled us *all* to God!"

The first man who read the lines was so strongly impressed by them that he hastened from his house to call immediately upon his offended friend; the friend had also read the lines, and, being affected by them, had done the same, and the offended persons met each other in the street. A reconciliation instantly took place—a reconciliation which, it is believed, was never interrupted or regretted by either of those useful and highly esteemed men.

Ver. 10. **Persecuted for righteousness.**—*Persecution*:—I. IN WHAT RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION CONSISTS. 1. Negative persecution which falls short of violence. 2. Domestic persecution. 3. Private persecution. 4. Public persecution. II. THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF THOSE WHO INFLICT PERSECUTION. 1. It is contrary to sound reason. 2. It is contrary to sound policy. 3. It is contrary to Scripture. 4. Persecution for righteousness is virtually aimed at Christ. III. THE HAPPINESS OF THOSE WHO ENDURE IT. 1. They are furnished with satisfactory evidence of the sincerity of their religion. 2. They are blessed in the enjoyment of those consolations which are generally administered under circumstances of persecution. 3. They largely

share the sympathy of the children of God. 4. They are encircled with high associations, "so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." 5. They are blessed in extensive usefulness. 6. Great reward in heaven. 7. Let us be thankful that we are happily exempted, in a great measure, from the evil of persecution. 8. Let us not go out of our way to provoke persecution. 9. Support those who suffer persecution. (*E. Clayton.*) I. The nature of true religion. 1. Its principles. These are spiritual—unpopular—present. Not something without a man, but within. Not of earth, but from above. They are: poverty of spirit, docility of mind, intense aspirations after God, purity of heart. 2. Its practice. Penitential sorrow, mercy, peaceableness, endurance. II. The blessedness of those who possess true religion. They have peace, true satisfaction. They enjoy all spiritual blessings, they are children of God—then all things are theirs. 1. Have you in possession the *principles* of true religion? 2. Do you daily reduce them to *practice*? (*Good Seed for the Lord's Sowers.*) *Persecution for righteousness' sake.* I. WHAT PERSECUTION IS. It is more than affliction. It is cruel and unjust. II. THE SUBJECTS OF PERSECUTION. Many suffer for their own peculiarities. III. THE PROMISE belonging to it—"Great is your reward in heaven." (*W. Reeve, M.A.*) *Persecution.* I. The PERSECUTIONS WHICH ATTEND THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. 1. It is seen in marked disrespect. 2. In the Christian's company being avoided. 3. In ridicule and slander. II. THE CAUSES of persecution. 1. The degenerate state of the world. 2. The influence which Satan exercises over the minds of men. 3. The conduct of Christians in the world. III. The MANNER in which we are called to suffer persecution. "Rejoice," &c. 1. Because the term of our suffering at most can be but short. 2. Because we suffer in a righteous cause. 3. Because we have the most illustrious example. 4. Because if we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him. IV. The ENCOURAGEMENT afforded. 1. So persecuted they the Prophets. 2. They possess the kingdom of heaven. 3. Great is their reward in heaven. (*J. Jordan.*) I. The GROUNDS of persecution. II. The TIMES. 1. In heathen lands. 2. When its professors are despised, and in a minority. 3. When their doctrines strongly clash with reigning maxims and controlling interests. III. The WAYS. 1. Reviling. 2. Slandering. 3. Injuring. 4. Destroying. IV. The EXTENT. 1. Upon property. 2. Upon relatives. 3. Upon good name. 4. Upon life. V. The REWARDS. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The blessedness of persecution.* I. THE FACT THAT TRUE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY EXPOSES TO PERSECUTION. 1. See this illustrated. 2. The form of the persecution. Reviling, injurious treatment, slander. 3. The ground of it. Because righteous. 4. The source of it. Enmity against God. II. TO VIEW PERSECUTION AS A GROUND OF REJOICING. 1. As an attestation of Christian goodness. 2. It connects you with the Prophets. 3. It brings great reward in heaven. Expect persecution; bear it; profit by it. (*T. G. Horton.*) I. True godliness is usually attended with persecution. 1. Christ died to take the curse from us, not the cross. 2. Piety will not shield us from suffering. 3. The way to heaven, though full of roses in regard of the comforts of the holy, is full of thorns in regard of persecutions. 4. Before Israel reached Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, they must go through a wilderness of serpents and a Red Sea. 5. So, the children of God in their passage to the Holy Land, must meet with fiery serpents and a Red Sea of persecution. II. Christianity is sanctity joined with suffering. 1. Saints carry Christ in their hearts, and the cross on their shoulders. 2. Christ and His cross are never parted. 3. It is too much for a Christian to have two heavens—one here and one hereafter. 4. What is the meaning of the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breastplate of patience, but to imply that we must encounter with sufferings? III. Was Christ's head crowned with thorns, and do we think to be crowned with roses? 1. If we are God's gold, it is not strange to be cast into the fire. 2. Persecutions are pledges of God's love, badges of honour. 3. In the sharpest trial there is sweetest comfort; God's fanning His wheat is but to make it purer. (*Thomas Watson.*) I. WHAT IS PERSECUTION? 1. An abuse of power employed to the harm of another, with something of eagerness, pursuit, and perseverance. 2. No mortal is so weak, so wholly destitute of power, but that he has wherewithal to be some way or other upon the offensive; so there is no one in his turn is not some way or other capable of persecution. 3. The meanest vassals upon earth can have the insolence to say, "With our tongue we will prevail! our lips are our own, who is lord over us?" II. Persecution FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE. Men may be said to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake when they suffer for doing the duties of their stations, not in those acts alone which respect the faith and worship of God (though

these more especially), but throughout the whole stage of Christian virtue, as princes, magistrates, subjects, or Christians. 1. When a prince is made uneasy by potent factions in the government, when designs for public good are directly opposed, or artificially frustrated, then is he persecuted. 2. When a magistrate finds a weight thrown in the scale of justice, and the furious power of parties bears heavy on his hands, then is he persecuted. 3. When a faithful subject's good deeds are lessened and undervalued or skillfully ascribed to ill ends: in a word, whenever he suffers in his goods or good name for adhering unmovably to an even course of duty, then is he persecuted. 4. When a man's sobriety and conscientiousness are traduced as preciseness; his firm adherence to well-established principles, as stiffness, bigotry, and narrowness of mind; his moderation disputed—then is he persecuted. (*Lancelot Blackburn.*) Persecution, in the Scriptural use of the term, is evil treatment on a religious account. I. It is the infliction of an injury, or the withholding of a right, because the person thus persecuted renders what he regards a duty to his God. 1. Every person who suffers in his name, person, or family, for the faithful discharge of what he considers to be his duty to God, and who is actuated, (2) not by a spirit of pride, or affected singularity, but by a (3) commendable regard to Divine authority, and a (4) sincere intention of promoting the interests of Christianity, and the good of man, is "persecuted for righteousness' sake." II. There are other modes of persecution. 1. The carnal mind in its "enmity against God" has devised crafty and cruel schemes for the vexation and embarrassment of the servants of Christ. (1) There is persecution by speech. (2) "Men shall revile you." (*J. E. Good.*) *Mean things dignified.*—It is said of Joan, Countess of Shrewsbury, that in the midst of court festivities, she let her garter fall unawares; and, upon her blushing at the accident, the king took it up in his hand, whereat the nobility smiled. "Well," said the king, "I will make this an honourable ornament ere long." Upon that came the Order of the Knights of the Garter, the garter thus becoming an ornament of the highest order. If man can put honour on such mean things, then God much more. He ennobleth reproaches, and sanctifieth afflictions to His children, and maketh the sufferings of His servants as so many ensigns of heavenly nobility. If men had but the true skill of Christianity, they would be ambitious of the crown of martyrdom, and look upon it as a blessed thing when men speak all manner of evil of them. (*Spencer.*)

**Ver. 11. For My sake.**—*For My sake:*—The supreme and commanding claims implied. Endeavour to understand the meaning of the words, "for my sake." All intelligent creatures act from some consideration or other—for the "sake" of something. At the root of the life we are living there is a strong and dominant reason; or, if not one, several that sway us in turn. Motive in every action—money, pleasure, &c., regard for others. So that the principle which is contained in the text is by no means new or exceptional, but is as old and as wide as the world. Comes before us in its highest and most glorious application. The claims involved. We have, then, here—I. A person. II. A unique person. III. A unique person who claims to be Lord of our life. What are we to do for the *sake of Christ?* To *labour* and *suffer.* (*Dr. Mellor.*) *For My sake.* 1. There is a self-assertion here, which is justified by the character and position of the speaker. 2. All beings capable of love and hatred must, if placed together, act with direct regard to each other, and they will do many things for each other's sake. I. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF JESUS' CLAIMS? 1. Jesus claims work for His sake. 2. We owe to Jesus Christ patient endurance of suffering for His sake. 3. Jesus claims cheerful and generous gifts for His sake. 4. Jesus claims attachment to life, with a readiness to die, for His sake. 5. Jesus claims the devotion of ourselves to Him. II. SOME OF THE MEANS BY WHICH WE MAY STIR UP OURSELVES TO RECOGNIZE THESE CLAIMS MORE CORDIALLY. 1. Distinct ideas of the person of Christ are essential to our being moved by considerations which originate in Himself. 2. Frequent meditation upon the service He has rendered. 3. In order to this we need the communion of the Holy Ghost. (*S. Martin, D.D.*) The words bring before us the relation of the Christian to his living and loving Lord. I. Let us seek clearer views of the INFLUENCE of Christian motive. Christ has certain peculiar and special claims on us. There is the authority of His Godhead. The love of His incarnation and death. II. Let us get a juster estimate of its RANGE. 1. It bears on our efforts after personal holiness. 2. On the Christian's work for others. 3. It extends to the enduring of suffering for conscience' sake. 4. It applies to the sacrifices we are required to make. This

principle possesses a testing power to reveal whether or not we are what we profess to be as followers of Christ. (*Dr. W. M. Taylor.*)

Ver. 12. **Great is your reward.**—*The reward of the saints* :—I. Consider its PRECIOUSNESS. It is shown—1. By remembering who bestows it. 2. It is in heaven. 3. It meets and satisfies the yearning of the saints here. 4. It exceeds our power to measure. 5. It is connected with recognition of service. 6. It is freed from all admixture of sorrow. 7. It is carefully prepared for us. 8. It is certain. 9. It is the highest elevation. II. Consider it as a legitimate MOTIVE TO ACTION (Heb. x. 35, xi. 26). III. Concluding REFLECTIONS. 1. The saints' great reward, not in this life. 2. They have an ever-brightening prospect. 3. God's desire to stimulate us to a better life by revealing to us the great reward. 4. A support in trial. (*J. W. Hussey, M.A.*)

Ver. 13. **Salt of the earth.**—*The elect of God* :—I. Here is Christ's sublime DEFINITION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, and of those who compose His Church. The Church exists for the world's sake more than for its own. Christ's disciples are to be saviours of others. II. Is not this the DOCTRINE OF ELECTION as our Saviour understood it? God's people are chosen, not for their own comfort, but to show men the beauty of the Divine life, and to raise them to the same level. III. IT IS QUALITY MORE THAN QUANTITY that does God's work in the world. All history and progress are at bottom the life-story of the chosen few. IV. It should be one great object of our prayer and effort to KEEP UP THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL STANDARD OF THE ELECT FEW. (*J. G. Greenhough, M.A.*) *The purification of society* :—1. The disciples of Jesus Christ should seek to prevent the corruption of literature. 2. They should seek to prevent the corruption of public amusements. 3. They should seek to prevent the corruption of parochial and political life. 4. They should seek to prevent the corruption of commercial life. (*G. W. McCree.*) *The great calling of the disciples of Christ* :—1. Salt is intended to nourish: it is an article of food. The godly must nourish the earth spiritually. 2. Salt is intended to preserve. 3. Salt has also a consuming power. There is something sharp, biting, and aggressive in it. Laid on a wound it is painful. The Christian often pains men to heal them. (*T. Christlieb, D.D.*) *Salt without savour* :—These words must have seemed ridiculously presumptuous when they were first spoken. I. THE HIGH TASK OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES AS HERE SET FORTH. This metaphor involves two things: a grave judgment as to the actual state of society, and a lofty claim as to what Christ's followers can do for it. It is corrupt; you do not salt a living thing. It is the power and obligation of the good to arrest corruption by their own purity. The example of Christian men is not only repressive, it ought to tempt forth all that is purest in the people with whom they come into contact. Salt does its work by being brought into close contact with the thing which it is to work upon. It does its work silently, inconspicuously, gradually. II. THE GRAVE POSSIBILITY OF THE SALT LOSING ITS SAVOUR. It is evident that there is the obliteration of the distinction between the salt and the mass into which it is inserted. Is there any difference between your ideal of happiness and the irreligious one? III. The solemn question, Is THERE A POSSIBILITY OF RE-SALTING THE SALTLESS SALT, OF RESTORING THE LOST SAVOUR? These words not to be pushed to the extreme. IV. THE CERTAIN END OF THE SALTLESS SALT. You cannot put it upon the soil; there is no fertilizing virtue in it. You cannot even fling it into the rubbish heap; it will do mischief there. Pitch it out into the road; it will stop a cranny somewhere between the stones when once it is well trodden down by men's heels. That is all it is fit for. God has no use for it; man has no use for it. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) I. The world as constituting the particular sphere of the Christian's influence. Moral state of the world at large, and that portion in particular where our influence is most felt. How insensible are we of it, &c. II. Illustrate and apply this interesting and important truth. Explain the metaphor. All true believers in Jesus are denominated the "salt of the earth," because all that is Divine and holy and precious exists in them, and in them only. The moral influence of the Christian, *as it is exerted*, applies to the Church in its collective capacity. III. The decay of the inner life, as manifested in the impaired vigour of Christian influence, figuratively set forth by the "salt that hath lost its savour," and its consequent unprofitableness. The salt may again be salted—the inner life may be revived. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *Christians called salt* :—The ideal of an active and efficient Christian character. It is like salt. How? I. In its CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS. As

salt is made up of chlorine and sodium chemically united, so a Christian character is composed of faith and works in union. (*a*) As chlorine gas is a deadly poison by itself, so faith without works killeth. (*b*) As the metal sodium is destitute alone of the saving quality of salt, so works without faith are destitute of merit to save the soul. (*c*) As the chemical union of the two elements forms a third substance, with a new and useful quality, so faith and works, when united, give life and efficiency to Christian character. II. In its EFFECTS. (*a*) As salt prevents corruption and decay in animal and vegetable matter, so Christian character is the antidote of vice in the individual and in society. (*b*) As salt promotes digestion, and thus prevents deadly disease, so Christian character enables the soul to digest and profit by the various dispensations of Providence. (*c*) As salt renders palatable otherwise distasteful food, so a Christian character sweetens life's disappointments, and changes its crosses into crowns. (*P. S. Davis.*) There are three ideas suggested by the representation in the text. I. The first is INSIPIDITY, OR TASTELESSNESS. (1) This is the case, truly, where the savour of the gospel does not prevail. (2) There you will find no (3) moral beauty, no (4) fruits of benevolence and mercy. (5) How insipid the dear delights even of the family, the sanctuary, and the sequestered recesses of the closet, if there be no manifestations of His love, or indications of His presence, to the spiritual and regenerate heart. II. The second idea is FOLLY AND IGNORANCE. 1. True religion is wisdom. 2. Wickedness is folly. 3. Wicked men are as unwise as they are offensive to God. 4. True piety is an evidence of a well-seasoned and enlightened mind. III. The third idea is TENDENCY TO DECAY. (1) Mortality is the law of nature. (2) All hasten to corruption. The figure denotes (3) moral corruption. (4) When health has left the physical frame, we say it is diseased; (5) when life has fled, we say it is dead. (6) We use the same figure and language to describe the dreadful disorders of the immortal soul. (7) When the principle of love to God does not govern all its faculties, we say they are under a moral distemper. (8) If the Divine Spirit breathes not the "breath of life" into it, we say it is "dead in trespasses and sins." (*J. E. Good.*)

*Salt used in the baptismal service.*—The Latin Church, in its materialistic fashion, employs actual salt in the baptismal service. The priest puts it into the mouth of the person, adult or infant, who is baptized. It is an unauthorized ceremony; but it is a sort of traditional witness to the obligation lying on all Christians to have in themselves that which salt might symbolize. (*Dr. D. Fraser.*) *Salt and sunlight.*—A Roman proverb couples sunlight and salt together as the two things which keep the world alive and sweet. Homer calls it Divine; Plato the substance dear to the gods; Pythagoras spoke of it as the emblem of righteousness, and our common phraseology, following the Greek and Latin writers, has chosen it as the symbol of wit and wisdom, of all that gives grace to speech, refinement to thought, pungency to writing, and individuality to character. The idea, then, which the metaphor on the Saviour's lips suggests is that His disciples are the noble and indispensable element in the world; they sweeten, purify, and enrich its work, its thoughts, its social intercourse, its joys, its laws and literature. They save it from corruption, decomposition, and moral death. The great sea of life, like the sea which washes our shores, would become putrid without it. (*J. G. Greenhough, M.A.*) *Influence working from the few to the many.*—Do you remember Arnold of Rugby's famous sixth form? He brought the boys who composed that first class into closer intercourse with himself, and gave them his choicest teachings, that he might make them models of honour, purity, sobriety, and godliness; strong with the sense of duty, dignified by the thought of their responsibility, so that they might give a healthy tone to the whole school, and that from them might flow a continual stream of purifying, elevating influence. "If I have confidence in my sixth form," said Arnold, "I would not exchange my place for the loftiest position in the world." They were the salt of the school, as Christ's disciples are to be the salt of the earth. *Saltless salt.*—Maundrell, who visited the lake at Jebbûl, tells us that he found salt there which had entirely "lost his savour," and the same abounds among the *débris* at Usdum, and in other localities of rock-salt at the south end of the Dead Sea. It is a well-known fact that the salt of this country, if left long in contact with the ground, does become insipid and tasteless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all, and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust—not to fruitful soil, however. It is

not only "good for nothing," but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown; and this is the reason why it is cast into the street, to be "trodden under the foot of men." (*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*) *Common salt.*—Common salt, the chloride of sodium, is an extremely abundant substance in nature. It is found in almost inexhaustible deposits as rock-salt in various parts of the world: from such deposits arise brino springs, which are strongly impregnated with salt; and the water of the ocean, as well as that of various inland seas, hold it in solution in inconceivable amount. From these various sources salt is prepared for use as an indispensable condiment in human food, and as a raw material in several most important and extensive chemical manufactures. In the United Kingdom great deposits of rock-salt occur in the new red sandstone strata in Cheshire and Worcester. . . . The total amount of salt produced in the United Kingdom, during 1876, was 2,273,256 tons, of which 154,538 tons were in the form of rock-salt. In the same year, 854,538 tons, of a value of £529,547, were exported; British India, the United States, and Russia, being the countries to which it was sent. (*Globe Encyclopædia.*)

Ver. 14. **Ye are the light of the world.**—*Christians the light of the world:*—The Church can diffuse light. 1. By reflection. 2. By dispersing it. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *The Church of Christ the light of the world:*—I. THESE WORDS AS THEY PROCLAIM THE REDEEMER. 1. These words proclaim the moral grandeur of His sentiments. 2. They show the Divine wisdom of His doctrine. 3. The prophetic grasp of His language. II. THESE WORDS AS THEY SPECIFY THE CHRISTIAN. 1. Here is a distinction of persons—"Ye." 2. A distinction of principle—"light." 3. A distinction of efficacy—"light of the world." III. THESE WORDS AS THEY ILLUSTRATE THE WORLD. 1. The world is dark in reference to God. 2. The world is dead, Christianity its salt. (*R. Montgomery, M.A.*) *Christians the light of the world:*—I. VINDICATE THE TRUTH HERE ASSERTED. 1. The world is dark. 2. A contrast to the gloom—of a principle, the antagonist of this moral darkness. Believers are "the light of the world." (1) As in their own souls they possess Christ. (2) As in their life and labour they exhibit Christ. II. APPLY THIS TRUTH TO THE CASE BEFORE US. 1. In the way of privilege. 2. In the way of duty and obligation. (*F. Goode, M.A.*) I. EXPLAIN THE SYMBOL. 1. Light an emblem of purity. 2. Knowledge. 3. Action. 4. Unity. 5. Benevolence. II. ENFORCE THE DOCTRINE. 1. The test of discipleship. 2. The criterion at the judgment. (*W. W. Wythe.*) I. The WORLD'S MORAL DARKNESS IMPLIED. Jesus knew all the attainments of the earth, and He could appreciate their excellency and beauty too; . . . but nothing of all this could cast light on the deepest problems that agitate the human heart—what must I do to be saved? Beneath the surface of all this beauty . . . we find lurking the most revolting immorality. It is the light of Christianity that solves the deepest questions and answers the most anxious inquiries of mankind. The object of light is to disclose what would be otherwise unseen. This light discloses God, the way to heaven, &c. This holy light possesses a peculiar character, which the light of mere science, literature, or secular knowledge has not and cannot have. And since its dawn, even those bright things that were proposed as substitutes for it, this light has seized and made handmaids to it. Science and religion need not be divided. II. CHRISTIANS ARE THE BEARERS OF THIS LIGHT INTO ALL THE ENDS OF THE WORLD. Kindled from the Sun, they are to go forth and cast their light upon the world. Our mission is to enlighten the sphere in which we are placed, &c. (*Dr. J. Cumming.*) *Keep the light bright or you will hear of it.*—I read somewhere of a traveller at Calais going one dark and stormy night to the lighthouse there. Whilst standing looking on, the keeper of the house boasted of its brilliancy and beauty, observing there were few such lights in the world beside. The traveller said, thoughtlessly it may be, "What if one of these burners should go out to-night?" "What!" said the keeper, "go out, sir? Oh, sir," said he, "look at that dark and stormy sea. You cannot see them, but there are ships passing and repassing there to every point of the compass. Were the light to go out from my inattention, in six months news would arrive from every part of the coast, that such ships and crews were lost through my neglect! No, no! God forbid that such a thing should ever occur. I feel every night as I look at my burner as if all the eyes of all the sailors of the world were looking at my lights, and watching me!" If such was his care of lights, the extinction of which could lead only to temporal catastrophes, oh! what should be ours! I.

The true disciple's POSITION and calling. His *position* is like that of a city set on a hill, eminently conspicuous; he "cannot be hid," and he ought not to try to be hid. His *calling* is from the elevated position he occupies, to shed light upon the whole world. II. The QUALIFICATIONS needed by Christ's disciples for a right discharge of the duties of their position and calling (vers. 3–10). III. The REWARDS of a right discharge of our duties as true disciples. The hatred of men, the esteem and love of men, the unspeakable blessedness of seeing others led by our influence to worship God (ver. 16; 1 Thess. ii. 19), the approval of God (ver. 9), everlasting blessedness (vers. 3, 8, 12; Rev. xxi. 10). (*The Preachers' Monthly.*) These words are descriptive of:—I. The genuine Christian's character—"light." II. The Christian's place and functions. III. The Church's responsibility. (*Jas. Stewart.*) Example is the source of the Christian's most powerful influence on the world. In analyzing that power there are three or four elements. I. It is the most successful method of illustrating truth and imparting instruction. II. It is a demonstration of the practicability of religious life, as well as the truthfulness of Christianity, and the most successful method of removing objections to it. III. It attracts attention. IV. It is the most successful method of reproving wrong-doing. V. It is also the most successful way of winning the esteem of the world. (*Christian Age.*)

*Christian example a converting agency.*—When Lord Peterborough lodged for a season with Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray, he was so delighted with his piety and virtue, that he exclaimed at parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." (*Anecdotes.*) *Christian example an argument of weight.*—A young minister, when about to be ordained, stated that at one period of his life he was nearly an infidel. "But," said he, "there was one argument in favour of Christianity, which I could never refute—the consistent conduct of my own father." (*Ibid.*) I. CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. To let our light shine is, undoubtedly, to make a Christian profession. This implies that the true light has been kindled in us. This Christian profession should be made in union with the Church of Christ. II. CHRISTIAN CONSISTENCY. If the light which you let shine in your profession be the true light, there will be good works to be seen. The lowest requirement of Christian consistency is the absence of every evil work—the least immorality vitiates the entire profession. This Christian consistency requires nonconformity to the world, and the good works of an active Christian life. III. CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE. This will be the result of Christian consistency. Our Heavenly Father shall be glorified by the influence for good we thus exert over the minds of those who see our good works. They will ascribe to God the power by which we have been made what we are. They will recognize the truth and Divinity of Christ's religion, and many will be thus led to embrace it for themselves. How does the matter stand between our profession and our conduct? (*W. S. Dewstoe.*) *God glorified by our good works:*—I. REMOVE A DIFFICULTY which may have arisen from an apparent inconsistency between our text and the words of our Lord in a subsequent part of His discourse. In the sixth chapter our Lord gives cautions against ostentation in religion. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men." It may appear from this that *secrecy* is necessary to prayer and almsgiving; but that it is not the lesson inculcated, is evident from the tenor of Scripture. Solomon prayed before an assembly. Daniel. With regard to almsgiving, the Psalmist speaks of it as properly exciting the esteem of men. "He hath dispersed abroad," &c. The prohibition is of *religious acts from a wrong motive*, "*that they may be seen of men.*" The reproof of ostentation does not apply when the motive is already good. On the contrary, many advantages may arise to the cause of religion from the exhibition of piety. A Christian that burns with holy love to God cannot be unnoticed. II. HOW CAN MEN, THE CREATURES, BE SAID TO GLORIFY THE CREATOR?" God is the eternal fountain of all honour and glory, therefore, strictly speaking, cannot be dishonoured; He cannot but be glorified, because to be Himself is to be infinitely glorious. God is glorified by our repentance—faith—charity. (*H. Hughes, M.A.*) *Glorifying God:*—And yet He is pleased to say that our sins dishonour Him, and that our obedience glorifies Him. Just as the glorious orb of day, prying into the recesses of rocks and valleys, receives from the glassy lake and the limpid stream, and from every bright object, beautiful reflections of himself, though nothing could be seen at all without his own light; so God, contemplating the race of man, though he finds among us nothing but what He Himself enables us to exhibit, discovers in every heart that is faithful, in every heart that is pure, in every heart that is holy, merciful, and kind, beautiful representations of His own sublime perfections, and these He is pleased to call glorifications of Himself, though they

are made so only by His own gracious acceptation. (*Ibid.*) *The light of Christian example* :—1. The first thing to be done with a lamp is to light it. God alone can light you; teachers may polish. 2. The next thing to do with a lamp is to set it where it may be seen and give light. 3. A lamp must be fed with oil, or it will not keep alight. 4. A lamp must be trimmed if it is to give a good light. (*H. J. Wilmot Buxton.*) I. That religion, if it exists, cannot be concealed. II. That where it is not manifest in the life, it does not exist. III. That professors of religion, who live like other men, give evidence that they have not been renewed. IV. That to attempt to conceal or hide our light is to betray our trust, and hinder the cause of piety, and render our lives useless. V. That good actions will be seen, and will lead men to honour God. (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) *The Candle* :—I. Consider the LIGHTING. 1. A Divine work. 2. A separating work. 3. A personal work to every man who is the subject of it. 4. A work which needs sustaining. 5. It consecrates a man entirely to the service of light-giving. II. Consider the PLACING. 1. Negative. 2. Positive. III. The SHINING. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Lamp and the Bushel* :—I. A word about THE GREAT CONCEPTION OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OFFICE WHICH IS SET FORTH IN THIS METAPHOR. "Ye are the light of the world." Then our Lord goes on to explain what kind of a light it is to which He would compare His people—the light of a lamp kindled. Christian men individually, and the Christian Church as a whole, shine by derived light. Before the incarnation Christ was the light of men; also the historic Christ is the source of all revelation. Light signifies knowledge and moral purity. II. THE CERTAINTY THAT IF WE ARE LIGHT WE SHALL SHINE. The nature and property of light is to radiate. All earnest Christian conviction will demand expression; and all deep experience of the purifying power of Christ upon character will show itself in conduct. III. This obligation of giving light is still further enforced by the thought that THAT WAS CHRIST'S VERY PURPOSE IN ALL THAT HE HAS DONE WITH US AND FOR US. It is possible for good men to smother and shroud their light. We can bury the light of the Word under cowardly and indifferent silence. IV. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE. Candles are not lit to be looked at, but that something else may be seen by them. Men may see God through our works. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *If you are not warming the world, the world is chilling you.* If you take a red-hot ball out of a furnace and lay it down upon a frosty moor, two processes will go on—the ball will lose its heat and the surrounding atmosphere will gain. There are two ways by which you equalize the temperature of a hotter and a colder body, the one is by the hot one getting cold, and the other is by the cold one getting hot. If you are not warming the world, the world is freezing you. Every man influences all about him, and receives influences from them, and if there be not more exports than imports, he is a poor creature at the mercy of circumstances. (*Ibid.*) *No light apart from Christ* :—A sunbeam has no power to shine if it be severed from the sun than a man has to give light in this dark world if he be parted from Jesus Christ. Cut the current and the electric light dies, slacken the engine and the electric arc becomes dim, quicken it and it burns bright. (*Ibid.*) *The duty of letting our light shine before men* :—I. How SHINE. Because Christ has put light into His people, he does not intend it to be hid. II. WHY SHINE. Not to be seen of men. The Christian must show that he is earnest about religion. Habitual holiness is required. There must be a proper control of the temper. He must shine:—1. As a member of society he must be blameless. 2. As a subject he must be orderly. 3. As a member of the Church of Christ he must show good will. 4. As a neighbour he must be accommodating. 5. As a father he will have proper regard for the spiritual good of his children. 6. As a son he will show the excellence of his principles. 7. As a master his Christian character must shine. 8. As a servant he will be obedient. 9. He must keep within the limits of his proper place. (*E. Cooper.*) *The importance of good example* :—Some suppose that they need not set a shining light, but keep from great irregularities. 1. The world, though corrupt, is very sensible of what Christian practice ought to be. 2. The withholding of a good example may be more fatal to religion than positive irregularities, because the turpitude of the latter destroys their power of seduction. 3. The scandal is, not to see religion opposed by unbelievers, but that Christians dare not maintain their religion with zeal and proclaim it as their greatest honour and glory. 4. It is not enough to be Christians only to ourselves, we must be so before God and men. 5. We are naturally inclined to imitation. 6. Not only the honour but the progress of religion depend upon your examples. The greatest praise we can bestow upon a religion is to practise it. (*S.*

*Partridge, M.A.*) *Christians the light of the world*:—I. The positive injunction that Christians are to do all in their power TO SECURE THAT THEIR LIGHT SHALL SHINE AS BRIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE. 1. This is to be done by the position we take up. 2. By the character which we form. 3. By the exertions which we make for the conversion of our fellow men. II. Look at the negative side of this injunction, which requires that we REMOVE EVERYTHING WHICH TENDS TO HIDE OR OBSCURE THE LIGHT. 1. We should get rid of that undue reserve which keeps the real character from being as powerful an influence for good as otherwise it might be. 2. We should avoid all self-display. (*W. M. Taylor.*) *Christian Consistency*:—I. THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PURPOSE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. The glory of God. 2. The well-pleasing of men. II. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS WITNESS-BEARING MAY BE THE MOST EFFECTUALLY DONE. 1. Light is derived, and therefore humble. 2. Light is self-evident and consistent. 3. Then the light is a joyous and happy sort of thing. (*W. M. Punshon.*) *Christians the light of the world*:—I. THEIR CHARACTER. All others are in darkness. Goshen only has light: Christians once dark; but have received light. 1. The word light implies a saving knowledge of the truth. 2. Holiness of heart and life. 3. Happiness. II. THEIR DUTY. Christians are made what they are to attract the world. Must use their blessings for the good of others, their knowledge, holiness, and happiness. III. THEIR MOTIVE. 1. That they may see your good works, not yourselves, but your actions. Three things are necessary to render a work good. (1) It must be done under the influence of faith in Christ. (2) From love to God (3) with a view to His glory. 2. That they may glorify your Father which is in heaven. (*D. Rees.*) *Spiritual modesty*:—What are the limits of lawful showing of our deeds, so that we may not break the law which bids us be secret? 1. The passage read to the end will remove the difficulty suggested. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them." Secrecy in good deeds is not *absolute*, but *relative*; not positive, and for its own sake, but in order to exhibit the vitiating effect of ostentation. 2. And so the text seems to offer the antidote to its own difficulty. "And glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Your good works may be seen, and ought to be seen, but to God's glory, and not your own. Not to let our works be seen when they ought to be seen would be to desert our Lord. This rule may serve for some external direction in this perplexed case. Let the separate deeds be hidden, according to the precept of the sixth chapter; let the general design of goodness be known, according to the text. But the principle guide in cases like these is not to be found so much in an external rule as in *a spiritually enlightened discrimination*, which feels instinctively when is the time for secrecy and when for publicity. How dangerous to our Christian modesty everything must be which takes off from the delicacy of our natural modesty. 1. Do not fear that you incur any danger of ostentation in performing visibly such religious observances as your parents or teachers direct. 2. Be real, let all be *really* addressed to God. 3. Be consistent. 4. Be modest in other things. These rules will aid spiritual modesty. (*G. Moberley, D.C.L.*) *Lustrous Christians*:—1. Every man has a light peculiar to himself. 2. There is a right way of shedding light. 3. Men are to see the works, not the worker. 4. Men are affected by what they see. (*W. W. Wythe.*) *A good life the great means of glorifying God*:—I. THE FACT THAT THERE IS A LIGHT POSSESSED BY CHRISTIANS WHICH PECULIARLY BELONGS TO THEM. It is with borrowed rays that the Christian at any time illuminates others. II. THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO EXHIBIT THEIR LIGHT IN A GODLY CONVERSATION. "See your good works." III. THE END with a view to which the exhibition takes place. "Glorify your Father which is in heaven." (*W. Curling, M.A.*) *The beauty of moral qualities*:—I. The moral qualities enjoined in Christianity are in the highest degree natural—not artificial or secondary. The human mind was constructed so that every faculty in its organization tends to produce good qualities. It is better adapted to good than bad. The bad is something interposed between the original creative design and the execution. Irreligion is artificial. II. There is a moral constitution by reason of which Christian qualities seem admirable to men. The eye was not made any more for beauty in the outward world than a man's moral nature was made for beauty in the moral world. Men oppose light and yet light is pleasant to them. III. It is upon this state of facts that Christ ordained that men should carry their moral faculties up to the highest degree of excellence. IV. The success of the gospel was made to depend not on preaching, but upon living men. V. The impressions which a Church makes on the moral consciousness of the community in which it lives is a fair test of its life and power. (*H. W. Beecher.*) I. The holy

and exemplary lives of Christians will naturally attract the eyes of unbelievers. By so doing will engage them in some serious reflections upon the Christian religion. II. The holy and exemplary lives of Christians provoke men to a curious observation and examination of them, and also of the grounds and principles from which they proceed. III. The holy and exemplary lives of Christians will be a sure means of recommending them to the favour and esteem, love and friendship, of unbelievers; and consequently a sure means of gaining opportunities of conversing familiarly with them, insinuating truth into them, and making them willing and easy to receive it. IV. The holy and exemplary lives of Christians will so powerfully represent to unbelievers the reasonableness and excellency of the Christian religion, as well as the usefulness and advantage of it, towards the present and future happiness and well-being of mankind, that they will be led to examine into the grounds of it. Hence it appears that we ought frequently to contemplate the examples of good men, out of which there are so many and so great advantages to be drawn. We should learn in them to see our own faults, and to mend them. (*Sir William Dawes, Bart., D.D.*)

*Christian example leads to the discovery of Christian sympathy.*—When the English minstrel went to seek for his master of the Lion Heart, he played everywhere the monarch's favourite tune, and was at length rewarded by hearing its notes sent feebly back to him from the prison wherein Richard was confined. In like manner, if wherever you go you would sound out the music of your Christian experience, other hearts would respond to the melody, and your joy would be redoubled. *Christian example must be free from inconsistency.*—The visitor to a lighthouse is struck with the perfect cleanness of everything about the lantern or the lamps. The silver reflectors are burnished to the brightest purity, and every funnel and glass are absolutely without a spot. There must be nothing to mar the brilliancy of the light. So in us there should be nothing of evil to draw away men's eyes from the light and fix them upon our imperfections. That there is light in us at all makes it all the more important that we should keep ourselves pure. You may have a window all covered with dust, and spun over with the cobwebs of spiders, that have not been disturbed for years, and the passer-by, in the darkness, will take no note of its impurity. But so soon as you put a light behind it you thereby reveal its filthiness to every beholder. In the same way the evil deeds of open and avowed unbelievers are taken no notice of by the world, for there is no light behind them. But so soon as a man becomes connected with Christ and His Church, the light that is within him will be sure to make manifest his inconsistencies to all around. *God, not self, the end of Christian example.*—The purpose of letting our light shine is, that God, not ourselves, may be glorified. In looking at a painted window, we think more of the artist and his picture than of the light. And there are many who put such devices on the window, through which the light of their characters shines, that no beholder is ever moved to think of God. The best style in writing is that which gives the thought with such transparency that the reader sees nothing else; and that is the noblest Christian character which shows the most of Christ. When I was a lad, in my native town, I knew a painter there whose favourite works were all portraits of himself, taken in different costumes; and one of England's most famous poets produced a series of writings, in which his moody, misanthropic self was ever the central figure. So there are Christians among us who, while letting their light shine, contrive to paint themselves upon the glass of the lamp in which it is enclosed. Their song, like that of the cuckoo, is a constant repetition of their own name, and the listener is wearied with its iteration. Let it not be so with us. Let Christ be all and in all. It was Michael Angelo who, according to the beautiful illustration of a Boston preacher, placed his candle so in his pasteboard cap that his own shadow might not fall upon his work. Let our song be like that of the skylark, as he rises with dewy breast from his lowly earth-couch, singing as he soars, until, unseen in the deep blue above, he rains a shower of melody on the listening earth. It matters not though we be unseen, if but the light be clear; for then we are fulfilling the command. (*W. M. Taylor.*) *Christ shines into the world through the lives of His people.*—Do you ever pause to think out how it is that our streets are nightly lighted up? By that discovery, to which we have been so long accustomed that we have ceased to reckon it wonderful. A great central storehouse of coal-gas is accumulated, and with that all the lamps are connected by a hidden system of pipes, so that each is supplied with the necessary quantity; and, as the result, we can thread our way through the intricate places of the city as easily, if not as safely by night as by day. The city is lit by

lamps, and yet it is the gas that lightens it. Both statements are true. The gas would be unavailable without the lamps; the lamps would be useless without the gas. Now, similarly, Christ is the hidden source and centre of the world's enlightenment; but Christians, united to Him by the spiritual tubing of faith, draw off from Him that influence by which they are enabled, each in his own place and in his own measure, to dispel some portion of the darkness by which they are surrounded. (*Ibid.*) *Christians must be receptive of light:* — Our measure of light will depend greatly upon the clearness and sensibility of our spiritual perceptive and receptive capacities. All the glass in the optical instruments, whether they are intended for scientific purposes, or for ordinary use, should be free from dross. (*S. Slocombe.*) *Work entailed by Christ on His people:*—1. A reflector of spiritual light. 2. A reproducer of this light. 3. A prism, analytically solving this moral light, and exhibiting its beauties of colour. (*Ibid.*) *Christian example not transient:*—Be not a flashing meteor, exciting transitory curiosity with thy blaze of profession. *Men more ready to shine socially than morally:*—Persons who are not averse to make all the show they can in social life are wonderfully sensitive about any disclosure of spiritual conviction or feeling. (*Dr. D. Fraser.*) *The light to reveal the work, not the worker:*—It is thus that his own sun works daily in the heavens: who dares look at the sun when he so shines as to fill the earth with all the beauty of summer? We turn our eyes up to him and he rebukes us with darts of fire; he says, "Look down, not up; look at the works, not the worker." So we may feast our eyes upon a paradise of flowers, and get much of heaven out of it, but the moment we venture to say, "Who did this—where is he? Show me the worker," the sun answers us with a rebuke of intolerable light. (*Dr. Parker.*) *Hidden light dies.*—If he persists in this selfishness, his penalty is sure. The light that is in him will wax dim and incur great risk of going out, because it is shut up, and not set to burn on the lamp-stand, where the fresh air may reach and feed the flame. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *Wanted, much wanted, bright Christians!* (*Ibid.*) The figure of the house-lamp suggests domestic Christianity; that of the conspicuous city the more public and collective duty of Christians. (*Ibid.*) *Shine by expressed conviction:*—I do say that if the fountain never rises into the sunlight above the dead level of the pool there can be very little pressure at the main; that if a man has not the longing to speak his religious convictions, these convictions must be feeble. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The purity of example the primary care of the Christian:*—The lighthouse-keeper takes no pains that the ships tossing away out at sea may behold the beam that shines from his lamp, but all that he does is to feed and tend it. That is all you and I have to do—tend the light, and do not like cowards cover it up. Modestly but yet bravely carry out your Christianity, and men will see it. Do not be as a dark lantern, burning with the shades down and illuminating nothing and nobody. (*Ibid.*) *A good example a rebuke of evil:*—A good man or woman reveals the ugliness of evil by showing the beauty of holiness. (*Ibid.*) *Missionaries the light of the world.* Look at the primitive Schwartz, at the devoted Brainerd, at the zealous Corrie, and many others; Oh! how Godlike was their employ. These were "burning and shining lights" in the darkness; these displayed the glory of the Saviour's love and power to save, in the very midst of Satan's empire. (*F. Goode, M.A.*)

Ver. 17. **But to fulfil.**—*The moral law eternal and immutable:*—I. NEGATIVELY—that Christ did not come to destroy the law or the prophets. This may be illustrated as follows. 1. If the cause be immutably good, the operation and effects must be the same; especially if the cause be infinitely wise; all this is evident from the Word of God. If any persons declare that the moral law is altered, to be consistent, they must also suppose that the Divine nature is altered. 2. The law of God is perfect, the ceremonial law was imperfect. The moral law being perfect, the impress of the Divine image, it cannot be done away. II. THE GREAT END THAT OUR LORD HAD IN VIEW WITH RESPECT TO THE MORAL LAW—"to fulfil." He undertakes this important work with the greatest cheerfulness. He was obedient to the moral law in His childhood. Sufferings were necessary as well as active obedience. Our Lord set forth the spirituality of the moral law, and could not after that set about to destroy it. (*W. Kemp.*) *Jesus Christ the moral legislator:*—I. He fulfilled the law by spiritualizing it. II. He fulfilled the law by developing it. III. He fulfilled the law by generalising it and making it universal. 1. Breaking down class distinctions. 2. He abolished national distinctions in morality. 3. He abolished sex distinctions

in morality. (*J. C. Jones.*) *The mission of Christ in relation to the moral law.* I. To EXPOUND ITS SPIRITUALITY. II. To EMBODY ITS PRINCIPLES. III. To HONOUR ITS BREACH. 1. It had been broken in the practice of man, and He came to atone for it. 2. It had been broken in the estimation of man, and He came to show him its glory. IV. To SECURE ITS FULFILMENT. 1. By the presentation of a sufficient motive. 2. By the impartation of Divine power. (*T. Baron.*) I. The greatness of the assumption here made by Christ. Christ accepts the prophecies of the Old Testament as Divine, and points to Himself as their fulfilment. II. These words of Jesus reveal the historical continuity of Christianity. III. These words teach us the permanent authority of the moral principles of the Jewish law. Nothing that is moral can be destroyed. We do not need the light of stars when the sun has risen; but the stars are shining still. (*G. S. Barrett.*) *Christ's relation to the law:*—I. Mark the POSITION our Saviour occupied, as forming a key to the whole of the Sermon on the Mount. II. The MEANING of these words. 1. Christ fulfilled the law in His teaching. He completed it. 2. Christ fulfilled the law by His own personal, unbroken obedience. 3. Christ fulfilled the law by His sufferings and death. (*W. G. Barrett.*) *Positive religion:*—I. In a critical age, that has so many errors to be destroyed, reason acquires a destructive habit; against this habit one must guard, lest, instead of being a light to guide us, reason becomes only mildew to blight a world once beautiful. II. The soul grows great, useful, and happy, not by what it denies, but by what it cordially affirms and loves. III. Should you not all seek union with some positive, active, trusting Church? Let the Church you seek be broad, but not broad in its destructiveness, but in its soul, hopes, and charity; not broad by the absence of God, but by His infinite presence; not broad like the Sahara, in its treeless, birdless, dewless sands; not broad like the Arctic Sea, in perpetual silence and ice, but broad like an infinite paradise, full of all verdure, fruits, music, industry, happiness, and worship; wide enough for all to come. (*D. Swing.*)

*Destruction the law of increase.*—Christ certainly did come to destroy the law and the prophets—the outside of them. He knew perfectly well, if He had foresight, that they would be, as they have largely been, swept away; but He said, "That which these externalities include—the kernel, the heart—I came to fulfil. It was not the morality and spirituality for the sake of which Moses and the prophets had written that were to be destroyed. Even a crab knows enough once a year to get rid of its shell in order to have a bigger one: it is the sectary that does not know it! Men think, if you disturb beliefs, creeds, institutions, customs, methods, manners, that of course you disturb all they contain; but Christ said, "No; the very way to fulfil these things is to give them a chance to open a larger way." A bud must be destroyed if you are going to have a flower. The flower must be destroyed if you are going to have a seed. The seed must die if you are going to have the same thing a hundred-fold increased. (*Beecher.*) *Law tends to enlarge itself.*—So all institutions that carry in themselves, not merely external procedure, but methods of truth, justice, and righteousness, must of necessity, if they follow the ages, dig their own graves. A law that can last a thousand years is a law that is inefficacious. A law that is active, influential, fruitful, destroys itself. It is not large enough. It produces a state of things among men which requires that the law itself should have a larger expression and a different application. (*Ibid.*) As a painter laying fresh colours upon an old picture. (*Hacket.*)

Ver. 19. **Break one of these least commandments.**—*The perilous harmfulness of little sins:*—Man is set free from the curse of the law, but not from its authority. I. Let us consider these minor violations of the moral law as they are considered IN RELATION TO THE LAWGIVER HIMSELF. The least commandment has the same authority as the greatest. Little sins will soon acquire all the gigantic proportions of the greatest. It is no paradox to say, that little sins are peculiarly offending in the sight of God, because they are little; in other words, because we run the risk of offending Him for what on our own showing we care very little about, and from which we only expect an insignificant return. It would aggravate the venality of a Judge that the bribe was so paltry. The least sin is aggravated by the small degree of temptation by which it is accompanied. II. THE AWFUL DANGER OF THESE LITTLE SINS IN REGARD TO OURSELVES. Little sins leave men hardly conscious that they have broken God's law; great sins stir up piercing thoughts. See the peril of little sins, as they are sure to draw greater ones after them. It is fool's sport to play with firebrands. The multiplication of little sins show how we need the merit of an

infinite atonement. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *We learn*:—I. That all the law of God is binding on Christians (Jas. ii. 10). II. That all the commands of God should be preached in their proper place by Christian ministers. III. That they who pretend that there are any laws of God so small that they need not obey them, are unworthy of His kingdom. IV. That true piety has respect to *all* the commands of God, and keeps them (Psa. cxix. 64). (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) I. Christ does not hereby authorise us to suppose any of His commandments to be little. The meaning is—anything contained under or included in them, though seemingly small to us; as anger, scornful speaking, and reviling is the sin of murder. II. As little in it, as he accounts of *them*; that is nothing; they shall be excluded. (1) Observe the danger of vacating God's commands. (2) In any respect. (3) In any one instance. (*Thomas Adam.*) *A little sin indicative of a carnal disposition*:—That an act in itself inconsiderable, may indicate the existing state of feeling as clearly as one that is more palpable. As the motion of a leaf shows the quarter from which the wind blows as certainly as the agitated branches of an oak, so you may gather any one's dislike, though he does not strike you, or abuse you, or attempt insidiously to destroy your reputation. Only let him receive you with coldness, and his disaffection is as indisputable as if it were manifest in angry assault. . . . Is it not evident that the man who has brought himself to the perpetration of one fraud, has broken down the only security against the perpetration of a score. He who can be the oppressor of a few, wants only the means to become the despot of an empire. (*C. Williams.*) *Avoid the least sin*:—If we would save the big ship, let us stop the small leak. If we would save the palace from flames, let us put out the spark. (*Newman Hall.*) *The great evil and danger of little sins*:—I. What is meant by the "LEAST COMMANDMENT." It must not be understood as if one commandment were less necessary to be obeyed than another; God's commands are all alike necessary. 1. They are all enjoined by the same authority. 2. They are all necessary to be performed in order to eternal life. But when Christ speaks of the least commandment, He alludes (1) to the corrupt doctrine of the Scribes distinguishing God's commands into small and great. (2) Those commandments which are great in respect of the Lawgiver, may yet be least in comparison with other commands of the same law, which are indeed thought greatest. This inequality arises from the inequality of the objects about which they are concerned, our duty to God or man. Sometimes it arises from the latitude that any command hath in it, to our thoughts, words, or actions; a thought is said to be less than an action. II. What is meant by "BEING LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN." Either the kingdom of grace, the Church, heaven. Little sins carry great guilt and bring heavy condemnation. 1. This appears in that the least sin is a most high affront and provocation of the great God. 2. It is a violation of a holy and strict law. 3. What a complicated evil every sin is, that the commission of the least makes you guilty of the greatest. 4. The authority of the great God seems more to be despised by the commission of small sins than by the commission of great. 5. Little sins do greatly deface the image of God in the soul. In curious pictures, a little scratch is a great deformity. 6. Little sins have in them ordinarily less of temptation, and therefore more of wilfulness. 7. Little sins do maintain the trade and course of sinning. III. The evil and danger of little sins hath been made apparent: I shall add farther proofs of their AGGRAVATED GUILT. 1. Little sins usually are the destroying sins. 2. Small sins—what they want in weight, usually make up in number. A ship may have a heavy burden of sands, as well as of millstones; and may be as soon sunk with them. 3. It is very difficult to convince men of the great evil and danger of little sins. 4. The allowance of the least sin is a certain sign of a rotten heart. 5. Little sins usually make way for the vilest. (1) The devil, by his temptations, nurses up youngling sins, till they arrive at full stature. (2) Natural corruption is of a growing nature. 6. Little sins are the greatest provocations; murder is a reproach to all; unbelief does not provoke public scandal. 7. Damnation for little sins will be most intolerable—here for such little sins! IV. APPLICATION: 1. If little sins have so much danger, what shall we think of great impieties? 2. Then behold a fearful shipwreck of all the hopes of formalists. 3. What absolute need we stand in of Christ. 4. What cause we have to bemoan and humble ourselves before God. 5. Pray for a tender conscience. 6. Keep alive reverent thoughts of God. 7. Get a more thorough sense of the spirituality of the law. (*Bp. Hopkins.*) *Little sins accumulate*:—The devil cannot expect always to receive such returns of great and crying impieties: but yet, when he keeps the stock of corruption going, and drives on the trade of sinning by lesser sins, believe

it, corruption will be on the thriving hand, and you may grow rich in guilt, and treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, by adding those that you call little sins unto the heap. (*Ibid.*) *Great advancement made in sin by little stages* :—If Satan prevails with us to go with him one step out of our way, we are in danger to stop nowhere till we come to the height of all profaneness: he will make us take a second, and a third, and so to travel on to destruction; for each of these is but one step: the last step of sin is but one step, as well as the first; and if the devil prevail with us to take one step, why should he not prevail with us to take the last step as well as the first step, seeing it is but one? Your second sin no more exceeds your first, than your first doth your duty; and so of the rest. (*Ibid.*) *Little sins are often united with great, which together sweep the soul to destruction* :—As you see in rivers, the natural course of them tends to the sea: but the tide, joining with them, makes the current run the swifter and the more forcibly: so is it with sin. Little sins are the natural stream of a man's life; that do of themselves tend hell-ward, and are of themselves enough to carry the soul down silently and calmly to destruction: but, when greater and grosser sins join with them, they make a violent tide, that hurries the soul away with a more swift and rampant motion down to hell, than little sins would or could do of themselves. (*Ibid.*) *The need of a sensitive conscience* :—A tender conscience is like the apple of a man's eye: the least dust that gets into it afflicts it. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 20. **Your righteousness shall exceed.**—*An exceeding righteousness* :—I. What is the nature of the righteousness God accepts from us? It is a righteousness in excess of the most scrupulous moralist. 1. A Christian righteousness exceeds a natural or Jewish in that it is positive and not negative. 2. All other righteousness does the orders of God: this does His will. Here lies the greater part of the Christian's obedience—in doing what he knows will please, though it was never laid down. 3. The motive is different. 4. As the moving power is within, so the righteousness is first an inward righteousness. 5. No wonder that such an inner righteousness when it is wrought out, goes very deep, and soars very high. It does not calculate how little it can do for God, but how much. 6. The righteousness of Christ is the exceeding righteousness; in this only can we stand before a holy God. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Righteousness.* I. WHAT IS THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH MUST FAIL IF RELIED ON FOR ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Much in it that was good but only external. It was heart-deficiency. II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WILL OF NECESSITY BE EFFECTUAL. Exceed it—1. In regard to its source. 2. In its quality. (1) It must be spiritual. (2) It must be evangelical righteousness; not by the works of the law. (3) It must be a moral righteousness, possessed as well as imputed. (4) It must be an essential righteousness, as essential as the air we breathe. Address those whose righteousness does not come up to the standard of the Scribes and Pharisees; those who are trusting in the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; those who through grace have found the effectual righteousness. (*G. Fisk, LL.B.*) *The Pharisee's righteousness excelled by that of the Christian* :—I. It MUST DIFFER from that of the Pharisee. 1. The seat of righteousness. Both Pharisee and Christian look alike in their conduct; the latter from the heart. 2. The righteousness of the Pharisee is limited by the narrow rule of sectarianism, that of the Christian is wide as the Word of God. 3. The righteousness of the Pharisee is at fault in its source. Its beginning and end is self. Christ is our righteousness. II. IT EXCELS. 1. In the object of its faith. 2. In enabling the Christian to reach heaven. (*W. D. Harwood.*) *The Christian righteousness* :—The sense it which it must surpass them :—I. In KIND. II. In SPIRIT. 1. Not of mere outward zeal for the law, but of inward conformity. 2. Not of servile fear, but of filial confidence. 3. Not of religious pride, but of devout humility. III. In AIM, not to be seen of men. 1. This will rectify our judgment of righteousness. 2. Animate our pursuit of righteousness. 3. Brighten our prospect of righteousness (2 Tim. iv. 8). (*Prob. Griffith, M.A.*) *Necessity of evangelical righteousness* :—1. The nature of that righteousness which distinguished the Scribes and Pharisees. Was, according to God's law, extensive, connected with great devotion, self-denial, liberality, and zeal. II. The nature of that righteousness necessary to our entering the kingdom of God. Ours must "exceed" theirs in its origin, nature, extent, end, effects. The revelation of this righteousness is given in God's blessed Word. It is obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is made unto us, "wisdom," &c. The purity of the Divine law, &c., render this righteousness necessary. (*Dr. Burns.*) *Gospel righteousness* :—I. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PHARISEES. 1 Orthodox. 2.

Popular. 3. Moral. 4. Zealous. II. ITS DEFECTIVENESS. 1. Superstitious. 2. Servile. III. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS COMMANDED. 1. Personal. 2. Through faith. 3. Originating in love. (*W. W. Whythe.*) *Love more than regard for a mere rule*:—Now, no man can develop a true manhood who does not love the things which he does. No man ever does anything that marks him as masterly except it be done by a certain inspiration into which the whole soul enters. A man that paints, hating his business, never is an artist, and never can be one. A man that is a teacher, and hates teaching, making drudgery of it, can never be an inspirational teacher. A man that is a true workman in any sphere must work by a stimulation which comes from the actual enthusiasm of loving the thing done. A man that obeys moral laws without loving them is like a man who walks within the walls of a penitentiary. (*Beecher.*) *The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.* I. WHAT IT WAS. It consisted in—1. A speculative knowledge of the truth and doctrines of religion. 2. A scrupulous observance of the forms of religion. 3. A freedom from scandalous sins. II. ITS DEFECTIVENESS AND INSUFFICIENCY. 1. The righteousness here spoken of is insufficient for justification. 2. It is insufficient as the evidence of a justified state. It fell short in three respects. (1) It was altogether external. (2) It was partial in its requirements. (3) It left its followers under the unrestrained influence of spiritual pride. 3. How delighted we should be that our righteousness *does* exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. (*E. Cooper.*) *Morality the gate to spirituality*:—There are several kinds of religion. 1. There is the religion of simple technical observances. 2. There is a religion of conduct, or morality. 3. There is the religion of spirituality: this contemplates God and ignores man's needs. 4. There is the religion of morality *and* spirituality. Right conduct springing from right motives. Let us look at the nature and value of morality. I. Morality may be defined as conformity to the laws of our condition. The laws of the body, the law of fellowship, civil laws. II. The advantages of morality. 1. It is the gateway of spirituality. 2. All the things that come within the range of morality are good in themselves. 3. It has a tendency to educate men. 4. When men try to place themselves in conformity to the law of morals they put themselves in a line in which they will be illumined and carried to a higher Christian experience. 5. We must not suppose that morality is a substitute for the higher forms of religion. 6. It must not be a mask for self-indulgence. 7. Morality relates especially to this life, but religion to eternity, as fully realized in immortal existence. *Mere morality does not go far enough*:—A man builds him a house two stories high; but money fails, and he does not put on any roof. What is he going to do now? Live in it? He cannot live in it. It is good as far as it goes, but good for what? Until somebody can put a roof on it, and close it in, it is not good to live in. Honesty is a good thing. Kindness and neighbourliness are good things. Care for the laws of life is a very good thing. If this was all of our life, if these external and bodily relationships represented the sum total of all our existence, all that we should want would be morality. But we live again. (*H. W. Beecher.*) A shipmaster wants to anchor. He throws out his anchor, and puts out his cable, and comes within about twenty feet of the bottom. It is not any longer. What is it good for? It is good as far as it goes; but it does not go far enough to touch the bottom, and therefore it is not good for anything. (*Ibid.*) *Exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees*:—What is it to enter the kingdom of heaven? It involves leaving the kingdom of evil. There is no admission to it without righteousness. I. DESCRIBE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PHARISEES. 1. They were celebrated for their knowledge. As Scribes, they were acquainted with the Scriptures. 2. In religious matters they were particular and earnest. Always at temple, earnest at prayer. 3. They were wonderfully generous. They gave tithes of all they possessed. 4. They were held in high esteem by their fellow-countrymen. 5. Can you hope to excel them? Out of Christ you cannot. II. HOW THEN IS IT POSSIBLE TO ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? Two ways: 1. By works. 2. By faith. No thoroughfare along the first way. In nature's loom we cannot weave a better righteousness. Christ's righteousness exceeds; as the sunlight exceeds the glimmer of the glow-worm. (*Thomas Spurgeon.*) *The measure of righteousness*:—I. The Scribes represent those who are formalists in the treatment of God's Word. II. The Pharisees, the formalists in religious life. (*Dean Alford.*) *Faith in Christ the only way of righteousness.*—Will you try to imagine that just in front of you there is roaring the great cataract of Niagara? Now, there are two ways of getting over the cataract. "What are they?" asks one. Well, do you see that thin airy looking bridge, which in the distance seems like a spider's web, which has been flung athwart the torrent? That is the suspen-

sion bridge of Niagara, and that is one way across, and the best way, too. There is another way—the way that poor foolhardy Captain Webb went—right through the breakers. You may say that he did not get across. No; but it was his fault that he went that way, for it was not a way after all. And there are two ways to cross the cataract of sin and the avalanche of God's wrath. One way is the bridge of salvation which God, in mercy, through the blood and sacrifice of Christ, has flung right across the mighty stream. Its buttresses are eternal power and everlasting love, and feeble as it looks it is strong enough to bear creation. There is another way, and there thou shalt battle with the flood thyself, and stem the breakers in thine own strength, and dash thyself against the stones, and sink to rise no more. Any man in his senses would choose the simplest path, the way that everybody else goes. (*T. Spurgeon.*) *Well to have a standard of self-measurement.*—I have sometimes seen, at athletic sports, how, when one has jumped the long jump, an opponent, another competitor in the jump, will come and look how far his rival has jumped, and mark the place; and I see him go away, with rather dejected head, as he sees what his rival has accomplished, and wonders whether he can do as much, and wonders much more whether he can exceed that wondrous jump. Now, I want to show you how far the Scribes and Pharisees jumped; and then I have to tell you that you have to jump farther than they did. (*Ibid.*) *The "kingdom of heaven,"* here, as elsewhere in the Gospels, designates that spiritual society which Jesus came on earth to found. The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees was at fault because they placed righteousness in what a man does, irrespective of what he is, and though practising many things which might be called virtues, yet they did so from outward considerations. The results springing from these false principles were: I. Divorce of religion from common life. II. Overlaying of the spirit of God's law by the letter. III. Ostentation in the performance of their so-called religious duties, and uncharitable judgment of others. Pharisaism is a form of righteousness that is not extinct among us. (*Dr. W. M. Taylor.*) Here we have two things to consider: I. What was the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees? II. How far that is to be exceeded by the righteousness of Christians. I. (1) The Pharisees obeyed the commandments in the letter, not in the spirit. They minded what God spake, but not what He intended; they were busy in the outward work of the hand, but not careful of the affections and choice of the heart. This was just as if a man should run on his master's errand, and do no business when he came there. (2) The Scribes and Pharisees placed their righteousness in negatives; they would not commit what was forbidden, but they cared little for the included positive, and the omissions of good actions did not much trouble them. (3) They broke Moses's tables into pieces, and gathering up the fragments, took to themselves what part of duty they pleased, and let the rest alone. II. (1) When it is said our "righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees," we must do all that lies before us, all that is in our hand; the outward work must be done, and it is not enough to say "my heart went right, but my hand went aside." (2) Our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, by extension of our obedience to things of the same signification. Whatever ministers to sin, and is the way of it, it partakes of its nature and its curse. (3) Christ's commandments extend our duty, not only to what is named, and what is not named of the same nature and design, but that we abstain from all such things as are like to sins. Of this there are many. All violences of passion, prodigality of our time, doing things unworthy our birth or profession, aptness to go to law, misconstruction of the words and actions of our brother, easiness to believe evil of others, willingness to report the evil we hear, indiscreet and importune standing for place, and other things prohibited by the Christian and royal law of charity. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) 1. It was a righteousness of the outward letter rather than of the inward spirit. They washed their hands, but not their hearts. 2. Another defect in their righteousness was its narrowness and partiality. God's commandment is exceeding broad; condemns anger as well as murder. 3. It contented itself too much with mere abstinences and negatives. 4. They mutilated the law's proper unity, reversed the principle that failure in one point makes guilty of all, and considered it enough to keep the law in general. 5. It leaned more on the blood in the veins than on thorough obedience in the life. They were of Jacob. 6. Their greatest defect was their self-sufficiency. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *A man should not be content with morality when spirituality is possible.*—A man should not live in a hovel when he can live in a house. A man is not content to live in a house when he can live in a mansion. And no man, I think, would live in a mansion

when he could live in a palace. So no man is living rightly or honourably who demands of himself no more than morality requires. (*Beecher.*)

Vers. 21, 22. **Angry with his brother.**—"Thou shalt not kill." Are you sure you do not? How has Christ decided the point? He tells us plainly that if we have (1) any malice; (2) hatred; (3) ill-will; (4) scornful anger against our brother, we are guilty of a breach of this commandment. (5) God will accept nothing at our hands; no worship, no service that we can pay Him, if we are not reconciled to, and at peace with all the world. Not outwardly only, but in heart and soul. (*Thomas Adam.*) *Unjustifiable anger:*—I. THE SIN WHICH OUR LORD HERE CONDEMNS. II. THE GUILT OF THIS UNJUSTIFIABLE ANGER. 1. Causeless anger has in it the nature of murder. 2. Evident from the greatness of the punishment. III. THE DUTY OF AVOIDING SUCH ANGER. 1. In order that we may render acceptable service to God—"If thou bring thy gift to the altar." 2. That we may avoid the doom of those who are implacable. We learn from this how spiritual is the law of God; also the utter worthlessness of human righteousness. (*E. Bayley, M.A.*) *Restraint of hasty temper possible.*—La Fontaine, chaplain of the Prussian army, once preached an earnest sermon on the sin and folly of yielding to a hasty temper. The next day a Major of the regiment accosted him in no very good humour, saying: "Well, sir! I think you made use of the prerogative of your office to annoy me with some very sharp hits yesterday." "I certainly thought of you while I was preparing the sermon," the chaplain answered, "but I had no intention of being personal or sharp." "Well, it is of no use," said the Major, "I have a hasty temper, and I cannot help it. I cannot control it; the thing is impossible." The following Sunday La Fontaine preached on self-deception, and the vain excuses which men are accustomed to make. "Why," said he, "a man will declare it is impossible to control his temper, when he very well knows that were the same provocation to happen in the presence of his sovereign, he not only *could*, but *would* control himself entirely. And yet he dares to say that the continual presence of the King of kings imposes upon him neither restraint nor fear." The next day the preacher met the officer again, who said, humbly, "You were right yesterday, chaplain. Hereafter, whenever you see me in the danger of falling, remind me of the King."

Vers. 23, 24. **Be reconciled to thy brother.**—*Mutual conciliation:*—I. That a worshipper of God may be in a state of discord in reference to his brother. II. That public worship rightly used is one of the means to detect and remove this wrong affection. It leads to reflection. III. Conciliation is of superior value even to public worship. IV. That it is the duty of brethren to be immediately conciliate. (*Caleb Morris.*) I. In order to worship God acceptably, we must do justice to our fellow-men. Our worship will not be acceptable, unless we do all we can to live peaceably with others. II. It is our duty to *seek* reconciliation with others when we have injured them. III. This should be done before we attempt to worship God. This is often the reason why God does not accept our offerings, and we go empty away from our devotions. We do not do what we ought to do to others; we cherish improper feelings, or refuse to make proper acknowledgments, and God will not accept such attempts to worship Him. (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) I. Observe the word brother. 1. So God teaches thee to call every one. 2. Think with what tenderness and love thou oughtest, and perhaps wouldst behave to him, if he really were such. II. Does not Christ Himself call the Scribes and Pharisees fools? Truly; but with Divine compassion, to rouse them to a consideration of their state. (1) The sin is in the anger, the scorn, (2) the pride of heart in one sinner towards another. III. Nothing will be accepted from thee in this disposition. 1. Agree with thy brother. 2. The loss of an hour may be the loss of thy soul. (*Thomas Adam.*)

Ver. 25. **Agree with thine adversary.**—*Reconciliation with God:*—1. Man by his sin has made God his adversary. 2. God has opened a way by which sinners, though they have thus grossly offended, may be brought back into a state of reconciliation with Him. 3. To show you that it is man's duty and interest to avail himself of the opportunity of coming into agreement with God. I. WHO ARE THE PERSONS THAT MAY RIGHTLY APPLY TO THEMSELVES THE MOTIVES BY WHICH I SHALL URGE THE BUSINESS OF AGREEMENT WITH GOD. God is the adversary of any child of Adam who has not availed himself of pardon, the man of private virtue as well as his profligate neighbour. II. MOTIVES BY WHICH THIS BUSINESS IS URGED UPON YOU. 1.

Consider what it is I am endeavouring to enforce upon your attention. No trifle agreement with God. 2. What would be the blessings that would result if you were thus reconciled to God. 3. What will be the consequences if you are not reconciled? 4. Let me remind you of the interest others take in your reconciliation with God. III. BEGIN THAT RECONCILIATION IMMEDIATELY—"Whiles thou art in the way. 1. God is now waiting to come to agreement with you. 2. What reason have you to advance why you should not. 3. Consider the uncertainty of life. 4. All the opportunities of agreement are confined to this present life. 5. The results that in another world will follow a want of reconciliation with God in this, are indescribably dreadful. 6. The punishment will be inevitable and eternal. (*J. A. James, D.D.*) *Agree with thine adversary quickly*:—1. The Lord warns us to make our Christian peace in time. 2. To take care that our sacramental offering of charity and forgiveness be not delayed. 3. Lest our adversary be no more in the way with us; lest, among the many partings of this world, we lose sight of him for ever. 4. And that on the ground of God's awful judgment. 5. For to Him the unreconciled quarrels of this world must be referred. 6. He will exact the uttermost farthing of His own incalculable debt from those who have been unkind and unforgiving to their fellow-servants. (*G. Moberley, D.C.L.*)

Vers. 27–28. **In his heart.** The heart or will is, in man, the seat of virtue or vice. I. Actions must be our invariable touchstone of truth whilst we sojourn in this state of imperfect knowledge and comparative obscurity, where expression is the only avenue to sentiment, and action the only publisher of intention. II. Actions are the only public representatives of our private sentiments. 1. So many channels through which the heart discharges its flow of various passions. 2. So many mirrors by the reflection of which the internal dispositions of the soul become externally visible. III. Actions viewed in a moral light are to the soul what (1) streams are to the fountain; (2) branches are to the root. Branches have no existence but what they derive from the root. Streams have no existence but what they derive from the fountain. Actions have no moral existence but that which they derive from the heart. When God judges man, the heart is the rule of judgment. 1. The heart, the source of these actions, is to Him uncovered 2. The heart, having the principle of religion so strong as to prevent an unlawful enjoyment, will likewise be sufficiently strong to prevent an unlawful resolution. 3. The depraved heart is before God of the same criminality as the depraved life, and exposes us to the same punishment from God. Let us therefore eternally renounce every inclination inconsistent with religion and reproachful to humanity. Let us cultivate purity of heart. (*David Lamont, D.D.*)

Ver. 30. **Thy right hand offend.** I. Rather than anything, though ever so dear and precious to thee, should hinder thee in thy Christian progress, or prove a means of snaring thy soul and body, absolutely and totally forego it. 1. Whatsoever opposes God in the heart, or keeps Him out of it, must be abhored and cast out; 2. All sin and temptation must be resisted, and the outward act of any sin must be avoided. 3. For some temptations are against my retirement, against my prayers, against my possession and enjoyment of Christ, against peace in life, comfort in death, against time, eternity, and all my hopes. (*Thomas Adam.*) *Strange conduct of a Land-Crab.*—One of the most useful pioneer evangelists of the Samoan mission was Teava, who, after many years of active service, returned to Rarotonga. Though very feeble and bent with age, his place in the sanctuary was never vacant; and he was ever ready with a word of exhortation. On one occasion he said, "I have been meditating this morning upon our Lord's words: 'If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' When I laboured at Tutuila I often felt rebuked by the strange conduct of a large species of land-crab, called there the 'mali'o,' here the 'tupa.' It bores deep into the soil, the holes sometimes extending a considerable distance. At night this crab loves to make its way to the sea, for the purpose of laving itself in the salt water and drinking it. Now it sometimes happens that, when hurrying through the tall grass and fern, some of its legs become defiled by contact with filth. So great is the vexation of this crab at its mishap, that it delays its march to the sea in order to wrench off the offending legs! One may sometimes meet a mutilated individual hobbling along without two or three of its legs—a self-inflicted punishment! In some rare instances it has been known to

wrench off all its eight legs to escape defilement. It is then content to drag itself over the ground with considerable difficulty by means of its nippers, until it reaches its hole, where it hides until the legs partially develop themselves again, though not of their original length and beauty." "Were we," added Teava, "as willing to part with our favourite sins as this 'mali'o' crab is with its defiled limbs, there would be little doubt of our reaching heaven! This is what our Lord means by our cutting off our right hand, and casting it from us." *How may beloved lusts be discovered and mortified?*—I. EXPLICATION. 1. That we ourselves must engage in the mortifying of our lusts. It is not enough to cry to God, and be idle. 2. That we must be willing in this as in other duties. 3. It is not said, "If thine eye offend thee, observe it more than ordinarily," but "pluck it out." 4. It must be renounced for ever—"cast it from thee." II. OBSERVATIONS. 1. That the eye and hand are useful parts of the body of man. 2. That offences are from ourselves. 3. That sin is to all intents and purposes our own. I. WHY SIN IS EXPRESSED IN SCRIPTURE BY PARTS AND MEMBERS OF OUR BODY. 1. The whole mass of corruption in Scripture is called "the old man," and "the body of sin" (Rom. vi. 6). 2. As the natural body makes use of its several parts in work, so corruption makes use of several lusts. 3. Sin is, according to some, conveyed into the soul by means of the body. 4. Corruption shews itself by the sinful actions of the body, and therefore may have its denomination by the parts of it. II. THAT EVERY MAN HATH HIS PARTICULAR INIQUITY. III. HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT PARTICULAR PERSONS HAVE THEIR PARTICULAR SINS. 1. Men have particular temperaments, and therefore sins suitable to their constitutions. 2. There are distinct and peculiar periods of times and ages that incline to peculiar sins. 3. Men have distinct and particular callings that incline to particular sins. 4. Men have distinct and particular ways of breeding and education, and upon that account have particular sins. IV. THE USE AND APPLICATION. 1. Examination: how this sin may be discovered—(1) By the love the sinner bears it; (2) The sin which distracts us in holy worship is our beloved sin; (3) It may be known by its commanding power over other sins; (4) The sin that conscience doth most chide for; (5) It may be known by being impatient of reproof; (6) It makes a man notoriously partial in his own case; (7) It may be known by the fair pretences that the sinner hath for it; (8) The sin which a man wishes were no sin; (9) The sin we think of first in the morning and latest at evening; (10) The sin which most infests us in our solitudes; (11) The sin we are willing to endure greatest hardship for. 2. Press upon you the mortification of your beloved sin; (1) Seek holy courage and resolution against it; (2) Let your repentance be against it; (3) Beware of those things that occasion it; (4) Pray to God that thou mayest not fall into that condition favourable to it; (5) Learn to suspect things that are delightful; (6) Labour to act that grace that is contrary to thy beloved sin; (7) Keep watch over thy heart; (8) Get respect to all God's laws; (9) Lay hold on God's strength. V. MOTIVES. 1. Right-eye sins are the greatest hindrances to the soul's closing with Christ. 2. They are a great trouble to the soul afterwards. 3. It is a choice evidence of regeneration. (*B. Needler, B.C.L.*)

Vers. 33, 34. **Swear not.**—I. Profane swearing is always the evidence of a depraved heart. II. No man is believed any sooner in common conversation because he swears to a thing. III. It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. IV. Profaneness does no man any good. It is degrading, &c. V. God will not hold the profane swearer guiltless. There is not in the universe more cause of amazement at God's forbearance. (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) I. It is mean to swear. II. It is rude to swear. III. Swearing is the sign of an empty head. IV. Swearing is wicked. (*J. N. Norton.*) In order to keep us at the greatest distance from all profanation of the sacred name, Christ warns us here to avoid oaths of every kind. (1) Except in cases of necessity. (2) How trifling soever they may seem to us. (3) As implying an appeal to God contrary to the reverence we owe Him, and to that simplicity of speech which becomes those who fear Him. II. Let the general probity of your character and known regard to the truth be such that your bare word may be credited. Whether it is or not, resolve to go no farther, for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil. (*Thomas Adam.*) *The lawfulness and obligation of oaths:*—I. This precept does not absolutely forbid all use of oaths. An oath is a solemn appeal to God, as a witness of the truth of what we declare, and of our sincerity in what we promise. Oaths are *assertory* and *promissory*. 1. It is not uncommon for Scripture to use general expressions, which are to be understood in a qualified sense. 2. From the reasons

of the charge and other passages of Scripture. Oaths are necessary in civil society: they are of Divine institution; St. Paul used them; God swears by Himself. II. CHRIST CONDEMNS—1. Perjury. 2. Customary swearing in common conversation. 3. As we may not use the Divine name wantonly so neither may we swear by any of God's creatures. 4. He forbids all rash imprecations. 5. All scoffing at religion, contempt of the writings of God, and all sporting with Scripture. Profane language is a sure evidence of a bad disposition of mind. It tends to produce greater hardness and to extinguish all reverence: it is most pernicious in its consequences; it is unreasonable yet infectious; it heaps guilt upon the soul. (*J. Lathrop, D.D.*) I. The Christian law in regard to oaths (Lev. xix. 12; Num. xxx. 2). II. The Christian law of retaliation. III. Practical lessons. The sin of perjury is said to be growing appallingly frequent. Whilst technical vows are no longer in harmony with the liberty of the new dispensation, still the spirit of the vow by which one dedicates himself to Divine service is as sacred and as useful as ever. Avoid using expressions that are in the nature of an oath without having its technical form. Outright profanity is a terrible sin, as useless as it is hardening. What a confession of man's proneness to lie, is his habitual appeal to God as a witness of the truth! The law of retaliating love laid down by Christ shows Him to be the one and supreme Teacher. (*J. S. Doolittle, D.D.*) *Language*:—1. Language should be the simple expression of the heart. 2. Christianity seeks to simplify human communications. 3. Exaggerated expressions lead to an untrue life. 4. Christ's law of speech will regulate our social intercourse. (*W. W. Whythe.*) *Profane Swearing*:—This sin is awfully prevalent. I. The EXCUSES usually made for it. Ignorance, custom, example, surprise, passion, confirmation of what is said, meaning no harm, inconsistencies of professors, &c. (2 Sam. xii. 14; Ezek. xxxvi. 20; Rom. ii. 24; 2 Peter ii. 2). II. The evil CONSEQUENCES of it. Destroys the little remains of the fear of God. Leads to the disobedience of all His commands. Such a horrid example to others, especially to the young, &c. III. The powerful ARGUMENTS against it. God hears. He is holy and jealous. Before His bar the swearer must appear. He is able to punish, and declares He will (2 Kings xix. 22, 28; Isa. xxxvii. 23, 36, 38; Ezek. xx. 27, 33; xxxv. 12–14). (*A. Tucker.*) *The Sin of Swearing*:—I. EXPLAIN THE SIN IN QUESTION. 1. One branch of this sin is cursing and swearing. 2. Another branch is the familiar introduction of oaths into common conversation. 3. A mingling religious language in our common discourse without any corresponding feelings in our heart. II. ITS AGGRAVATED GUILT. 1. It is a gratuitous sin. 2. It is a wilful sin. 3. It is a presumptuous sin. III. THE AWFUL STATE OF THOSE WHO PRACTISE THIS SIN. 1. Awful because God has denounced His vengeance against them. 2. It is a state of fitness for destruction. 3. It is a sure sign of an unregenerate condition. (*E. Cooper.*) *Profane exclamations.*—Charlie Harold, speaking to his grandmother about something he did not like, exclaimed, "By thunder!" "Hush!" said the old lady, "you must not swear, my dear. Don't you know that Jesus said, '*Swear not at all!*'" "Did He? Well, I didn't know it was swearing to say 'By thunder,' or 'By golly.' Is it, grandma?" "All such expressions, my dear, in which 'by' is used, partake of the nature of swearing, and a boy who wishes to be good will never let them fall from his lips." Charlie sat silent for several minutes, in grave thought, and then said, "Grandma, what makes the newspaper swear every morning?" "Does it," inquired the old lady, looking over the top of her spectacles with curious eyes. "Yes, it says, 'By telegraph.'" The old lady could not help laughing, but she explained to Charlie the difference between an exclamation such as "By thunder," used to give emphasis to a remark, and an incomplete sentence such as "By telegraph." The little boy determined that he would not offend in this way again, and I have told you the story, hoping that you may make the same wise rule. (*J. N. Norton.*)

*Keep from Swearing.*—A lad in Boston, rather small for his years, worked in an office as errand boy for four gentlemen who did business there. One day the gentlemen were teasing him a little about being so small, and said to him: "You never will amount to much, you never can do much business, you are too small." The little fellow looked at them. "Well," said he, "as small as I am, I can do something which none of you four men can do." "Ah, what is that?" said they. "I don't know as I ought to tell you," he replied. But they were anxious to know, and urged him to tell what he could do that none of them were able to do. "*I can keep from swearing!*" said the little fellow. There were some blushes on four manly faces, and there seemed to be very little anxiety for further information on

the point. *Swear in the Gaelic tongue.*—A lady travelling from Edinburgh to Glasgow was much annoyed by a young officer's conversation in the carriage being interspersed with oaths. She sat uneasy till she could no longer keep silence. "Sir," she said to the officer, "can you talk in the Gaelic tongue?" To this he replied in the affirmative, seemingly with great pleasure, expecting to have some conversation with the lady in that dialect. She then politely requested that if he wished to swear any more, it might be in that language, as the practice of swearing was very offensive to herself and the rest of the company. The officer was confounded at this reproof, and no more oaths were heard from him during the remainder of the journey. *The tongue and the temper:*—1. The language of irreverence. 2. The language of retaliation. 3. The language of revenge. (*Sermons by Monday Club.*)

Ver. 43.—**Love your enemies.**—*Forgiveness of injuries:*—The duty of forgiveness does not forbid resentment, but the excess or abuse of it. I. Such resentment in excess is wrong, for anger produces anger; revenge, malice, and that without limit: an aggravation of misery; and such resentment is a painful remedy to him who suffers from it, and, if not a remedy, it becomes an unmixed evil: the gratification of this passion is never innocent except when necessary. II. Love to our enemies is a duty; for it is part of the law of general benevolence, which, however, admits resentment, though not the abuses of it. Resentment is consistent with good-will. To love our enemies is not rant, unless benevolence is so; but is as reasonable as the opposite is mischievous. III. Reflections adapted to beget and strengthen the temper. Self-love is apt to magnify things amiss in others and lessen them in ourselves. So is anger. Moderation, therefore, is only common sense, trying to ascertain the truth; and is perfectly reasonable. The origin of wrong done is not generally malice, but some passion in itself, and within proper limits, allowable. The object of our resentment is himself a sufferer, and therefore a fit object of compassion. We ourselves need forgiveness, and a forgiving disposition is essential to it. (*Bishop Butler, D.C.L.*) Man's nature is to be judged, not as to whether it is best in the abstract, but on a comparison with his circumstances. Here we have to consider—I. The NATURE of the emotion. Sudden and deliberate. *Sudden* anger is an instinct, excited by violence or harm, not necessarily a wrong, and the end of this passion is the resistence or prevention of violence. *Deliberate* anger, or resentment, is a passion, excited by wrong or injury undeserved. Hence called indignation, which is not malice, and is stronger the more nearly the injury affects ourselves. The sense of wrong is essential to it, as is plain from the circumstances which aggravate the feeling. II. The END for which the emotion is implanted: to prevent or remedy injury. III. The ABUSES of the emotion of resentment. Sudden: passion, peevishness. Deliberate: resentment against such as innocently injure us; obstinacy in resisting evidence of innocence. Though liable to abuse, the emotion is important, as a balance against the weakness of pity, and in punishing crime. Hence fresh proofs of the reality of virtue, which has certain emotions on its side, and of the wisdom and goodness of God, who makes an instance of them, even the emotion of resentment. (*Ibid.*) *The Christian's duty to prisoners:*—Never, perhaps, does guilty, suffering humanity assume a form more likely to be overlooked or despised by the world at large than in the person of the imprisoned convict. But Christians may be justly expected to regard him with pity—may be justly expected to make prompt and vigorous exertions to promote his welfare. This I argue: I. From the character of Christians. Disinterested benevolence. Deep sense of personal guilt which they maintain. Efficacy of Divine grace to work a radical change. II. From the means of usefulness they are able to employ. III. The commands of Jesus Christ. IV. The Providence of God. (*Beriah Green.*) *In what manner are you to repress the rising of improper dispositions:*—1. Remember your own feelings. 2. The evil in the city is permitted by God. 3. Recollect the unwearied patience of God. 4. The treatment the Saviour endured. 5. This will not make a Christian mean-spirited; were there any in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar that showed such greatness of soul as Daniel? (*E. Irving.*) 1. The supreme art of life, above all other arts, is the art of living together justly and charitably. 2. To get on with men will constitute the most persistent aim within the Christian disposition. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *On forgiveness of injuries and against revenge:*—This law reasonable: I. If we consider THE NATURE OF THE ACT here required, which is to love—the most natural, easy, and delightful of all the affections; whereas ill-will and revenge are troublesome and

vexatious passions. The devising of mischief, accomplishment of it, and reflection upon it are uneasy. II. If we consider THE QUALIFICATION OF THE OBJECT—our enemy. The two great foundations of love are relation and likeness. Men alike and related in essential nature. The hatred of an enemy, if we make a right use of it, may prove of greater advantage to us than the civilities of our best friend; is better and less dangerous than the flatterer. Reconciled enemies often prove our best friends. III. If we consider THE EXCELLENCE AND GENEROSITY OF THE THING ITSELF. It is the most perfect act of the most perfect of all graces—in spite of provocation. IV. The PERFECTION AND PREVALENCY OF THE EXAMPLES which the gospel proposeth to us to allure to this duty. 1. The example of God Himself. 2. The example of Jesus Christ. It is objected that the bearing of injuries like this invites more. 1. Few so bad as to make so barbarous a return for generosity. 2. Christ never intended that our goodness should be void of all prudence. Learn: 1. Let us be careful how we make enemies, if it be thus difficult to love them. 2. How great ought our kindness to be to others. 3. The excellence of Christian religion which hath carried our duty so high. 4. The humanity of the Christian religion. (*T. Tillotson.*) *Prayer for enemies:*—I wonder how many prayers you ever sent up for those that hate you? I think it did not take the top of one sheet in the angel's record-book to put down all the prayers that you ever made for men that hate you. (*Beecher.*) *Difficult to forgive a sneaking enemy:*—When a large house-dog comes out with an announcement of himself, a man knows what he has got to meet: but when one of those little nasty Spitz dogs that don't bark at all, but run behind and nip, you don't know whether to run or to stand still, whether to fight or to give it up. An enemy that is an enemy outwardly and openly, and strikes fair blows, can be met; but whisperers, backbiters, mean folks that follow you, and nip you, and sneak in and out of the fence to save themselves, we do not know how to deal with; and yet we are commanded to pray for them. (*Ibid.*) *The marrow of the gospel:*—1. The teaching of the New Testament is that love is the only religion. 2. It teaches that love is a comprehensive disposition. 3. There is no worship of God which is an equivalent or substitute for love. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar." 4. No man can love God except through the practice of loving men. 5. Love carries with it a double capacity, of perceiving an ideal excellence, and of loving men who represent the opposite. Love goes out to men, not according to their righteousness, but according to their needs. 6. True gospel love is a love that re-creates men. (*Ibid.*) *Love a universal disposition:*—A man does not love according to Scripture, simply because he can count well, and say, "I love that person, that one." That is not it. What kind of a candle would that be which, being set on your table, only shone on particular things—on this book, on that vase, on that mirror, on that picture, and nowhere else. A candle is put upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all in the house. Love must leave nothing out. (*Ibid.*) *Love attracted by need rather than by character:*—Is your heart a physician to cure men that need curing, no matter who they may be? (*Ibid.*) *Love is sometimes severe in its methods:*—Love is like the old surgery, which took blood, that the fever might go, and that life might come. Love is no poor moonshiney, pale light, caring for nothing. Love is a revelator; it discriminates between right and wrong. It likes the right and hates the wrong, and helps men out of the wrong into the right. (*Ibid.*) *Love severe in order to salvation:*—The mother, under ordinary circumstances, is unwilling to singe the child's hair or scourge its skin, because she loves it so, yet, if there is some conflagration, and she sees that the way of life is through the flame, with wild strength she bears the child through in her bosom, though it be burned in every part. Such is her love for the child that she would rather see it wounded than see it perish. (*Ibid.*) *The enemies of Louis XII. of France.*—There is a story told of Louis XII. of France. He had many enemies; and when he succeeded to the throne, he caused a list of these to be drawn up, and marked against each of their names a large black cross. When this became known, the enemies of the king fled, because they thought it was a sign that he intended to punish them. The king, hearing of their alarm, recalled them, and gave them an assurance of his good will, saying that he had placed a cross beside their names to remind him of the Cross that brings pardon to all; and he urged them, by his own example, and especially by the example of Him who prayed for His enemies, to go and do likewise. *Sir Eardley Wilmot's advice.*—A gentleman who had filled many high stations in public life, with the greatest honour to himself and advantage to the nation, once went to Sir Eardley Wilmot in great anger at a real injury he had received from a person high in the political world, which he was considering how to resent in the most effectual

manner. After relating the particulars to Sir Eardley, he asked if he did not think it would be manly to resent it? "Yes," said Sir Eardley, "it would doubtless be manly to resent it, but it would be Godlike to forget it." This tho gentleman declared had such an instantaneous effect upon him, that he came away quite another man, and in temper entirely altered from that in which he went.

**Ver. 44. But I say unto you.**—*The imperatives of Jesus:*—I. THE RANGE AND EXTENT OF JESUS' IMPERATIVE SPEECHES. He keeps up to His own superior level of command upon all occasions and before all men. Men like us only assume without offence an imperative mood in certain relations of life. Christ did before the Rulers, before the Roman power. II. THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE RELATIONS OF LIFE, AND THOSE ELEMENTS OF HUMAN NATURE, OVER WHICH JESUS QUIETLY ASSUMED MASTERY. 1. The miracles of Christ not the greatest of His wonderful works; a greater assumption of power to exercise authority over the higher principles and laws of our human nature, than to claim authority over winds and waves. 2. With what calm consciousness of right Jesus assumes this authority—which belongs to God alone—over human hearts. 3. The nature or right of this supremacy of the Christ. (1) One ever-present illustration of what Jesus is to this universe we have within us in conscience. Hence you have a means of understanding the authority of Christ. (2) It reappears in the law of love. He is the righteousness of God with man. 4. We should bring obedience. 5. Do we not need, all of us, to be most thoroughly commanded by something higher and better than ourselves? We fall from our own possibilities, and need a command to step forth like princes to our high calling. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) *The authority of Jesus over human nature and history resembles the lordship of the sun over the earth:*—The world feels it from centre to circumference; every fruitful field rejoices in it, and this earth would be indeed worthless and dark without it; but we can only make guesses at the riddle of its gravitation and its light; and while any child knows that it is, the wisest can only declare in part, in very little part, how it is. (*Ibid.*)

**Ver. 47. What do ye more?**—*Christian benevolence:*—I. What HAVE we more than others? 1. You have forgiveness of sins. 2. Peace with God. 3. Fellowship with God. 4. You have in expectation a perfect deliverance from evil contact with sin. 5. You have in expectation the resurrection of your bodies. II. What DO ye more than others? 1. The first obligation is to be thankful. 2. The second obligation is to be boastful: "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." 3. To be loving towards all men, but especially towards the household of faith. 4. We must do more than others because more has been done for us, and more is expected of us. (*H. McNeile.*) *Christian service:*—I. THE QUESTION IS SUGGESTIVE OF DUTY. For whom? (1) More for themselves. (2) For their families. (3) For their neighbours. (4) For their country. (5) For the world. By what means? By use of their tongue, pen, purse. For what reasons? (1) Because they know more. (2) Because they have received more. (3) Because they enjoy more. (4) Because they profess more. (5) Because they expect more. (6) Because they are responsible for more. II. THE QUESTION IMPLIES DOUBT. (*J. Morgan.*) *The superiority of the Christian:*—I. On what GROUND this superiority may be challenged. More is required of Christians because more is done for them, expected of them, can be accomplished by them, has been realized by them. II. The WORKS AND EVIDENCES that this superiority should assume. They will always have recourse to a higher standard and motives than others. By an unfeigned attachment to the cause of Christ. They must openly commit themselves to the cause and interest of the Church. As to the estimate they form of the world. In a strict observance of all religious ordinances. By engrafting in all their ordinary virtues those which are extraordinary. III. To what PRACTICAL PURPOSE the enforcement of the subject may be applied? It is often requisite to ask Christians what they do because a considerable odium attaches itself to evangelical doctrine. There is greater evil in hollow friendship than open hostility; they are prone to coldness and neglect. (*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*) I. Explain why as Christians we ought to do more than others. Because we underlie special obligations—are endowed with supernatural strength, acknowledge a higher standard of duty—burdened with a heavier responsibility. II. Inquire whether we do more than others. For our own souls, our families, the Church, our race? (*G. Brooks.*) *The superior obligations of Christians:*—While all men are under one sovereign law, some by voluntary profession bring themselves an additional accountableness. We must not compare ourselves with the worst of men. On looking on

others and forming judgments, we may SPECIFY POINTS OF ADMONITORY COMPARISON. 1. They will observe and feel a very limited sense of responsibility. 2. They will observe the lamentably small effects of admitted truth. 3. A different sensibility to the evils which affect mankind. 4. What good things they do not that they might. We must beware of the sad tendency there is to the "*less*" in any good thing, instead of the "*more*." Consider the extent of what there is to be done; where we should have been if there had not been persons in every age to "*do more*" than others, such as Wicliff, Luther, &c.; consider how we talk of imitating excellent examples. Those who desire to do more than others must not be discouraged by the disposition that will show itself to depreciate and obstruct. This obligation is increased by the fact that others do less than they ought. In this comparison with others we must have regard to the MOTIVE WHICH leads us to exceed them, and also respecting THE EQUITY IN THE MODE OF MAKING THE COMPARISON. We must beware of seeming to be admired and set off in invidious comparison. There must be no motive of self-merit. A word on the equity of the comparison. 1. Let there be a jealous watchfulness on the propensity to magnify *ours* and to diminish *theirs*. 2. The others with whom the comparison is made may have more difficulties than we are aware of. 3. Those of larger means are not to consider themselves as doing more, unless according to that proportion. 4. A man must not compare his most against another's least. 5. Our Lord when on earth did more than all other men. (*J. Foster.*) *A call to holy living:*—I. The GROUNDS FOR EXPECTING MORE from Christians. 1. They profess more. 2. True Christians *are* more than others. 3. It is certain the true Christian *can* do more than others, he has the Holy Spirit within him. 4. They *have* more. 5. They are looking for more than others. II. MATTERS IN WHICH WE MAY NATURALLY LOOK FOR THE CHRISTIAN TO DO MORE than others. 1. To set a more godly example. 2. A more exact performance of the Divine will. 3. To excel all others in gentleness. 4. In purity. 5. In truthfulness. 6. In forbearance. 7. In love to mankind. III. REASONS for doing more than others. 1. By our fruits we are to be known. 2. Works are to be evidence at last. 3. By them the mouths of gainsayers are stopped. 4. God is glorified. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 48. **Perfect.**—I. What is not to be understood by this requirement, or what Christian perfection is not. Not perfection of knowledge, freedom from temptation, conflict, &c. II. What is the perfection here required? Perfect obedience to the law of God. III. That this perfection is a duty. For God requires it. IV. That it is attainable. It is commanded—God wills it; it is promised; it is the object for which the Holy Spirit is promised and given, &c. Answer objections. (*Professor Finney.*) *The moral perfections of God:*—I. God is PERFECTLY WISE. Wisdom implies right use of knowledge, and lies in the will as well as in the understanding. He acts wisely whose will is directed by right reason. Practical improvement we should make of the wisdom of God. 1. We should be hereby excited to seek wisdom (Prov. iv. 5, 7). 2. We should ask wisdom of God to direct us in our ways. 3. It becomes us to resign to His will and acquiesce in His appointments. II. God is PERFECTLY GOOD. His other attributes are rendered engaging to us by His goodness. How extensive the Divine goodness (Psa. cxlv. 9, 16). Is God perfectly good? 1. Then all our powers ought to be awakened to bless His name. 2. Then how hateful should sin be to us. 3. Then we ought to be careful to practise goodness. III. God is PERFECTLY HOLY. This denotes the transcendent excellence of His nature, while He is infinitely distinguished from all other beings. Then we should follow after holiness. IV. God is PERFECTLY JUST. Justice is commonly distinguished into commutative and distributive, the former in an equal exchange of benefits; this can have no place in our dealings with God. Distributive justice, which ought to be exercised by rulers towards their subjects, consists in the equal distribution of rewards and punishments. God cannot be awed by any power to pervert judgment. The judgments of God cannot be fathomed at present. Is God just? 1. This should awaken in us holy awe. 2. It is of great concern to us guilty creatures to be found in Jesus Christ, having on His righteousness. V. God is TRUTH. 1. Then we must embrace whatever God has revealed to us. 2. The reasonableness of reliance on God's promises. Conclude:—1. It should yield us satisfaction that such a perfect Being as God is governs the world. 2. We should in our contemplations of Him have a strict regard to the harmony of His attributes. 3. Blessed are they who upon good grounds can call this perfect Being their Father and God. (*S. Price.*)

## CHAPTER VI.

VER. 1. **Alms before men.**—*Almsgiving*:—I. THE DUTY TO WHICH OUR LORD REFERS. The word in the first verse rendered "alms" is in some ancient copies rendered righteousness; in the second verse it means charitable gifts. Our duty to give of our goods. The gift of alms a deed of justice as well as of mercy; the poor have a just claim on the abundance of the rich. II. THE EVILS TO BE AVOIDED IN ITS DISCHARGE. 1. We are to avoid the desire of human applause. 2. We are to avoid giving an ostentatious notoriety to deeds of beneficence. It is the empty vessel that cannot be touched without telling it. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH DEEDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND CHARITY ARE TO BE PERFORMED. 1. Modesty. 2. With a cheerful respect to the Divine precepts. 3. We must aim at the advancement of the honour of God. 4. Act from Christian compassion and fellowship. 5. We must depend on Divine assistance, and ascribe the praise of all to Him who enables us to live to His glory. IV. THE ARGUMENT STATED BY OUR LORD. 1. The futility of ostentatious displays of piety. 2. The promise annexed to their right performance. 3. How jealous should we be of the principle from which we act. 4. Never presume on eternal life from the works of the law. (*J. E. Good.*) *Purity of motive in religion*:—When Mrs. Judson read the Lord's "Sermon on the Mount" to the first Burman convert, he was deeply affected. "These words," said he, "take hold on my very heart; they make me tremble. Here God commands us to do everything that is good in secret; *not* to be seen of men. How unlike our religion is this! When Burmans make offerings they make a great noise with drums and cymbals, that others may see how good they are. (*Anecdotes of the Aborigines.*) *Secret philanthropy*:—Loud, ostentatious, and unprofitable, it was like the brawling, noisy, foaming, frothy torrent, which, with a rock for its bed and barrenness on its banks, makes itself seen and heard. How different genuine, gracious piety! Affluent in blessings but retiring from observation, it has its symbol in the stream that pursues a silent course, and, flashing out in the light of day but here and there, but now and then, is not known but by the good it does—the flowers that bloom on its banks, and the evergreen verdure which it gives to the pastures through which it winds on its quiet path. (*Dr. Guthrie.*) *Silent philanthropy*:—Alms should be like oil, which, though it swim aloft when it is fallen, yet makes no noise in the falling; not like water, that sounds when it lights. (*Hall.*)

Ver. 2. **Their reward.**—*Having one's reward*:—I. A PROFOUND TRUTH ABOUT HUMAN NATURE—man works for reward. II. There is a suggested CONTRAST—"their reward." In God all the noblest aspirations of men are met. III. A SENTENCE which the Divine Speaker passes upon some of the men of the time. "They have their reward." They have it altogether. Irony, pathos. Their reward was transient, worthless. It does not necessarily follow that *all* good works done publicly forfeit God's approval hereafter. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Their reward*:—Ostentatious piety has its own remuneration. There is real happiness in other things besides goodness. There is pleasure in wrong-doing; quarrelsome, destructive, lazy, gluttonous men find a certain kind of enjoyment in these. There is pleasure in the love of praise and pride. But that is *all* their reward. The gospel points out the great life that lies beyond; it charges man to use himself in this life that he may gain the higher. (*Beecher.*)

Ver. 5. **And when thou prayest.**—*Nine things pertain to the knowledge of true prayer*:—I. To know WHAT PRAYER IS. II. How MANY SORTS OF PRAYER THERE BE. III. THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER. Four things provoke us to pray. 1. God's commandment. 2. Sin in us. 3. Our weak nature. 4. Subtilty of the enemy. IV. To WHOM WE OUGHT TO PRAY. V. BY WHOM WE SHOULD PRAY. VI. WHERE TO PRAY. VII. WHAT TO PRAY. VIII. THE EXCELLENCY OF PRAYER. IX. WHAT WE MUST DO THAT OUR PRAYERS MAY BE HEARD. (*John Bradford.*) *Secret prayer*:—I. Let us notice THE IMPROPER MANNER IN WHICH THE PHARISEES PRESENTED THEIR SUPPLICATION TO GOD. 1. They were presented in an improper place. 2. It was sinful in its object. 3. It was worthless as to its issue. II. THE OPPOSITE METHOD WE ARE COMMANDED TO ADOPT. 1. The hallowed work in which we are to engage. 2. The place to which we are to retire. (1) An exclusion of company; (2) A withdrawment from secular affairs. 3. The approbation which shall be given. III. A

FEW CONSIDERATIONS TO ENGAGE YOU TO THE DISCHARGE OF THIS IMPORTANT DUTY. 1. The Divine command. 2. The example with which we are furnished in the sacred writings. 3. The necessity of secret prayer. 4. The advantages of private devotion. 5. The vital connection with our public usefulness. (*J. E. Good.*) *Private prayer:*—1. It is a test of a man, what he is when alone with God. 2. Observe the personal words, so endearing. 3. It implies that you go to the closet for the purpose of prayer, you are to separate yourself from all outer things. 4. Take with you Fatherly views of God. 5. A Father likes to hear everything; He never refuses a secret. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

**Ver. 6. Enter into thy closet.**—*Private prayer:*—I. The NATURE of prayer. II. The KIND of prayer prescribed—"Enter into thy closet." III. The OBJECT of prayer—"Thy Father." IV. The REWARD promised—"Reward thee openly." (*J. Pollock.*) *Closet prayer:*—I. The duty. II. The place. III. The Spirit. IV. The object. V. The profit of prayer. (*T. Whitelaw, M.A.*) *The duty of secret prayer:*—To press this I offer the following motives:—1. It is expressly commanded of God. 2. Are not the vows of God upon you for the performance of it? 3. Were ye not baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to worship them, and that in all parts of worship, of which prayer is a principal one? 4. Have not some of you been admitted to the Lord's table, when ye professed to renew your baptismal engagements? 5. Have ye not secret sins, secret wants, and secret temptations? And shall ye not have secret prayers adapted to each? (*Thomas Boston.*) *Secret prayer:*—I. The DUTY of secret prayer. All the force of a command. It is more by example than by precept that this duty is enforced in Scripture. Is essential, because we have wants which can be presented before God in no other way. No times are specified for the performance of this duty. II. The proper MODE AND SEASONS of secret prayer. If possible, a place to which we may retire and be alone with God. Set times. The appropriate seasons—early morning, evening, times of perplexity, &c. III. The REWARDS AND ADVANTAGES of secret prayer. Furnishes the best test of piety. What is the "open reward"? Are you obeying the command? (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) *Secret prayer:* I. DIRECTIONS. 1. The place. As solitary as possible. 2. The Being. He is in secret—invisible—omniscient. Realization of the Divine presence. 3. The spirit—filial. II. ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. From the relation which He sustains. 2. From the prerogative which He exerts. He sees the suppliant. 3. From the reward which He bestows, present and future. (*Various.*) I. The duty and necessity. II. The employments and enjoyments. III. The many advantages. IV. The lamentable consequences of neglecting secret devotion. (*Studies.*) *Secret prayer:* I. It is a DUTY. 1. Because it is commanded. 2. Because indispensable to the religious life of the soul. II. It is a PRIVILEGE. 1. Because it is communion with God. 2. Because it is priceless and seasonable. It is not like the Roman *Porta Santa*, which is opened but once in twenty-five years, with grand ceremonies, conducted by the highest dignitaries of the Church. III. Its PRACTICE IS COMMENDED to us. 1. By example of Christ. 2. By the observance of eminent saints. IV. Its OBJECT. 1. To be alone with God. 2. To cultivate heart-religion. 3. To obtain needed supplies of grace. V. Its BENEFITS. 1. Its privacy promotes meditation and heart-scrutiny. 2. It favours the confession of such sins as are individual. VI. APPLICATIONS. 1. A command all followers of Christ will obey. 2. Some local "inner chamber not necessary." Every man can build a chapel in his breast. (*American Homiletic Monthly.*) *The secret life of the Christian the most important:*—The root that produces the beautiful and flourishing tree, with all its spreading branches, verdant leaves, and refreshing fruit, that which gains for it sap, life, vigour, and fruitfulness, is all unseen; and the farther and deeper the roots spread beneath, the more the tree expands above. Christians! if you wish to prosper, if you long to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, strike your roots wide in private prayer. (*Salter.*) *The silent influences of secret prayer the most productive:*—As the tender dew that falls in the silent night makes the grass and herbs and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly than great showers of rain that fall in the day, so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish in the soul, than all those more open, public and visible duties of religion, which too, too often are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy. (*Brooks.*) *Closet prayer secret in mode as well as in place:*—Not like the hen who goes into a secret place to lay her egg, but by her cackling tells all the house where she is, and what she doing. (*Gurnall.*)

Vers. 7, 8. **But when ye pray.**—*Prayer forbidden:*—I. LET us endeavour to explain THE NATURE OF THE EVILS HERE FORBIDDEN. 1. Vain repetitions. 2. Much speaking. 3. Undue length. II. THE REASON on which the admonition is founded. 1. The condition supposed—a needy one—hence they pray. 2. The privilege afforded—we may ask for supplies. 3. The omniscience declared. 4. The argument which this perfection of the Almighty supplies. Hence prayer like the heathen unnecessary. (*J. E. Good.*) *Brief prayers best:*—Precious things lie in small compass. . . . Not length but strength is desirable. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) A vial made of gold is more precious than a brazen urn, or an earthenware pitcher. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *On prayer:*—Let all examine themselves as to whether they have prayed aright, and whether their prayers have done them good. I. ARE YOUR MINDS MADE MORE SPIRITUAL by your prayers to God, the Father of Spirits? 1. Are you raised above the petty concerns of this world? 2. Do you feel your souls enlarged in universal love and charity? 3. Can you trust God more confidently? 4. Do your prayers make you more just and merciful? II. Closely examine yourselves, every one of you, AS TO WHETHER YOUR PRAYERS GIVE YOU A TASTE OF SUCH PLEASURE IN GOD, and in holiness and goodness, as to make you desire to be better acquainted with them. 1. Is your care for this world daily suppressed and deadened? 2. Are your thoughts at rest in God, and in His love? 3. Are your hearts set upon rectifying all disorders in your souls? 4. Is it the highest boon we can ask of God, that we may be thoroughly and universally good? Then it is certain our prayers have been truly devout, and highly acceptable to God; which if we do not yet feel, let it not discourage but quicken our spirits to more frequent and fervent prayer. (*Symon Patrick, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **Our Father which art in heaven.**—*The Divine Father:*—I. IN WHAT SENSE GOD IS A FATHER. 1. With relation to Christ, as the Son of God: so the first Person is called the Father, as He is the fountain of the Deity. 2. With respect to us: for the first Person is not only the Father of Christ, but *our Father.* We share with Christ in all His relations: as God was His God by covenant, so He is *our* God. II. By CREATION God is a Father. To establish the relation of a Father, there must be a communication of life and likeness. A painter that makes an image or picture like himself, he is not the father of it; for though there be likeness, yet no life. III. What ADVANTAGE have we in prayer from this common interest, or general respect of God's being a Father by virtue of creation? 1. This common relation binds us to pray to Him. All things which God hath made, by a secret instinct they are carried to God for their supply. 2. It draweth common benefits after it. Christ saith where God hath given a life, He will give food. 3. It giveth us confidence in the power of God. The Creator who made you out of nothing can keep and preserve life when you have nothing. IV. How WILL GOD PERFORM THE PARTS OF A FATHER? 1. In allowing us full leave to come to Him in all our necessities. 2. In supplying all our wants (Isa. xlix. 16). 3. In pitying our miseries. Many times we forget the duty of children, but God will not forget the mercy of a Father. 4. In disciplining us, and treating us with much indulgence, wisdom, and care. A father takes a great deal of pains in forming his child, fashioning its manners and behaviour: so God doth with His children. 5. In providing able guardians for His children. None so attended as God's children are. They have a guard of angels to watch over them. 6. In laying up an inheritance for them. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Our* Father:—I. That we should in our prayers consider and acknowledge the universality of God's power and goodness. II. That we should not in our conceit proudly and vainly appropriate or engross the regard of God unto ourselves, but remember that our brethren have an equal share with us therein. III. That in all our devotions we should be mindful of those common bands which knit us together as men and Christians. (1) The band of nature and humanity; (2) The more strict ties of common faith and hope; of (3) manifold relations unto God that made us, and (4) our Saviour that redeemed us, and the (5) Holy Spirit that animateth us and combineth us in spiritual union. IV. That we should bear such hearty goodwill and charitable affection toward others as not only to seek and desire our own private and particular good, but that of all men. (1) Especially of all good Christians who, in a peculiar manner, are (2) God's children and (3) our brethren. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) *Lessons of the Paternoster:*—I. The Divine Fatherhood. II. Christian sonship. III. Human brotherhood. What great lessons in such little compass. (*T. Spencer.*) *Our Father which art in heaven:*—1. In prayer we address One who sustains the relationship of Father to

us. 2. In prayer we direct our thoughts to One who is above us. 3. In prayer we confess that we form members of one family. 4. In prayer we depend upon and confide in God as children. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) *God a Father* :—I. The CHARACTER in which God is represented as approachable in prayer. The common Parent of all men, the bountiful supplier of their wants, His people's covenant God and Father in Christ. II. The PRIVILEGE which this title imports. Relationship, access, protection, direction, expectations. III. The DUTY connected with this privilege. To pray to Him, to glorify Him, reverence, trust, submit, love Him, and look for His coming. (*Dr. Cope.*) *The Invocation* :—I. THE DIVINE FATHERHOOD. II. The Fatherhood of God by CREATION. III. The Fatherhood of God by REDEMPTION. IV. The BLESSINGS INVOLVED in the Divine Fatherhood. 1. Love. 2. Sustenance. 3. Protection. 4. Education. 5. Discipline. 6. Consolation. 7. Intercourse. 8. Inheritance. V. UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD in the Divine Fatherhood. We pray for others; we share in the prayers of others. This brotherhood extends to the various conditions of social life. It embraces nations. What a bond to our otherwise dissevered humanity is this word "our." VI. The MAJESTY of the Father. These were added that there may not be anything earthly in our conception of the heavenly majesty of God. "In heaven" :—(1) It is suggestive of dignity; (2) power; (3) knowledge; (4) purity; (5) mystery; (6) constancy; (7) nearness. VII. PRACTICAL LESSONS: 1. Filial confidence. 2. Reverence. 3. Gratitude. 4. Resemblance. 5. Assurance. 6. Hope. 7. Prayerfulness. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The Paternity of God* :—In our nature are quenchless affections. These call for something more than God the Creator, the Ruler. 1. We should recognize that God is our Father, in order that we may have right views of religion. 2. It is important to realize the truth of God's paternity, because of its consolations. 3. This truth furnishes us with the profoundest motives to obedience. (*E. H. Chaplin.*) *The invocation* :—I. From the title FATHER we know that God is a Person. II. OUR Father belongs to God as the Father of all mankind. III. God is our Father through Jesus Christ. IV. In teaching us to pray "Our Father," Jesus would remind us of our brotherhood. 1. The fellowship that knits together God's elect. 2. It is a word of love that takes in all men. V. Which art in heaven, means Father in perfection. 1. Perfection of love. 2. Perfection of help. 3. Perfection of nearness and observation. 4. Perfection of homeliness. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *The doctrine of the invocation* :—1. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him the Father of all who believe in the Saviour. 2. Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren, Head of the Church, the centre of union. In Him we say "Our Father." 3. Jesus has opened to us heaven; and, risen with Christ, we seek the things which are above, we pray to our Father in heaven. 4. We say Our Father, because the Holy Ghost is given unto us, as the Spirit of adoption. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *The spirit of the invocation* :—I. The FILIAL spirit. 1. It rests upon the Fatherhood of God as the source of all blessings. 2. It is a childlike spirit, earnest, unsuspicious, submits to discipline in faith. 3. As a spirit of dignity and perfection. 4. A spirit of separation from the world. II. The BROTHERLY spirit. III. The HEAVENLY spirit. All spiritual blessings are treasured up for us in heaven. Our storehouse can never fail. (*Ibid.*) *In heaven* :—1. Power. 2. Authority. 3. Omnipresence. 4. Wisdom unsearchable. 5. Mercy unspeakable. (*Downame.*) *Our Father* :—1. A revelation. 2. When faith says "Father," love says "Our." 3. Contrast between earth and heaven. 4. We can speak to our Father in heaven, and yet be audible. (*Dr. C. J. Vaughan.*) *The opening address* :—I. The views here furnished of the CHARACTER OF GOD. 1. The title "Father" belongs to God essentially: as part of His nature He must be the Parent of all being. We are indebted to Him not only for *life*, but for *likeness*; He made us partakers of a spiritual nature. II. The affections and EMOTIONS these views of the Divine character are fitted to inspire. 1. Admiring gratitude. 2. Confidence and trust. 3. Submission. 4. Contentment. 5. Reverent awe. 6. Purity and elevation in our desires. 7. We should remember that our inheritance is "in heaven." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The filial spirit of the Lord's Prayer* :—1. Christ confirms the fact of God's Paternity. 2. Christ was also the personal and visible representation of the Father. 3. Christ also reveals the Paternal character of God. 4. Christ also revealed the Paternal heart of God. Father :—1. It is the language of the believing heart. 2. It is the language of filial love. 3. It is the language of the spirit of adoption in prayer. 4. The filial spirit exhibited not less in times of trial than in seasons of communion. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) "*Our Father*" :—*The catholic spirit of the Lord's Prayer.* The Paternal relation involves the fra-

ternal; no engagement so uniting as prayer. Considerations for fraternal union:—1. The equality of love with which the Father regards all His family. 2. The same spirit of adoption dwells alike in all the children of God. 3, That our Father is bringing us all to one parental and eternal home. 4. This topic belongs essentially to practical Christianity. 5. How uniting this truth upon the family institution. (*Ibid.*) *"Which art in heaven." The celestial spirit of the Lord's Prayer:*—In ascribing locality to God we must not forget that He is everywhere. How appropriate heaven as the dwelling-place of God. 1. Heaven is a glorious place. 2. It is a holy place. 3. It is a happy place. 4. It is a prepared place. Practical lessons: 1. We are instructed to look up, the whole soul should be in the ascent. 2. To seek heavenly blessings. (*Ibid.*) *The Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man:*—Prayer a most exalted privilege—connected with the richest blessings: but is liable to abuse. 1. Christ admonishes His disciples to avoid the ostentatious formalities of the Pharisees. 2. To avoid the vain tautologies of the heathen. This is to be our model prayer:—1. Simplicity. 2. Brevity. I. The FATHERHOOD of God. 1. By an act of creation. 2. By an act of adoption. 3. God is in heaven. II. The BROTHERHOOD of men. 1. The whole human race constitutes one family. They belong to different classes, climes, ages; all sprung from one Father. 2. All Christians constitute one family. (*J. Morgan.*) *The Paternal relationship of God to us:*—1. It confers noble privileges (1 John iii. 1; Rom. viii. 7; Psa. cxiii. 5; 1 Sam. ii. 8). 2. Such a name and title we could never have dared to take upon us had not God permitted. 3. This is no barren title (Rom. i. 21; Isa. xlix. 14, 15; lxiii. 16). 4. This first word of the Lord's Prayer is designed to give us access with confidence to God (Eph. iii. 12; Psa. lxxxi. 10). 5. This sonship has its duties. (*F. C. Blyth, M.A.*) *Children worthy of the Divine Father:*—It is recorded of Alexander the Great that to one who bore his name he gave this admonition, "Remember thy name is Alexander;" implying that such a remembrance would keep him from doing anything that would stain and tarnish, and so render him unworthy to hold it. *The title of Father enables us to understand God:*—Luther was one day catechising some country people in a village in Saxony. When one of the men had repeated these words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty," Luther asked him what was the meaning of "Almighty"? The countryman honestly replied, "I do not know." "Nor do I know," said the catechist, "nor do all the learned men in the world know; however, you may safely believe that God is your Father, and that He is both able and willing to save and protect yourself and all your neighbours." *Fatherhood indicative of Personality:*—You never say Father, to a force; Father, to a law; Father, to a mist; Father, to a mile, nor to infinite millions of miles in a line; "Father" is not the name for Thought apart from the Thinker, nor for Friendship apart from the Friend; nor for a Link, though the first link in a long chain of grand phenomena. If we mean more than a figurative father, we mean by that word a living Person. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *The Lord's Prayer an intercession for others as well as for ourselves:*—It was a law among the Romans that no one should approach the Emperor's tent at night, under penalty of death. One night, however, a soldier was found near the royal tent, holding in his hand a petition which he meant to present to his master: and thereupon he was sentenced to death. But the Emperor, hearing voices, and asking what was amiss, and hearing that a soldier had intruded within the forbidden bounds to present a petition, and that they were about to deal with him according to the law, said—"If the petition be for himself, let him die; but if for another, spare his life." It was found that it was for two of his fellow-soldiers that he had come to intercede, who had been taken asleep while they were posted on the watch. The Emperor, well pleased, commanded that he should escape death, and that they also should escape punishment. *The look of the soul ever toward its heavenly home:*—It is related of Cicero when he was banished from Italy, and of Demosthenes when he was banished from Athens, that they wept every time they looked towards their own country, so great was their love for their fatherland, and so keen their desire to return thither: so should our soul long after our home above. *Which art in heaven:*—I. The RESIDENCE of God. Heaven is the seat of His government; the region of holiness and enjoyment; the abode of angels and saints. II. HIS STUPENDOUS CONCERNS. Arranging all the affairs of the universe; receiving the homage of the celestial inhabitants (Rev. iv. 2); issuing His commands and executing His threatenings; attending to the supplication of His people; protecting His Church" (Zech. ii. 5). III. THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUBJECT UPON OUR MIND. Humility, reverence, spiritual desires, confidence, expecta-

tion, joy. (*Dr. Cope.*) *Looking up to God "in heaven," showeth us:*—(1) Prayer is an act of the heart, not of the lips. It is not the sound of the voice which can enter into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, but sighs and groans of the Spirit. . . . The commerce and communion of spirits is not hindered by local distance. (2) The work of prayer is to lift up the heart to God; to withdraw the heart from all created things, that we may converse with God "in heaven." (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Which art in heaven:*—I. Our Saviour, to oppose narrowness of opinion, requires us to pray to our Father which art in heaven, showing by this, that our petitions have equal access to Him from all places. II. This acknowledgment of our Father in heaven, shows His great kindness in suffering us to approach Him. Though distant in station, and unprofitable in our service. III. By calling God *our Father* we express the greatness of those blessings we have received; and by professing this our Father to be *in heaven*, we own the great dignity of the person that hath conferred them upon us; and the sense of both these together will naturally prepare our hope, reverence, and attention, to send up the following prayer. (*Thomas Mangey.*)

**Hallowed be Thy name.**—*How and when may God's name be sanctified?*—(1) Upon us, by the righteous executions and judgments of His providence; (2) By us, in our thoughts, words, and actions; in our hearts, and life. Not only when we speak of the name of God, but when we *think* of it; (3) When in straits, difficulties, and dangers; (4) When we speak of the Lord with reverence; (5) In our actions; (6) In our worship; (7) In ordinary conversation. Let this be your care, and let these be your directions in hallowing and sanctifying the Lord's name. 1. Be holy. 2. Study His name if ye would sanctify it. 3. Submit to His providence without murmuring. 4. Live to public ends. Allure others, and recommend God to them. 5. Be fully sensible when God's name is dishonoured by yourselves and others; not enduring the least profanation of it. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Hallowed be Thy name:*—As to the substance of this particular, we may consider, that sanctity implying—I. A Discrimination; II. A distance; III. An exaltment in nature or use of the thing which is denominated thereby. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) *The Sanctification of Jehovah's name:*—I. The objects of the petition. The name of God denotes His titles, perfections, &c. To hallow His name denotes—A reverential acknowledgment of God; profound veneration for His Being, attributes, ordinances, word, &c.; sanctification of Him in thought, word, and action; the diffusion of His name through the world; removal of the causes which prevent His name from being hallowed. II. The sins deprecated. A thoughtless and irreverent use of His name; appeals to God in common conversation; perjury. III. The grounds on which this petition rests. God is jealous of the glory of His name; He has commanded it to be reverenced; punishment is annexed to a violation of that command. (*Dr. Cope.*) *Hallowed be Thy name:*—1. This prayer is a confession of our ignorance. 2. It is a supplication for knowledge. 3. It is an acknowledgment of our sin. 4. It is an entreaty for holiness in ourselves. 5. It ought to be increasingly comprehensive. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) *The first petition:*—I. The place of this petition. II. The meaning of the petition. III. What is involved in this petition. 1. Honour to Jesus, as revealing the name of the Father. 2. Appropriate thoughts of God. 3. Suitable emotions towards God. 4. Reverential use of the name. 5. Confession of the name. 6. Private and public worship of the name. 7. Observance of special institutions: sacraments. 8. Subjection to the name. 9. Making known the name. IV. Reasons for offering this petition. 1. The welfare of the world. 2. For the good of ourselves. 3. For the glory of God. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The first petition:*—I. What do we mean by the name of the Father. 1. His name is the expression of Himself through the language of nature. 2. It includes the further expression of Himself through the medium of inspired words. 3. His name is perfectly expressed in the language of the Incarnation. II. How can we hallow it? 1. In the language of the Old Testament to hallow a thing is to set it apart ceremonially, as a thing sacred. 2. Hallowed be Thy name by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us. 3. By our trust. 4. In the spirit of our prayers. 5. In our lives. 6. In our language. 7. In Thy Church by the ascription to Thee alone of honours due. 8. In the overthrow of idolatry. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *Hallowed be Thy name:*—I. In breathing this prayer we ask that God would hallow His own name, or cause it to be hallowed. It is not the tribute which we pay to mere power and magnitude. Nature appears in forms of greatness; we do not reverence her. Nor do we reverence

mere kindness. A full knowledge of God is necessary in order to hallow His name. To avoid superstition. Terror is not reverence. Some view the Divine Being as too good-natured to punish; the guilt of sin is not felt. By this theory God's name is acknowledged, but not hallowed. II. We can also pray THAT WE AND ALL MEN MAY HALLOW THE NAME OF GOD. We should consecrate His name—1. On our lips. 2. In our lives. 3. In our hearts. (*E. H. Chaplin.*) *The fundamental petition*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE NAME OF GOD? God has revealed His name—1. In creation. 2. In Israel. 3. In His Law. 4. In the sacrifices. 5. In the names of His servants. Elijah means, Jehovah is my strength. 6. In the face of Jesus. II. HALLOWED be Thy name. All the works of God glorify His name. The petition implies—(1) The desire to know God's name; (2) To treat it as a reality; (3) To rejoice in it; (4) To separate it from our corrupt thoughts and desires; 5. To regard it as inviolable in its unity; (6) That we be manifestations of God. (7) This prayer is universal; there is no health for the nation or family but by the knowledge of God's name. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *The reverential spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—This petition takes precedence in the Lord's prayer: all things must resolve themselves into a manifestation of the Divine glory. 1. God's name is Holy (Lev. xxii. 2). 2. He is jealous of it (Ezek. xxxix. 25). 3. God notices the hallowing of His name by His people (Matt. ii. 5). 4. God has hallowed His own name (1) in His revealed word; (2) in the Lord Jesus Christ; (3) in His dealings with His saints. How is God's name to be hallowed? We cannot make it more holy, yet may hallow it (1) By a deepening sense of its holiness; (2) By bringing it into the daily exercise of faith; (3) By a meek, submissive spirit, under the discipline of our Father's correcting hand; (4) By a full trust in the name, Person, work of Jesus. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The first petition*:—This prayer directory for the *matter* and *order* of our desires. I. What we should INCLUDE in this prayer. 1. Just and worthy apprehensions of the Divine character and attributes. 2. That fresh accessions of glory may be constantly accruing to that name from the Person and work of Christ. 3. That in everything which pertains to God, due regard may be had to the sanctities of His holy nature. 4. To emphasize the utterance of the sacred name by some act of mental worship. 5 A reverent observance of His ordinances. II. What we may LEARN from this petition. 1. That in all our prayers, regard must be had to certain fixed principles of moral government. 2. The law of subordination according to which we are to frame our desires. 3. He may not allow praise to be given to any other name. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The Holy name*:—I. The NAME. II. The HOLY name. Who so worthy of honour: (1) He is the God of Nature; (2) of Providence; (3) of Grace; (4) of Glory. (5) The redeemed saints in glory honour and venerate Him; the angelic host worship Him. (6) The other Persons in the adorable Trinity honour Him—"He shall glorify Me." III. How can we honour Jesus? 1. By giving Him the first place in our thoughts and affections. 2. By a reverential use of all the appellations by which He is distinguished from all other beings. 3. By solemn and grateful acts of worship. 4. By keeping holy the Sabbath day. 5. By living holily before our fellow men. 6. By praising, and recommending Him to all who dwell around us. (*J. Morgan.*)

Ver. 10. **Thy kingdom come.**—*The coming of Christ's kingdom*:—1. Greater than all the kingdoms of the world is the kingdom of God. 2. Amidst all the breaking up of human kingdoms men seek one that will abide. 3. This is a kingdom founded not by external might but by moral goodness. 4. The kingdom of God is God's first primeval thought. 5. The kingdom of God has made out a history. 6. The way of its coming is an inner, a spiritual, a moral one. 7. His kingdom comes in time till it will one day come gloriously in eternity. (*Dr. Luthardt.*) *Importance of prayer for the conversion of the world*:—I. In the fact that Christ directs His disciples to make it. II. In the good influence it exerts over those who offer it in sincerity and in earnest. III. In the encouragement it affords those who have consecrated themselves to labour in person for that object. IV. Prayer is the only means of bringing down God's blessing upon us. (*J. Doolittle.*) *Thy kingdom come*:—1. This prayer reminds us that there is another kingdom besides God's kingdom established in the world. 2. It suggests difficulties in the way of the establishment of God's kingdom. 3. It expresses our acquiescence in all things by which the desired result may be secured. 4. It leads us to anticipate that the ascendancy desired will be gained only slowly. 5. It impregnates the future with hopefulness. 6. It necessitates the cultivation of a missionary spirit. (*F.*

*Edwards, B.A.)* *Christ's kingdom*:—I. DESCRIBE THIS KINGDOM. This kingdom supposes—1. A kingdom, and who is the King of this kingdom. 2. The kingdom of Christ is wholly Divine in its rise and progress. 3. This kingdom supposes a sceptre of dominion. It is a sceptre of invincible strength. 4. This kingdom is destined to be universal. II. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH FOR ITS ADVANCEMENT. 1. It is not yet fully come. 2. That this kingdom may come in the world, we ought to pray that this kingdom may come in the Church. 4. We ought to pray that this kingdom may come in our hearts. III. BUT IF WE PRAY FOR IT, THIS INTIMATES THAT WE MUST DESIRE ITS COMING. 1. And can it be otherwise than an object of desire to you, if you love Christ. 2. This prayer intimates that you should labour for its advancement. 3. You should hope for the universal coming of this kingdom. *(J. Brown.)* I. THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM. 1. Spiritual in its nature. 2. Tranquil in its government. 3. Abundant in its immunities. 4. Perpetual in its duration. II. THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS BEING COME. III. THE MEANS TO EFFECTUATE IT. *(The Pulpit.)* *The arrival of Christ's reign*:—I. REVELATION FAVOURS LARGENESS OF VIEWS. It unfolds a sphere composed of vast circles. It attempts to extend our contemplations over the whole earth. God's kingdom is everywhere. II. WE SHOULD LET OUR RELIGIOUS CONTEMPLATIONS EXPAND TO THE LIMITS OF THE EARTH. What a mortifying diminutiveness in our widest views of the same. III. THERE ARE SOME CONSOLATORY TRUTHS TO RELIEVE THIS AWFUL VIEW OF THE WORLD. What revealed religion has done and is doing. The prophetic vision of its future achievements. The absolute certainty that Christianity is the grand expedient for renovating the state of man. IV. CONSIDERATIONS TO INDUCE THE ACTIVE CO-OPERATION OF ALL CHRISTIANS. The good designed to be diffused is heavenly. Its progress is at present most marvellous. God looks with greatest complacency upon the missionary toil. *(The Evangelist.)* "*Thy kingdom come*:—I. This kingdom shows THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. It is always used in the singular number, showing that there is but one Church, wheresoever dispersed through the world. (1) It reminds us—that we have but one God, one faith, and one baptism; (2) That the several parts of it, however distant in interests, judgment, or affection, yet are but many members of one body. II. The kingdom of God IS NOT YET FULLY COME from the narrow extent of Christianity. (1) It cannot be said to come till all nations have received and submitted to it; (2) Until it hath been preached to all the world. III. This kingdom is NOT YET COME, FROM THE WANT OF DUE OBEDIENCE IN THE MEMBERS. (1) A government cannot be said to be perfect—where the laws and constitutions of it have not their due force; (2) Till the power and efficacy of it be more visible in the orderly lives of its subjects. IV. The kingdom of God cannot be said to come—TILL THE TRUE MEMBERS OF IT RECEIVE THEIR REWARD; (1) Till His faithful servants are made sharers in it; (2) Till the subjects of it are freed from hardships and oppression. V. This petition SHOULD DISPOSE US TO UNITY. We pray not here for this or that particular Church, but for that diffusive universal one that makes up Christ's kingdom. *(Thomas Mangey.)* *The second petition*:—I. THE KINGDOM. II. THE WAY THIS KINGDOM WILL COME. 1. It will come by the mediation of Jesus Christ. 2. It will come through the instrumentality of the cross. 3. It comes by the power of the Spirit. III. How WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THIS. 1. Each one of us should pray that the kingdom may come in his own heart. 2. That it may come in the world. *(Dr. Stanford.)* *The second petition*:—I. The kingdom of God SPIRITUAL. Once this kingdom was undisputed: angels. II. ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD. 1. In their ruler. 2. The laws. 3. The subjects. 4. The objects. 5. The methods. 6. The extent. III. THE COMING OF THIS KINGDOM. IV. THE MILLENNIAL REIGN. V. PRAYER FOR THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM. 1. Not unnecessary. 2. What the prayer includes. 3. A test of character. 4. Personal concurrence. 5. Missionary zeal. *(Newman Hall, LL.B.)* *The kingdom of grace within us*:—1. If the kingdom has to come to us, we must be by nature outside it. 2. We cannot go to the kingdom; it must come to us. 3. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bring with them righteousness, peace, and joy. 4. In this kingdom there is dignity and liberty. 5. The extent and comprehensiveness of this kingdom; the whole heart, body, mind. 6. Antagonistic: in opposition to sin within and around us. *(Dr. Saphir.)* *The Messianic kingdom*:—I. WHO is the King? 1. Christ as Son of man. 2. As the Son of David. 3. By virtue of His sufferings and death. 4. Associated in His reign are glorified saints. II. WHEN will this kingdom be established. III. The CHARACTER of this kingdom. 1. In manifested power on earth. 2. It is spiritual. *(Ibid.)* *The second petition*:—I. The

NATURE of the kingdom spoken of. The Jews always expected a ruling Messiah. Pray for—1. The reign of grace in the heart. 2. The reign of truth in the world. 3. The reign of holiness and joy in the life of the world to come. 4. We pray against all divided loyalties. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The prophetical spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—I. God is a GREAT KING. 1. The kingdom of nature is His. 2. The kingdom of providence is His. 3. God's higher kingdom of grace. II. The kingdom of Christ IN THE WORLD. 1. It is spiritual. 2. It is prophetical. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *Thy kingdom come*:—I. Let us observe the fact that the consummate blessing is TO COME. There is a better era for men to come. I refer to this prospective attitude of Christianity because it exhibits two characteristics worthy of notice. 1. It is in accordance with the general working of God. Progress is His law. Christianity is not a fixed system. 2. The wise benevolence of such a position. By proclaiming a better era it gives individuals and the race the loftiest inspiration of hope. II. Consider some INDICATIONS OF THAT COMING. 1. As its coming is gradual we cannot expect to discover great advancement within any narrow scope of time. 2. That the kingdom of God is coming is indicated by the fact that the most civilized communities of the world are in a far better condition now than before the advent of Jesus, especially in point of morality. III. The ESSENTIAL NATURE of this kingdom. 1. Considered externally, it is an historical fact, and has an organized form. 2. This kingdom is also internal, it is spiritual. 3. As to the advancement of that kingdom do not let us cherish conceptions which are calculated to discourage our exertions. (*E. H. Chaplin.*) *Thy kingdom come*:—God's kingdom is a kingdom of many provinces. They are divided by narrow isthmuses; but over the whole there is a unity of system and design, and the same law pervades. There is the kingdom of nature, providence, of grace in the heart of man, in the world, and in the eternal glory. I. WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF THE HEART FOR WHICH WE PRAY. 1. It does not consist with the glory and show of this present life—"My kingdom is not of this world." 2. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink. 3. Neither does the kingdom of God come with observation. But it is—1. Spiritual. 2. It is free. No one knows liberty who does not know the kingdom. 3. It is comprehensive. It gathers up the whole range of things into a system. 4. It is exclusive. The heart grows so full of God that it can hold nothing else. II. Have you considered WHAT YOU REALLY MEAN when you offer this prayer. God hears and answers, perhaps by loss, bereavement, isolation: thus the kingdom comes into the heart. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Divine kingdom*:—I. THE KINGDOM ITSELF. We should have known nothing of it but for revelation. 1. It is not a worldly kingdom. 2. It is constituted in the Person of the King Himself. 3. It is a peaceable kingdom. 4. The subsidiary and collateral blessings which flow from this kingdom. 5. It admits of unlimited extension. 6. It will be of long duration. 7. Its brightness is perpetually increasing. II. SOME GROUNDS ON WHICH THE PIOUS MAY PRAY AND EXPECT THE DIFFUSION OF THIS KINGDOM. 1. We may expect it from analogy. 2. We may expect it from the symbolical events of Jewish history. Moses was victorious over Egypt; Elijah over the priests of Baal; Dagon over the ark. 3. The figures and representations of the New Testament. 4. The moral properties require that the kingdom of God should become glorious. Providence produces great results by small means. So large an agency as are involved in the cross and Christianity requires the result to be vast. 5. When we think of the energy employed in the diffusion of the kingdom our hopes arise. III. POINT OUT SOME OF THE ENCOURAGING INTIMATIONS WHICH WE HAVE OF THE COMING OF THIS KINGDOM. 1. The facilities which there are for it. 3. The union of effort. 4. The success of effort. (*Dr. Beaumont.*) *Nature, a prophecy of the unlimited diffusion of the gospel.* We are warranted in such an expectation, I may say, almost from *analogy*. Why does the moon spread her horns? Why, it is to fill them. Why does the sun rise above the horizon? It is that he may go on his march upward and onward, till he gains his meridian altitude, and pours his vertical glory on the world below. Why is the corn deposited in the soil? It is that it may unwrap, that it may unfold itself—that, of that single seed there may come a tree, the branches of which are for a lodgment of the birds, and a shadow for the beasts of the earth. Why does the rill steal silently from under the sod, wend its way among the grass and the pebbles, following its course onward and onward, enlarging its channel, rendering the fissure wider and wider for itself—till at last that little rill becomes a mighty river, bearing on its bosom the riches of a nation and feeding a nation's agriculture. (*Ibid.*) *The missionary prayer*:—I. The IMPORT of this petition. 1. What kingdom is this? It cannot refer to God's natural kingdom; all such are His already. It refers to His

spiritual. 2. What we are to understand by the coming of it? (1) Its advancement in the hearts of its subjects. (2) Its extension in the world over the hearts of the ungodly. (3) It includes the final consummation of the kingdom of grace in glory. II. The NEED THAT EXISTS FOR STILL OFFERING THIS PRAYER. 1. It is lamentably far from being fully come. 2. Look at the professing Church. III. Some of the ENCOURAGEMENTS we have to continue presenting this petition. 1. Past success. 2. The character of our weapons of warfare. Truth has power over the conscience. 3. The predictions of the Bible. (*J. Morgan.*) *Men generally feel more interested in the earthly than the heavenly kingdom:*—It is very sad to see how excited and absorbed men can be about the politics of this world; how, on any subject of national interest, such as the progress of a war or the annexation of a territory, the pulse of the nation will beat fast with excitement; how, not only in the council-chambers of kings and the legislative assemblies of nations, but at every street-corner and in every little tavern, men will discuss the matter with eager interest; while it is almost impossible to gather a roomful of people to listen to the records of the gospel difficulties, or of the triumphs of the kingdom of Christ. (*F. C. Blythe, M.A.*) *Subjects made by voluntary submission, not by geographical limitation:*—Earthly kingdoms claim all who dwell within territorial limits. A river, a chain of hills, an imaginary line, may determine the question who are the subjects of its rule. But in this kingdom all are enrolled as subjects who voluntarily submit to it, and none else. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The gradual progress of the Divine kingdom:*—If it had seemed good in His sight, He could have overturned the power of Satan in a short period; but His wisdom saw fit to accomplish it by degrees. Like the commander of an invading army, He first takes possession of one post, then of another, then of a third, and so on, till by and by the whole country falls into His hands. And as the progress of a conqueror would be more rapid after a few of the strongest fortresses had surrendered (inasmuch as things would then approach fast to a crisis, to a breaking up, as it were, of the powers of the enemy), so it has been with the kingdom of Christ, and such will be its progress before the end of time. (*A. Fuller.*)

**Thy will be done in earth.**—*Doing God's will:*—I. WHAT IS THE PETITION. There is the secret will of God; the providential will of God; the revealed will of God—our sanctification. II. THE MEASURE. How do they do the will of God. 1. From love to God. 2. Cheerful alacrity. 3. With zeal and energy. 4. With humility and reverence. 5. With perseverance. (*J. Hambleton, M.A.*) *Thy will be done:*—1. We are here taught to pray that God's will may become the standard and rule of our actions. 2. That God's will may become the regulator of our wishes and pleasures. 3. That God's will may become ours, and not that it may destroy ours. 4. That God's will may be ours, not fitfully and in part, but constantly and perfectly. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) *The reign of grace viewed in relation to the work of righteousness:*—I. A FACT ASSUMED, THAT THE WILL OF GOD IS DONE BY ALL THE INHABITANTS OF HEAVEN AS HE HIMSELF REQUIRES. The place, the parties, the practice, must receive consideration. 1. To determine the locality of heaven will for ever exceed the ability of man on earth. 2. We can, however, describe its inhabitants. 3. We have to consider how they act. II. ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE IMPLIED. God has, and will exercise, the same authority over men on earth and angels in heaven. 1. Our first proof is from the dictates of conscience. 2. Confirmed from the deductions of reason. 3. Clear from scripture. III. ENFORCE THE DUTY. 1. That obedience to the will of the Creator is essential to the welfare of every intelligent creature. 2. It is obvious if there had been no sin there would have been no suffering. 3. It is therefore evident that in order to be happy we must be in a state of acceptance with God. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *Thy will be done:*—God's will is to be the guide and measure of ours. These two standards of God's will—reason and revelation—however they may promote the same end, yet they are very different in their extent. I. The laws of Nature seem to regard only (1) outward order and decency; (2) strict justice in our dealings. (3) They allow us to return like for like; (4) oblige us to no more temperance than can keep the faculties in good order. II. The laws of the gospel require (1) inward purity and holiness; (2) extensive charity, whereby we are to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and mourn with them that weep. (3) To do good for evil. (4) To mortify our corrupt affections, and take up our cross and follow our Saviour. By this short view of these two rules of God's will, it appears that one is more extensive than the other, and that we cannot be said to fulfil the whole of that will without making the gospel the immediate rule of it. (*Thomas Mangey.*) *The necessity of a*

*cheerful obedience to the Divine will*:—I. HUMILITY, which corrects every arrogant thought, (1) reminds us of our demerits, (2) convinces us that the least blessings we receive are greater than the best of us deserve. II. CONTENTMENT. (1) An easy satisfaction with our present share of the bounties of providence, (2) neither envying the more liberal allotments of other men, nor (3) repines at its own. III. PATIENCE. 1. Cheerful submission to whatever pains and afflictions we are at any time called upon to suffer. 2. Any troubles and trials we may be called upon to endure. IV. QUIET SUBJECTION to the (1) authority, (2) full trust in the goodness, the (3) wisdom, and the (4) promises of God. These are virtues of so close an affinity and connection, that one of them can hardly subsist without the other. All of them are necessary to form and perfect that resignation to the will of God, for which we are taught here to pray. (*John Rogers, D.D.*) *Our Father's will*:—1. The Divine will is more than mere power,—it is righteousness, wisdom, tenderness. It does not fulfil itself by simple force. 2. We should ascribe the sweet as well as the bitter experiences of life to the will of God. 3. We shall find in the Father's will *being* as well as doing. It will be in all our doings and desires. 4. In doing the Father's will it is manifest that many things we have loved will have to be laid aside. 5. The day when this prayer has its answer will be the day of God's revenge and victory, the revenge and victory of righteousness and love. (*W. Hubbard.*) *The obedience of angels*:—1. An angel, by his very nature, is a servant doing God's behest. It is a law of his being; with us it is an occasional thing. 2. They go from the immediate presence of God, hence their power and joy. 3. An angel's obedience is the obedience of a happy being. Obedience is the fruit of happiness. 4. It matters nothing to an angel what the work is which is given him to do. 5. The response to an order is always instant. 6. It is always primarily to Christ. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Angelic obedience universal*:—You would do well to notice that it matters nothing to an angel what the work is which is given him to do. It may be for a babe, or it may be for a king; it may be for a prophet, or it may be for a country; it may be for one, or it may be for multitudes; it may be for the holiest, or it may be for the vilest; it may be to comfort, or it may be to reprove; it may be to carry a promise, or it may be to execute a judgment; it may be to deliver, or it may be to smite; it may be to restrain, or it may be to lead on. It is just the same to him. It cannot be too menial or too lofty; it cannot be too little or too much. It is—Who has given him to do it. It is simple obedience. (*Ibid.*) *The third petition*:—I. THE WILL OF GOD. II. God's POTENTIAL will. III. God's PERCEPTIVE will in relation to the human will. IV. WHY SHOULD GOD'S WILL BE DONE? Because it is God's. Besides the benefits resulting, there is the joy in the very act of performing His will. It dignifies the humblest lot. V. ANGELIC NATURE. The resemblance of obedience suggests resemblance of nature; angels only a higher species of man. VI. ANGELIC OBEDIENCE. 1. Angels do the will of God lovingly. 2. They do it intelligently. 3. They do it prayerfully. 4. They do all God's will. 5. They do it always. 6. They all do it, and do it altogether. 7. They do it in the presence of God. VII. PASSIVE OBEDIENCE. (*Newman Hall, LL.D.*) *The third petition*:—I. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS PETITION? 1. That the will of God may be done by the will of man. 2. This is the prayer of a renovated will. 3. In this prayer to our Father we say with emphasis, *Thy* will be done. II. HOW SHALL WE USE THIS PETITION? 1. Thy will be done in obedience to orders. 2. Thy will be done in submission under trials. 3. Thy will be done by surrender to Thy guidance. 4. Thy will be done in the use of means for Thy reign to come. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *Let us pray this prayer*:—1. Not in a spirit of indolent acquiescense. 2. God has a will concerning our actions. 3. God looks on the heart. 4. Three points revealed concerning the life of angels. (1) Their holiness; (2) the vitality of their service; (3) the love. Their angelic obedience is distinguished by holiness, diligence, love. (1) We must cast away everything that defileth. (2) We must stir up the gift that is in us to a lovelier, a brighter, a more kindling glow. (3) Above all, by setting ourselves to that which is the very work of heaven—sympathy and love. In heaven there is no disobedience, no indolence, no selfishness. (*Dr. C. J. Vaughan.*) *The submissive spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—I. Look at God's will, in two or three of its ESSENTIAL PROPERTIES. 1. It is universal. 2. It is wise. 3. It is supreme. II. Three things CONTAINED in this petition. 1. God's will done in the fulfilment of duty. 2. In the endurance of trial. 3. In the universal prevalence of holiness. III. How is God's will done in heaven? 1. Harmoniously. 2. Cheerfully. 3. Promptly. IV. The BLESSINGS THAT FLOW from acquiescence with the will of God are innumerable. 1. It secures our happiness. 2. It secures our safety.

8. It secures our satisfaction. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The third petition*:—I. As it illustrates the great rule of MORAL obligation. The fitness of taking the will of God as the great rule of human conduct; this was brought out in the first sin. II. Its application to the circumstances of our Christian life and CHARACTER. 1. As the will of God embraces all beings, we as a unit-world in this moral system, must have our allotted part to sustain. 2. We are to say "Thy will," as opposed to the will of any other master. 3. The revealed will of God is to be the paramount, exclusive, all-determining law of human conduct. This conformity to the will of God will be exhibited (1) in an attitude of pious submission, under all that is hard to bear in His providential appointments; (2) in relation to our spiritual experiences. III. The PATTERN of all acceptable obedience. 1. In the way of probation our compliance with the will of God is limited to the present state. 2. How are we to do the will of God? (1) In its integrity; (2) with delighted complacency in our obedience; (3) unwearedly. This shows us with what meek acquiescence we should pray. We have made mistakes enough by following our own will. Let there be no striving to get away from our providential lot. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Thy will be done on earth*:—The same principle which renders an angel a willing servant in glory would make him a willing servant in this wicked state. He who gets his copy most into his eye, and takes it into his mind, will draw the straightest lines. In material things it is the glory of heaven, where God looks He sees Himself. The crystal sea, sheets of gold, gates of pearl, are made to reflect the glory that shines upon them. As we pass from the material to the intelligent inhabitants, the pattern becomes higher. 1. When we look upon ourselves, what a very disobedient thing obedience is. How men struggle to obey, and often to escape obedience. But turn to the angels. 1. Mark the entire submission of their intellect. 2. The absorption of their will. 3. The pliability with which they adapt themselves exactly to God's varying purposes. 4. Or pass from the act to the spirit—"They are beholding the Father's face." 5. God's will must be done in the way God wills it. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Angelic obedience the model for ours*:—1. It is worthy of remark that our Lord teaches us to think a good deal about the angels. 2. Proposing the angels as a model of obedience gives us a most exalted notion of them and their performance of God's will. 3. In what way are they our models? (1) As pure and holy creatures. We must therefore imitate their purity. (2) As continually occupied in offices of praise and adoration of God. We must imitate their praises in our prayers. (*G. Moberley, D.C.L.*) *Resignation to the Divine will*:—I. DEVOTION TO GOD'S WILL THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN LIFE. Subjection to the Divine will has made the heroes of the past great. 1. Obedience to God takes its rise in God's revelation of Himself. 2. It is through acquaintance with the revelation of God we grow into knowledge of His will, and are guided in our desire for its accomplishment. 3. The revelation of God supplies the means for the accomplishment of the Divine will. It gives the power of obedience. II. THE EXAMPLE. (*J. Pillans.*) *Constant obedience to God*:—Let our obedience resemble theirs; let it not be characterized by fits and starts, with intervening relapses into indolence; not needing revivals out of apathy; not dependent on novelty which must soon lose its charm, but patient and persevering under all changes and circumstances; not as a mountain torrent, whose rocky channel is bare and sunburnt when snows are not melting and rains do not fall, but as a deep, broad river, ever flowing with fertilizing tide. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The will of God*:—1. The secret will of God. 2. The revealed will of God. 3. The determining will of God. 4. The prescribing will of God. 5. The providential will of God. (*F. C. Blythe, M.A.*) *Thy will*:—Not Satan's. 2. Not my will. (*Ibid.*) *In earth as in heaven*:—1. Thankful that we are not yet *under* the earth, but permitted to toil at the work God has given us. 2. We should deem it a great privilege to be allowed to do God's will, inasmuch that we are not only on the earth, but "of the earth earthy." 3. We are not to wait till we get to heaven to do God's will. 4. We are not to take any earthly standard as our aim. 5. The angels do God's will zealously, perfectly, orderly, constantly, cheerfully. (*Ibid.*) *Imitating angels*:—I. Some CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OBEDIENCE rendered to God in heaven. 1. Angelic obedience is thorough. 2. It is continuous. 3. Prompt and lively. 4. Cheerful and loving. 5. Universal. II. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD SEEK TO IMITATE the obedience of angels. 1. It will be a positive self-injury not to submit to Him. 2. God ever wills our present and everlasting welfare. 3. Perfect submission to the will of God is essential to our present happiness. 4. It is right. III. WHAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE THE PRAYER OF THE TEXT CAN BE FULLY ANSWERED. 1. The Scriptures must be circulated over the entire globe. 2. We also

need an unction from the Holy One. (*J. Morgan.*) *As it is in heaven*:—1. The will of God is perfectly done in heaven because it is done with the unbroken, uninterrupted sense of the presence of God. We must try to look on things as God looks at them. 2. There is in the celestial world a wide diversity of gifts and operations. The seraph's fire is combined with the cherub's strength. 3. There is war even in heaven to carry out the will of God in casting out evil from the world. "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon." Courage, self-denial, discipline, are the gifts by which victories are won. 4. It is a world of spirits—the spiritual unites and vivifies the whole. The hosts which really govern the world are the thoughts and consciences of men. 5. It is beneficial. (*Dean Stanley.*)

Ver. 11. **Our daily bread.**—*Daily bread*:—1. That even the wants of our bodies are to be subordinated to the purposes of religion. 2. That our dependence upon God for the supply of our bodily wants ought to be recognized. 3. That a sufficiency and not a superabundance of the supplies of life ought to be solicited. 4. That unneedful anxiety about the future ought to be condemned. 5. That all selfish grasping, and all unfair living upon others ought to be avoided. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) I. WHAT IS HERE ASKED. The poor of God's flock have special interest in this prayer, and the rich have need of it. 1. That what they have may be preserved. 2. That they may have true enjoyment. 3. That they may suitably improve what they have. II. THE SPIRITUAL BREAD. 1. God alone can break this bread to you. 2. You shall eat bread in the kingdom of heaven. (*W. Wilkinson, M.A.*) This is the language of—personal need, conscious dependence, quiet contentment, childlike trust, and fraternal sympathy. (*F. J. A.*) "*Give us this day our daily bread*":—I. We begin as nature prompteth, with the preservation of our beings and lives; whereby we become capable of receiving and enjoying other good things. II. By doing so, we also imply the sense we have of our total dependence upon God; avowing ourselves to subsist by His care and bounty. (1) Disclaiming all confidence in any other means to maintain or support us; in (2) any store we may have laid up, or (3) estate we pretend to. III. We are taught our duty of being willing continually to rely upon God. (1) We ask not that God would give us at once what may serve us for ever, and put us out of any fear to want hereafter; (2) we ask not for that which may suffice for a long time, for many years, months, or days; but (3) that God would give us to-day, or rather *day by day*; that is, that He would constantly dispense what is needful for us. IV. We must esteem (1) God's providence our surest estate; (2) God's bounty our best treasure; and (3) God's Fatherly care our most certain and most comfortable support. V. We learn to ask only for so much as shall be fit to maintain us, not for (1) rich or plentiful store; not for (2) full barns nor (3) heaps of treasures, wherewith to pamper ourselves; but for (4) daily bread, a moderate provision then to be dealt to us when we need it. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) "*Give us this day our daily bread*":—Bread, by a common and natural figure, signifies the necessaries of life. I. We are to make that the only subject of our prayers, which religion allows us to desire. (1) The gospel, not the (2) insatiate appetites of men, is to be the measure of their wants. (3) A Christian must not by prayer seek for anything which is contrary to his holy profession to enjoy. II. This petition for daily bread shows the true measure of Christian philosophy. 1. It requires us to restrain our wishes by our wants, which are both few and easily supplied. 2. God allows us to ask nothing of Him, but what we may with purity desire, and with innocence enjoy. 3. Religion makes us truly rich in making us temperate, content, and independent. True happiness of man consists not in the extent of possession, but in the restraint of desire. (*Thomas Mangey.*) *Daily bread*:—I. WE MAY ASK FOR TEMPORAL THINGS IF WE ASK FOR THEM LAWFULLY. It is true, prayers to God for spiritual things are more acceptable. As your child pleaseth you better when it comes to you to be taught its book, rather than when it comes for an apple. But we may ask for other things. 1. For they are good and useful to us in the course of our service. 2. Without them we are exposed to many temptations. Prayer easeth you of a deal of carking about them. II. We must ask for them LAWFULLY. 1. Not preferring these temporal things before His favour, and the graces of His Spirit. 2. In moderate proportion. III. We must ask them WITH HUMILITY AND SUBMISSION to the will of God. 1. Not for ostentation and riot, that we may live at large and at ease, but that Thy name may be glorified, and that we may be supported in service. 2. We must not come and challenge it, as if it were our due. 3. We must not use the plea of merit, but of mercy. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *The fourth petition*:—I. We put the emphasis on "DAILY BREAD."

1. Bread means that which is needful to support the life of the body. 2. That which is needful to support all our life in this world. 3. Is prayer that we may have enough. II. We would now separate the phrase "GIVE US" that we may think over its special meaning. 1. It implies acknowledgment of dependence. 2. We know that giving is His delight. 3. We mean, give this, for thou art our Father. 4. We mean, through a blessing on our own right use of means. 5. When common means are not within our power, by means of Thine own. III. Place the emphasis on "OUR." We do not ask for the bread belonging to others. IV. We next dwell on "THIS DAY." V. This petition suggests A HIGHER PETITION—for heavenly bread. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *The fourth petition:*—I. The MEANING, PLACE, AND REASONABLENESS of this petition. II. The Giver, "our father." God is the universal giver. Giving implies personality, thought, emotion. III. The GIFT—"daily bread." Religion sanctifies common life. IV. The COMMUNITY of the gift. V. The CONDITIONS of the gift. 1. Honesty. 2. Industry. VI. The PERIOD of the gift. A warning against covetousness. VII. PRAYER for the gift. 1. It teaches humility. 2. It encourages filial confidence in little things. 3. It prompts to daily gratitude. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The daily gift:*—I. THE GIVER, God is the only giver. He gives constantly and quietly. He gives simply. He delights in giving. II. The GIFT. All bread comes from God. Bread has an eternal meaning. III. The EXPANSION of the gift. 1. This little word "our" excludes every calling which is injurious to the interests of our fellow men. 2. We are to think of the poor and needy. IV. The LIMITATION of the gift—"To-day." 1. Christ would have us free from anxious care. 2. It teaches moderation and contentment. 3. Sometimes God tries the faith of His people, and they are in difficulties about their daily bread. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *Daily bread:*—1. These words show that earthly interests and animal wants have an appropriate place in our prayers. 2. Our intimate dependence upon God. 3. We virtually ask for ability and opportunity to obtain our daily bread. The blessing involved in the very effort for acquisition. 4. The relative dependence of others upon us. 5. Our wants are always new "daily." (*E. H. Chaplin.*) *The dependent spirit of the Lord's prayer:*—I. The source of the supply. II. How the supply is granted. He grants strength of body for toil; by the wonder-working of His providence. III. God's blessings are gifts. IV. God will have us live upon His bounty day by day. V. The unselfishness and sympathy of the petition—"give *us*." VI. Contentment with God's measure supplied is taught by this petition: not what we *wish*, but what we *need*. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The fourth petition:*—I. Certain SUPPOSITIONS appear to be made in this petition. 1. That temporal blessings are necessary for our happiness. 2. That we can look for them only as they are the free gift of God. 3. It supposes our right to this form of good to be forfeited and lost. II. The FORMS OF DESIRED GOOD which are to be commended under this clause. 1. Bread the representative of all forms of temporal blessing; a healthy mind, continued energy, for the duties of our calling. 2. The Divine blessing on the gifts we have. Let us never ask for bread without the blessing. III. Practical LESSONS. 1. A protest against our sumptuous and luxurious living. 2. Against all covetous and inordinate desires. 3. Against carefulness. 4. An admonition to mercifulness and brotherly love. 5. Prayer must be a "*daily*" exercise of the Christian life. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Daily bread:*—1. It is the believer's piety that he seeks all his daily portion at the hand of God. 2. The faith of the prayer. Hard to trust God for temporals. 3. The moderation of the prayer—(1) of time, (2) of matter, (3) of degree. *A train of holy contemplation awakened by a morsel of bread:*—Did the corn wave freely in its beauty in the summer field? Just so was Christ once in the brightness and the expansion of His father's glory. Did the reaper put in the sickle, and the free corn fall before the scythe? So, in the ripeness of time did the iron enter into the soul of Jesus, and He laid prostrate in the dust. Was the wheat ground within the mill? So was Jesus ground under the tremendous pressure of the world's sin. Is the one bread broken into many parts? So is Jesus the one life of the whole Church. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Prayer for daily bread:*—I. The MEANING. 1. The principle of dependence is developed in it. 2. The principle of moderation. 3. The principle of tenderness towards others. II. The encouragement to go to God for the bread that perisheth. 1. It is to His Father He goes. 2. It is to the Father who gave us His Son. III. The still HIGHER ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRAY FOR THE BREAD ETERNAL. 1. From considering the Bread itself. Here no moderation is needed. 2. Here are absolute promises. 3. Covet larger portions of the Bread. (*J. H. Evans.*) *Men recognize secondary causes rather than the Divine Being in the gift of their daily bread:*—The Rev. J. H.

Wilson of Edinburgh relates: "One day I asked the children in our infant school, 'Who gives you the bread you get to your dinner?' Almost every voice answered, '*My mother.*' 'But who gave it to your mother?' '*The baker.*' 'And who gave it to the baker?' '*The miller.*' 'And who gave it to the miller?' '*The farmer.*' 'And who gave it to the farmer?' '*The ground.*' And only when I asked, 'Who gave it to the ground?' did I get the answer, 'It was God.'" How many children of a larger growth, like these infants, attribute their blessings to any second cause rather than to the gift of their Father! *It is suitableness, not superabundance, that gives enjoyment*:—A dress that fits is more useful to the wearer than one which is too large, though more costly. A shoe that pinches the foot is no easier for all the gold lace upon it. (*Newman Hall, LL.D.*) *The cry of the needy*:—I. It is an utterance of FELT NEED. II. It is an acknowledgment of entire and constant DEPENDENCE on God. III. It is the language of MODERATION. IV. It breathes a spirit of TRUSTFULNESS. V. The language implies personal effort to gain the bread. VI. It is the language of brotherly ANXIETY AND LOVE. VII. The GREAT END for which all bread, temporal and spiritual, should be sought and used—the promotion of God's glory. (*J. Morgan.*) *All good things from God are gifts*:—One sharp winter day, so runs a nursery tale, a poor woman stood at the window of a king's conservatory, looking at a cluster of grapes, which she longed to have for her sick child. She went home to her spinning-wheel, earned half-a-crown, and offered it to the gardener for the grapes. He waved his hand, and ordered her away. She returned to her cottage, snatched the blanket from her bed, pawned it, and once more asked the gardener to sell her the grapes, offering him five shillings. He spoke furiously to her and was turning her out, when the princess came in, heard the man's passion, saw the woman's tears, and asked what was wrong. When the story was told she said, "My dear woman, you have made a mistake. My father is not a merchant, but a king; his business is not to sell but to give;" so saying, she plucked the cluster from the vine and dropped it into the woman's apron. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *Daily bread*:—1. Fastidiousness about food is condemned by this petition, so also is sumptuousness of apparel. 2. And as moderation in our desires is here commanded, so is thankfulness for ordinary benefits. (*F. C. Blyth, M.A.*) *Bread*:—1. The bread of righteousness. 2. The Word of God (Matt. iv. 4). 3. God the Word (John vi. 35). 4. The Holy Eucharist. (*Ibid.*) "*Our*":—1. Such food as is suitable for us. 2. Diligence in our calling. 3. Necessities for us, superfluities for our brethren. (*Ibid.*) "*Us*":—1. Excludes selfishness and incites to charity. 2. As we eat with our households so we should pray with them. (*Ibid.*) *This day*:—1. Uncertainty about the future no excuse for recklessness. 2. Each new day is a special gift from God, in which are contained all the possibilities of His grace. 3. What is our whole lifetime but a day! 4. To any earthly friend we should be ashamed thus frequently to ask a favour. (*Ibid.*) *Contentment*:—"Contentment is a jewel which turns all into gold, yea, want into wealth." Covetousness is a canker which eats into the richest robes and the costliest treasures; a dropsy which, the more it drinks, the more it thirsts. (*Ibid.*) The wise man, as he looks forth upon the riches and luxuries with which the worldling loves to surround himself, learns to say with Socrates, "How many things there are that I do not want!"

Ver. 12. **Forgive us our debts.**—*Forgive us our debts*:—There is a twofold debt which man oweth to God. I. A debt of DUTY, worship, and obedience; II. A debt of PUNISHMENT. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Our Debts*:—1. By this prayer we are reminded of our constant liability to sin. 2. We are led to separate between the fact and theory of forgiveness. 3. We are led to regard forgiveness as a favour, and not as a claim. 4. We are reminded of the only condition upon which forgiveness can be extended to us. 5. We are taught to comply with the condition which is required. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us*":—I. We must here take notice that we are obliged to go to our devotions WITH CHARITY AND GOOD-WILL TOWARDS OTHERS. (1) To depose all enmity before we bring our oblation to the altar of God. (2) Reserving no spite or grudge toward any man, but having a heart (3) clear of ill-will; (4) being in affection of mind towards others, as we do wish, hope, and pray that God would be toward us. II. It is implied on God's part, that He VOUCHSAFES PARDON ONLY UPON THESE TERMS; yea, more, that He doth truly promise pardon upon our performing this condition. (1) It also implies a consent on our part, and (2) submission to this condition, as most equal and reasonable. (3) If we break it, if we

retain any uncharitable inclinations, we deal falsely with God; we forfeit all pretence to mercy and favour from Him; we are neither qualified for mercy, nor shall obtain it from God. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) *The fifth petition*:—I. Observe how it BEGINS—"*and* forgive," &c. It follows prayer for daily bread. Life without forgiveness would not be worth having. II. It is a prayer for the forgiving of our sins AS THE CHILDREN OF GOD. III. Sin is described as a DEBT. IV. This is a prayer for GRACE. V. In this prayer for forgiveness we MUST FALL IN WITH THE DIVINE PLAN for its bestowment. VI. The DECLARATION connected with the prayer. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *The fifth petition*:—I. Sin considered as a DEBT to God. 1. A debt is what we owe. 2. We have failed to discharge it. 3. Let us glance at some items in the account. (1) Wrong to the property of our neighbour; (2) To his reputation; (3) To his person. 4. Sins as debts (1) are entered in God's books. (2) They increase. (3) Can never be discharged. (4) They cannot be transferred to any fellow creature. (5) They cannot be escaped by lapse of years or change of residence. (6) Payment will be claimed. II. THE DEBTS OF GOD'S PARDONED CHILDREN. III. Our FATHER'S FORGIVENESS. 1. Absolute. 2. Immediate. 3. Complete. IV. PRAYER FOR PARDON. Includes—1. Conviction of guilt. 2. Contrition. 3. Confession. 4. Purpose of reformation. V. FORGIVENESS OF ONE ANOTHER. 1. Human forgiveness. 2. Human forgiveness a condition of the Divine. There can be no genuine prayer for pardon unless we cultivate a forgiving spirit:—1. Pardon is always linked with repentance of sins, and these include an unforgiving spirit. 2. Faith in God's mercy is incompatible with unmercifulness in ourselves. 3. Gratitude to God for pardon received or expected prompts forgiveness of others. 4. This prayer includes those who wrong us. 5. It is the prayer of a child of God. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Mercy in heaven and on earth*:—1. He who has not received the spirit of forgiveness has not truly received the gift of pardon. 2. Without this loving spirit we cannot truly worship God. 3. He who does not forgive forsakes the spirit of the gospel, and returns to the spirit of legalism. 4. He who does not forgive will soon lose the sense and enjoyment of God's pardon. 5. He who does not forgive lacks one of the great evidences and confirmations of faith. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *The penitential spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—What is mere bread to a man under sentence of death?—forgiveness necessary. I. Man is God's debtor. 1. As regards his being. 2. His moral debtor. 3. Christ the real paymaster of His people. II. The import of the petition. 1. It at once confronts us with the sin-forgiving God. 2. There is unselfishness in the petition—"us." (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The forgiving spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—Forgiven, I am to forgive. I. There exists a great necessity for the exercise of this godlike precept of forgiveness. 1. In the family circle. 2. God's forgiveness of us the rule and measure of our forgiveness of others. (1) God forgives immediately. (2) God forgives fully. (3) God forgives heartily. (4) God forgets as well as forgives. "I will remember them no more for ever." (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The fifth petition*:—I. Consider MAN AS A SINNER in need of Divine forgiveness. How could guilt be remitted? Through death of Christ. How can a righteous lawgiver who insists upon a righteous equivalent be said to forgive? Forgiveness and payment of price often combined by sacred writers—"In whom we have *redemption* through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." II. A reference to our own MORAL CONDITION AND CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. These words presuppose in us some failure of moral obligation. 2. That sin unremitted has an indelible place in the Divine remembrance. Debts are registered. 3. The need of an individual interest in the provided atonement for transgression. III. The scriptural CONNECTION between the forgiveness we seek of God, and the forgiveness we may show to our fellow man. 1. The words suppose us to have sacred or relative rights which, as appertaining to our station, every other person is under obligation to acknowledge. This prayer implies that in the case of invaded rights we seek only such restitutions as are necessary to social security; not resentment. 2. The exact force of the connecting particle "AS" in this petition. The word has various meanings, *ground* or reason—this would attribute to man the meritorious initiative in obtaining his own pardon. Sometimes the word is used in the sense of *similitude*—God infinitely above man in the way and measure of His forgiveness. It is used both as an *ordained condition and as a ground of hope*. This connection between our mercy and what we expect is one of *unalterable* necessity. IV. The MOTIVES which concur to enforce the duty. 1. What kindness is it to ourselves to forgive. 2. What a victory is it over our enemy to forgive. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *As we forgive our debts*:—The debtfulness of sin should be remembered. It implies the wrongful possession of what belongs to another.

Say that sin occupied a moment: that moment was God's. Sin has diminished the glory of God: therefore we owe God glory. "*Trespass*" implies the same thought; it is when you go on ground where you have no right to go. Forgiveness follows our request for daily bread, and is quite as necessary. Only they who show mercy can expect mercy. We must be careful to draw no parallel of degree between God's forgiveness and ours, though there is a resemblance in kind. What is the nature of the forgiveness you expect from God? 1. Absolute in character. 2. Immediate in time. 3. Universal in extent. 4. It is an easy thing to use a result, while we are totally unobservant of the great processes by which that result has been produced. If God had forgiven without this process He would not have manifested any great abhorrence of sin. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Concomitants of debts*:—1. A sense of burden. 2. A sense of fear. 3. A sense of perplexity. 4. A feeling of hatred. (*F. C. Blyth, M.A.*) *The condition of forgiveness*:—1. Let us think whose children we are (Matt. v. 44, 45). 2. Whose disciples we are (1 Pet. ii. 23). 3. How often our Lord has forgiven us. 4. How small is the debt our fellow servants owe to us compared to the sum we owe to our Lord. 5. An unforgiving spirit towards others disqualifies us for forgiveness. 6. If we forgive our brethren their wrongs we turn those wrongs into blessings. "*As we*":—1. As a plea with God. 2. As an argument. 3. As an example. (*Ibid.*) *The prayer of the penitent*:—I. THE GENERAL PETITION. 1. An humble confession of sin. 2. True penitence. 3. Filial confidence in God. II. THE ADDED CLAUSE. 1. This language as preceptive. It has the force of a precept. 2. It is solemnly admonitory. God will not forgive us unless we forgive. 3. It is promissory. I have forgiven, do Thou, Lord, forgive, as Thou hast promised. 4. It is abundantly consolatory. (*J. Morgan.*) *Sin a debt*:—I. HOW IS SIN A DEBT? 1. It supposes obligation. 2. It supposes obligation undischarged. 3. It is an obligation that cannot be denied. 4. It is an obligation that cannot be ignored. 5. It is an obligation that cannot be transferred. 6. It is an obligation that cannot be run away from. II. HOW THIS DEBT MAY BE CANCELLED. 1. Not by repentance. 2. Not by good works. 3. Not by any amount of seeking and striving. 4. But solely by the grace of God forgiving the debt for the sake of Jesus Christ. (*Amer. Hom. Rev.*) *A secret record kept of all our sin-debts*:—A record is being kept unobserved by us. As a traveller calls for what he needs at his hotel and no demand is made at the time for payment, though every item is carefully recorded, so it is with our daily incurred debts against God. Sins record themselves. As a multitude entering some place of resort pass individually through the turnstile, and a record is unerringly made out of sight of the visitor, and as mechanical contrivances in factories register every beat of the piston and every fraction of the result produced, so, by the law of God impressed on our own nature, all our actions are registered, all our debts recorded. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Forgiveness of injuries a self-improving act*:—When thou forgivest, the man who has pierced thy heart stands to thee in the relation of the sea-worm that perforates the shell of the mussel, which straightway closes the wound with a pearl. Bishop Andrewes observes, "David compares his enemies, not to wasps, but to bees (Psa. cxviii. 12), inasmuch as, if they have a sting, yet they have honey also, as ministering to his comfort before God."

Ver. 13. **And lead us not into temptation.**—I. GOD PERMITS US TO BE TEMPTED FOR HIS OWN GLORY, to discover the freeness and riches of His grace, that men may be driven the more earnestly to sue out their place in the name of Jesus Christ. We keep off from the throne of grace till temptations drive us thither. As when the sheep wander, the shepherd lets loose his dog upon them, not to worry them, but to bring them back again to the fold: so God lets loose Satan to drive us to Himself. II. FOR THE TRIAL OF THAT GRACE WHICH HE HATH WROUGHT IN US. Grace doth appear better in temptation than out of it. A great tempest discovereth the goodness of a ship and skill of the pilot; so these great trials discover the soundness of our hearts and the fruit of that grace which God hath wrought in us. Gold is most tried in the fire, and discovered to be pure and perfect. Stars that lie hidden in the day shine in the night. The valour and worth of a soldier is not known in times of peace, but when he is out in action. When we are put to some difficulty and straits, then is faith seen. III. TO HUMBLE US. That we may never be proud of what we have, nor conceited of what we have not. Spiritual evils need a spiritual cure. Outward afflictions humble, but not so much as temptations do. IV. TO CONFORM

US TO CHRIST. We must pledge Him in His own cup; it must go round; He Himself was tempted. V. To MORTIFY SIN. When men have smarted they grow more cautious. VI. To MAKE US MORE MEEK TO OTHERS. We are very apt to be severe upon the failings of others. But now, when we are tempted ourselves, we learn more pity to them. VII. To give us EXPERIENCE OF THE CARE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD, and the comforts of His promises. A man doth not know what the comforts of faith mean till he be exercised by temptation. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Temptation*:—1. This prayer recognizes temptation as part of the discipline of life. 2. It traces temptation to the source whence it originates. 3. It intimates that temptation generally results in sin. 4. It expresses on our part a shrinking from temptation through a sense of weakness. 5. It is a joyful acknowledgment of God's power and strength to rescue us. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) *The temptations of those who are unhappy*:—I. THOSE TEMPTATIONS THAT ARE RELATED TO GOD HIMSELF. 1. Persons who are unhappy often murmur against the government of God. 2. To withhold prayer before Him. II. THOSE TEMPTATIONS RESPECTING MANKIND. 1. They are tempted to hate their race. 2. A determination to change their position. 3. A temptation to destroy their enemies. III. THE TEMPTATION THAT COMES UPON THE UNHAPPY THEMSELVES. 1. To obtain unlawful information respecting their destiny. 2. To secure an oblivion of their wretchedness. 3. To seek to obtain relief by suicide. (*J. Blackburn.*) I. If God, provoked thereto by our carelessness, doth justly bring us into, or doth let us enter into temptation, we shall infallibly run into many grievous sins and mischief. II. We continually NEED GOD'S INSTRUCTION TO GUIDE US, God's hand to uphold us, God's care to guard us. (1) When our condition and circumstances minister dangerous occasions of sin; (2) When the world would frown or smile us into it; or (3) Satan thrust us toward it; (4) Then, in such cases and seasons, God's interposal is necessary to remove those temptations, or to support and defend us from the prevalence of them. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) "*Lead us not into temptation*":—I. In praying thus, we desire not to be absolutely freed from that reluctance of flesh against the spirit, but from those additional trials that surprise, forgetfulness, or public affairs may bring upon us more at one time than another. II. The petition is not the effect of sloth, but a wise provision for our safety, and we thereby only desire to be discharged from such trials as make our perseverance not only difficult, but doubtful. III. We, in this petition, desire God to excite our own care and watchfulness. Humility, caution, and charity are the several lessons which we are taught in the right use of this prayer. (*Thomas Mangey.*) *The sixth petition*:—I. This is an appeal to our LEADER. 1. It implies that our Father is our Leader. 2. We make this appeal to our Father with a sense of His nearness. II. This petition comes from the fear that when, in answer to the last petition, our sins are forgiven, WE SHALL BE TEMPTED TO SIN AGAIN. III. We thus pray because we know that OUR PATH ABOUNDS WITH INSTRUMENTS AND OCCASIONS OF TEMPTATION. 1. In business. 2. By the habits of society. 3. We may be led into temptation by retiring from the world. 4. We may be so led even when we feel most secure from it by communion with God. IV. It implies a SENSE OF OUR OWN TEMPTABLENESS. V. That WE HAVE NO WILL TO GO INTO TEMPTATION UNLESS IT BE THE WILL OF GOD TO LEAD US INTO IT. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *The sixth petition*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY TEMPTATION? The primary idea is test, or trial for discovery. The test may be applied with various motives—by friend or foe. 1. Inducement to sin. 2. Afflictions or trials are temptations in the sense of being tests of faith. 3. Temptation for the distinct purpose of testing (Gen. xxii. 1). II. WHAT IS MEANT BY ASKING GOD NOT TO LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION. III. CONSOLATION for the tempted. 1. Temptation is not sin. 2. Temptation is not peculiar to the individual. 3. Christ Himself was tempted. 4. The prayer is presented to our Father. IV. PRACTICAL LESSONS: 1. We should not go into temptation. 2. We must resist temptation in the way Christ Himself has appointed. 3. We should specially guard weak places in our defence. 4. Turn stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones. 5. We should not bring others into temptation. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *Believers tempted, yet safe*:—1. The universality of temptation. 2. We are concerned about the safety of others as well as our own. 3. When you notice the sins and failings of your fellow-Christians, remember they were tempted. 4. The special temptations of the believer. 5. The most gifted, perhaps the most tempted. 6. The safety of the believer. 7. Jesus protects us by His loving sympathy, faithful intercession, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *Lead us not into temptation*:—I. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE EXPOSED TO MUCH TEMPTATION. In the old dispensation they were a tempted people. It is exemplified in the varied

experiences of the saints. The world is a great temptation. The outward plague of sin: Satan. There are peculiar seasons of temptation: Abraham. II. WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD by this petition. It does not imply exemption from temptation. The Lord likes to know the reality of the grace of His people. Leads them to watchfulness. God does not entice men to sin. A wise prayer. A holy prayer. (*J. H. Evans.*) *The watchful spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—I. THE PRESENT SCENE OF THE CHRISTIAN ONE OF TEMPTATION. 1. There are temptations that arise from the power of Satan. 2. From the world. 3. From within the Christian. II. THE PETITION. 1. The entire exemption of the believer from temptation would be exemption from some of the greatest blessings of his life. 2. We are not to infer that God can solicit men to evil. 3. The prayer is that God would, by His providence, keep His child out of the way of temptation. 4. That God would either weaken the power or remove entirely all existing temptation. 5. It is a petition that God would not withdraw His restraining check from the believer. 6. It asks to be preserved from the great tempter. III. PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS: 1. While praying not to be led into temptation, we should be watchful against voluntarily running into it. 2. The unselfishness of the petition—"us." 3. It is offered in the name of the Tempted One. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The sixth petition*:—Pardon for past is followed by implored grace for the future. I. TEMPTATION GENERALLY, as belonging of necessity to the condition of moral agents. The word temptation suggests moral experiment for good or evil. It has come to mean invitation to sin. Exposure to illusory suggestions is only what the analogy of natural government would lead us to expect. In our ordinary worldly interests what attractiveness appears to hang about a wrong course of conduct, whilst difficulty seems ever to dissuade us from what is right. We find that men are free to stand or fall. II. IN WHAT SENSE GOD CAN BE SAID TO LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION. 1. When God brings us providentially into the neighbourhood of hurtful influences. 2. When He allows temptations to come upon us with all their unmitigated force without restraining influences. God never leads us into temptation to make us fall. III. How much of the leading into temptation IS DUE TO OURSELVES. 1. The blame is our own when we without cause expose ourselves to any moral hazzard. 2. When we allow ourselves to be carried away by sinful conformity to the world. 3. When we do not habitually restrain those tendencies and appetites, without which any temptation would be powerless. IV. The BENEFICIAL ENDS for which our temptations may be permitted. 1. In order to the trial of our religious sincerity. 2. In order that God may get honour to Himself by our successful resistance. 3. The mercifulness of those permitted trials, in that our very failures may conduce to our greater spiritual humility. We should never separate the prayer for deliverance from the pledge to keep ourselves. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Lead us not into temptation*:—No man should go into the future with God till he has a clear past. When the soul has tasted forgiveness, it has the fear of sinning again. Shall a man recovered from a malignant fever, go and breathe infection? Temptation is the precincts of sin. Admire the anticipatory character of God's care for us. Preventatives of temptation. Prevention may be effected in three ways. The occasion may not be presented. Every sinful inclination may be taken away and overruled, or the power of Satan to deal with one or the other may be abridged or withdrawn. Temptation depends mainly upon the bias of the natural character. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The Divine guidance in the midst of dangers*:—A guide on the mountains leads the Alpine climber where dangers exist. The summit cannot otherwise be reached. In avoiding or conquering the danger, the traveller's skill, courage, and endurance are both tested and improved. His health and manhood, as well as his enjoyment, are secured by his being thus led where dangers abound. But the leader knows what path is practicable, what perils should be shunned, and is ever ready to lend a helping hand. Thus our Heavenly Guide leads us by His Providence even when we are beset by snares. (*Newman Hall, LL.D.*) *Men should avoid circumstances favourable to the development of evil tendencies*:—It would be a great misfortune to a man with weak lungs to call him to live in a cold, bleak air. So would it be to a man with weak eyes, to fix him in a situation which required much study by candle-light. Now it is to the full as dangerous for the soul of the ambitious man to be put into the road which leads to high stations, as it can be for the lungs of the consumptive man to give him a house on a bleak hill. (*Ibid.*) *Men must not unnecessarily expose themselves to temptation*:—It is said that at the battle of Waterloo, a wealthy merchant of Brussels, who had been allowed access to headquarters, asked Wellington whether he was not exposing his person to great danger, as shot and shell were falling

around. The general replied, "*You* have no business here, but I am performing my duty." So let us never go into spiritual danger from idle curiosity, but only when duty calls: then, and then alone, may we expect to be safe. (*Ibid.*) *There are certain temptations which our natural constitution and temperament should lead us to avoid*:—There is in old Arabic fable the story of a great rock that was a great magnet, drawing ships, so that they were dashed into splinters on it. If I have been magnetized by a certain sin, I would not be led near the loadstone that might draw me into destruction by its malignant potency. If I carry in me the gunpowder of some slumbering badness, I would not be led where sparks are flying. If I am "Little Faith" bearing precious jewels, I would not be led through "Dead Man's Lane," where robbers lurk. If I am short-sighted, I would not be led into "the land of pits." If I am timid and fear "the power of the dog," I would not be led near his chain, but far as may be beyond the reach of his spring. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *In the moment of defeat temptation may gather new force*:—But sin seems to be strongest when it has had its death blow. The eagle, when down, strikes at you with a beak like a bolt of iron, and may flap you dead with its wing. The red deer, when down, may fell you with its antlers. The dying horse may, in the plunge of its agony, break a man's limb. A harpooned whale may dash a boat over. Sin is like that. Speared through by its conqueror, it may grasp us in its last convulsions, and seem to be stronger dying than living; but we shall soon spring out from it, and cry, "Deliverance!" (*Ibid.*) *Lead us not into temptation*:—1. There is no evil in temptation unless complied with. 2. Temptation is a necessary element in a life of probation, such as our life on earth is. 3. It is a useful discipline to brace our energies and increase our strength. 4. If successfully overcome they confirm our graces and become helps in the way to heaven. God may be said to lead us into temptation—1. By the dispensations of His providence. 2. By giving Satan permission to tempt us. 3. When He leaves us to ourselves. Lessons: 1. To know and acknowledge our own weakness. 2. Temptation not a thing to be courted, but feared. 3. Cannot be avoided by the saintliest. 4. Are under God's control. 5. We must pray against temptations, especially such as we feel we are most likely to fall under. 6. To prayer we must add watchfulness. 7. We must avoid the seducing opportunities of evil. 8. How many lead themselves into temptation. 9. We must be content to deny ourselves some things that are lawful if we would not be lead to the commission of what is unlawful. 10. We must be jealous about the approaches of temptation. 11. We must beware of little temptations. 12. We must listen to the slightest whispers of conscience. 13. We must remember the devil varies his temptations to suit the changing circumstances of our life. 14. The consciousness of our own individual danger must not make us insensible to the need of our brethren. *Us*:—1. We are not fighting alone. (*F. C. Blyth, M.A.*) *Keep far from danger*:—He who has no mind to trade with the devil should be so wise as to keep away from his shop. (*South.*) If you would not be drowned, what do you so near the waterside. (*Baxter.*) *Let us not tempt the devil to tempt us*:—The lion may cross our path, or leap upon us from the thicket, but we have nothing to do with hunting him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Temptation*:—1. The sources of temptation may be divided into three: those within ourselves, those that surround us, those from the spirit-world. 2. This petition does not mean that we should ask God to give us an easy time. 3. Temptations are just as liable to come to men from things that are good as from things that are bad. What is nobler than industry well applied—property—regulated anger? These are full of temptations to avarice, &c. The Divine conception of life is that it is a conflict. 4. Modes of resisting temptation. Many of them are to be forestalled. We are to watch against weak hours. A safeguard against temptation is the strengthening of the natural antagonisms of the passions; over against cruelty lies benevolence, &c. (*Beecher.*) **Deliver us from evil.**—*Deliver us from evil*:—I. That is, IF WE BE LED INTO TEMPTATION, LET US BE KEPT FROM THE EVIL OF IT. It is a more wonderful providence to be kept from the evil, than from temptation. If a garrison be never assaulted it is no wonder that it standeth exempt from the calamity of war. II. THE EVIL OF SIN IS GREATER THAN THE EVIL OF TEMPTATION. 1. Because it separateth us from God. Poverty, sickness, blindness, loss of goods—let a man be never so low, yet, if in a state of grace, the Lord taketh pleasure in him. 2. Because it depriveth us of God, who is the fountain of our comfort. 3. It reproveth our folly. We complain of other things, but do not complain of sin, which is the greatest evil. The evil of affliction is but for a moment; like rain, it drieth up of its own accord; but the evil of sin is for ever, unless it be pardoned and taken

away. Sin is the cause of all the evils of affliction; therefore, when we complain, we should complain not so much of the smart, as of the cause of it. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Deliver us from evil*:—1. This prayer looks upon evil as something separate from ourselves. 2. It regards our personal deliverance from evil as our great need. 3. It leaves with God the decision as to what is evil. 4. It leaves with God both the mode and time of the desired deliverance. 5. It recognizes our dependence on God for this desired deliverance. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) *Deliver us from evil*:—I. That is principally from sin, or evil, (1) moral and spiritual; or evil, (2) penal and afflictive. From all (3) mischief, from the (4) root of all evil. II. We absolutely request of God that He, in His mercy, would also deliver and free us from (1) remorse of conscience, (2) anguish of spirit for having violated His laws, and neglect of duty; from (3) blindness of mind, (4) hardness of heart, (5) want of love, reverence, devotion toward God; of (6) charity and good-will toward our neighbour. III. We are hereby taught not to be studiously punctual and particular in our prayers, as if God needed our information, or were apt to neglect the particulars concerning our good. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) *Our supplication for deliverance*:—1. This petition is supported by the authority of human experience and history. We are led into situations of trial. 2. It is the natural language of the human heart. It is the utterance of fear. 3. It is the prayer of wise self-distrust. 4. It must always be a prayer springing from our trust in God. 5. The prayer now becomes an aspiration, a prophecy. It gathers up all the great hopes and faiths of the gospel. (*W. Hubbard.*) This prayer implies—I. That we are living in a world in which is the presence of evil. II. That those who use it are under a sense of being in bondage to evil. III. Nothing less than the omnipotent arm of God can deliver us from this evil. IV. That nothing can be satisfying to the Christian but the entire expulsion of evil from the world. V. Let our petition be presented in fervent faith of an answer. (*W. Dodsworth.*) *The devotional spirit of the Lord's prayer*:—Deliverance from evil. This the cry of humanity. 1. From the evil of sin. 2. From the evil of the world. 3. From evil men. 4. From the Evil One. 5. A daily prayer: what evil one day may expose us to. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The seventh petition*:—I. The AGENCY OF SATAN. 1. The existence of orders of beings superior to the human race is antecedently probable; as those below us, so some above. Scripture confirms this. 2. What are the limits of this agency, and how are the personal attributes requisite for its success to be reconciled with our notions of a finite being? Satan has some form of access to the heart, he has insight into our ruling mental tendencies. II. The MEANS USED by Satan for the carrying on of his designs. 1. Our enemy is personal. 2. He avails himself of outward accidents to stir up motions to evil. 3. When he cannot find, he seeks to make, occasions of sin. 4. He turns our permitted enjoyments into evil; our friendship, our religious feelings. III. The provisions made for our deliverance from this adversary. 1. The restraints constantly put upon the tempter in the exercise of his own power. 2. A gracious Father has provided many forms of unseen and unknown deliverance. 3. God more generally delivers His children from the adversary by enabling them to deliver themselves. We must resist (1) at first (2) earnestly. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The last petition*:—It stands last because all previous petitions are summed up in it. I. EVIL IS AROUND AND WITHIN US. II. Evil has a central unity—"*the* evil." III. WHO delivers. God delivers in Christ. IV. The promise involved in the petition. In the resurrection delivered from evil. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *But deliver us from evil*:—It surrounds the purest, clings to the holiest, shadows the brightest, embitters the happiest. 1. The true suppliant will try to see evil from the point of view from which God sees it. 2. There is no good which has not in its constitution some evil, so there is no evil that is not mingled with some good. 3. An enlightened man will leave the time and way of deliverance to God. 4. God's plan is by ransom; He delivered Christ to evil that He might deliver you from it. 5. The believer's liberty, sanctity, and rest. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The seventh petition*:—I. The EVIL ONE. II. The evil caused by yielding to the evil one—THE RESULT OF SIN. III. The evil in OURSELVES. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The seventh petition*:—I. Identify the evil. 1. Not the world. 2. Not affliction. 3. Not death. 4. But sin. II. NOTES ON THE PETITION. 1. In offering this petition we have to keep in mind the whole connection—connect it with the prayer for forgiveness, with the prayer against temptation. 2. We offer this prayer in that Jesus is the *medium* of deliverance. 3. This prayer fits the lips of Christians in a time when old sins seem to recover new power. 4. Our thoughts rush forward to the day when this prayer for deliverance from evil will have its finished and perfect answer. (*Dr. Stanford.*)

*Evil may be productive of good* :—Like the merchant who lost his all in a storm, and was thus driven to learn philosophy at Athens, many who have been deprived of earthly comforts, have learned that Wisdom is better than Wealth. (*F. C. Blyth, M.A.*) *The universal prayer-cry* :—1. The evidence of an all-pervading and over-present evil is irresistible. 2. If we cry for deliverance it is because we have a lingering recollection of a promise that there will be a Deliverer. 3. But God's children intelligently offer this prayer to the Divine Father; they feel that He is not the Author of evil. 4. As brethren we pray this petition: the successive generations have used it. 5. Estimate the price paid for deliverance; not silver and gold. (*Dr. Cumming.*) *Afflictions not necessarily evil* :—Only as you call a flail evil that separates the grain from the chaff; a wheel evil that grinds jewels to shine in a crown; a knife evil that prunes a tree; a tree evil that bears good fruit; a plough evil whose coulter crashes through the hard soil, opens it to the chemistry of nature, and makes it a soft, porous, receptive seed-plot for the harvest; the medicine evil that brings back the colour of health to the white face, and the flash of gladness to the dim eye; the hand evil that snatches back a heedless child from the nest of the serpent, or the lip of the river, just in time to save its life—only in this qualified sense can you call an affliction an evil. Out of our greatest sorrows grow our greatest joys. (*Dr. Stanford.*) *Suitable that this should be the last petition in the prayer* :—1. If this be granted all other blessings are comprehended in it. 2. It will grant us the gift of perseverance. 3. It presupposes all that has gone before. (*F. C. Blyth, M.A.*) **For Thine is the kingdom.**—*Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory* :—I. The KINGDOM. 1. God's kingdom is universal over all men or things, over all persons in the world. 2. It is special. Which notes His relation to the saints. It is the duty of a king to defend his subjects and provide for their welfare. II. The POWER. Titles without power make authority ridiculous. We can ask nothing but what God is able to give—yea, above our asking. III. The GLORY. The honour and glory of all will redound to God, the comfort accrueth to us. IV. The DURATION. For ever. All excellencies which are in God, are eternally in God. (*Thomas Manton, D.D.*) *Thine is the kingdom* :—That is: I. Thou hast a perpetual and unmoveable authority whereby justly to dispose of all things; an indefectible and irresistible power, whereby Thou canst effect whatever seems just and good to Thee. II. Therefore we profess only to rely upon, and seek help from, Thee; with hope and confidence we address ourselves to Thee for the supply of our needs. III. Thine is the glory; all honour and reverence, all love and thankfulness, are due unto Thee, therefore we render our adorations and acknowledgments to Thee. (*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*) I. The KINGDOM—"Thine." 1. By eternal right. 2. By assuaging wrath. 3. By infinite purchase. II. THINE IS THE POWER. 1. Upon the intellectual world. 2. Upon the political world. 3. Upon the ecclesiastical world. 4. Upon the invisible world. III. THINE IS THE GLORY. (*T. Mortimer, M.A.*) *The doxology* :—1. Our confidence in the acceptableness of our prayers is derived from God and not from ourselves. 2. That the power by which our desires are brought about is Divine, and not human. 3. That our certainty of success is based upon our faith in God. 4. That our confidence in our prayers ought not to waver. 5. That our prayers ought always to be confirmed and ratified by ourselves. (*F. Edwards, B.A.*) I. WHAT IS HERE ASCRIBED TO GOD. The kingdom. The glory. II. THE ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM THIS ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE. We shall feel that we have presented to God the strongest arguments to ensure an answer to our prayers. We should be encouraged to expect great things in answer to our prayers. We shall feel how eternal and unchangeable is the basis upon which our expectation rests. We shall feel calm and hopeful after prayer, whatever the circumstances in which we are placed, or our views of the world around us. (*W. O. Lilley.*) *The ordering spirit of the Lord's prayer* :—There is the kingdom :—1. Of nature. 2. Providence. 3. Grace. 4. Glory. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *The doxology* :—I. The OFFERING OF PRAISE as a necessary part of religious worship. 1. Praise is the most disinterested form of religious worship. 2. It is a divinely appointed type of devotion because of its inspiring and elevating influence upon the mind of the worshipper himself. 3. Praise comes nearest to the worship of heaven. II. Those CHARACTERISTICS of His holy nature and ground for which we are here taught to show forth His praise. 1. We ascribe to the object of our adoration boundless and universal sovereignty. 2. We are instructed to make grateful mention of His omnipotence. 3. His glory. 4. But our doxology rises in the majesty of its ascriptions—dominion, power, glory—*for ever*. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The doxology* :—I. ▲

SEVENFOLD VIEW OF PRAISE. 1. Prayer ends in praise. Our God who sees the end from the beginning, sees praise in every petition. 2. Praise is the language of the soul in communion with God. 3. It is the culminating point of prayer. 4. The doxology is an argument. 5. Praise is faith and more than faith, it is an anticipation of heaven. 6. The great bond of union is praise. 7. Praise is God's gift. II. THE THREEFOLD ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE. 1. There is the kingdom. 2. The power. 3. The glory. III. THE KINGDOM, POWER, AND GLORY, AS BELONGING TO THE TRIUNE GOD. IV. FOR EVER. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *The doxology* :—I. The doxology a confession of faith. II. An argument in prayer. III. An ascription of praise. (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *For Thine is the kingdom* :—I. DOXOLOGY. 1. All prayer should gather itself up and crown itself in praise. 2. Praise should not be for gifts and graces, but for what God is in Himself. II. AN ARGUMENTATIVE doxology. "*For* thine," &c. It establishes a plea for every petition. III. The virtue and sufficiency of prayer lie in a threefold recognition of God. 1. His kingdom—perfect, sovereign, regal. 2. True prayer never stops to ask how. 3. It fixes itself on the glory of God. (*T. Vaughan, M.A.*) **Amen**:—1. It is a word of veritable history in Israel and in the Church. 2. It announces God's truth and faithfulness. 3. It is the name of Christ. 4. It is the seal of prayer. 5. It is the voice of faith. 6. It is the answer of a good conscience. 7. It is a renewal of our dedication to God. (*Dr. Saphir.*) *The "Amen" of Christ* :—1. Christ is the amen of the Father's love. 2. Christ is the amen of the Father's holiness. 3. Christ is the amen of the Father's sovereignty. 4. Christ is the amen of the Father's will. 5. Christ is the amen of the Father's bestowment. 6. Christ is the amen of the Father's forgiveness. 7. Christ is the amen of the Father's guidance. 8. Christ is the amen of the Father's deliverance. 9. Christ is the amen of the Father's eternal kingdom and power and glory. (*R. W. Percival, M.A.*)

Ver. 14.—**If ye forgive men.**—*Mutual forgiveness* :—I. All mankind as transgressors are deeply INDEBTED TO GOD'S LAW. II. That if ever man be saved it must be by AN ACT OF PURE MERCY. III. That the Scriptural character of the Almighty ENCOURAGES US TO CONFIDE IN HIM FOR FORGIVENESS. 1. Because the love of God has laid such a foundation for its exercise. 2. It is seen in the earnestness of His invitations. 3. In the promises of His word. 4. In the persons whom He has saved; (1) their number; (2) their character. IV. That however free the mercy of God is to man, A MERCIFUL DISPOSITION TOWARDS OUR FELLOW-CREATURES IS NECESSARY to its enjoyment. 1. It cannot, according to the general tenour of Scripture, condemn self-defence by lawful means. 2. There is a connection between forgiving and being forgiven. 3. Reason establishes this connection. (*J. E. Good.*) *Those who do not forgive others should never sin themselves* :—The Rev. J. Wesley, in the course of his voyage to America, hearing an unusual noise in the cabin of General Oglethorpe, the Governor of Georgia, with whom he sailed, stepped in to inquire the cause of it. The General addressed him: "Mr. Wesley, you must excuse me; I have met with a provocation too great for man to bear. You know, the only wine I drink is Cyprus wine; I therefore provided myself with several dozens of it, and this villain, Grimaldi" (his foreign valet, who was present, and almost dead with fear) "has drunk up the whole of it: but I will be revenged on him. I have ordered him to be tied hand and foot, and be carried to the man-of-war which sails with us. The rascal should have taken care how he used me so, for I never forgive." "Then I hope, sir," said Wesley, looking calmly at him, "you never sin." The General was quite confounded at the reproof; and putting his hand into his pocket, took out a bunch of keys, which he threw at Grimaldi. "There, villain," said he, "take my keys, and behave better for the future."

Ver. 16. **When ye fast.**—I. A few remarks on the practice of fasting AT THE TIME OF OUR LORD. II. The sinful and UNPROFITABLE MANNER IN WHICH THE JEWS OBSERVED IT. 1. Their ostentation. 2. Its futility—"They have their reward." III. The DIRECTIONS given us for its observance. 1. The propriety of private fasting. 2. The manner of its observance. 3. The prosperity of personal religion may be promoted by it. (*J. E. Good.*) *Fasting* :—I. THE NATURE, DESIGN, AND IMPORTANCE OF FASTING. Not only abstinence from sin, but abstinence from food for a time, longer or shorter, as health and duty will allow. Scripture testimony, &c. What is the design of fasting? 1. To manifest and promote sorrow for sin, &c. (Isa. lviii. 5). 2. Self-denial, and a means of mortification. 3. That it may help

to prayer and other holy duties. These things manifest the reasonableness and importance of fasting. II. How THE HYPOCRITES FASTED. Partial, insincere, selfish, self-righteous, external, &c. How much reason is there to think that thousands among us fast in this way! III. How THE TRUE PEOPLE OF GOD OBSERVE THIS DUTY. They are sincere and deeply affected with their own sins, &c. (Joel. ii. 12–17; Exod. ix. 4; Dan. ix. 3; Jas. iv. 9, 10). They intend the glory of God (Matt. vi. 18), and the mortification of sin in themselves and others, and the reformation of the nation (Rom. xiii. 14, viii. 13; Gal. v. 16-24). They are humble, spiritual, consistent, practical (Joel ii. 14; Isa. i. 16, lv. 6, 7; Matt. iii. 7–10; Luke iii. 7–9, xiii. 1–9; Jas iv. 8; Isa. i. 17, lviii. 7; Psa. xlviii. 25; Luke iii. 11). (*J. Benson.*)

Ver. 19. **Treasures upon earth.**—This does not discourage diligent endeavour for the body which is necessary; industry, which is one part of duty. We are not to over-value even these valuable possessions. I. HERE IS AN EXHORTATION TO DUTY. 1. What are these treasures? 2. What is implied by laying up treasures in heaven? (1) By fleeing from the wrath to come, the Christian is laying up heavenly treasure. (2) By endeavouring to secure an interest in Christ. (3) By setting his affection on things above. (4) By having his conversation there. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS TO ENFORCE THE DUTY OF LAYING UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN. 1. No thieves deprive them of their property. 2. Are you trading for that better world? (*Dr. Fisher.*) *Treasures in heaven:*—The love of accumulation is a principle in our nature; no man free from its fascination. The only true investment for an immortal being must be in eternity. Everything done for God's grace and glory is like something planted out of this world into the soil of another state. It is a deposit which will appear again. Take an instance of the way in which Christians may lay up treasures in heaven. 1. By selecting for our friends and companions those who are children of God, so that each departing one is an actual increase of the holy treasure which is awaiting us in another state. To Christian man, death only sweeps the field to house the harvest. The treasures of his heart are only locked up from him for a little while, to be opened presently, in greater loveliness, where everything is real, and every reality is for ever. It will be our greatest joy to meet in heaven those to whom we have been useful in this life. 2. The motive of any action will carry it higher than its present and visible scope. Every man has his time, talents, influence, and money, as working materials. If he so use these that he is constantly considering their value for eternity, he is putting treasure in God's bank. 3. It is the power of faith to appropriate everything it grasps. You send on your affection to occupy heaven; you have a present enjoyment of your reversion. You increase your treasure in heaven by continued acts of faith in Jesus Christ. 4. By thus throwing yourself into another world this life will appear an impoverished thing. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Earthly and heavenly treasures:*—I. THE TREASURES REFERRED TO. 1. The treasures of earth are evanescent. 2. The lawful possession of earthly treasures is no sin. 3. The text does not object to your getting rich in a righteous way. II. LAY UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN. 1. Because its bank is strong in its independence. Banks and firms are much like ninepins with which children play; when one pin falls the others fall also. But as for the bank of heaven, it is strictly independent; it is the only bank of its kind in the universe. 2. Because the omniscience of the Banker is the very best security. Could men foresee financial disaster they would avoid it. 3. Because this bank can never be broken into. 4. It is the only bank that can help you at death. You cannot very well trade in France with English money. You must change it into French money. But no earthly bank can change its coin so as to ferry you across Jordan. 5. Bank not with evil any longer. (*J. O. Davis.*) *Toys must not be counted treasures:*—A lady once asked two little boys who were amusing themselves with some beautiful playthings, "Well, boys, these are your treasures, I suppose—your greatest treasures." "No, ma'am," said the elder boy, "these are not our treasures, they are our playthings; our treasures are in heaven." A noble answer from a child. Oh, my congregation, let us treat gold and silver and precious stones as toys, and let us treat moral goodness, spiritual beauty, righteousness of heart, Christlikeness, Godlikeness, as our only treasures worthy the name! (*Ibid.*) *Treasures in heaven:*—Have a deposit on earth, if you must or can; but let your chief banking be in heaven. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Heavenly mindedness:*—I. THE CONDUCT PROHIBITED. 1. The heart of man is the governing principle of his actions. 2. This too high estimation of the things of the world leads to an undue degree of solicitude for their acquisition, which the precept under consideration is designed to

repress. II. THE OPPOSITE DUTY which we are required to discharge. 1. The objects exhibited to our attention—"Treasures in heaven." 2. The exhortation to secure an interest in this felicity. III. The SATISFACTORY REASONS on which these directions are founded. 1. The uncertainty of earthly good. 2. The reality of that which is Divine. 3. And the powerful influence which our possessions have over our affections. Learn: 1. The folly of the worldly-minded man. 2. The wisdom of true piety. (*J. E. Good.*) *Our treasures to be raised higher:*—The Rev. Ashton Oxenden quotes from an old writer an illustration of this precept. He says, "We need not lose our riches, but change their place. Suppose a friend should enter thy house, and should find that thou hadst lodged thy fruits on a damp floor; and suppose he knew the likelihood of those fruits to spoil, and should therefore give thee some such advice as this—'Brother, thou art likely to lose the things which thou hast gathered with great labour. Thou hast placed them on a damp floor. In a few days they will corrupt.' You would inquire, 'What shall I do?' And he would answer, 'Raise them to a higher room.' If wise, you would instantly act upon this advice. So Christ advises us to raise our riches from earth to heaven." *No man ever went to heaven whose heart was not there before:*—These words. I. As an ENTIRE PROPOSITION IN THEMSELVES. 1. Every man has something which he accounts his treasure or chief good. This is apparent—(1) From the activity of man's mind; (2) From the method of his acting. 2. Whatsoever a man places his treasure in, upon that he places his heart also. (1) A restless and laborious endeavour to possess himself of it. (2) He places his whole delight in it. (3) He supports his mind from it in all his troubles. (4) For the preservation of that he will part with all else besides. II. As AN ARGUMENT. Two rivals for the affections; man cannot fix on both. 1. Consider how far inferior the world is to man's heart. Its enjoyments are (1) Indefectible; (2) Endless; (3) Not to be taken away. (*Dr. South.*)

Ver. 22. **The light of the body is the eye.**—*Singleness of eye:*—The man whose only object is to make good his eternity moves forward in an element of clearness, without the doubts which harass other men. I. THAT WHICH WE MOST DESIRE WE MOST WISH TO KNOW ABOUT. Let a man be actuated by strong desire for salvation and he will never cease to inquire till he has found it. In proportion to the laboriousness of the search is the largeness of the discovery; the "whole body" is "full of light." II. HE THAT HATH SINGLED OUT ETERNITY AS THE OBJECT OF HIS PURSUIT, PROVES THAT HE HAS A JUST ESTIMATE OF ITS IMPORTANCE AS COMPARED WITH TIME. To our optics magnitude is reversed; but let it be seen in its just proportions and all the prospects of futurity are altered. This will bring justice and order into the whole perspective of being. What a view do we get of time if we measure it on the scale of eternity. This sweeps away a multitude of errors, and the whole body becomes "full of light." One principle will often throw light over the whole field of contemplation. We must not try to unite the interests of both worlds; this has more than a *distracting*, it would have a *darkening*, effect. Another mode in which singleness of eye entails light is by the reflex influence of obedience on faith. The more we prepare for heaven and the further we get on the way to it, the light grows brighter and brighter. Every accession of grace brings new light. The path of the just is as the shining light. (*Dr. Chalmers.*) *Religion the ruling, though not the only, object of life.* The "eye" is "single," not because it sees *one thing*, but because it looks in *one direction*. It is a simplicity, not of the *intellectual*, but of the *moral* regards. It marks one ruling passion to which all others are pressed into subservience. A navigator may set his mind on the discovery of some distant region, and may repel all the temptations he meets with in his way; not allowing the luxury of one place, or the gain of another, to detain him. Here is singleness of eye; but yet he attends to the waters below, and to the firmament above, and to the compass by which he steers his course. Here the object is *one*, but its pursuit is illuminated by the light of many sciences. (*Ibid.*) *The single eye:*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY "THE SINGLE EYE?" 1. It implies the contemplation of one object. "One thing have I desired of the Lord." "One thing is needful." 2. Clearness of perception is implied. 3. Undeviating attention to the object of our view. II. WHAT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE FULNESS OF LIGHT WHICH IS SAID TO ATTEND ITS VISION? Light is an emblem of knowledge, happiness, usefulness. 1. Then Divine knowledge springs from the contemplation of God. 2. Light is an emblem of happiness. 3. Light is an emblem of usefulness. (*J. Curwen.*) *The single eye:*—1. Naturally: It is by means of the eye the body

is directed in its avoidance of evil. 2. Metaphorically: Light is the emblem of happiness and joy. 3. Morally: Light applied often to the conscience. (*J. E. Good.*) *The darkness of unbelief:*—I. The body has EYES to see with. II. We have LIGHT to see by, as well as eyes to see with; the light is as necessary as the organ of sight. Vision is the result of a two-fold agency—Man's and God's. III. The eyes are subject to DISEASE. Sometimes the eyes are intolerant of the light; sometimes they distort it so as to narrow or lengthen objects, and thus misrepresent them. *These three things are true of the mind:*—1. The mind has eyes—organs to see truth, to know realities in the world of thought; these eyes are understanding and reason. Furthermore, our natural eyes perceive the colour of objects as well as the objects themselves, so the mind has perception of the quality of action as just and beautiful, or the opposite. 2. But as the eyes are dependent upon light, so are our minds dependent upon the light God sheds upon us. Reason, conscience, need light. It is folly for a man to say he has no need of light, that his eyes are enough for him! 3. The mind's organ of vision is subject to disease. *How great the darkness:*—1. As to the kind of it. To be in a room hung with pictures and not to be able to see them is grief; to be in a world filled with expressions of the Creator's power and love, and not see them is unutterable loss. 2. It is great in respect of guilt. 3. It is hopeless. (*W. I. Budington, D.D.*) I. THERE IS IN EVERY MAN A CONSCIENCE OR practical judgment, A SPIRITUAL EYE OR LIGHT WITHIN HIM. Conscience is God's deputy. 1. Acts by His commission. 2. Dictates in His name. 3. Censures by His authority. 4. Refers us to His sentence. 5. Assigns us over to answer for all our actions at the bar of the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. II. CONSCIENCE IS A LIGHT TO DIRECT AND GUIDE US. It manifests and demonstrates itself in all the circumstances of human life by universal regard to present, past, and future action. 1. When temptation assaults and inclines to evil action, conscience is ready to interpose, admonish, and dissuade us from it. 2. When temptation prevails upon us, conscience resists, regrets, checks, and upbraids the undertaking, after the commission. 3. It objects, convicts, reproves, accuses, condemns, and afflicts us for it. 4. When occasion of doing good is offered, conscience incites, persuades, and encourages us to do it. 5. After it is done, it defends, approves, and applauds the action. III. CONSCIENCE MAY ABUSE ITS OFFICE, MISTAKE ITS MEASURES. This eye may be evil, this light may be darkness. 1. Conscience may be perverted by false principles, prejudice, dangerous errors, and evil practices. 2. May err in its notions of truth. IV. FOUR PRINCIPLES GENERALLY INFLUENCE HUMAN LIFE. 1. CHANCE; 2. SENSE; 3. CUSTOM; 4. TEMPORAL INTEREST. V. THE GREATEST MISERY AND MISFORTUNE THAT CAN BEFALL US, IS TO HAVE OUR CONSCIENCES DEPRAVED AND CORRUPTED. If the light within us be darkness, how great, how mischievous, is that darkness? (*Samuel Fuller, D.D.*) *Singleness of eye, its meaning and consequences:*—I. WHAT IS HERE MEANT by singleness of eye? It is being wholly decided for Christ alone. II. The CONSEQUENCES of having the eye single. 1. There will be light in regard to God and His dealings. 2. There is light in regard to our own position and character. 3. There will be light in regard to revelation. 4. There will be light in regard to our own experience. (*W. Park.*) *The mental eye fixed on one object:*—We are told that rope dancers, in order to steady themselves during their perilous feats, are in the habit of fixing their gaze steadily on some distant object, and that, if once they permit themselves to look upon the rope, or upon the sea of upturned faces beneath them, then they become dizzy and fall. If you ever tried to cross a stream on a log, you will remember that, by looking steadily at some object on the opposite bank, you were quite safe; but, no sooner did you begin to look at the log, or upon the foaming, dashing waters beneath, than you lost your balance and came to grief. And, in order that our conduct may be right, that in this world, so full of snares, and temptations, and pitfalls, we may walk aright, it is absolutely necessary that we fix our affections upon one object, and that object is Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Singleness of eye conducive to assurance of salvation:*—Why is it, my friends, that you have any doubt in telling which way the wind is blowing? or in what direction a river is running? Is it not because the wind is scarcely blowing at all, or always changing? and because the river is scarcely running, or running in opposite currents? Let the wind blow steadily in one direction, and you do not require to look at the vane in order to tell what is its point; and when the stream, swollen and turbid with mountain torrents, rushes down to the sea, bearing everything before it, you do not require to stand on its banks and think whether it is going this way or that. So let a man have thoughts, and feelings, and desires decidedly heavenward, let him be wholly

decided for Christ, and he can have no doubt as to his own state; but, if he is to-day with Christ, and to-morrow on the side of the world, I should not at all be surprised if that man had many doubts and misgivings as to his acceptance with God. (*Ibid.*) *A single eye and simple faith*:—I. The eye of our FAITH. Faith the eye of the believer's soul. This eye must look to Jesus alone, not to Christ and our own merits. If thou canst be saved by these things the glory is divided. No! II. The eye of our OBEDIENCE. There are professors whose eye of obedience is not single, they are for the world as for Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Look and live in the same spiritual direction*:—An old Puritan said, "A hypocrite is like the hawk; the hawk flies upward, but he always keeps his eye down on the prey; let him get up as high as he will, he is always looking on the ground. Whereas, the Christian is like the lark, he turns his eye up to heaven, and as he mounts and sings he looks upward and he mounts upward." (*Ibid.*) *Pure motives the light of the soul*:—The human eye is the most striking feature in the human constitution; is closest to the soul; gleams with ethereal fire. As the eye must not see double, but must be single in order that the body may be full of light, so there must be no double mind if the Christian would not walk in darkness. Pure motives are the light of the soul. I. It is the light of the soul because IT RELIEVES THE MIND OF DOUBTS CONCERNING THE PATH OF DUTY. If the soul be full of pure affection for God it will guide in the path of duty. II. Because it relieves the mind of doubts CONCERNING RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE. Does its adoption glorify God? (*W. G. T. Sheed, D.D.*) *The causes and danger of self-deceit*:—I. EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE TEXT. There is a disparity between external light and the judgment of the mind; the former does not depend on choice. Obstruction in the eyesight may be a man's infelicity, it is not his fault. The evil eye is the disease of the mind, malignant and dangerous. We are to lay up treasure in heaven; we are in danger of such darkness or ignorance as shall make us insensible of our highest interest. We are liable to this self-deceit. 1. It is evident from the plain intimations of Scripture (Prov. xvi. 2; Isa. v. 20). 2. Instances within the compass of our own acquaintance. II. THE MOST GENERAL CAUSE OF SELF-DECEIT IN THE AFFAIRS OF RELIGION IS SOME PREVAILING, CORRUPT PASSION. This leads to unfairness in these inquiries concerning duty. III. THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS FATAL DISEASE OF THE MIND IS CONFIRMED. 1. False imagination. 2. Superstition. 3. Self-flattery. 4. Feeble, ineffectual purposes of future amendment. IV. THE EXTENT OF THIS SELF-DECEIT. Learn: 1. To be watchful. 2. What is right will generally appear to our first thoughts. 3. Implore the aid of Divine grace. (*J. Abernethy, M.A.*)

Ver. 24. **Serve two masters.**—*Neutrality in religion exposed*:—I. NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS. 1. There are many who contrive to elude the force of this maxim, or make awful experiments to try the certainty of it. 2. Nor are these persons wanting in excuses to palliate, if not to justify their practice. 3. There are, however, four cases in which you may serve two masters, but the exceptions only render the general rule more remarkable. (1) You may serve two masters successively. (2) By serving one in reality and the other in pretence. (3) You may serve two masters unequally. (4) When they are on the same side and differ only in degree. You cannot serve God and mammon. II. ONE OF THESE YOU WILL UNAVOIDABLY SERVE. 1. It is impossible for a man to be without some master. 2. The advocates of independence are greatest slaves. 3. The service of religion does not demand greater privations than that of sin. III. YOU OUGHT TO SERVE GOD. Remind you—1. Of His various and undeniable claims. 2. Of His designs in employing you in His service; our own good, not His need. 3. Make the right choice. (*W. Jay.*) *The impossibility of serving God and mammon*:—I. THE MEANING AND TRUTH OF THE MAXIM HERE LAID DOWN. The man who serves his master serves him with faithfulness and singleness of heart, with a mind wholly given to his service. It is impossible *thus* to serve two. He may *appear* to serve both: but let contrary interests arise and it will be seen to which he *really* belongs. II. OUR LORD'S APPLICATION OF THIS MAXIM. God and mammon are two masters: cannot serve both. 1. You must follow your worldly business from right motives. 2. You must follow it by right rules. 3. You must use your worldly gain in a right manner. Two motives weigh with a man in selecting masters, interest or gratitude. On these grounds God claims your service above the world. 1. God can do more for you than mammon can do. God claims your service on the ground of what He has done for you. (*E. Cooper.*) I. THE NECESSITY OF DECISION IN RELIGION. 1. From the impracticability of uniting the two services. 2. From the misery which

is an attendant on the attempt to unite these services. 3. The fatal consequences in another world. 4. The happy consequences from a uniform attachment to the right master. (1) Faithfulness has its own reward; (2) The path of decision is that of safety; (3) In heaven. II. APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT. 1. Decision of character, it is evident, is totally distinct from party spirit. 2. We do not intend anything like indifference. 3. But are not some decided on the other side? (*J. Fell.*) *No man can serve two masters*:—1. It is a moral impossibility. He will love the one, &c. Men who love the world hate religion; and those who hate the world love Christ. 2. A divided service is making a divided life, the world comes into the religion, and religion comes into the world; both are spoilt. 3. The luxury, repose, and strength of a heart quite made up. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *God and mammon*:—I. THE SERVICE that cannot be divided. II. WHY CANNOT BOTH BE SERVED. 1. Because God claims a whole service. 2. Because God claims a heart-service. III. The GROUNDS OF A REASONABLE CHOICE. 1. Justice—God claims our service as His due; not upon contract, but natural relationship. 2. Gratitude—God has redeemed us. 3. Interest. Here mammon rests his whole case. His claim is that he offers (1) advantages suited to our nature. (2) That they are present. Examine his claims. They are not adapted to our nature as it ought to be. Are there no present advantages in God's service? Concerning the advantages of mammon three inquiries have to be answered. 1. Are they certain? 2. Are they real? 3. Will they last? (*T. M. Macdonald, M.A.*) *The service of the heart supreme*:—When a statute was made in Queen Elizabeth's reign that all should come to church, the Papists sent to Rome to know the Pope's pleasure; he returned them this answer, it is said: "Bid the Catholics in England give me their hearts, and let the Queen take the rest." (*Gurnall.*) You cannot sail under two flags. *The impossibility of serving God and mammon, and the propriety of giving God the preference*:—I. THE IMPOSSIBILITY of serving both. 1. Because of their opposite interests. 2. From the different objects they have to advance. 3. From the nature of the flesh and the spirit. II. THE PROPRIETY OF GIVING GOD the preference. 1. He has the first claim upon you. He your Creator. 2. Consider the relative character of the service. One your life and joy, the other servitude and death. III. IMPROVEMENT. 1. The infinite importance of having singleness of heart in matters of religion. 2. How necessary to examine our hearts that we may know whom we serve. 3. What an awful idea the subject gives us of worldly-minded possessors. (*J. E. Good.*) *The inconsistency of the love of God and love of the world*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO SERVE GOD? 1. A visible profession, a steady belief, and awful sentiments of a Supreme Being. 2. To ascribe that worship that is strictly due to Him, as an acknowledgment of His almighty power, and a testimony of our submission. 3. Regard to His sacred laws. 4. A ready and cheerful obedience to His will, and a resignation under afflictions. II. WHAT IS IT TO SERVE MAMMON? 1. It implies a persuasion of mind that riches and grandeur are the true seat of human happiness. 2. It is to attribute that worship to the creature which is only due to the Creator. 3. It is to be so much devoted to the world, as to fret at every disappointment, and repine at the least obstruction to our growing rich. III. TO SHOW WHEREIN THE SERVICE OF GOD AND MAMMON IS INCONSISTENT. Their commands are contrary and irreconcilable. God commands us to seek Him first; mammon tempts us with kingdoms. God asks for our time; mammon takes it. 2. Annex a consideration to enforce what has been said. (1) The folly to saunter away this span of life in the fruitless pursuit of riches, since we cannot tell who shall gather them. (2) Can all the kingdoms of the world give us any inducement to their pursuit: they are gilded toys. (3) Riches make to themselves wings and fly away. (4) From the impossibility of finding happiness in the love of the world, and its inconsistency with the love of God, we meet with an indispensable obligation of fixing our attention on greater objects. (*W. Adey.*)

Ver. 25. **Take no thought.**—*Take no thought for the morrow*:—1. The question arises, Is not the Christian character a provident one? 2. All this is done to drive us to live by the day: to let the day's affairs fill the day's thoughts. See the benefit of this. (1) As respects our pleasures. How can a man enjoy pleasure when he has his mind disturbed about the future? We must dwell on it undistractedly. (2) As respects your pains. That which makes pain painful is the thought that it will continue. (3) As respects duties. The secret of doing anything well is concentration. 3. We should have only to do with the sins of the current day. As with our sins so with our cares. 4. The trouble which comes is very often not the trouble

which we expected. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *No thought for the morrow*:—1. The Christian should live in quiet confidence in God. 2. This quiet dependence upon God is our happiness, usefulness, strength, security. 3. If this were wrought in our hearts as a principle, how energetic we should be in the exercise of faith in God. 4. The secret of getting through work is to take the work of the day and leave all that does not belong to it. 5. Although a man leaves all to God, and is happy in Christ, he is not therefore exempt from evil. (*J. W. Reeve.*) *Undue anxiety reproved*:—I. THE PROHIBITION. If the text prohibits anxiety about gaining sustenance itself, it must much more condemn such a disposition of mind in reference to the luxuries or *show* of life, what a world of uneasiness is created by inordinate desire about trifles. II. THE REASONS OR MOTIVES FOR DOING SO. 1. The first is derived from a view of the conduct of the Gentiles. 2. Another reason for avoiding anxiety is this, "that our heavenly Father knoweth we have need of these things." 3. There is no advantage in excessive carefulness. Learn: 1. Christianity is calculated to make men happy. 2. Let Christians guard against a distrustful spirit. (*R. Robinson.*) The word "thought" is here used in the antiquated sense of anxiety. In this sense it occurs in Bacon and Shakespeare, "Queen Catherine Parr died of *thought*." "The pale cast of *thought*." *Evils of anxious forethought*:—1. From the intrinsic superiority of the spirit or the soul to its material surroundings. 2. It is needless, as all men stand in an order of nature that they are sure to be supplied by a moderate exertion of their powers. A man ought to be ashamed if a bird can get a living and he cannot. 3. Anxiety does no good. The mind works more wisely when it works pleasantly. Anxiety distorts the future. 4. It brings men under the power of the imagination and phantoms, which they fight without pause, and upon which they spend their strength for nothing. 5. If a man is constantly looking to the future in despondency, where is faith in his God? (*Beecher.*) *Anxious thought incapacitates for a wise ordering of life*:—The whole success of life depends upon the wholesomeness of a man's mind. The ship-master that navigates the sea beyond the sight of land is dependent upon the correctness of his chronometer and his compass. If the instruments of navigation fail him, everything fails him. And what these are to navigation on the sea and in a ship, the human mind is to our navigation of life. And anything that disturbs the balance of the mind so far invalidates the whole voyage of life. (*Ibid.*) *Anxiety for the future often arises from some unholy passion*:—Fear still sits in the window. "What seest thou?" says Vanity. "Whisperings are abroad," says Fear. "Men are pointing at you—or they will, as soon as you come to a point of observation." "O my good name!" says a man. "All that I have done; all that I have laid up—what will become of that? Where is my reputation going? What will become of me when I lose it, and when folks turn away from me? O trouble! trouble!—it is coming!" What is it? Fear is sitting in the window of the soul, and looking into the future, and interpreting the signs thereof to the love of approbation in its coarsest and lowest condition. Fear still sits looking into the future, and pride, coming up, says, "What is it that you see?" "I see," says Fear, "your castle robbed. I see you toppled down from your eminence. I see you under base men's feet. I see you weakened. I see you disesteemed. I see your power scattered and gone." "O Lord; what a world is this!" says Pride. Now, that man has not had a particle of trouble. Fear sat in the window and lied. And Pride cried, and Vanity cried, and Avarice cried—and ought to cry. Fear sat and told lies to them all. For there was not one of those things, probably, done there. Did Fear see them? Yes. But Fear has a kaleidoscope in his eye, and every time it turns it takes a new form. It is filled with broken glass, and it gives false pictures continually. Fear does not see right. It is for ever seeing wrong. And it is stimulated by other feelings. Pride stimulates it; and Vanity stimulates it; and Lust stimulates it; and Love itself finds, sometimes, no better business than to send Fear on its bad errands. For love cries at the cradle, "Oh, the child will die!" It will not die. It will get well. And then you will not be ashamed that you prophesied that it would die. You put on mourning in advance. (*Ibid.*) *A dissuasive from anxiety*:—I. The EVIL which we are directed to avoid. II. The powerful CONSIDERATIONS BY WHICH THE SAVIOUR ENFORCES THE PRECEPT. I. The power of God as displayed in our creation and preservation. 2. The care of Divine providence. 3. The futility of excessive anxiety. 4. The beauty of nature. III. THREE REFLECTIONS. 1. The connection of Divine agency with the existence of all things. 2. This subject reminds us of Him through whom we have access to the Father. 3. Let us learn lessons of spiritual wisdom from everything around us. (*J. E Good.*)

Appears to use a variety of arguments against over-anxiety. I. He that gave the lesser gift will surely give the greater. II. God cares for the lower creation. III. Over-anxiety is useless. IV. To be over-anxious is to arraign the Divine foresight. V. To be over-anxious is to sink from the level of the Christian disciple to that of the heathen. (*Gordon Calthrop, M.A.*) *Fretfulness*:—Arguments against an unquiet spirit. 1. The general course of nature is in favour of men. 2. That there is a Divine providence which employs the course of nature and gives it direction. 3. Fretting does no good, but uses up the nerve force needlessly. 4. It begets a habit of looking at the dark side of things. 5. The things we fear seldom happen. (1) A tranquil soul is indispensably necessary to anything like a true Christian atmosphere. (2) The chief ends of life are sacrificed to the unnecessary dust which our feet raise in the way of life. (3) What disagreeable company we make of ourselves for God. (4) This way of life, devoid of cheer, is bearing false witness against your Master. (*Beecher.*) *The folly of looking only at the ills of life*:—Now, what if a man should go round searching for a more familiar acquaintance with thistles and nettles and thorns, and everything sharp, up and down the highways, over the hills, and through the fields, and insist on putting his hand on everything that could give him a scratch? What if a man should insist upon finding out whatever was sour and bitter, and should go about tasting, and tasting, and tasting for that purpose. What if a man should insist upon smelling every disagreeable odour, and should see no gaspipe open that he did not go and look at it? When doves fly in the heavens, and go swinging round in their flight, we know what they see — the grassy field, the luxuriant grain, or the inviting perch where they may rest; but when buzzards fly through the air they see no green fields, no pleasant gardens, but carrion, if there be any in sight; and if there is none to be seen, there is discontent in the buzzard heart. (*Ibid.*) *One fretful person a pleasure spoiler*:—It does not take more than one smoky chimney in a room to make it intolerable. (*Ibid.*) *Over-anxiety forbidden*:—I. Anxiety is useless about things not under our own control. Duration of life, &c. II. Anxiety is useless in matters under our own management. Anxiety will not furnish the opportunity of earning bread, or arm us with power—but the reverse. III. Anxiety does not attract us to the notice of God. He cares for us irrespective of our carefulness. No promise is made to anxiety, &c. IV. Anxiety is useless because Jesus bids you get rid of it. Trust Him and let the spirit rest, and be strong and glad. (*S. Martin.*) I. There is no wise man who will lay out his time and thoughts about things he cannot bring to pass; no one debates but of things possible and probable, lying within the sphere of his activity. II. That our food and maintenance nourishes us, and augments and enlarges the proportion of every limb, is not the product of our own care, but of God's blessing. III. So it is with all outward concerns. From the Divine benediction which accompanies them, they prove good and useful to us. Not from our own care. (*Adam Littleton, D.D.*)

Ver. 28. **Consider the lilies.**—I. God puts on the lilies and tulips such gorgeous apparel for one day's wearing, spun by providence, as far surpasseth the tracery of the most splendid court, that Solomon himself, with all his wisdom and magnificence, could not match them. II. These are but inconsiderable creatures in comparison with men, and such as God has infinitely less obligations to take care of than He has for us, who are by adoption through His Son so nearly related to Him, that He is our heavenly Father. III. Therefore be sure He will not fail in looking after us, who are creatures of so much greater excellence in ourselves, and of so much nearer relation to Himself; insomuch that he who distrusts God in these outward things, shows want of faith, by not depending upon God according to the dignity of His nature, as well as to the obligations of His *grace*. (*Adam Littleton, D.D.*) *Consider the lilies*:—I. THE OBJECTS TO WHICH HE DIRECTS US FOR THE LESSON HE WOULD TEACH. II. THE LESSON ITSELF. God takes care of the lilies; the inference (1) From the less to the greater; (2) From the gift to the recipient. Shall God follow the gift with so much interest and be unmindful of him for whom it is intended; (3) From the ornamental to the needful. III. THE REBUKE TO UNBELIEF AND CALL FOR FAITH. (*C. M. Merry.*) *Consider the lilies*:—1. For the sake of their tender associations. The life of flowers has all the vicissitudes of human life. 2. Consider their growth. 3. Their beauty. 4. Their unselfishness. 5. Their death. (*W. E. Shalders, B.A.*) *Christ and the lilies*:—1. Lily-life and growth teach us freedom from care. 2. The lily grows everywhere, the Oriental lily. 3. The special utility of the lily. 4. A word on this question of raiment. Life first, then

clothing. (*A. J. Griffiths.*) *The lilies' witness;* or, God will take care of you. I. So, then, THERE IS A GOSPEL IN NATURE. Under pretence of exalting what God has *said* in His Word we must not depreciate what He has *done* in His works. There is *a* gospel in nature, not *the* gospel. Christ comes as the interpreter of nature's gospel. This gospel of nature is especially for the poor. II. THIS GOSPEL MUST BE MUSED ON. Nature's text must be studied—"consider." Multitudes are blind and deaf, not through misfortune, but from disposition. Nature's gospel has no vision for those who consider not. III. THIS GOSPEL IS VERY CONVINCING AND CONSOLATORY AS EXPLAINED BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. God takes care of the lilies and the grass. They do not grow by chance. 2. From these specimens of nature Jesus preaches the good news of faith in providence. Men are better than birds, and more useful. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *Lessons from the lilies:*—The lily as an emblem of our blessed Lord (Song of Sol. ii. 1). 1. Purity. 2. Admiration at the amazing power of God. 3. The unceasing watchfulness the Almighty One extends over all His works. 4. Humility. It delights in the valleys. 5. Contentment. Other flowers may boast that they grow in more conspicuous places, that their colours are more gay; but the lily is content to be as God made it. 6. Beauty. 7. A reminder of immortality. (*J. H. Norton.*) *The preaching of nature:*—1. The first lesson which these silent preachers would have us learn is the unfailing care of God for His creatures. 2. They indicate a resurrection. 3. The flowers teach us a lesson of usefulness. 4. The flowers teach us to be a comfort to our neighbours. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *The good life a ministry to the barren life:*—In the highest part of the Peak of Teneriffe, far above the clouds, and in a dry and burning waste, there grows a plant which, in the spring time, fills the air with delicious fragrance. There are some of us who may be condemned to live in a barren and dry land of hard work and lonely trouble. But loving natures and gentle words can make that desert blossom as the rose. (*Ibid.*) *Consider the lilies:*—Contentment without distrust. I. They are CLOTHED WITH BEAUTY (1 Peter iii. 3, 4). II. They GROW WITHOUT ANXIETY. They never fret because of the heat, drought, rain, or cold. They pass through changes; are of different growth. III. They are WATCHED, ALTHOUGH SOON TO FALL. (*Canon Titcomb, M.A.*) *True contentment found in God:*—If the sun of God's countenance shine upon me I may well be content to be wet with some rain of affliction. (*Bishop Hall.*) *Lessons from the lily:*—I. It has its root HIDDEN. Secret trust, &c. No pure white lily could live without the hidden root to draw up moisture from the soil. II. Consider how pure and sweet the lily is, and how INNOCENT. Everybody loves them. What a picture of the Child Jesus! III. Consider the lilies as A LESSON ABOUT DRESS. This the special lesson of text. He clothes the lilies in white. Some children always fretting about dress. Vain about dress. Sinfully careless about dress. IV. Consider the lily in THE EVENING. When sun sets, close up. Don't stare at darkness, hang the head and sleep. Children should do the same. V. Even lilies MUST DIE. (*C. R. Wynne, M.A.*) *The lilies of the field:*—We learn from the lilies something concerning—I. OUR FATHER'S POWER. Our heavenly Father is almighty. Variety in colour, size, and form of the lily, an indication of God's power. God's resources are so boundless. This power will *punish* or *save* us. II. OUR FATHER'S CARE. Describe the beauty and delicacy of all the parts, &c. Note concerning lilies. They are comparatively insignificant. They are perishing. They often grow amongst thorns, yet are cared for. III. OUR FAITH. Our weakness and liability to sickness and death. Lilies not more frail than our lives. IV. OUR FUTURE LIFE. When stem and flower wither, root does not die, &c. V. JESUS CHRIST. He is called the "Lily of the valley." There are spots and flaws in the character of all others, none in His. (*W. H. Booth.*) *Lily lessons:*—I. A lesson of WONDER AND DELIGHT in contemplating the works of God. They are God's workmanship. II. ADMIRE AND LOVE WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL. Some people take no account of beauty; they want only the useful. The beauty of heaven, the beauty of holiness. III. DILIGENCE. IV. PATIENCE AND PUNCTUALITY. Every blossom has its season. V. TOLERANCE. Lilies and roses and oaks all grow in obedience to same laws; but each after its own pattern. VI. A lesson of FAITH. (*E. R. Conder, D.D.*) *God's workmanship combines reality and beauty:*—One of the most noticeable things concerning the beauty of God's works is this—that it is never *stuck on* as mere outside show, but grows out of their nature. Men often make a thing ugly first, and then cover it up with paint, or plaster, or gilding, to make it beautiful. God never does so. You will find no sham ornaments on His works. The shape He gives to each creature is just that which is fitted for it; and the colour with which He adorns it

will never wash off. In His great workshop, truth and beauty go together. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 30. **Much more clothe you.**—Therefore:—I. We should from hence be excited to magnify and adore the goodness of God, who, as a common Father, provides for the maintenance of all His creatures. II. We should never be tempted to do anything unjust, in order to increase our substance or gain a livelihood. We may improve our circumstances, but within the bounds of strict honesty. Whenever we find it impossible to mend our condition without deceitful and unrighteous dealing, we ought to conclude that it is the will of God we should remain as we are. III. We should be filled with resignation and contentment, being fully convinced that He who thus constantly provides for the substance of such inferior beings will never suffer us to want anything which is truly needful. (*Nicolas Carter, D.D.*) *Particular providence*:—I. EXPLAIN WHAT WE UNDERSTAND BY A PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE. Many deny that God exercises a particular providence over the world. They acknowledge that God rules by general rules, but deny that these leave room for contingencies. II. OFFER SOME CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOUR OF A PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE. 1. That it appears from the nature of providence that it must be particular. We can no more conceive that one creature can uphold itself than another. It is absurd to suppose that a created object is independent of its Creator. 2. The supreme and ultimate end of Divine providence proves it to be particular. If God exercises a government over the world it is to some definite end; hence, providence must be particular over the parts as much as the whole. 3. The goodness of God requires Him to exercise a particular providence over His creatures. This leads Him to care for every member of His family. 4. The Scriptures represent God as exercising a particular providence over every part of creation. He telleth the number of the stars. Learn: 1. Then there can be no such thing as chance. 2. Then God will certainly accomplish His ultimate end in creation. 3. A particular providence displays the perfections of God in a glorious light. 4. The whole world is under obligations to Him for the favours it enjoys. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*)

Ver. 32. **Your heavenly Father knoweth.** *The antidote to anxiety*:—I. REASONS AGAINST ANXIETY. 1. Anxiety is a part of indecision of character and partakes of its harmfulness. "No man can serve two masters." 2. An argument from the greater to the less; God takes care of fowls, He will of men. 3. The impossibilities in the case—"Which of you," &c. 4. The analogies of nature—"Consider the lilies," &c. 5. It puts the Christian to shame by showing that he is anxious like the heathen. 6. The character of God—"Your heavenly Father," &c. 7. The folly of the thing. II. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE SIN of anxiety. 1. It makes you unhappy, which is matter for blame rather than pity. 2. It is a positive wrong done to God; it distrusts him. 3. Do not speak of your anxieties as something for which you are to be commiserated. 4. Never place yourself willingly in a position of worldly anxiety; it is a great hindrance to spiritual life. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *God's individual care of His children*:—A father does not deal with all his children by one and the same universal rule, but with each child individually. For he is acquainted with their separate, especial wants; he knows them as no one else knows them. Therefore, not only have all their portions, but every one the portion he requires. The delicate one is the most shielded,—the timid one is the most encouraged,—the infirm one is the most helped,—the dull one is the most taught,—the tempted one is the most prayed for,—the returning one is the most rejoiced over. And it is the speciality and the appropriateness of the care which makes the great characteristics of paternal government. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 33. **Seek ye first the kingdom of God.**—*The profitable pursuit*:—I. WHAT we are to seek. II. How we are to seek. 1. First in time. 2. First in attention. 3. What are your desires? 4. What are your exertions? These last two will reveal the object of your search. III. WHY WE ARE THUS TO SEEK THESE BLESSINGS. 1. Though destitute, as we naturally are, of His kingdom and righteousness, if we seek them in the manner here required, we shall obtain them. 2. Besides gaining this kingdom and righteousness, all other things shall be added unto us. Religion has a friendly influence over secular affairs; other things occupy too much of your time and attention. 1. This undue solicitude injures your spiritual welfare. 2. It is hurtful even to your temporal welfare. (*W. Jay.*) *Religion our chief concern*:—1. From the excellence of the objects which it proposes. 2. From the

certainty of its rewards. (*W. Fleming, D.D.*) *The care of the body transferred to the soul*:—I. The CONCLUSION to which the Saviour arrives. 1. The carefulness forbidden. 2. The grounds on which the prohibition is founded. (1) It is heathenish. (2) It is ungrateful. (3) Fruitless and unnecessary. (4) Unwise. II. The DUTY commanded us. 1. The objects we are to pursue—"The kingdom of God." 2. The precept given us respecting them—"Seek first." (1) Make religion our earliest and primary object of attention. (2) Give it preference. 3. The promise annexed to the pursuit. III. THREE REFLECTIONS. 1. What a friend to man is Christianity! 2. What an enemy to our peace is a worldly spirit! 3. What a reproof does this administer to multitudes of the hearers of the gospel! (*J. E. Good.*) *The first object in life*:—Suppose a man should be religious for the sake of temporal advantage. Whatever a man's motive, that is the first thing. Therefore this man is not seeking first the kingdom of God, but the temporal advantages to which his religion is subservient. Do not let a poor man be tempted to think that because he is not richer, either he is not a seeker, or God is not a faithful promiser. Occasions on which we may especially urge this text:—1. Upon the young man just entering into life. 2. The man who is passing under some temptation to compromise a principle for the sake of some worldly interest—in friendship or business. Whatever be your engagements in life, remember that you have a prior one. And in whatever relation you stand to man, never forget that you have a higher one. Keep your eye on the eternal. 1. Remember that there is a kingdom within, in which the spiritual is to reign over the carnal. 2. That there is a kingdom around you, which is God's Church, which is your foremost duty to extend. 3. That there is a kingdom coming which shall put to shame all the riches of this present world. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The first concern*:—The word "seek" is contrasted with the same word used in the thirty-second verse: "After these things do the Gentiles seek." With what activity, zeal, are these things attended to! I. We need no argument to convince you THAT THE THINGS AFTER WHICH THE GENTILES SEEK OCCUPY A GREAT PLACE IN MEN'S MINDS, and necessarily so. Religious ordinances not merely for enjoyment, but to strengthen for the toil of life. But men postpone their salvation. This is against God's ordinance. "Seek first." (1) In point of preference. (2) In point of time. (3) In point of anxiety. II. THE ASSURANCE CONNECTED WITH THIS COMMAND. This is a positive assurance; the fulfilment depends upon the faithfulness of God. 1. He argues from the less to the greater—"Is not the life more than meat?" 2. He takes us to God's providential care over the lower creatures. 3. If men indulge in disquieting care, what benefit do they derive? 4. Disquieting care is as unnecessary as it is unprofitable. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." A common objection is, "How is it that so many good people are in want?" Have they been seeking God first? (*W. Cadman, M.A.*) *Seeking first the kingdom of God*:—I. WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD? 1. To have the whole of one's heart in subjugation to God. 2. To extend the Church. 3. To pray for and help on the Second Advent. II. WHAT IS HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS? 1. There was the righteousness in which man was first made. 2. There is a righteousness which is a part of the character of God. 3. There is a righteousness composed of all the perfections of the life of Christ. Now this is the righteousness which every good man seeks. 1. That it will justify him before God. 2. Then something that will justify him before his own conscience. 3. The comfort of the thought that it is not to attainers, but to seekers. 4. There is one God in providence and in grace. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Man's first duty*:—I. HIS FIRST DUTY 1. In priority of time. 2. In excellence of value. 3. It implies diligence. 4. It implies consideration. How the unjust steward planned his conduct. 5. Seek a personal interest in the kingdom of God. 6. Seek the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. 7. Seek the glory of the kingdom. II. HIS REWARD. "Godliness hath promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." God is revealed as love; will He allow His servants to starve? He has given a positive pledge—"He spared not His own Son; shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" (*H. M. Villiers, M.A.*) I. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE PRECEPT OF THE TEXT IS NEGLECTED. 1. By the busy, anxious, laborious class of the community. 2. By the lovers of pleasure. 3. By the lovers of worldly honours and sordid applause. 4. By the professors of religion. II. THE DUTY OF A STRICTER REGARD TO THIS PRECEPT. 1. The kingdom of God is entitled to this deference. 2. If not sought first, will never be found at all. 3. In this search, all other essential things will be granted. (*J. W. Cunningham, M.A.*) I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY

THE KINGDOM OF GOD? The reign of God, the ascendency of God. Self is the great usurper. The righteousness named is the Christian character in all the details of practical religion. To seek them, is to desire these above all other things. II. ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU. Temporal necessities. The kingdom of God, &c. 1. It will guard a man against those vain, ostentatious habits above his real income, which bring so many into difficulties, and eventually ruin. 2. It will preserve from those lax and slovenly habits of management which bring so many into ruin. 3. It will preserve from all dishonesty. (*Hugh McNeile, M.A.*) *Man's first duty, and God's promise*:—Jacob's blessing has the preference over Esau's. It is well to obtain first "the dew of heaven," then the fatness of the earth. Things are only of value as God blesses them; God's gifts are better than His permissions. The promises of prosperity in the New Testament are small. I. HOW FAR MAY OUR TEXT BE USED AS A MOTIVE TO GODLINESS? Suppose a family with whom everything goes wrong, their best pains useless. No religion in the family. If I could work a moral change, I feel that the only way of avoiding want. No matter what means used, so long as the man is brought to God. But we must not make secular good the motive; this would not be seeking *first* the kingdom. II. WHAT RESTRICTIONS DOES OUR TEXT IMPOSE UPON HUMAN CAREFULNESS? It gives no sanction to those enthusiasts who would renounce all worldly provision. Anxiety they ought to dismiss, but not attention; lay aside distrust, but not industry. Not to seek *only* the kingdom, but *first*; this implies a second. The text gives no promise of superfluities. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *What is meant by seeking the kingdom of God?*—1. A fixed design and resolution to that end. Like the term and end of a man's journey, towards which the traveller is continually tending, and hath it always habitually in his intention, though he doth not always think of it every step that he takes. 2. Care and diligence as to the means. That we make religion our business, and exercise ourselves in the duties of it, both in public and private. With the same seriousness and application of mind as men do in their callings and professions. 3. Zeal and earnestness in the pursuit of it. The greatness of the design, and the excellency of what we seek after, will justify the highest degree of discreet zeal and fervour in the prosecution of it. 4. Patience and perseverance in our endeavours after the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Notwithstanding all the difficulties, discouragements, the opposition and persecution we may meet with, for righteousness' sake. (*John Tillotson, D.D.*) I. Constantly and sincerely make use of all means such as He hath prescribed whereby to obtain and practise true grace. II. Consult and study the Word of God, wherein He hath revealed His will to you. III. Make it daily your prayer to God, that He, for His Son's sake, will assist you with His grace and Holy Spirit in doing this. (*William Beveridge, D.D.*) *Providence leaves no excuse for indolence*:—Take the flowers of the field. They do not reap nor plant; and yet God clothes them with beauty. Very good; the flower has to develop. There is not a single flower in all the wilderness, nor in all gardens, whether of the Orient or here on our continent, that does not work for a living. It sprouts from the seed. It sends down its roots, and every one of these roots is a purveyor hunting underground here, there, and everywhere; developing, spreading out, sucking within and sucking without, dissolving the mineral, pumping here for the juices that are to run up, and searching for water yonder. The willow finds moisture, even though you should not be able to. In darkness the long vine reaches out to the light, seeks it, and at last finds it. Every plant that lives and comes to perfect plant-life is a worker, only on the plane to which he belongs with his limited development, and with his limited organization. It works for a living; and what does it find? What does the bird find? He finds that God so orders the affairs of this world that when he works according to his nature he is provided for. The plant, when it works and develops itself according to the laws of its nature, finds that providence has provided for it. When a man works and develops according to his nature, he finds a providence that makes it possible for him to live and to thrive. (*Beecher.*) *Unfitness a great occasion of anxiety*:—Men are mistaking all the time what they are fit for. Shall a weak man go into the ring to wrestle? Shall a dull and heavy man go on the road to race? Shall an unskilled man undertake to carry on the most skilful shop? Men are all the time miscarrying and miscarrying; it is the collision between impotence and desire that is all the time putting them back; and they are worrying and fretting and anxious. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 34. **Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.**—*Undue anxiety reproved*:—

1. Because nothing can happen to any without God's general permission. 2. Because nothing shall happen to His people without God's special direction. 3. Because in what does happen, the terms good and evil, as we are accustomed to employ them, are often misunderstood and misapplied. 4. Because sufficient will be afforded by every passing day to exercise our powers and occupy our thoughts, without extending our views beyond. (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *Forecasting sorrow*:—1. It renders us insensible to present good. 2. It unfits for the activities of to-day. Anxiety depresses. 4. It gives a practical denial of the Christian creed. 5. It has a saddening influence upon others. (*T. Jackson, B.A.*) *Anxiety depresses*:—Men are worn out, enfeebled, aged more by corroding care than by hard labour. Look at a housemaid; if she be bright, cheerful, high-spirited, her toil is performed efficiently and speedily, to the satisfaction of herself and her mistress. How different if she is cheerless and gloomy! "A merry heart goes all the day: a sad tires in a mile," observes our great dramatist; while the Chelsea philosopher says, "Give us, oh, give us the cheerful man that sings at his work. He will do more in the same time; he will do it better; he will persevere longer. One is scarcely sensible to fatigue when marching to music." (*Ibid.*) *It renders insensible to present good*:—A young lady once expressed to Hogarth, the great satirist, a wish to learn to draw caricature. "Alas!" said he, "it is not a faculty to be envied. Take my advice, and never draw caricature. By the long practice of it I have lost the enjoyment of beauty; I never see a face but distorted, and have never the satisfaction to behold the human face divine." So, by constantly looking at the dark side of their life, its distorted and unpleasant aspect—evils at hand and those looming in the distance—men lose the power to appreciate the blessings which are theirs, and make them an object of envy to their neighbours. (*Ibid.*) I. Folly to be wholly taken up with the accessories, and neglect the principal. II. TROUBLE NOT YOURSELVES ABOUT FUTURITY. 1. Do not anticipate your cares. 2. Do not add vexation to your life by forecasting and designing uncertainties. 3. Leave events to God's infinite, all-wise disposal. 4. Look after your present duty. 5. Reserve all your strength about you, to bear you up against present difficulties and temptations. III. TO-MORROW IS A NEW DAY. 1. Brings care of its own. 2. Brings new duties. 3. Fresh troubles. 4. Both its hands are full. To-day has enough to do of its own; to-morrow brings its own harvest. (*Adam Littleton, D.D.*) The evil here is—I. THE EVIL OF PUNISHMENT. 1. Afflictions. 2. Troubles. 3. Incumbrances and turmoils of life. Every day finds us enough to do. Every year brings us enough to suffer. II. THE EVILS OF SIN. 1. Temptations and lapses. 2. Allurements. 3. Suggestions of Satan. 4. Enticements of the world. As if the load of cares each day lays upon our shoulders were not heavy enough, we ourselves do fetch in more grist, and heap more bags still upon ourselves, by bringing future cares upon us. (*Ibid.*) *Taking no thought for the morrow*:—We must regard this injunction as Christ here regards it, as flowing from faith. 1. Faith may be intuitive. It springs at once from love. You have experienced hours when the Presence of a heavenly Friend seems most real; doubt was impossible. Such a faith is a defiance of life's evils, dares all futurity. The faith of love soars above all the sorrows of time, and gazes on the glory of immortality. 2. Faith arises from reflection on the revelation of God. The belief springing from love does not always live; it is fitful. In nature we find a Fatherly care extending to the least of God's creatures. Is it possible that faith in this Father can exist with anxious care for the morrow? 3. Faith rises from the conscious feebleness of man. The more we are conscious of our own ignorance and powerlessness, the more utterly can we leave the future in God's hands. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The future does not belong to fear*:—The past belongs to gratitude and regret; the present to contentment and work; the future to hope and trust. (*Beecher.*) *Meeting sorrow*:—1. This meeting trouble half way is both a sin and an act of folly. God watches over us as individuals. We are doubting God's love and care for us. 2. This habit of looking out for sorrows makes us forget our past and present blessings. 3. It is a sin to meet sorrow half way, because our present troubles are sufficient without seeking for others. 4. It is a sin because it is a want of faith in God. 5. It makes us melancholy, suspicious, and unfit for duty. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *Anxiety produces an unhealthy habit of mind*:—A man once planted two rose trees, one on either side of his house. The trees were equally strong and healthy, but after a time the one grew and prospered, the other withered and died. Then the man discovered that the living rose tree was on the sunny side of the house. Brethren, we must have the sunshine of faith

and hope on our lives, or we cannot live. I have read of a little child who was often observed playing by itself, and laughing and singing with delight. They asked the child what it was playing with, and the little one answered, "I am playing with sunbeams." It would be better for some of us who are too apt to look on the dark side to imitate that happy child. If we allow ourselves to be always haunted by the shadow of fancied misfortune, we shall lose faith in prayer, since the black shadow will have eclipsed the face of God. (*Ibid.*) *The future should not embitter the present*:—Will you shudder at winter's snow whilst the flowers of summer are growing around you? (*Ibid.*) *By fighting with fancied ills, we shall be too exhausted to struggle with real misfortunes*:—Your feet will become so tender from treading on imaginary thorns, that they will not endure the true thorny path, and there is such a path for all to tread. (*Ibid.*) *Sorrows to be borne singly*:—John Newton says: "Sometimes I compare the troubles we have to undergo in the course of a year to a great bundle of fagots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole at once. He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are to carry to-day, and then another, which we are to carry to-morrow, and so on. This we might easily manage if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day; but we choose to increase our trouble by carrying yesterday's stick over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load before we are required to bear it." "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." *Foreboding*:—I. ITS NATURE. It is a painful, growing, contagious, discouraging habit. II. The CAUSES of this unhappy disposition. Constitutional. Bad health. Lack of faith in God. III. The REMEDY for this evil habit or disposition of mind. If the result of physical causes must be treated accordingly. If the result of constitutional melancholy must be borne patiently, &c. If from defective faith can only be remedied by an increase of faith. (*Dr. O. P. Fitzgerald.*) *Live one day in the day*:—We may consider the year before us as a desk containing 365 letters addressed to us; one for *every* day, announcing its trials and prescribing its employments, with an order to open daily no letter but the letter *for the day*. Now, we may be strongly tempted to unseal, beforehand, some of the remainder. This, however, would serve only to embarrass us, while we should violate the rule which our Owner and Master has laid down for us. (*Jay.*)

## CHAPTER VII.

VER. 1. **Judge not.**—*Against censoriousness*:—I. THE PROHIBITION. It refers to the conduct of private individuals, not to men in a public capacity; nor to hinder private persons from forming any opinion upon the misconduct of others. It forbids the indulgence of a censorious temper. II. The METHODS BY WHICH HE REPROVES and condemns it. 1. He refers to the common principle of retribution. 2. As another corrective we are reminded of our own imperfections. (1) Men of this description have no right to sit in judgment on others, who are themselves guilty of the same crimes. (2) They have no moral qualification for its discharge. 3. Our Saviour directs us to reform our own conduct before we undertake to sit in judgment on that of others. III. The CAUTION WHICH WE MUST OBSERVE IN ITS DISCHARGE—"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs," &c. (*J. E. Good.*) *Judgments and retributive judgments*:—I. JUDGMENTS. 1. We are warned against judgments that are prejudiced. Not to judge others by a sort of hasty inspiration, by their manner, or by their class or locality. 2. We are warned against judgments that are uncalled for. Sometimes our duty; but often not required of us to judge our neighbour's character. 3. We are warned against judgments that are one-sided. Must hear both sides. 4. We are warned against unmerciful judgments. Danger arises from attributing motives. We must beware lest we ignore the possibilities of good even in a bad man. Be as merciful as you can be to the sinner. 5. We are warned against blind judgment—"Why beholdest thou," &c. Evil men more suspicious of others. II. RETRIBUTIVE judgments—who will inflict them (Luke vi. 37, 38). 1. The first solution is that they are the judgments of men. This not practically true. 2. Consider the interpretation which attributes the retributive

judgments to angels. It is not our Lord's wont to attribute judgment, forgiveness, &c., to angels. 3. God will inflict them. He judges men according to the state of mind in which they live. (*J. E. Rust, M.A.*) *The evil of judging rashly*:—I. THE DUTY—"Judge not." 1. From the context it is evident that the Saviour here speaks only of those judgments that we form concerning our neighbour. Favourable judgments are not forbidden; unfavourable judgments allowed, when our station or clear evidence require. Judges, parents, teachers, must condemn and publicly censure. Our Lord condemns—1. The inward disposition of the mind which inclines persons to judge the actions of their neighbours with (1) precipitance, (2) malignity, (3) rigour. 2. He condemns the habit of communicating to others the rash and severe judgments we have formed, when no necessity requires it. We multiply the injury in proportion to the number of persons to whom we communicate our unfavourable opinions. II. THE MOTIVE. If we thus judge our brethren, there is more than one tribunal at which we shall be condemned. 1. We shall find for ourselves in society judges without pity. 2. The rigour at the last judgment. God will punish those who have encroached upon His rights, and who have trampled down the rules of justice and charity. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) Reasons against a censorious spirit:—1. Such judgment provokes retaliation. 2. Such judgment is not becoming in us. Such a sinner has no right to sit in the judgment seat. 3. Such judgment shows incapacity for true judgment. (*Sermons by Monday Club.*) *Against rash censuring and judging*:—There are divers sorts of judging which it is requisite to distinguish from the judging prohibited:—1. That exercising public judgment, or administering justice is not here prohibited. 2. The trial and censure, although out of court, which any kind of superiors do exercise on their inferiors, committed to their care, such as masters and servants. 3. Neither is friendly reproof proceeding out of charitable design, on clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition. 4. All observing and reflecting on our neighbours' actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them, are not forbidden. 5. We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men as without competent knowledge always to rely on their pretences, or to entrust our interests in their hands. 6. We are not obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge all men well. We observe: 1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power, without competent authority, either by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference to the parties concerned. 2. A judge should be free from all prejudices and all partial affections. 3. A judge should never proceed in judgment without careful examination of the cause, so as well to understand it. 4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but after certain proof and on full conviction. 5. Hence there are divers causes wholly exempt from our judgment, such as the secret thoughts of men. 6. Hence we should not judge the state of our neighbour in regard to God. 7. A judge should not proceed against any man without warning, and affording him opportunity to defend himself. 8. Moreover a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment. 9. He must be a person of good knowledge and ability. 10. It is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser. 10. He should himself be innocent. 11. He should proceed with great moderation. Again: 1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God. 2. In respect to our neighbour it is an unjust practice. 3. It is an uncharitable practice. 4. It is a foolish and vain practice. 5. It will produce many inconveniences and mischiefs. (1) We provoke others to requite us in the same kind. (2) We pass censure on ourselves, as we are seldom clear. (3) We aggravate our own faults and deprive them of excuse. (4) We forget to what a dreadful judgment we stand obnoxious to. (5) It causes us to leave our own faults uncorrected. (6) The best men are the most candid and gentle. (7) It signifies bad conscience; a vulturous nature smelleth out carrion. (*Dr. Barrow.*) *Social self-echoes.*—A little boy once went home to his mother and said, "Mother, sister and I went out into the garden, and we were calling about, and there was some boy mocking us." "How do you mean, Johnny?" said his mother. "Why," said the child, "I was calling out, 'Ho!' and this boy said, 'Ho!' So I said to him, 'Who are you?' and he answered, 'Who are you?' I said, 'What is your name?' he said, 'What is your name?' And I said to him, 'Why don't you show yourself?' he said, 'Show yourself?' And I jumped over the ditch, and I went into the woods, and I could not find him, and I came back, and said, 'If you don't come out I will punch your head!' and he said, 'I will punch your head!'" So his mother said, "Ah, Johnny! if you had said, 'I love you,' he would have said, 'I

love you.' If you had said, 'Your voice is sweet,' he would have said, 'Your voice is sweet.' Whatever you said to him, he would have said back to you." And the mother also said, "Now, Johnny, when you grow and get to be a man, whatever you say to others they will, by and by, say back to you." And his mother took him to that old text in the Scripture, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." *Censoriousness a compound of the worst passions:*—Censoriousness is a compound of many of the worst passions; latent pride, which discovers the mote in our brother's eye, but hides the beam in our own; malignant envy, which, wounded at the noble talents and superior prosperity of others, transforms them into the objects and food of its malice—if possible, obscuring the splendour it is too base to emulate; disguised hatred, which diffuses, in its perpetual mutterings, the irritable venom of the heart; servile duplicity, which fulsomely praises to the face and blackens behind the back; shameless levity, which sacrifices the peace and reputation of the absent, merely to give barbarous stings to a jocular conversation; altogether forming an aggregate the most desolating on earth, and nearest in character to the malice of hell. (*E. L. Magoon.*) *Men self-reflected in their judgment of others:*—Pedley, who was a well-known natural simpleton, was wont to say, "God help the fool." None are more ready to pity the folly of others than those who have a small share of wit themselves. "There is no love among Christians," cries the man who is destitute of true charity. "Zeal has vanished," exclaims the idle talker. "O for more consistency," groans out the hypocrite. "We want more vital godliness," protests the false pretender. As in the old legend, the wolf preached against sheep-stealing, so very many hunt down those sins in others, which they gladly shelter in themselves. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Judgment should combine moderation:*—Avoid forming refined and romantic notions of human perfection in anything. For these are much apter to heighten our expectations from others, and our demands upon them, than to increase our watchfulness over ourselves; and so every failure provokes us more highly than it would have done else.

Vers. 3–5. **The mote that is in thy brother's eye.**—Three lessons stand out conspicuously in the text. 1. Close inspection of ourselves, lest any evil lurk there unobserved which we abhor in others; lest we be like the farmer whose field is overrun with weeds, who delights in pointing out the defective condition of a neighbour's farm. 2. Avoidance of passing rash judgments on others. 3. Readiness to assist others in overcoming their faults. (*Baring Gould, M.A.*) *The beam and the mote:*—I. That sin may exist in man to an enormous extent, and YET HE BE UNCONSCIOUS OF IT—"the beam." Several things tend to produce this unconsciousness. 1. Habit. 2. Association. 3. Satanic agency. II. That however unconscious of our OWN sins, WE MAY BE ALIVE TO THE SINS OF OTHERS. 1. Sin does not destroy the faculty for discerning moral distinctions. 2. The importance of Christians being circumspect in their conduct. III. That SELF-IMPROVEMENT IS A NECESSARY QUALIFICATION for the improvement of others. (*Dr. David Thomas.*) *Self-knowledge needful in a minister:*—At Wragby, in Yorkshire, in the vestry of the church is a very curious old painted window, representing in coloured glass the subject of my text; a man with a huge piece of wood before his eyes is trying diligently to extract a mere speck from the eye of another man. And this picture is most appropriately placed in the vestry, as it reminds the priest, whose ministry it is to declare to the people their faults and sins, that he should closely examine himself, lest, after he has preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away. (*Baring Gould, M.A.*) *Social intercourse should be free from scandal:*—I have got a piece of plate, probably two hundred years old, for the table at meal time. On the silver is embossed a representation of the mote and the beam; a man with a spiked log sticking into his eye is trying hard to pick a tiny grain out of the eye of another. Perhaps you may think it most inappropriate to have such a group and subject on a piece of plate before one's eyes commonly. But I do not think so. It is when families meet, or guests assemble round the board, that the characters of neighbours are most freely talked over. (*Ibid.*) *A knowledge of self gives skill in dealing with others:*—It is only when we have wrestled with and overcome our own besetting sins, that we have the insight and tact to direct others how to overcome theirs. Massillon, the great French preacher, was once asked where he obtained his profound knowledge of the world and of the human passions, and his skill in solving religious difficulties. "From *my own heart*," he replied. In his endeavours after personal holiness he had met and vanquished, one by one, those bosom sins which trouble men. Their false excuses, their specious pretences, their conflicts with temptation,

their weak submission to vices which they have vowed to forsake, their remorse, their fears—he knew them all from experience, and he described them as one who knew. Hence the convicting pungency of his preaching, by which the careless courtiers of Versailles were impressed, and to which Louis XIV. himself bore witness. At the close of a sermon the king said to him, "I have heard several great orators, and been very much pleased with them; but every time I have heard you I have been very much displeased with myself." The ability to minister to others is acquired through faithful self-treatment. *Consistency required in the reprover*:—Before thou reprehend another, take heed that thou art not culpable in what thou goest about to reprehend. He that cleanses a blot with blurred fingers will make a greater blot. Even the candle-snuffers of the sanctuary were of pure gold. (*Quarles.*) Nowadays men take upon themselves to reprove others for committing such things as themselves do practise without amendment. Therefore these are like some tailors, who are busy in decking and tricking up others, but go both bare and beggarly themselves. (*Henry Smith.*) If my carriage be unblamable, my counsel and reproof will be the more acceptable. Wholesome meat often is distasteful, coming out of nasty hands. A bad liver cannot be a good counsellor or bold reprover; such a man must speak softly for fear of awaking his own guilty conscience. If the bell be cracked, the sound must needs be jarring. (*Swinnock.*) The vicious reproving vice, is the raven chiding blackness. (*Eliza Cook.*) *It is easier to judge others than to improve ourselves*:—Easy and ordinary is it for men to be others' physicians, rather than their own. They can weed others' gardens, whiles their own is overrun with nettles. But charity begins at home; and he that loves not his own soul, I will hardly trust him with mine. The usurer blames his son's pride, sees not his own extortion; and whiles the hypocrite is helping the dissolute out of the mire, he sticks in deeper himself. No marvel if, when we fix both our eyes on others' wants, we lack a third to see our own. If two blind men rush one upon another in the way, either complains of other's blindness, neither of his own. Thus, like mannerly guests, when a good morsel is carved us, we lay it liberally on another's trencher, and fast ourselves. How much better were it for us to feed on our own portion! (*Adams.*)

Ver. 6. **Give not that which is holy unto the dogs.**—*Prudence necessary in conversing upon religious subjects*:—I. THE BAD CHARACTERS AND DISPOSITIONS OF SOME MEN HERE REPRESENTED by the allusion of "dogs" and "swine." 1. We may be sure they are unworthy the powers and dignity of human nature. There are in their character—(1) Stupid impunity; (2) Stubborn forwardness. They snarl at admonitions. 2. How deplorably human nature is capable of being corrupted. 3. Watch against all tendencies towards the beginnings of these evil dispositions. II. THE NECESSITY AND REASONABLENESS OF TREATING THE AFFAIRS OF RELIGION WITH CAUTION AND PRUDENCE IN OUR CONVERSING WITH OTHERS. 1. Since we know that sacred things are so liable to be abused by profane persons. 2. That it may be attended with bad consequences of ill treatment to ourselves—"lest they turn again and rend you." (*J. Abernethy, M.A.*) *The dogs and the swine*:—The lesson is one of reverence and discretion. I. As to the preaching of the gospel. II. As to statements of spiritual experience. III. As to the admission to sacred privileges and functions in the Church. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*)

Ver. 7. **Ask, and it shall be given you.**—I. We have in these words, not a formal DEFINITION OF PRAYER, but an incidental definition, and most complete. To pray is to "ask" of God; the more childlike the asking the better. II. A recognition of THE HINDRANCES which we meet in prayer. We are to ask when God is nigh; mercies are sometimes hid, then seek. III. A POSITIVE INJUNCTION. Prayer not optional; it is a duty. IV. Christ stimulates to obedience by WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. He calls attention to universal experience—"Every one that asketh, receiveth." Prayer is not an experiment. 2. Christ points to the conduct of parents towards their children. 3. A gentle reference to our common depravity—"If ye, being evil." God far above all earthly parents, more willing to give good gifts. (*S. Martin.*) *Prayer a duty, even though there be no desire to pray*:—In certain states of the body men lose all appetite for food. Are they to yield to this want of appetite? If they do yield to it, they are soon starved to death. Sometimes without appetite, it becomes necessary for them to take, day by day, nourishment. Just so with prayer. If I cannot pray as a privilege, I am to pray as a duty. *Prayer not a runaway knock*:—Watch in prayer to see what cometh. Foolish boys, that knock

at a door in wantonness, will not stay till somebody cometh to open to them; but a man that hath business will knock, and knock again, till he gets his answer. (*J. Manton.*) *Keeping up a suit:*—Keep up the suit and it will come to a hearing-day ere it be long. (*Ibid.*) *Ask and receive:*—1. Every promise is attached to a duty. 2. That concerning any duty it is not enough that you do it, you must do it scripturally. 3. It does not say *when* you shall receive. 4. The whole Trinity combine before there can be prayer. 5. This is the language of entire dependence. "Ask." Man is empty. 6. It is God's method to try the grace which He intends to crown. "Seek." 7. Never be afraid of being too earnest. "Knock." 8. God wishes you to have a clear understanding about the certainty of prayer. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Ask: Children speaking to God:*—I. Ask, WHOM? Not to angels, saints. God is the only Being who is everywhere present, and therefore the only one to whom we should pray. II. Ask, WHEN? Any time; some times better than others. Morning, &c.; the time of perplexity, &c. III. Ask, WHERE? "I will that men pray *everywhere.*" IV. Ask, HOW? 1. Orderly; think about what you are going to ask. 2. Earnestly; not carelessly. 3. Repeatedly: until you receive an answer. 4. In your own style—as children. 5. In faith. 6. In the name of Jesus, the only Mediator, &c. (*A. McAuslane, D.D.*) *How to find the Lord:*—A man said to me the other night in the inquiry-room, "Mr. Moody, I wish you would tell me why I can't find the Lord." Said I: "I can tell you why you can't find Him." "Why is it?" "Why, you haven't sought for Him with all your heart." He looked at me, and said he thought he had. "Well," said I, "I think you haven't; because you will surely find Him when you seek for Him with all your heart. Now, my friend, I can tell you the day and hour you are going to be converted." The man looked at me, and I have no doubt thought I was a little wild. Said I: "The Scripture tells me, 'He that seeketh findeth.'" It don't take a man long to find the Lord when he makes his mind up to do it. *Life a research:*—1. Life is a research. 2. Not get some one else to seek for you. 3. The Lord assigns no limit to the research. (*A. Coquerel.*) *Rogation Days. Ask, and it shall be given you:*—In May almost always the Rogation Days come. The fitness of this. These days are meant to prepare the people's hearts for the coming festival of the Ascension; but mainly to be days of intercession "for the fruits of the earth, which are then tender, that they may not be blasted," as well as for health and peace at that season of the year when war and pestilence may be expected to begin. These intentions are indeed closely blended, for when our Lord ascended up on high He received gifts for men. I. We pray for a blessing upon the fruits of the earth. We can scarcely help it unless we are untrue to nature. Man's heart is on his fields; he has done all his work as far as crops are concerned—now he can only hope, watch, and pray. Now all depends upon what God will be pleased to do. We are not powerless: prayer is left to us. Thirteen centuries ago Rogation Days were first appointed; it was then felt that prayer was a power to secure peace and plenty. Though there is no *service* for these Days, there is nothing to prevent us from keeping them. Our great authority for them is found in the first and second chapters of Joel. In these days of agricultural depression we have need to remember them. (*E. T. Marshall, M.A.*) *Prayer, Knock with confidence:*—When thou standest before His gate, knock loudly and boldly, not as a beggar knocks, but as one who belongs to the house; not as a vagabond, who is afraid of the police, but as a friend and an intimate acquaintance; not as one who is apprehensive of being troublesome, or of coming at an improper time, but of a guest who may rest assured of a hearty welcome. (*Dr. F. W. Krummacher.*) *The nature and efficacy of prayer:*—I. THE PRECEPT. 1. The nature of the duty. 2. A few of our obligations to this holy duty: (1) The Divine command. (2) The pious example of holy men. (3) It is reasonable. 3. Some of the motives by which it is enforced: (1) Its necessity. (2) Its great importance in preparing the mind for the duties of the sanctuary and the family. (3) Another motive arises from the maintenance of the power of religion within us. (4) The pleasure of walking with God is a powerful incentive. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT which the text affords us. 1. The promise itself. 2. Its Divine fulness. (1) It comprehends every human being that presents his prayer for relief. (2) The quality of the blessing—"good things." Two reflections: 1. How happy is the believer. 2. How important to know the medium of acceptable prayer. (*J. E. Good.*) *Prayer the characteristic action of religion:*—I. PRAYER IS RELIGION IN ACTION. It is the soul of man engaging in that particular form of activity which presupposes the existence of a great bond between itself and God. It is the noblest kind of human action, in which man

realizes the highest capacity of his being. This estimate of prayer not universal amongst even educated people. They regard it as an outlet for feeling, a means of discipline; but less worthy the energies of a thinking man than hard work. But prayer is indeed work. The dignity of labour is proverbial. 1. Is it true that prayer is little else than the half-passive play of sentiment? Let those who have truly prayed give the answer. Jacob wrestled with an unseen Power (Matt. xi. 12). 2. Take prayer to pieces; it consists of three different forms of activity. (1) To pray is to put the understanding in motion, and to direct it upon the Highest Object. How overwhelming are the ideas which thus pass before it. The issues are realized. This an absorbing occupation for the understanding. (2) To pray is to put the affections in motion, it is to open the heart; this movement of the affections is sustained throughout prayer. (3) To pray is to put the will in motion, just as decidedly as we do when we sit down to read hard, or when we walk up a steep hill. It enters vitally into the action of prayer, and is in proportion to sincerity. Now these three ingredients of prayer are also ingredients in all real work, whether of brain or hand; in prayer they are more evenly balanced. The dignity of prayer as being real work becomes clear if we reflect on the faculties it employs; and clearer if we consider the effect of it upon the habitual atmosphere of the soul. It places the soul face to face with facts of the first order of solemnity; with its real self and with its God. And just as labour in any department is elevating when it takes us out of and beyond the petty range of daily and material interests, while yet it quickens interest in them by kindling higher enthusiasms into life, so in a transcendent sense is it with prayer. It is so noble, because it is the work of man as man; of man realizing his being and destiny with a vividness which is necessary to him in no other occupation. The nobleness of his best form of toil must fall infinitely below that of a spirit entering consciously into converse with the eternal God. II. But granted the dignity of prayer even as of labour: WHAT IF THIS LABOUR BE MISAPPLIED? 1. There is here no question as to the subjective effects of prayer; this is admitted by all. 2. Prayer is not chiefly a petition for something that we want and do not possess. It is intercourse with God, often seeking no end. 3. If prayer is to be persevered in, it must be on the conviction that it is heard by a living Person. We cannot practise trickery upon ourselves with a view to our moral edification. If God exists, if He be a Personal Being, then surely we may reach Him if we will. Where is the barrier that can arrest our thought, as it rises to the all-embracing intelligence of God. And if God be not merely an infinite intelligence, but a moral Being, a mighty heart, so that justice and tenderness are attributes of His, then surely we appeal to Him with some purpose. It is on this ground that God is said to hear prayer in Scripture. That He should do so follows from the reality of His nature as God. He who has planted in our breasts feelings of interest and pity for one another cannot be insensible to our need and pain. III. But will God answer prayer when it takes the form of a petition FOR SOME SPECIFIC BLESSING which must be either granted or refused? 1. The first presumed barrier against the efficacy of prayer to which men point is the scientific idea of law reigning throughout the spiritual as well as the material universe. But the laws of nature are not self-sustained forces; God can use His own laws. They have not escaped His control. 2. A second barrier to the efficacy of prayer is sometimes discovered in the truth that all which comes to pass is fore-determined in the predestination of God. Prayer, too, is a foreseen action of man, and is embraced in the eternal purpose of God. 3. The third barrier is the false idea of the Divine dignity which is borrowed from our notions of human royalties. Need not depreciate man's place in the universe; God's best creature, and He cares for the lowest. 4. A fourth barrier to the efficacy of prayer is thought to be discernible in an inadequate conception of the interests of human beings as a whole. But Christian prayer is conditioned. 5. The last barrier is really to be discovered in man's idea of his own self-sufficiency. 6. That prayer is answered is a matter of personal experience. (*Canon Liddon.*)

Ver. 9. **A stone.**—*The bread of God's Word not to be petrified by preachers:*—Petrarch's works are said to have laid so long in the roof of St. Mark's, at Venice, that they became turned into stone; by what process deponent sayeth not. To many men it might well seem that the Word of God had become petrified, for they receive it as a hard, lifeless creed, a stone upon which to sharpen the daggers of controversy, a stumbling-block for young beginners, a millstone with which to break opponents' heads, after the manner experienced by Abimelech at Thebez. A man

must have a stout digestion to feed upon some men's theology; no sap, no sweetness, no life, but all stern accuracy, and fleshless definition. Proclaimed without tenderness, and argued without affection, the gospel from such men rather resembles a missile from a catapult than bread from a Father's table. Teeth are needlessly broken over the grit of systematic theology, while souls are famishing. To turn stones into bread was a temptation of our Master, but how many of His servants yield readily to the far worse temptation to turn bread into stone! Go thy way, metaphysical divine, to the stone-yard, and break granite for McAdam, but stand not in the way of loving spirits who would feed the family of God with living bread. The inspired Word is to us spirit and life, and we cannot afford to have it hardened into a huge monolith, or a spiritual Stonehenge—sublime, but cold; majestic, but lifeless; far rather would we have it as our own household book, our bosom companion, the poor man's counsellor and friend. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 9–11. **How much more shall your Father.**—*The heavenly and the earthly Parent*:—I. THE FACTS WHICH OUR TEXT RECOGNIZES. 1. The moral condition of earthly parents—"evil." 2. The natural affection of earthly parents. II. THE ARGUMENT OUR TEXT EXPRESSES. Suggested by contrast. Strengthened by condition. Confirmed by covenant. III. THE APPEAL IT SUPPLIES. Addressed to your consciousness of duty, compassion for suffering, recollection of heavenly goodness. (*Anon.*) I. An encouraging CHARACTER of the Being to whom we pray—a father. Most endearing. He feels the tenderest concern for us. We have freedom of access to Him, &c. But the extent of His Fatherly relation is in the text illustrated—by appeal and by contrast. II. The BLESSINGS we shall receive from our heavenly Father in answer to our prayers—"good things." Temporal and spiritual "things." What an encouragement to pray! How careful we should be to pray aright. Address those who do not pray. (*R. Watson.*) *God the best of Fathers*:—How PRE-EMINENTLY HE SUSTAINS THE PARENTAL OFFICE. 1. The first instance of His superiority is derived from His knowledge. 2. The superiority of His correction. 3. God surpasses every earthly parent in His nearness and observation. Parents cannot always be with their children. 4. Parents may be unable to relieve their children, if with them. 5. Other parents are not suffered to continue, by reason of death. 7. The love of parents is far exceeded by the love of God. 7. Parents give good things to their offspring, however imperfectly they make known their wants and desires. (*W. Jay.*) *Dependence upon God*:—I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS DEPENDENCE? A conviction that we are not able to provide for ourselves, and therefore need to depend on Him. That there is nothing to prevent God's providing for us. II. HOW THE SPIRIT OF DEPENDENCE IS TO BE EXPRESSED. III. THE SUPPORT THAT IS GIVEN TO THE SPIRIT OF DEPENDENCE. The express promise of God. The experience of God's people. The relationship which God bears to His people. There is a lesson of instruction, rebuke, warning, encouragement. (*F. Tuck, B.A.*) *Good gifts to our children*:—Our Lord refers here to the disposition of the father rather than to his discernment, his willingness more than his wisdom. The impulse of affection not always wise. What are the gifts we owe to our children? 1. First among them is a careful training in obedience. 2. Another gift we owe our children is a careful training in the unselfish virtues. 3. Another gift we owe our children is a high and worthy ideal. 4. Another good gift we may impart to our children is education. 5. Finally, a good gift wherewith you may enrich your children is your confidence. (*W. Gladden, D.D.*) *God a royal Father concerned for the welfare of His children*:—A king is sitting with his council deliberating on high affairs of state involving the destiny of nations, when suddenly he hears the sorrowful cry of his little child who has fallen down, or been frightened by a wasp; he rises and runs to his relief, assuages his sorrows and relieves his fears. Is there anything unkingly here? Is it not most natural? Does it not even elevate the monarch in your esteem? Why then do we think it dishonourable to the King of kings, our heavenly Father, to consider the small matters of His children? It is infinitely condescending, but is it not also superlatively natural that being a Father He should act as such? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 12. **That men should do to you, do ye even so to them.**—*Wherein lies that exact righteousness which is required between man and man*:—I. The EXPECTATION of it. Put thyself into the place and circumstances of every man with whom thou hast to do. This is an exact rule. It is plain and easy. Three things are to be done before this rule will be of use to us. 1. We must make it appear reasonable. 2.

Make it certain. 3. Make it practicable. (1) Labour to understand truly every man's condition so far as you have opportunity. (2) When from distance, self-interest you cannot understand, trust the concurrent experience of others that are in that condition. (3) Conclude that in cases between superiors and inferiors, the partiality is usually on the inferiors' side. (4) In judging of your present condition and circumstances, always abate something for the presence of them, for self-love and self-interest and other passions. II. THE GROUNDS of this. The equity of the rule stands upon these foundations. 1. All men are equal in many things, and these the greatest things. 2. In most of those things wherein we are unequal, the inequality is not considerable, so as to be a ground of any unequal dealing with one another. 3. In all these things wherein men are unequal, the inequality is not fixed and constant, but mutable and by turns. 4. Among other grounds is the mutual and universal equity and advantage of this rule. 5. The absurdity and inconvenience of the contrary. III. THE INSTANCES. 1. In matters of civil respect and conversation. 2. In matters of kindness and courtesies. 3. In matters of charity and compassion. 4. In matters of forbearance and forgiveness. 5. In matters of report and representation of other men, and their actions. 6. In matters of trust and fidelity. 7. In matters of duty and obedience. 8. In matters of freedom and liberty, which are not determined by natural or positive law. 9. In matters of commerce and contracts which arise from thence. IV. RULES for directing our commerce. 1. Impose upon no man's ignorance or unskilfulness. 2. Impose upon no man's necessity. 3. Use plainness in all your dealings. 4. In matters of fancy use moderation. Let us not revenge ourselves. (*J. Tillotson, D.D.*) It is sometimes said that Christians are defective in the duties of the second table; hypocrites may be, but not real Christians. I. A RULE OF LIFE. This precept may be considered in the affirmative and negative; the latter to restrain injury, the former to do good. To impress this rule in the negative sense take four considerations. 1. That in the duties of the second table we have more light than we have in the first, for in the first we are to love God with all our heart (Matt. xxii. 36, 37), but the love to our neighbour is a measure more discernible. Love will tell us what is good for ourselves; in guiding our love to God we need many rules. 2. The breach of the rule is more evil in him which hath experienced the bitterness of wrongs, than in another; because experience giveth us a truer knowledge of things, than a naked conception of them. Thus conscience worketh in the way of restraint. 3. That this rule is spiritual, and concerneth the inward man as well as the outward, thoughts as well as actions. 4. This rule must be done not only out of love to man, but out of love to God, and as an act of obedience. Self-love is the measure, but not the principle, of our action. Now take the affirmative part. 1. In giving. Be as ready to do as to receive good. 2. In forgiving. II. VINDICATE THIS RULE. 1. It seems not to be so perfect a rule: because many desire and wish much evil to themselves. 2. It seems to make all men equal, and destroy order and superiority, as master and servant. 3. Doth not this establish revenge and retaliation? 4. Is not this to impose a restraint upon the Christian from which others are free, and so to expose to constant loss? III. THE EQUITY OF THIS RULE. 1. The actual equality of all men by nature. 2. The possible equality of all men as to condition and state of life. IV. THE ILLATIVE PARTICLE "Therefore." 1. That God is the judge of human actions. He will see whether you do to others as they do to you, and you shall hear of it in your dealing with God. 2. That the usage we expect from God the same in measure we should deal out to others. Application: What an advantage religion is to mankind in the present life. (1) How securely we might live one by another. (2) How mutually helpful men would be to each other. (3) How much mankind have degenerated, and how few live Christians in the world. (*J. Manton, D.D.*) *Duty towards our neighbour*:—The several capacities wherein we can help or hinder him. I. As to his soul. Promote its good by—1. Prayer. 2. Example. II. As to the body we must do as we would be done by. III. We must deal with our neighbour as we desire he should deal with us, in respect of his good name. IV. This rule extends to men's estates. 1. Justice. 2. Charity. Some motives to induce the the practice of this rule: 1. The first shall be taken from the end for which they were made. 2. From the intrinsic beauty and loveliness of the rule itself. 3. Because we and they both bear the same stamp and impress of heaven. 4. Because if we be just and generous in time of our prosperity, it will cause a like affection in others to us. 5. It would be the best security of our lives, honour, reputation, riches, power. (*Dr. Barrow.*) 1. The mutual dependence of man upon his fellow man. 2. The duty which devolves on each to assist his neighbour, especially in

spiritual things. (*Bishop of Winchester.*) *The golden rule*:—I. What is THE TRUE MEANING of this Divine rule? That we practise toward our neighbour in such a manner as our hearts and consciences would think it reasonable he should practise towards us in a like case. II. What is THE SPECIAL ARGUMENT that our Lord uses in order to enforce it. III. Wherein its PARTICULAR EXCELLENCIES appear. It is easy to be understood and applied, easy to be remembered, carries greater evidence to the conscience than any other rule of virtue, includes a powerful motive, will secure our neighbour from injury and us from guilt, as fitted to awaken repentance as to direct to duty, suits all stations, &c., includes all actions and duties, a rule of the highest prudence, and fitted to make the whole world happy. IV. REFLECTIONS. How compendious the Saviour's method of providing for the practice of all the moral duties enjoined by Moses and the prophets! What Divine wisdom to make the golden rule a fundamental law in both the Jewish and Christian systems. (*Dr. Watts.*) Concerning this rule or principle note the following facts: I. It is a golden rule. It is sound throughout and very precious. II. This is our Saviour's golden rule. III. It is a revolutionary rule. IV. It is a very stringent rule. V. It is an evangelical rule. Whoever thinks about it cannot fail to see two things. His need of God's forgiveness and God's grace. VI. Following the golden rule we shall be led to our duty and therefore to blessedness. (*Anon.*) *The golden rule of gospel equity*:—I. THE PRECEPT ITSELF AND THE LIMITATIONS WITH WHICH IT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD. We must not make what we *expect* others would do in our circumstances the rule of conduct; because we expect selfishness, we must not be selfish; this is retaliation. The rule of the text does not apply when what we would is inconsistent with the well-being of society; a creditor need not forego a just debt. So this rule has equity and right reason as a limit. We must not take too favourable views of our individual case and form an exaggerated estimate of what we are entitled to at the hands of a neighbour. Anger may be justified. II. THE EXCELLENCY OF this rule, and the grounds on which we claim for it the respect of mankind. 1. Its reasonableness, as founded on the original equality of all men. 2. Its capability of easy and immediate application. 3. The beneficence of such a rule in relation to ourselves. God seems to let us make our own laws. III. A few practical ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE WAY IN WHICH THIS RULE MAY BE APPLIED. 1. Let the rule be applied to the civilities of social intercourse. 2. To the practice of neighbourly charities and compassions. "Ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." 3. To the rights, properties, and good name of all around us. 4. To the social duties falling under no special name, regard for the opinions of others. 5. The connection of these several duties with the sinner's acceptance with God. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The golden rule*:—I. The RIGHTEOUS RULE OF CONDUCT HERE LAID DOWN. 1. In order to the performance of this duty there must be a sameness of circumstances. There is a diversity in the station and character of men; this requires diversity of duty towards them. 2. We must carefully observe the measure by which we are to regulate our conduct towards others. It is not what they actually do, but what we would desire they should do, which is to be our rule. 3. This rule must be taken with certain modifications, not absolutely; we might wish others to do things unreasonable and sinful; it must recognize the law of God. II. ITS EXCELLENCE. 1. Its brevity. 2. Its comprehensiveness—"All things." 3. Its perfect justice. III. A FEW CONSIDERATIONS TO ENFORCE OBEDIENCE TO IT. 1. The argument exhibited by our Lord—"For this is the law and the prophets." 2. The injunction of our Lord on this subject. 3. The powerful recommendation such a course would prove to the gospel of our Lord. 4. It is enforced by the benevolent and righteous example of Him who gave it. Learn: 1. It presents a most invaluable testimony to the truth of Christianity. 2. How happy will be the world when the religion of Jesus Christ shall be universally diffused. (*J. E. Good.*) *The golden rule a fundamental law*:—Nature's great law that matter attracts matter; that a vast central world will attract planets from a straight line into a circle; that an earth will draw a falling apple to itself, and hold its liquid sea and liquid air close to itself, and will hold the seas under the air and the land under the sea, is not more fundamental in the material world than the golden rule is in the world of duty and happiness. Take away the single principle discovered by Newton, and the organized universe is at once dissolved; air and water and land mingle; our globe would become a fluid, and fill its orbit with a floating *débris* of itself. The golden rule underlies our public and private justice, our society, our charity, our education, our religion; and the sorrows of bad government, of famine, of war, of caste, of slavery, have come from contempt of this principle. (*D. Swing.*) *Christ did not*

*originate the golden rule, but gave it new meaning and power over men:*—To find the glory, therefore, of a truth you must not pause with the man who may have first announced it, for he may have had no conception of its worth, and may have given it little love, like the Sibyl who wrote prophecies which she did not herself understand, and which, written upon leaves, she permitted the winds to carry about never to be seen or cared for again. In order to locate the glory of discovery you must measure the heart and mind that first took hold of the idea or law in its infancy or later life. You will find the word liberty in Cæsar's history and in Cicero's ethics, but they knew nothing of the idea as compared with that conception of the word in the mind of a Wilberforce or a Polish exile. (*Ibid.*) *The golden rule a portable law:*—By that I mean it is always at hand, always ready to be appealed to. It is like the "two-foot rule" which the skilful artizan always carries with him ready to take the measurement of any work to which he is called; a rule is his that can measure the brick that is but of few inches length, or that could compute the height of the pyramids. So is it with this law. Other social regulations, such as those of professional etiquette, of trade customs, and even of national statutes, are continually failing men according to the class or country in which they are found. But this is ever at hand. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The golden rule should be remembered in the infliction of punishment:*—The Emperor Alexander Severus was so charmed by the excellence of this "golden rule," that he obliged a crier to repeat it whenever he had occasion to punish any person; and caused it to be inscribed in the most noted parts of his palace, and on many of the public buildings: he also professed so high a regard for Christ, as having been the author of so excellent a rule, that he desired to have Him enrolled among the deities.

Vers. 13, 14. **Enter ye in at the strait gate.**—*The strait gate not a shut gate:*—I. THE FAITHFULNESS OF A HOLY GOD. God has told us the way is difficult. It is against nature. II. THE TENDERNESS OF A MERCIFUL FATHER. 1. There is a gate. 2. The gate leadeth unto life. If the pleasures of sin must be left behind, the pleasures of holiness await. 3. Those who enter neither make nor open the gate; they only find it. Men cannot make ways of peace for themselves; they cannot force, but find the way. 4. He who made the way, and keeps it open now, is glad when many "go in thereat." (*W. Arnot.*) *Salvation: joy that the gate is open:*—If some of the Queen's soldiers were taken prisoner by the enemy, and confined in a fortress far in the interior of a foreign land; and if an intimation were conveyed to the captives by a friendly hand that, at a certain part of their prison walls there is an opening to liberty and home, but that the opening is narrow and the path beyond it rough, their hearts would forthwith fill with joy. They would feel already free. Strait gate! what do they care for its straitness?—enough for them that there is a gate. Ere that setting sun get round to gild the east again, many long miles will be between them and the house of bondage. Surer and safer is their outgate, if slaves to sin were as willing to be free. (*Ibid.*) *Salvation: the gate cannot be forced:*—Outside the frowning barrier swarm the multitudes of all kindreds and tongues, who strive to be their own saviours. One will give ten thousand rivers of oil. Another, more alarmed, and more in earnest, will give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul. Another will waste or wound his own flesh at the bidding of a priest who will assure him of an entrance. Another, without the intervention of any human mediator, will, under the spur of an alarmed but unenlightened conscience, abandon this life to blank, slavish fear, not daring to enjoy any comfort or any hour, in order that he may more surely propitiate the judge, and finally make his way into heaven. It is all labour lost. There is no gate on that side, and you cannot make one. (*Ibid.*) *The supreme importance of personal salvation:*—I. THE FACILITY OF ATTAINING DESTRUCTION. Will appear from the following considerations:—1. Temptation to evil. 2. Man's susceptibility to temptation. 3. The large numbers who tread this way. 4. The needlessness of effort to tread this way. II. THE DIFFICULTY OF ATTAINING SALVATION. The attainment of salvation demands (1) The resistance of temptation; (2) The exercise of self-denial; (3) The overcoming of difficulties. III. THE DUTY OF STRIVING TO ATTAIN SALVATION. 1. Strive to trust in God. 2. Strive to watch and work. (*William Jones.*) *The difficulty of salvation:*—We wish not to discourage, but awaken Christians from their languor. 1. The figures Christ has employed set forth the difficulty of salvation. A warfare in which we must engage; a building we must erect. 2. Perhaps the places where Christ speaks without figures will be less severe. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the

kingdom of heaven." 3. The exalted perfection of the law of Jesus Christ joined to the extreme weakness of man in the state of corrupt nature. 4. What shall I say of outward obstacles? 5. Those who have been influenced by sincere desire to work out their salvation have perfectly understood its difficulty. 6. Why has God made the way to heaven so difficult? (1) It does not belong to us to call God to account. (2) The difficulty comes from man, to whom God has given all necessary strength to do well. (3) All good men have had other sentiments on this alleged difficulty, wonder that God for so few things should save His people. (4) When a thing is not absolutely necessary difficulty may dishearten; but when of indispensable necessity, there is nothing that we ought not to surmount. (5) Above all, we must have recourse to God with this prayer, "Lord, save us, or we perish." (*Cheminais.*) *The strait gate and the wide; the narrow way and the broad:*—1. They all produce destruction of peace. 2. Some of its paths lead to destruction of character. 3. Some of its paths lead to destruction of health. 4. Some of these paths lead to the destruction of life. 5. They all lead to the destruction of the soul. (*J. Gwyther, B.A.*) *The broad way:*—I. THE PLACE THEY ENTER—"wide gate." 1. Wide enough to admit spiritual ignorance. 2. Wide enough for inconsistency and sloth. II. THE ROAD THEY TRAVEL. III. THE NUMBERS WHICH BEAR THE UNGODLY COMPANY. IV. THE END TO WHICH THEY COME. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) I. A CONTRAST WITH RESPECT TO THE ENTRANCES—"strait," "wide." II. TWO WAYS CONTRASTED—"broad," "narrow." III. A CONTRAST AS TO THE NUMBER THAT JOURNEY IN THESE WAYS. IV. A CONTRAST AS TO THE ENDS TO WHICH THESE WAYS LEAD. (*Garrard.*) I. THE IDEA WHICH OUR LORD GIVES OF FUTURE MISERY—"destruction." Although the powers of the soul will be preserved in all their might, yet the sources of sensual gratification will be destroyed. It is a positive penalty inflicted by the justice of God. The ruin is complete, often sudden, certain, eternal. II. A CONFIRMATION OF THE STATEMENT MADE CONCERNING IT. The gate is "wide," &c. The way of sin is broad, considering the ease with which it is found. Broad by its enticements. So broad as to admit persons of all descriptions, &c. What entering in at the strait gate implies. Inducements to comply with this admonition. (*R. Treffry.*) I. THE SINNER'S IMMINENT DANGER. Great, certain, near, hastening. II. THE SINNER'S IMMEDIATE DUTY. To search the Scriptures, self-examination, prayer, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The destruction of sinners will be charged to themselves. If you are in the narrow way be thankful. (*Dr. J. Matthews.*) *The way to life and the way to destruction unfolded:*—I. AN EXHORTATION AND WARNING, how to direct our course for the other world, which this life is but the avenue to. 1. The safe course. 2. The unsafe course. 3. Our duty and interest with respect to these gates. II. A REASON FOR THIS EXHORTATION AND WARNING. That though the other gate is easy and much frequented, yet it is most dangerous. The nature of the gate opposite to that we are called to enter in by, and of the way of joining it. 1. It is wide. 2. It is broad. They are not hampered by conscience, Bible, &c. 3. The use made of it. There are many dispositions of carnal men. 4. The end of it. The safe way:—1. The gate is strait. 2. The way is narrow. It is like a strait shoe that presses the foot. It is not easy walking in it. Afflictions and temptations beset it. 3. The unfrequentedness of it. 4. The happy tendency and end of it. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *What makes the gate strait?*—1. The mighty contrariety of our nature to it. 2. The various lusts hanging about the soul. 3. The keen opposition made by Satan to the soul's entry. 4. The enmity of the world against religion. 5. The nature of the thing makes it a strait gate. *The entering in by the strait gate:*—What they enter into by it: 1. A new road (2 Cor. v. 17). 2. A safe road (Prov. i. 33). 3. Into a house all ease and comfort (Rev. xxi. 7). *How do they enter in by this gate?*—1. Coming out of themselves. 2. Coming to Christ in the free promise of the gospel faith. 3. Coming unto God by Christ. *What this entering bears:*—1. A discerning of the gate. 2. A finding of an absolute necessity of entering by it. 3. Resoluteness for a happy arrival. 4. A contentment to forego our present ease. 5. Nobody walking carelessly will get a safe arrival. 6. They must begin well who would end well. *The wide gate:*—1. It is a deceitful way. 2. It is an unprofitable way. 3. It is a trifling way. 4. It is a restless way. 5. It is a disappointing way. 6. It is easy to fall on it. 7. It is easy walking in it. 8. It is not easy to get off it. *This way leads to destruction:*—1. This is the constant voice of the word of God. 2. The rectorial justice of God demands it. 3. The nature of things manifests it. 4. The voice of the natural conscience confirms it. *The multitude in the broad way:*—1. Seen in the universal corruption of human nature. 2. The constant call to the multitude to repent. 3. The judgments God

has sent on the world. 4. From our own observation. 5. It is the most agreeable way to the corrupt nature. 6. The blindness of the human mind. 7. Prejudices against the way. 8. The broad way is easiest. 9. Satan influences them to it. 10. Example contributes to it. 11. Also want of consideration. (*Ibid.*) *The facility with which sinners go to destruction*:—This will appear—I. From the fact that it is agreeable to the nature of man to pursue a sinful course. II. From the spiritual sloth of the transgressor. III. The blindness of the carnal mind. IV. The strength of unbelief, the allurements of the world, and the devices of Satan. V. The effect of things present, compared with the influence of things distant. VI. The imperfections and sins of professing Christians. VII. The example of the multitude. These obstacles must be overcome, or we inevitably perish. (*W. Mitchell, A.M.*) *The broad and the narrow way*:—I. THE WAY OF DESTRUCTION. 1. The gate into it is wide. 2. The way itself is broad. 3. It is the way along which the great bulk of mankind are travelling. II. THE WAY OF LIFE. 1. The gate into it is strait. 2. The way itself is narrow. 3. It is a way little travelled. III. LET US JUDGE AS TO WHICH WAY WE ARE WALKING IN. (*E. Cooper.*) *The two ways*:—I. THE WAY OF SIN WHICH WE ARE DIRECTED TO AVOID. 1. The gate is wide. It requires no difficulty. 2. It is broad. It is lawless. 3. It is crowded. 4. Its termination. II. THE PATH OF CHRISTIAN HOLINESS WHICH WE ARE TO PURSUE. 1. Its entrance. 2. Its dimensions. 3. Its paucity of passengers. 4. Its blissful end. III. REFLECTIONS. 1. There is an inseparable connection between the present and the future. 2. There is no middle path in religion. 3. Never suffer the world to be your authority in matters of religion. 4. Strive to enter in at the strait gate. (*J. E. Good.*) *The narrowness of the gospel*:—I know nothing broader than Christianity; not one of the ideas of which it has taken hold that it has not enlarged in infinite proportions. Take the ideas of God, humanity, and destiny of man. Yet it is accused of narrowness. The cause not in any weakness, but in the gospel itself. It is narrow—I. Because it is the way of TRUTH. It can tolerate no other way. Truth alone is good. In science men prefer it: why not in religion? Because morally inconvenient. II. Because it is the way of HOLINESS. Each would like to retain his favourite inclination. It will not let our vices pass. III. Because it is the way of HUMILITY. It is closed even to virtuous pride, to fancied merits. IV. Because it is the way of LOVE. The Divine love is narrow in that it rejects all that is contrary to it. Your love is narrow, and seeks the welfare of its object. But none can reject the privations of this narrow way. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The gate of salvation too narrow for the self-righteous*:—See in the middle of the night a house on which fire has caught. Everywhere the flame breaks out with the rapidity of lightning. Cries of alarm are raised, for there is an unfortunate sleeper above this furnace which is going to consume him. He awakes, he turns his scared looks everywhere. Before him a single passage remains open, narrow, but sufficient to save his life. What does he do? With a grasping and feverish hand he gathers all that he can save of his goods, and laden with his treasures, bending under his burden, he arrives at this door which refuses to give him passage. "For me," he cries then, "for me! the door is too narrow." Ah! poor idiot! leave there thy treasures which will cost thee thy life, strip thyself of that which prevents thy progress, consent to sacrifice all; thy salvation is only at that price. You have understood me, brethren. This house which is falling in is our life; this devouring flame is the judgment of the holy God; this open door is pardon; and these treasures which will ruin you, are those qualities, those virtues, those merits, which you wish to preserve at all cost. Yes, the door of heaven is too narrow for the self-righteous, and because of this the Gospel raises so much repugnance and irritation amongst them. (*Ibid.*) *Salvation: its difficulty argues its worth*:—The difficulty of obtaining shows the excellency; and, surely, if you consider but what it cost Christ to purchase it; what it costs God's Spirit to bring men's hearts to it; what it costs ministers to persuade to it; what it costs Christians, after all this, to obtain it; and what it costs many a half-Christian that, after all, goes without it; you will say that here is difficulty, and therefore excellency. Trifles may be had at a trivial rate, and men may have damnation far more easily. Conclude, then, it is surely somewhat worth that must cost all this. (*Baxter.*) *Salvation: difficulty the law of entrance to it and all other kingdoms*:—Into what kingdom is it that you are anxious now to enter? Above all things you wish to enter into the kingdom of music. Very well. This is the New Testament doctrine concerning the kingdom of music. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto excellence in music, and few there be that find it." You have to study night and day, you

have no time for yourself, you are at it, always at it, or getting ready for it, criticizing or being criticized, repeating, rehearsing, going over it again and again, still higher and higher. If that is the law of your little kingdom of music, why should it not be the law of the larger kingdom of life, which includes all beauty, and learning, and music, and power? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The world way*:—All the world is a way. It is so broad that the whole generation for the time travel abreast upon it. (*W. Arnot.*) *The way of sin easy*:—You have nothing more to do than lie like a withered leaf upon the stream, and without a thought or an effort you are carried quickly down. Sinners do not find it difficult to sin. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 15. **Beware of false prophets.**—*The false and the true*:—I. The TESTS by which the false and the true may be known. II. The ultimate DESTINY of the false and the true. 1. In respect to the paths they tread. 2. In respect to the fruit they bear. 3. In respect to the profession they make. 4. In respect to the foundations on which they build. The plainness of these tests. (*D. C. Hughes, M.A.*) *False prophets*.—But while we are thinking of the teachers that are without, let us not forget that we all have within us a false prophet, the most insidious, and therefore the most dangerous of all. (*W. G. Humphry, M.A.*) *False prophets and false Christians*:—The Scriptures treat largely of the false—false gods, false doctrines, false Christs, and false hopes. I. False PROPHETS. A prophet in the strict sense of the word is one who foretells future events. A false prophet is one who assumes the office without a call from God, or who puts forward his own thoughts as if they had Divine sanction. It is not always easy to detect which are the true prophets, and which the false; but though difficult, they may be detected. Their plausible guises are among their marks. Some under-estimate errors in matters of doctrine. II. False CHRISTIANS. Most men have some religion; man has religious instincts. The religion of some is a mere profession; they *say* unto Him, "Lord, Lord." Others add to their profession some of the more striking works and offices of Christianity. The fearful end of this self-deception. Let us not receive the grace of God in vain. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The prophecies of deceit*:—They hinder repentance by bidding us believe (1) In delay: no need to repent now; (2) In an easy return to holiness; (3) That sin is not so dreadful as it is represented: (4) That repentance may be worse for us in the end, if we fall away from it; (5) That by some one great act we can atone for sin. (*J. M. Ashley.*) *The false prophet*:—I. The IMPOSTURE. They "come in sheep's clothing:" in the garb of (1) innocence; (2) weakness; (3) gentleness. II. Its DETECTION. III. Its PUNISHMENT. (*Ibid.*) *Wisdom needed to detect little errors*:—The first appearances of error are many times modest. There is a chain of truths; the devil taketh out a link here and there, that all may fall to pieces. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) Satan knows that we would never consent to give up a wheel of the gospel chariot, and therefore in his craftiness he only asks for the linch-pins to be handed over to him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Ability cannot condone error*:—Mere talent ought not to attract us; carrion well dressed and served upon Palissy ware, is still unfit for men. Who thrusts his arm into the fire because its flame is brilliant? Who knowingly drinks from a poisoned cup because the beaded bubbles on the brim reflect the colours of the rainbow? As we would not be fascinated by the azure hues of a serpent, so neither should we be thrown off our guard by the talents of an unsound theologian. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 16–20. **Know them by their fruits.**—*Utility the test of truth*:—The two criteria on which men most chiefly rest for the guidance of their religious opinions would here be of no avail; *authority* would be claimed by the prophet; and *private judgment* might possibly lead his votaries astray. Both these useful, but require caution. Let us get a clear conception of the notion of utility as a criterion. It is an acknowledged fact that every human action and word is followed inevitably by certain consequences, which are good or bad. Those acts which produce happiness are useful; those which do not are injurious. We must extend our notion of happiness beyond the ancient conception of it. Christianity has made happiness in worldly good things alone impossible. It must now include peace with God. This a criterion which cannot be mistaken. Apply this test. I. As AN ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIANITY in the widest sense of the word. When Christianity appeared in the world, Roman civilization had practically failed. The privilege of Roman citizenship had done much—had kindled a feeling of community of interest; but needed a higher sanction. The Incarnation taught men

brotherhood; nations which possess this truth have the principle of vitality. II. Let us apply this test to our ENGLISH CHRISTIANITY. Doubtless there are physical reasons which make the English race so strong; but also moral, latent in our Christianity. III. As an argument supplying to us each practical reasons for FOLLOWING IN OUR CONDUCT THAT LINE OF DUTY which conscience tells us to be right. It is a solemn thought that we can be like a good tree or a bad one. It is the *uses* of a man which determine his status before God. (*J. T. Coxhead, M.A.*) *The test of true religion*:—I. The rule laid down by Christ in the text is INFALLIBLE IN CHARACTER AND UNIVERSAL in application. It is true in the natural world as in the spiritual. II. By their FRUITS ye shall know them. 1. This test is a reasonable one. 2. It is a sensible one. 3. It is a simple one. 4. It is a just one. 5. It is a sure one. 6. It is one which men apply continually in judging of each other's conduct. 7. It is one which the Judge will apply on the final day. (*J. M. Sherwood, D.D.*) *The standard of good and evil*:—I. That THERE IS A STANDARD of good and evil. 1. It is fixed. 2. It is just. 3. It is evidenced by experience. 4. It is knowable. 5. It is practical. II. By this standard GOD WILL JUDGE. 1. Men cannot plead ignorance, it being written in the hearts of those who have not the Scriptures. 2. Judgment will not be according to profession. 3. Nor with respect of persons. 4. Conscience approves these principles. 5. The Holy Spirit will, if we ask, teach us the will of God. III. By this standard CHRISTIANS ARE TO judge. 1. False prophets must needs be, they are foretold, and are busy perverting the truth. 2. We must judge them by the Word of God. (*Flavel Cook.*) *The moral influence of doubting*:—I. Doubt loosens the moral hold of the principle of the Bible upon our personal obedience. II. The position of antagonism into which doubting throws a man is, in itself, unfavourable to growth in moral virtue. III. Doubt presents no incentive to holiness like that which Christianity offers. (*Bishop Cheney.*) *The test of the fruitage*:—We do not usually connect fruit-bearing with *children*. This is a mistake. Notice three things. I. WHAT ONE FLAVOUR SHOULD THERE BE IN ALL FRUITS? Many different flavours in fruits, yet there is something common to them which makes us approve of them all. This may be applied to children. There are many varieties of disposition, but we can call all children good, if we can detect in them the flavour of *godliness*—Christlikeness. That is just the wonderful, beautiful thing about the Lord Jesus; He can be a model for all—for the young and for the old. II. WHAT PECULIARITIES OF FLAVOUR SHOULD THERE BE IN CHILDREN'S FRUITS? Unselfishness, thoughtfulness, truthfulness, gentleness. These flavours are to be found in our *words* and in our *deeds*. III. WHAT IS THE SECRET WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE BEST FLAVOURED AND MOST ABUNDANT FRUITAGE? For even in fruits of one kind of flavour, we find differences. "From *me* is thy fruit found"—the Lord Jesus, the *life*. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Good fruits the test of principle*:—I. THE PERSONS WHOM OUR LORD DIRECTS US TO SHUN. 1. Their deception. 2. Their artifice. 3. Their end. II. THE SATISFACTORY AND EQUITABLE TEST by which they are to be ascertained. Of this rule we remark (1) that it is infallible; (2) it is easily comprehended; (3) it is of universal application—to personal religion and doctrine, &c.; (4) it will apply to the several views of Christianity which are propagated in the world. (*J. E. Good.*) *The false and the true*:—I. That action, and not appearance, is the test that determines the genuineness of religion. II. The announcement of the law of moral certainties—"A good tree cannot," &c. III. That mere sincerity is not salvation. IV. Christ and His gospel are man's only security. (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *Figs or thistles?*—It has pleased God to make every tree and herb "after its kind." There are three reasons for this:—1. That people may know what to expect. 2. That diligent work may be rewarded. 3. That great results may be caused to grow out of small beginnings. 4. We reap what we sow. (*E. R. Conder, D.D.*) *Ravening wolves*:—Conduct indicates character. I. As illustrated by the WELL-KNOWN COMPARISON which is here employed. II. In reference to the SPECIAL CHARACTERS which are here described. 1. Their office. 2. Their outward aspect—sanctimonious. 3. Their evil designs. "Inwardly they were ravening wolves." III. In its general APPLICATION. 1. This is the only true standard by which to judge either ourselves or others. Profession, feelings, are deceptive. 2. According to this rule the decisions of the great day will be regulated. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The effects of the Bible*:—1. Upon the laws of nations. 2. Upon the liberty of nations. 3. Upon the morality of nations. 4. Upon the charity of nations. 5. Upon the literature of nations. 6. Upon the acts of nations. 7. Upon social life and domestic relationships. 8. Upon individuals. Thus judged by its fruits it is a good book. (*J. H. Hitchens.*)

*Christians known by their fruits*:—Not by our acquired knowledge, or fancied experience, or creed; but by fruits. I. THE PRIMARY AND IMMEDIATE DESIGN OF OUR LORD IN THE DECLARATION BEFORE US. This text connected with the preceding (vers. 15-20)—"Wherefore." The greater part of the Sermon on the Mount was designed to rectify the errors of the Pharisees. 1. The false prophets whom our Lord condemns were guilty of lowering the standard of moral duty by explaining away the spirituality and extent of the law, and reducing the whole of human obedience to a few unimportant ceremonies. 2. They frustrate the free grace of the gospel by insisting on the meritoriousness of human obedience. Thus did the Judaising teachers in Corinth, Galatia, and Ephesus. II. THE PRACTICAL NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY AS A DECISIVE PROOF OF ITS DIVINITY. 1. The influence of genuine Christianity is always practically holy. 2. Let the actual results of the influence of Christianity upon the world be examined, and it will be found that they are uniformly of a holy and felicitating character. (*J. Savill.*) *But who expect to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles?*—I. The man who expects to obtain happiness without a holy life. II. The man who expects to obtain a holy life without a renewed heart. III. The man who expects to obtain a renewed heart without faith in evangelical truth. (*R. Halley, D.D.*) *Thistle seed.*—There is a schoolboy, yawning over his lesson. He sits with his books before him, but he is not working. If we ask him why, he says, "Oh, I hate Latin!" "Well, perhaps you like arithmetic better?" "Oh no, I hate doing sums." "Well, do you like geography?" "Oh no, I hate geography worst of all." The real truth is, he hates work. He is *sowing thistles*; and by and by, when his school-days are over, the prickles will sting him, and the empty, useless seed be a plague in his neighbours' fields. (*E. R. Conder, D.D.*) *Grace seen in conduct*:—The apples appear when the sap is not seen. It is the operative and lively graces that will discover themselves. A man may think well, or speak well; but it is that grace which governeth his actions which most showeth itself. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) It is all very fine to plead, as some have done, that they are doing *inside* work; if their fruit is all within, they will have to be cut down that it may be got at. A true epistle of Christ is not written in invisible ink, and then sealed up, but it is known and read of all men. A tree of the Lord's right hand planting bears fruit to His glory, visible to all about him. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Christian fruitful in a barren scene*:—Those who travel through deserts would often be at a loss for water, if certain indications, which the hand of Providence has marked out, did not serve to guide them to a supply. The secret wells are for the most part discoverable from the verdure which is nourished by their presence. So the fruitfulness of good works of the believer, amidst the deadness and sterility around him, proclaim the Christian's life. (*Salter.*)

Ver. 21. **Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord.**—*The connection between holy obedience to the will of God, and the happiness of heaven*:—I. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER of those who make an external profession of religion, but walk unworthy of its precepts, connected with the impossibility of their entering in such a state into the kingdom of heaven. 1. It is evident that a person may have much which bears the semblance of piety, while he is far from feeling its genuine influence. 2. The text may refer to the lukewarm and indifferent. II. THE CONNECTION between the character of those who not only profess Christianity, but adorn it by a suitable conversation, with the reward which is held out for their encouragement. 1. The will of God is a term of vast extent. 2. It is easy to see the connection between the character of those who do the will of their Father who is in heaven, and the prospects of future bliss. Learn: 1. That active obedience to the precepts of Christianity is the surest mark of a genuine Christian believer. 2. The necessity of unremitting endeavours, relying on the strength of Divine grace to qualify us for admission into heaven. (*D. Kelly, M.A.*) I. A great TRUTH proclaimed. The religion of Christ is to be practised. 1. For the teachings of Jesus are only understood as they are put into practice. 2. They are only honoured as they are put into practice. II. A great ERROR perpetrated—mere profession. 1. This error is common. 2. It is displeasing to Christ. 3. It injures the individual who practises it. 4. It is a misrepresentation of Christianity. III. A great DUTY. (*U. R. Thomas.*) I. THE TRUE QUALIFICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. "He that doeth the will," &c. II. THE DELUSIVE HOPES WHICH MANY WILL CHERISH as to admission into Christ's kingdom by means of other qualifications. 1. The first having made a strong and ambitious profession of His name. 2. Arising from a life of practical usefulness to others. III. THESE HOPES WILL BE DESTROYED. (*G. T. Noel.*) *Pro-*

*fession and practice*:—Let us observe the kingdom of God in the light of this text. 1. It is a kingdom of fruit, not of thorns, not of leaves. 2. We see that the faith which is so essential to it is an active grace. The proof of sincerity is doing. It is not a mere emotion destitute of energy. 3. That every one that cometh into it must do God's will. Active trust not enough; it must be in the proper direction. The world is a great law-keeper. Even Christ did the will of His Father. Learn: 1. That active obeying the will of God is the decisive test of being in the kingdom of God. 2. That it is one thing to hear and another to do the will of God. 3. Nor is confidence sufficient. The Pharisees were sure that they were on the rock. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *The disowned*:—I. They went a long way in religion. II. They kept it up a long while. III. They were fatally mistaken. IV. They found it out in a terrible way. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Self-confidence no security*:—You remember the lighthouse that was built off the coast of England by Winstanley. The architect was confident that the structure was strong, and laughed at the criticisms upon it. To show his confidence, he took up his abode in the building. In the midst of that fearful November storm, how little that confidence availed him as the structure was caught in the grasp of the winds and shaken to pieces! Now another lighthouse stands there well founded, well builded, and lights the mariner to the safe harbour. So that character that is rightly founded and builded in Christ will not only be secure itself, but light others to security. (*Ibid.*) *Sincere obedience necessary to our acceptance with God*:—I. Explain THE FALSE PRETENCES TO THE FAVOUR OF GOD AND THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. 1. The first pretence is saying to Christ, "Lord, Lord"—a mere profession of Christianity. 2. The second founded on the gift of prophecy—that is to propagate Christianity and promote edification, separable from a holy life. II. To ILLUSTRATE THAT ONLY SOLID GROUND OF HOPE WHICH OUR LORD ESTABLISHES. 1. The will of God is revealed plainly. 2. In what sense is it to be done? Infirmity cleaves to us all; the gospel of pardon in Christ requires sincerity in doing His will; a partial obedience will not please Him. 3. There must be a persevering continuance in well doing. This the only ground of hope. (*J. Abernethy, M.A.*) *The final rejection of false professors*:—I. THE QUALIFYING TERMS OF OUR ADMISSION TO HEAVEN—"He that doeth the will," &c. II. The OPPOSITE GROUNDS of dependence which many prefer:—1. National privilege and profession. With such persons religion is a question of geography; they are Christians because born in a land of knowledge. 2. Splendid professions of zeal. 3. Deeds of charity and mercy. III. THE FINAL REJECTION of all who place their confidence on these insufficient grounds. 1. The period. 2. The dignity of the Son of God at that time. 3. The nature of the profession itself—"I never knew you." 4. The designation given to those unhappy men—"Workers in iniquity." (*J. E. Good.*) *The danger of formality and hypocrisy*:—1. That in the great day there will be an earnest desire in many to enter into the kingdom of heaven. 2. A mere profession of religion will then be found insufficient. 3. All true and obedient believers will be admitted into the heavenly kingdom. (*G. Burder.*) *Christian profession easy*:—It is easy enough to assume the character and manner of a Christian, but to live the Christian life is not so easy. A man can make a sham diamond in a very short time, but the real gem must lie for ages in the earth before it can sparkle with perfect purity. We have far too many of these quickly made Christians amongst us, who have never brought forth fruits meet for repentance, nor gone through the fire of trial, and sorrow, and self-sacrifice. Do not trust to feelings, or words, in yourselves or others, look at your life; a real and a false diamond are very much alike, and yet there is all the difference in the world in their value. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *Christian profession partial*:—There is a variety of mineral which, when held before the light, exhibits translucency only on its edges. They are dark in the centre; such are marble, flint, or hornstone. It is so with some men; the light of Christianity has shone upon them and modified much of their external conduct, and produced a considerable regard for piety, but within, the centre of their being, remains in the darkness of sin. (*Professor Hitchcock.*) There are many men like ponds, clear at the top, and mud at the bottom; fair in their tongues, but foul in their hearts. (*Swinnock.*) Like a beautiful flower, full of colour, but without scent, are the fine but fruitless words of him who does not act accordingly. (*Buddha.*) *The testimony of works more reliable than that of words*:—Actions are a greater discovery of a principle than words. The testimony of works is louder and clearer than that of words, and the frame of men's hearts must be measured rather by what they do than by what they say. There may be a mighty distance between the tongue and the heart, but a course of

action is as little guilty of lying as interest is, according to our common saying. All outward impietics are the branches of an atheism at the root of our nature, as all pestilential sores are expressions of the contagion in the blood. Men's practices are the best indexes of their principles. The current of a man's life is the counterpart of the frame of his heart; who can deny an error in the spring or wheels when he perceives an error in the hand of the dial? Who can deny atheism in the heart when so much is visible in the life? The taste of the water discovers what mineral it is strained through. (*Charnock.*)

Ver. 24.—**I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.**—I. THE BUILDING. Every immortal creature is supposed to be building a house—entertaining a hope of heaven. They know they cannot always live in their present earthly house, &c. II. THE FOUNDATION. There is the foundation of the formalist, hypocrite, presumptuous enthusiast. The foundation of the real saint—Christ, the Rock. All his hopes of pardon, &c., founded on Christ alone. III. THE TRIAL. The storm of tribulation and persecution, affliction, death, judgment, will try every man's work, what sort it is. All joy to the believer. IV. THE RESULT, certain. Nothing can then prevent the fall of a house not built on the true foundation; nothing can then endanger the hope that is built on Christ. Total: Irrevocable. 1. Look well to the foundation. 2. If the true foundation be laid, see that the superstructure goes on. 3. No ground for boasting. (*J. Hirst.*) *The two builders*:—I. THE POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE. They both heard Christ's sayings; both saw the necessity of building a house, or place of refuge; both actually erected a house; both houses were exposed to storms; both builders rested with security in the edifices they had raised. II. THOSE THINGS IN WHICH THEY DIFFERED. In their personal character; in their practice; in the foundations on which they built; in the final result of each. 1. How necessary is careful examination. 2. How important a saving knowledge of Christ. 3. How indispensable practical godliness. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *The wise and foolish builders*:—I. THE BUILDERS. 1. They were alike (1) in their need of a house. (2) In their privileges. Both heard the same words of Jesus. (3) In their efforts; both built. 2. They were unlike (1) in their character. (2) In their choice. (3) In faith and love. One heard and did not. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." II. THE FOUNDATIONS. The one sure, the other insecure. III. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE. IV. The TRIAL. V. The RESULTS. (*American Hom. Monthly.*) *The wise and the foolish building for eternity*:—I. THE DESIGNATION—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them." 1. Fortuity. "Whosoever," a pronoun contingent; we cannot foresee the issue. We must leave our spiritual toils with God. 2. Privilege. Privilege to hear the gospel. 3. Docility. "Doeth them." II. WISDOM. 1. Design. Building a house denotes an intention to live in it. 2. Selection. If you build, you must look after a place. 3. Perseverance. He went on building in face of difficulties. 4. Stability. If the works of art are less durable than the works of nature, the works of grace outshine the works of nature much more. There is something enduring when you are enabled to build upon the Rock of Ages. III. FOLLY. 1. Concession. He could not manage without a house. 2. Labour. He took much pains. 3. Promise. It looked fair. 4. Fall. The fall of a soul! Ruinous. (*E. Andrews, LL.D.*) *The great Teacher*:—I. The sayings of Christ are eminently PRACTICAL. II. They are PRACTICABLE. It was no impossible ideal. God has provided helpful agencies. 1. The agency of the Holy Ghost. 2. A means of Christian holiness is the earthly life of the personal and human Christ. 3. There is the encouragement of conscious progress. III. The sayings of Christ are AUTHORITATIVE. IV. The sayings of Christ are IMPERATIVE. (*H. Allon.*) *The wise and foolish builders*:—I. We have every one of us a house to build; or, in other words, a soul to save. 2. There is a Rock provided for us, on which we may safely build our house. 3. On this Rock we must build if we would escape everlasting destruction. 4. The danger of delaying to place your building upon the right foundation. (*E. Cooper.*) I. WHEREIN THESE TWO BUILDERS RESEMBLED EACH OTHER. 1. They both heard Christ's sayings. 2. They both saw the necessity of building a refuge. 3. They both actually erected a house. 4. Both houses were exposed to storms. 5. Both builders rest securely in their houses. II. WHEREIN THEY DIFFERED. 1. In their characters. 2. In their practice—one was a hearer, the other a doer. 3. In their judgments of the foundation. 4. In the final issue. III. THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH FOLLOWED. 1. The fallen house involves the eternal ruin of the inmate. 2. It is a disappointment of fondly-cherished hopes. 3. It is a

fall, total and irreparable, for ever. 4. The inmate in the other house is in no danger. 5. He lives in peace and plenty on earth. 6. He shall reign with God in glory. (*J. B. Baker.*) *The sure foundation*:—I. THE POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE CONVERTED AND THE UNCONVERTED PROFESSOR. 1. Both profess to be religious. Both build a house. 2. Both have their religion put to the test. II. THE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM. 1. In their conduct. The one indolent, the other was laborious: one idly plants his house, the other digs for foundation. 2. In the foundation of their hopes. 3. In their end. How wise the genuine believer! How foolish the unconverted professor! (*C. Clayton, M.A.*) *Building upon the Rock*:—1. True religion is likened to a man's own house. Every one's real life is his own home. 2. There are a few persons who are fond of looking at foundations, and questioning whether they rest on the right place; others make the far more vital mistake of not searching into them enough. 3. Foundations are found, after much search, in deep places; certain floating ideas about religion are not enough to build a life upon—such as "He is a kind God, and will not punish." 4. The Spirit of God shows a man the Rock. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The foundation imparts strength to the structure*:—But what can the hurricane do? Just what the elements do in nature. Whatever they do not break, they consolidate. Your trials will only consolidate—they will consolidate your principles, your affections, your hopes—they will make you, on "the Rock," yourselves a rock. Judgments may fall from above, like the descending "rain." Disappointments, afflictions, persecutions, may swell around you, like rolling "floods." Temptations may buffet you with all the mysteriousness of the invisible "wind." Yet St. Luke says, "They could not shake it." The strength of "the Rock" is in the believer—he passes all his troubles on to his "Rock," and from his "Rock" he draws his strength. And the eternal unchangeableness of the foundation, makes the poorest, weakest stone that is once fastened to it, unshaken and impregnable as the throne of Jehovah. (*Ibid.*) *The two builders and their houses*:—I. THE TWO BUILDERS. 1. They were equally impressed with the need of building a house. 2. They were both alike resolved to obtain a house. 3. They were equally well skilled in architecture. 4. They both persevered and finished their structure. II. THEIR HOUSES. 1. The chief apparent difference between the two edifices probably was this, that one of them built his house more quickly than the other. 2. One was built with far less trouble than the other. 3. The main difference lay out of sight—underground. III. THE COMMON TRIAL OF THE TWO HOUSES. IV. THE DIFFERENT RESULTS OF THE TRIALS. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *False foundations removed, and true ones laid for such wise builders as design to build for eternity*:—I. To show the reasons WHY PRACTICE OR OBEDIENCE IS THE BEST AND SUREST FOUNDATION FOR A MAN TO BUILD HIS DESIGN FOR HEAVEN AND THE HOPES OF HIS SALVATION UPON. 1. Because, according to the economy of God's working upon the hearts of men, nothing but practice can change our corrupt nature; and practice continued in, by the grace of God, will. 2. Because action is the highest perfection and drawing forth of the utmost power, vigour, and activity of man's nature. 3. Because the main drift of religion is the active part of it. (1) Thus God is honoured. (2) The good of society. II. THOSE FALSE AND SANDY FOUNDATIONS WHICH MANY VENTURE TO BUILD UPON, AND ARE ACCORDINGLY DECEIVED BY. 1. An unoperative faith. 2. Honesty of intention. 3. Party and singularity. III. WHENCE IT IS THAT SUCH ILL-FOUNDED STRUCTURES ARE, UPON TRIAL, SURE TO FALL. The force and opposition from without. Satan. (*R. South, D.D.*) *The wise builder*:—I. The sayings to which the Saviour refers. II. The practical attention they demand. III. The dispositions of mind necessary for the due reception and practice of the truth. 1. A holy vigilance against whatever may prove an obstacle; custom, curiosity, criticism. 2. To cherish whatever may be likely to promote the due reception of the gospel, freedom of the mind from worldly entanglements; there must be reverence for the truth, docility, self-application, faith in the Son of God, prayer. IV. THE INVIOLABLE SAFETY OF SUCH HEARERS OF THE WORD. 1. The faith and hope of the Christian may be rudely assailed in the present life. 2. However assailed the Christian is secure. (*J. E. Good.*) *The foolish builder*:—I. WHO AMONG THE HEARERS OF THE GOSPEL ARE INTENDED BY THIS REPRESENTATION. 1. It applies to all who build their hope of heaven upon the mere belief of the doctrines of Christianity. 2. The individual who builds upon his own goodness, and rejects, either in part or whole, the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. The foolish builder represents likewise the hearer of the gospel, on whose mind its Divine truths only partially operate. 4. The persons on whose minds the influence of the Word is transient. II. THE FEARFUL AND TREMENDOUS

OVERTHROW WHICH AWAITS SUCH HEARERS OF THE WORD. 1. As regards the time of its occurrence. It fell in the storm, when the builder had most need of it. 2. It was great as to the sacrifice of property. The plans and toils of the wicked are vain. 3. It was great because it was irreparable. Too late to build another. (*Ibid.*) *The builders:*—The two houses in building; the two houses in the storm. I. WE ARE ALL OF US BUILDERS. People are often building something quite different from what they fancy. A man fancies he is building a fortune, when in reality he is building a prison for himself. Some persons go on building for sixty years, and have nothing to show worth calling a life. II. If we would build safely and well WE MUST BUILD ON A RIGHT FOUNDATION. It is so in small things. The want of a good foundation does not always show at once, but sooner or later the trial comes. 1. Sometimes it is the temptations of worldly companionship and influence that try our foundations. 2. Sometimes it is sorrow. 3. Sometimes sickness searches out the hidden weakness of the foundation. (*E. R. Conder, D.D.*) *Life a structural process:—The trust-house.* A quiet, bright girl is sitting at work in a cottage by her mother's side; ready, with cheerful promptness, to run on an errand, to spread the table, to fetch her little brother from school, or to teach and amuse the younger children. Is she building anything? Many things. For one thing, *a feeling of trust* in her mother's heart. Years hence, when that mother is stricken down with sickness, she will not have to say with a sigh, "Jane means well, but I can't trust her." She will say, "I can trust you, my child, to do all that I have been used to do—all that you know I should wish. (*Ibid.*) *The memory-house:*—A brother and sister are sitting together by the fireside, listening to their father's teaching, to their mother's sweet voice reading aloud: they repeat the same hymns; they turn over the leaves of one book; they kneel side by side at family prayer. What are they building? A happy, holy *chamber of memory*, of which they two alone will have the key. (*Ibid.*) *The thought-house:*—Shall we look at one or two other builders? A grave, bright-eyed boy is sitting before a fire, earnestly watching the bubbling, hissing, steaming tea-kettle, and thinking, thinking, thinking. What is he building? Neither he nor any one else can guess; but in truth he is building things as wonderful as the enchanted castles and palaces of the genii in fairy-tales. Steam-engines, steamboats, locomotives, with their long trains of railway carriages, and the long lines of railway made for them to run on: all these are, in time, to grow out of the THOUGHT which that boy is building in his busy brain. All the steam-engines that ever will be built were wrapped up, like a forest of oaks in a single acorn, in the first thought of the steam-engine in the mind of James Watt. For, let me tell you (though I scarcely expect you to understand it), of all that men build in granite, or marble, or iron, or whatever else they please, nothing is so strong and lasting as thought. The pyramids themselves might be blown up and shattered into fragments, but what power could destroy the twenty-third Psalm? (*Ibid.*) *Life-structures are varied:*—Some men's lives are like palaces, fair and spacious and lofty; full of nobleness. Some are like castles, grim and stern and tyrannical, with dark cells and secret winding passages. Some are like mills and warehouses, stuffed so full with machinery and merchandise that the owner has scarce room to move about; and not a glimpse of the bright blue sky can he catch through their dusty windows. Some, again, are lighthouses, standing bravely on their rock amid the dashing waves, and holding forth the light by which many a storm-tossed voyager is guided into port. Some lives are more like ships than houses, ever wandering, nowhere abiding. Some are like quiet cottage homes, with no splendid outside or towering pinnacles, but full of homely peace and quiet usefulness. And some—how many!—never get beyond the beginning: just a few courses laid. (*Ibid.*) *Foundations always important even in small things.* If you are going to paint a picture, and get the outline wrong (which is the foundation of the picture), all the picture will be wrong. If you have a long division sum to do, and make a mistake in the first step, all the sum will be wrong. A child soon learns that he cannot even build a card house on a shining, polished table, or on a crooked, ricketty table; or a house of toy bricks without a firm level foundation. How much more must this be so in greater matters! (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 28. **When Jesus had ended these sayings.**—*The Sermon on the Mount:*—I. Some FEW CHARACTERISTICS which the Sermon possesses. 1. The wonderful literary beauty of the language cannot have been unobserved by any one. 2. Then we have remarked the desultory arrangement and the apparently disconnected progress of

ideas. 3. Chiefly, however, all of us have perceived the one great absence in this discourse, I might almost say lack, as we contemplated it from our Christian outlook. There is no allusion to the atonement. Christ is here as the preaching prophet, not as the atoning priest. 4. Hence the history of the Sermon affords a conspicuous example of the way in which men sometimes pervert God's Word. They say, "Our sufficient creed is the Sermon on the Mount." 5. Many of us would admit this statement, for we remember a startling and supernatural reach of requirement in this discourse—"Be ye therefore perfect," &c. II. THE PURPOSE of this Sermon. 1. We find in it the description of a character. 2. We find in it a rule of life. 3. A standard of spiritual and experimental attainment. 4. We find in this Sermon an instrument of condemnation. 5. We find in it an incitement to holiness. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Effects of our Lord's Sermon on the people*:—I. The IMPRESSION of this Sermon on the minds of the people—"They were astonished," &c. 1. Admiration. 2. Some were penetrated with the importance of the word, and became "renewed in the spirit of their mind." It is not so much information, as vital impression which the masses of the people require. II. The CAUSE to which it is ascribed—"For he taught them," &c. 1. His doctrine. 2. His manner. There was a combination of dignity, earnestness, and affection. III. A few points of INSTRUCTION which the whole conveys. 1. The true nature of personal religion. 2. To exercise Christian charity towards all mankind. 3. Never to despair of the Salvation of any of the human family. 4. A lesson of caution to all who attend the ministry of the Word. (*J. E. Good.*) *Truth gains by being lived*:—For whereas precepts and discourses of virtue are only the dead pictures and artificial landscapes and descriptions of it, a virtuous example is virtue itself; informed and animated, alive and in motion, exerting and exhibiting itself in all its natural charms and graces. And, therefore, as we know a man much better when we see him alive and in action than when we only see his picture; so we understand virtue much better when we see it living and acting in a good example than when we only behold it described and pictured in various precepts and discourses. (*J. Scott.*) *Truth attracts by being lived*:—A belief without any adequate expression in acts is like an organ when all its pipes are silent and its keys untouched. It is dumb. It charms no one. It attracts no one. But bring forth the player; let him press the keys, let the dead air in all the choral columns be started into vibrations, and how the anthem swells, and how hearts are lifted on the waves of sound, and all the thousands applaud, some with their hands, others with eyes filled with happy tears. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *The doctrine of Christian obedience rewarded*:—1. Let us take A GENERAL VIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST. II. THE EFFECT WHICH IT HAD UPON THE MINDS OF THE SURROUNDING MULTITUDE. 1. These may be an astonishment of delight and approbation. 2. It may be a feeling of voluntary unbelief. 3. The high and irresistible authority with which He taught these holy truths. III. THE PROMISED REWARD OF OBEDIENCE TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST—"He shall in no wise lose his reward." 1. Because the Lord has said it. 2. Because godliness with contentment is gain. 3. Because godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 4. Because if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 5. Because though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death they will fear no evil. (*S. Morrell.*)

Ver. 29. **Having authority.**—*The great authority*:—There resides in what is called an "authority" a power which we shall do well to contemplate. By it I mean that position as an adviser which is gained only by diligent study and habitual practical research; or else by the inherent endowment or special gifts of a superior nature. The medicine man, the legal man, gain authority by study. The importance of finding in Jesus the authority in the affairs of the soul, and also of the mind when brought up against eternal questions. There is a class of mind which takes delight to fathom the unfathomable. Faith is as much an integral part as our ignorance, in our imperfect condition. It is the aim of faith to turn ignorance into bliss in the perplexities of life, with respect to most of which it were folly to be wise. What a calamity if in this half-fledged condition we knew all about ourselves and God. We should shake our dispositions with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls. Christ knows. He is the authority for the soul. (*W. P. Philpot, M.A.*) *Authority the result of knowledge*:—We have lately learned among the laws of solar light which have been revealed to us—for science also has

its late and lagging revelations—the astonishing fact, that beyond the atmosphere of our world, as of all other worlds, all is blackness and darkness, even till the eye again reaches the airy envelopes of other worlds, and catches the bright particular stars which are the sources, direct or mediate, of the rays that play upon its tiny pupil. And so we find it to be round all the circle of science, round every world of knowledge there is also a darkness which no knowledge can penetrate. We live and move and have our being upon the edge of a ring of precipitous and abysmal darkness. But, as we have seen to be the case in the fiery citadels of heaven, so we Christians believe it to be in the moral world; that, dark as its surroundings are in respect of the origin and workings of evil, and all the problems that hang about this inquiry, there abides above and beyond all a Paternal source of Light. "God is a central and Personal Sun, Who gives light to all, and borrows none from any, and in Whom," as Jesus shows Him to us, "is no darkness at all." In that light Jesus dwells, "having no part dark," and from that light He speaks to us, and teaches with an authority which is unique. (*Ibid.*) *Divine audacity*:—Audacity, in reverent sense, better expresses the word than authority. This He did—1. In declaring His pre-existence. 2. In declaring His identity with the Godhead. 3. In assuming Divine prerogatives. 4. In arrogating exclusive rights, and exhausting in Himself the similitude of things. Lessons: 1. A proof that Christ was what He professed to be. 2. This was the only consistent course. 3. An audacious Christ should have an audacious Church. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Authority of our Saviour as a teacher*:—The nature of this authority. 1. It was the authority of truth. There was no artifice or affectation in His manner; no excess; solemnity. Earnestness of conviction apparent. 2. It was derived from the intrinsic truth of the doctrines which Jesus communicated, as from the sincerity with which they were taught. 3. It arose from the purity of His character. It was the authority of a good life. 4. It was the authority of heaven. The Divine assistance was afforded to Jesus; God confirmed what He said, and miracles were wrought. We are too familiar with Christ's doctrine to be astonished at it. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *Truth, not beauty, gives authority to doctrine*:—The question is not whether a doctrine is beautiful, but whether it is true. When we want to go to a place, we don't ask whether the road leads through a pretty country, but whether it is the right road, the road pointed out by authority, the turnpike-road. (*Hare.*) *Christ an unconventional but model preacher*:—I. HE WAS A MODEL AS TO THE MATTER OF HIS PREACHING, which was unconventional. Christ taught Himself. 1. He had nothing higher to represent than Himself. 2. He had nothing that the world required more than Himself. II. HE WAS A MODEL AS TO THE MANNER OF HIS TEACHING, which was unconventional. 1. His positiveness. 2. His self-assurance. 3. His naturalness. 4. His freshness. 5. His suggestiveness. 6. His definiteness. 7. His tenderness. 8. His faithfulness. 9. His consistency. 10. His devoutness. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Vers. 1–4. And, behold, there came a leper.**—*The leper's cure*:—I. THE LEPER'S FAITH. II. Christ's TREATMENT OF THE LEPER. 1. That this disease is a type of moral corruption. 2. God's grace alone can effect a cure. 3. We see the power of prayer. (*W. Wight, M.A.*) *The healing of the leper*:—I. THE LEPER'S OPPORTUNITY. Let every hearer of the word follow Jesus Christ till he finds Him in secret. II. THE LEPER'S DEFILEMENT. 1. The disease of leprosy seems to have appeared first in Israel while in the land of Egypt, the earliest notice of it being in the leprous hand of Moses. Sin, like leprosy, is deeply hereditary. It spreads corruption and dissolution through the entire body. It was viewed with the hopelessness of death. 2. The leprosy, selected by God as the special type of sin, was more than other diseases sent immediately from heaven as the express punishment of sin. Thus with Gehazi. 3. The leper, alone of all the sick, was shut out from the camp of Israel. The sinner excluded from holy fellowship. 4. The leper was appointed to bewail himself as one already dead; he was to become his own mourner (Lev. xiii. 45). These were three of the chief symbols of sorrow for the dead. The leprous sinner is dead, while he lives. III. THE LEPER'S PRAYER. 1. He was convinced of Christ's ability to heal him. This the chief element of saving faith. 2.

There is an appeal to the compassionate will of Jesus. IV. THE LEPER'S CLEANSING. 1. Jesus is moved with compassion, touches, and cleanses. 2. The thanksgiving is seasonable and acceptable in one case; the gratitude, unwise and not obedient in the other. The case of the ten lepers. (*A. Moody Stuart.*) I. THE INDIVIDUAL REFERRED TO—"a leper." No condition more awful and distressing. Striking representation of sin. Leprosy was generally hereditary; small in its first appearance, deep-seated and inveterate in its nature, universal in its prevalence, loathsome in its appearance, excluded from society, incurable by human power, and generally produced a most awful death. II. HIS ADDRESS TO THE REDEEMER. It was an address of humble respect, associated with faith, affecting appeal to his misery and Christ's goodness. III. THE CONDUCT OF THE SAVIOUR. Responded to his appeal; His word was omnific and conveyed His healing power; He put forth His hand to testify to his cleanness; He sent him to the priest that his recovery might be duly attested; He was to present a gift unto the Lord. See how you are to obtain healing and purity. See the way in which Christ will receive you. 1. Bless God for health of body. 2. Especially be anxious for health of soul. 3. Praise God for the means of spiritual health and felicity. 4. Come and be healed. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Healing of the leper*:—I. His lamentable condition. II. His appropriate prayer. III. His complete restoration. IV. His instant dismissal. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Christ's healing touch*:—It was a touch (1) of purity; (2) of sympathy; (3) of power. (*G. Shrewsbury.*) *The touch of Christ cleanseth*:—"Blessed are the merciful," so our Lord had said; now the act follows the word. I. How truly HUMBLE and lowly was Jesus. Free from ostentation He walked among men. Christ can heal the leprosy of pride. II. Though lowly, the Saviour WAS NOT FEARFUL. With all our pride, how many things we fear. We fear labour, difficulty. Let us learn from Christ what courage is. He can cleanse from the leprosy of fear. III. IMPURITY IS ANOTHER FORM OF LEPROSY. IV. INDOLENCE, TOO, IS A LEPROSY. Christ's is an active Spirit, by feeling the influence of which we shall be healed of sloth. V. SELFISHNESS IS LEPROSY. VI. We shall see in DISCONTENT an irritating leprosy, eating into our mind's health and our soul's peace. These are instances of our moral disease. The Saviour's hand can heal. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *Christ's healing touch*:—Notice in Christ's touch of the sick. I. HIS FIXING AND CONFIRMING FAITH IN HIMSELF THE HEALER. It is in condescension to human weakness that He lays His hands on sick folk; we believe in little that we cannot see. Naaman said, "Behold, I thought," &c. Pain and sickness are sensible; we look for equally sensible tokens of the energy of the Restorer. Thus we are touched into attention. II. HIS ANSWER TO OUR CRAVING FOR SYMPATHY. Had Jesus held aloof from the diseased they would never have trusted Him. His touch was healing; some touches irritate. In the Incarnation Christ touches us in sympathy. It is a comfort to be touched by Christ. III. THE SYMBOL OF HIS BEARING OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRYING OUR SINS. He touched our nature in all its pollution. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. (*A. Mackennal, B.A.*) *Touching the loathsome*:—A good Christian lady living in Sweden opened a home for crippled and diseased children—children whom nobody really cared about but herself—and received about twenty of them into it. Amongst them was a little boy of three years old, who was a more frightful and disagreeable object than you ever saw, or are ever likely perhaps to see in your life. He resembled a skeleton. His poor skin was so covered with blotches and sores that he could not be dressed. He was always crying and whining, always peevish, and the poor little fellow gave more trouble almost than all the others put together. The good lady did her best for him; she was as kind as possible—washed him, fed him, nursed him; but the child was so repulsive in his look and ways, that she could not bring herself to like him, and her disgust, I suppose, occasionally appeared in her face. One day she was sitting on the verandah-steps with the child in her arms. The sun was shining warm, the scent of the autumn honeysuckles, the chirping of the birds, the buzzing of the insects, lulled her into a sort of sleep; and in a half-waking, half-dreaming state, she thought of herself as having changed places with the child, and lying there, only more foul, more disagreeable than he was. Over her she saw the Lord Jesus bending, looking intently and lovingly into her face, and yet with a sort of expression of gentle rebuke in it, as if He meant to say, "If I can love and bear with *you*, who are so full of sin, surely you ought, for My sake, to love that guiltless child, who suffers for the sin of his parents." She woke up with a start, and looked in the boy's face. He had waked up too, and she expected to hear him begin to cry; but he looked at her—poor little mite!—very quietly and earnestly for a long time, and then she—sorry for her

past disgust, and feeling a new compassion for him, and a new interest in him—bent her face to his, and kissed his forehead as tenderly as she had ever kissed any of her own babes. With a startled look in his eyes, and a flush in his cheeks, the boy, instead of crying, gave her back a smile so sweet, that she had never seen one like it before; nor will, she thinks, till it will light up his angel features some day on their meeting in heaven. From that day forth a perfect change came over the child. Young as he was, he had hitherto read the feelings of dislike and disgust in the faces of all who approached him, and that had embittered his little heart; but the *touch of human love* swept all the peevishness and ill-nature away, and woke him up to a new and happier life. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Christian reserve in words modified by deeds* (ver. 4):—Why was this reserve insisted on? What would have led the restored leper to act at variance with Christ's command? Two motives—a desire of bearing personal witness to the miraculous power of his Benefactor; or a wish to draw the eyes of men on the favour he had received. Both these we can conceive our Lord would be likely to prohibit—the one, because it was needless; the other, because it was exposed to harm. 1. The first of these objects was prohibited for reasons of our Lord's showing. He did not wish to be the idol of strong excitement. 2. It was not His purpose to take men's minds, as it were, by force. He would lay no compulsion on faith. 3. Then there was also the fact itself, clear and patent to the observation of all men. Then see, on the other hand, how the injunction of our Lord seems to have borne on the personal case of the leper himself. "Go, show thyself to the priest." As if our Lord had said, "Be not occupied with thine own self, make no display of what I have done, let not that distract thee from what thou oughtest to do, thy duty is more than words, more than even magnifying thy blessings." Thus our Lord prohibited *words* that He might enjoin *actions*. The full heart can seldom find adequate vent in words; deeds do not fail us. This is a comfort to the poor. (*J. Puckle, M.A.*) *The prudence of Jesus* (ver. 4):—Why did Jesus give this charge? I. It may be observed that though our Saviour's injunctions of silence and secresy were frequent, they were BY NO MEANS CONSTANT. Many of His miracles were wrought in public. Jews expected a temporal Messiah. He wished to prevent popular rebellion. Fear did not suggest the injunction; but it was the course of courage, benevolence, and wisdom. He guarded Himself against the imputation of political intentions and of turbulence. II. Our Lord desired TO AVOID ALL IDLE AND UNPROFITABLE EXCITEMENTS. A love of display formed no part of His character. Quiet faith was the grace He loved to see. He desired obedience rather than profession. Is all need for caution gone? A due regard to circumstances and consequences no proof of a timid spirit. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *A picture of true faith* (ver. 1–13):—I. WHAT IT SEES IN CHRIST. 1. Both of these applicants assigned to Him the character of a great Healer. Saving faith sees in Christ the attributes of a great Physician. 2. They both saw in Christ a superhuman Power. Saving faith never thinks meanly of Christ. 3. They both saw in Christ a most encouraging beneficence. True faith sees in Christ a Rewarder of them that seek Him. II. WHAT ARE THE AFFECTIONS WITH WHICH IT MOVES TOWARD HIM. 1. It despairs of help in any one but Christ. 2. True faith is also attended with a feeling of great unworthiness. 3. True faith is attended with earnest and practical interest in others. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SAVIOUR MET THE FAITH OF THESE MEN. 1. He graciously entertained their applications. 2. He mercifully granted their requests. 3. He introduced them into another empire. They were to sit down with Abraham, &c. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Human leprosy and its Divine cure*:—I. THE LEPER. 1. He comes. 2. He worships. 3. He pleads. II. THE HEALER. 1. He puts forth His hand. 2. He touched him. 3. He spoke. (1) It is the voice of love; (2) of authority; (3) of power. (*Dr. Bonar.*) In the leper two things are remarkable—the weakness of his body; the virtues of his mind. I. THE WEAKNESS OF HIS BODY. Weakness proceeds from wickedness. The weakness of his body brought him to the Physician of his soul. He felt his misery great; but hoped Christ's mercy was greater. II. THE VIRTUES OF HIS MIND. 1. Faith. 2. Adoration. 3. Wisdom in selecting place, not on Mount, but in valley; time, not interrupting His sermon. 4. Patience. Content to stay God's leisure. 5. Confession. III. NOW LOOK AT THE PHYSICIAN. 1. His mercy. 2. His might. (1) Christ touched the leper, which was forbidden by Moses. Hence He was greater than Moses. (2) Moral duties superior to ceremonial observances. (3) This intimates that Christ was very man in touching, but more than a man in healing with a touch. (4) To demonstrate that Himself and none other cured him. (5) Christ's humility in touching a leper. 1. The leper was commanded to tell no man. We must temper zeal with

knowledge and obedience. 2. It was needless to tell it since his whole body, made clean, was a tongue to tell it. 3. It was absurd that he should boast he was clean, before he was so judged. (*J. Boys, D.D.*) *The leper's prayer*:—I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF LEPROSY AS SET FORTH IN SCRIPTURE. Loathsome—helpless—hopeless. 1. The position of this leper was one of shame and disgrace. He inspired repugnance in those around him. Sin is a disgrace. It ought to fill with shame. 2. Other maladies healed by Christ invited sympathy and help and society. The leper was reminded by everything that he was alone in the world. Each one of us alone before God. II. HIS FAITH. 1. There was a thorough consciousness of his own misery and a perfect conviction of his own helplessness. But he knew it was not too bad for Christ to deal with successfully. 2. The concentrated force which resides in the leper's petition. His entire resignation; he is willing to leave the matter in the hands of Christ. 3. What a Divine concentration there is in the answer—"I will; be thou clean." What a majestic utterance. Christ accepts the recognition of His power. The main point of the answer is, not His power, but His will. (*Dean Howson, D.D.*) *The leper's loneliness as indicating the soul's solitude*:—Each one of us is alone before God. However great may be the human crowd in which we live, however closely we may be connected with one another by affection, by interest, by duty, each soul is solitary in its relation to God. Just as in those great American forests, which stretch in vast succession over mountain and plain—whatever be the interlacing of the foliage—whatever be the beauty which comes from the blending of sunlight and shade—whatever havoc may be done on a great and extensive scale by storm and tempest—each tree, rising from its own root, with its one stem, and with the outgrowth of its own branches, is a solitary tree. So is the human soul, with the outgrowth of its own words and deeds, a solitary soul. No other human soul can share its responsibility. (*Ibid.*) *Secret leprosy.*—I have seen a fair and well-built house, lifting its head proudly above its neighbours, and having a goodly outside presence. And I have looked within, and found that the dry rot had eaten away rafter and beam, and that the house was ready to fall to ruin. During the Crimean War, our ships suffered far more from the dry rot within their timbers, than from the outside attacks of shot and shell. How many lives there are like that grand house, or those stately ships! Outside they are fair to look upon, men envy their wealth, or position, or good fortune, and all the while the foul leprosy is within, eating away the moral nature, making that life a ruin. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *The mark of the leper.*—Is it the leprosy of an impure life, or a selfish nature, or a cruel tongue, or a proud, rebellious spirit? Whatever it be, once more, are you *willing* to be made clean? Before you can find pardon, you must see your sin and hate it. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 5, 10. **There came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him.**—I. THE APPLICANT. He was a centurion, &c. He was a Gentile, and not of the house of Israel. His profession was unfavourable to piety. II. THE SUIT HE PRESENTED. The object of his suit. The way in which he presented it: personal exertion, earnest application, reverence and humility, extraordinary faith. III. THE SUCCESS HE EXPERIENCED. He was honoured by the Saviour, his servant was healed. 1. Admire this example of human excellence. 2. See the grace and power of the Saviour. 3. Let all believers exert their influence for the good of others. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Manliness*:—It is sometimes said that religion is not a thing for men. I. Look at this soldier's FAITH. It was the faith of a man; no sign of weakness or effeminacy. II. Look at this soldier's HUMILITY. It was the humility of a man; not mere subservience, which bends before title, wealth, and perhaps not before God. It is an elevating thing to bend before such a God as ours. III. Look at this soldier's AFFECTION. Human affections not to be sneered at. These are the qualities of true manhood. (*A. G. Bowman, M.A.*) 1. The duty of masters in relation to their servants. 2. The duty of making intercession on behalf of others at the throne of grace, and the encouragement given thereto. 3. The intimate connection between great faith and great humility. (*A. Peebles.*) *Christ's healing the centurion's servant*:—I. In the centurion we have AN INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE TO PETITIONERS. 1. His benevolence in applying to Christ on behalf of the sick servant. He had not been hardened by scenes of war. The prudence and diligence of the servant won his esteem. Providence compensates cruelty or attention towards servants; this sickness brought the centurion into contact with Our Lord. 2. The humility that declined the Saviour's offer—"I will come and heal him." What conscious

power; prompt kindness; unwearied benevolence! The military spirit often haughty. 3. The faith that asked only a word from the Saviour's lips. He was convinced of Christ's supremacy. II. In the Saviour we have AN EDIFYING PATTERN TO BENEFACTORS. 1. His admiration of the centurion's faith. Christ, who saw all the glory of the world—wealth, valour, culture—admires faith more than all. 2. Christ's warning to the Jewish nation—"Many shall come," &c. (ver. 11). 3. The miracle of healing on the servant. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) *The Roman centurion*:—I. IN ALL THE SICK THE HIGHEST HONOUR GIVEN TO A DYING SLAVE. 1. He is honoured by his master because he is faithful and obedient. Also because he was probably a believer in the God of Israel. How anxious ought we to be for the spiritual good of our friends, if centurion so anxious for bodily healing. 2. The whole city is moved on behalf of this poor, dying stranger; it is this which exalts his case above all the other sick in the gospel narratives. 3. The Lord Himself honours this dying stranger, saying, "I will come and heal him." Jesus had a hard day's work, and might have spared Himself this visit to the sick bed. II. THE DEEPEST HUMILITY HID IN THE HEART OF A ROMAN COMMANDER. 1. The centurion is the only example of a man who thought himself unworthy to come to Christ, to speak to Jesus personally. How unworthy are we to address God! 2. He is the only man who thinks his house unworthy of Christ. Probably he had a good official residence. III. THE STRONGEST FAITH FOUND IN A GENTILE SOLDIER. The strength of his faith is connected with the depth of his humility; faith the root of every grace. 1. His faith discerns in the Son of Mary the unseen arm of the Lord. 2. His faith so discerns Christ as to make his own unworthiness no barrier to Christ's work. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *Miracles of healing*:—I. WHAT DISEASE IS; WHAT PLACE IT HOLDS WITH REFERENCE TO THE OFFICE AND WORK OF THE REDEEMER. An important place from the numerous cases of cure. Disease is the beginning of death. Christ came to abolish death; by healing confirmed His mission. He showed the great restoration He came to effect in our whole nature. 1. The Son of Man came to save men's lives, not to destroy them. 2. The importance of these our bodies in the great process of redemption. Modern religion too spiritual: must better the body by civilization and art, as well as soul. II. THE TYPICAL IMPORT OF THESE HEALING MIRACLES. 1. A type of man's great disease—sin. 2. The great command which Christ has over all diseases, as His servants, going and coming at His word. (*H. Alford, D.D.*) *True faith*:—Our Lord did not heal the centurion's servant at once; He delays. He will allow time for the play and energy of faith. What were the characters of the centurion's faith? 1. His faith must have been a thing of gradual growth, and it must have grown under no ordinary conditions. He was a heathen. Many a man in his position would have looked at the religion around him with lack of sympathy. But he had come to see that though the Romans were better than the Jews in courage, the Jews were in possession of a higher faith. One step leads to another. He took interest in the religion of Israel: then led to notice the fame of Jesus. No help came to him from the memories of youth. When adverse circumstances do not kill faith, they brace it. 2. His faith was marked by thoroughness. No flaws in it at a critical hour. 3. His faith was characterized by humility. Alive to the awful majesty of God. The question has been asked, Why should such a disposition and effort as faith have this power? 1. One reason of the religious power of faith is that it implies knowledge of facts of the highest importance to man. 2. It is a test or criterion of the predominant disposition of the soul or character. The believer has moral affinities with the revelation. The habit of insincerity is fatal to faith. 3. The third reason for the religious power of faith is its leverage. It sets the soul in motion, it embodies the element of will. Here a caution is necessary. Faith does not create, but apprehends its object. The healing power of Jesus is not dependent upon the centurion's faith, although exerted as a token of approval of it. Let us pray for the faith of the centurion, persevering, thorough, humble. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Faith powerful because of the knowledge it imparts.*—At the time of the Franco-German War, some twelve years ago, the success of the Germans was largely attributed to the superiority of their intelligence department. They knew so much more about the strength and position of the enemy, and their own available resources, than did the French, that they conquered. Well, faith supplies the general intelligence department of the soul. Faith reports all that is of most importance to a being who is wrestling, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. True, such information may not be acted on. The truant soul often prevails against the sense

of evil; but faith does supply the information which may be acted on, and thus it contributes very efficiently indeed, a first condition of religious success. (*Ibid.*) *Faith powerful because of the will-power it evokes.*—The action of faith is in Scripture represented to us not merely by that of the eye; it is also represented by that of the hand. When Scripture speaks of the believing Christian as "apprehending," or "laying hold on" Christ our Lord, it implies that faith is a hand as well as an eye; that it is not merely spiritualized intelligence, but spiritualized will. The faith which justifies does not merely behold; it claims its object. And the effort of will, which is thus inseparable from faith, means energy—let us be quite sure of it—in a great many more directions than one. (*Ibid.*) *The faith of the centurion*:—I. THAT HE ATTAINED IT UNDER UNFAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES. II. THAT HIS APPLICATIGN WAS MADE, NOT FOR HIMSELF, BUT FOR HIS SERVANT. His faith was thus adorned by fervent charity. We should intercede for others. III. THAT HE DOES NOT IN WORDS ASK ANYTHING. He merely stated to Jesus the fact that his servant was ill. His faith deemed this enough to ensure relief from Christ. Jesus says, "I will come and heal him." In these words He expresses His own gracious method in dealing with mankind. IV. THAT IT WAS TEMPERED WITH HUMILITY. A false faith known by its pride. V. HOW HE USES HIS OWN REASON FOR HELP IN ESTABLISHING THIS EXCELLENT FAITH. "For I am a man under authority," &c. To us the *word only* is spoken. We must be healed through the influence of the written Word, if healed at all. This is the condition of our trial. Some want sensible proof of the truths of religion. (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) *The centurion's faith proved*:—"Go thy way;" "I will stay apart from thy sick servant;" "I will take thee at thy word." I. OBSERVE HOW THIS PROPOSAL WAS CALCULATED TO TRY THE EARNESTNESS OF HIS FAITH. How far we really believe may be gathered from the fruits of our faith. Let us thus test our belief in Providence, revelation, the assistance of Divine grace, of the resurrection of the body. What portion have we by real faith in these? To the centurion Christ's words were words of comfort; to his servant, of healing. Are they to us? He was justified in the profession of his faith. II. HENCE WE MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE SLIGHT DEGREE IN WHICH WE AT PRESENT DERIVE BENEFITS FROM THE PRIVILEGES OF THE GOSPEL. It is only by believing more heartily that we can be healed more fully. III. FROM THESE WORDS WE MAY FORM A JUST APPREHENSION ALSO OF OUR FUTURE SENTENCE. Then it will be said, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." We are graciously justified by faith. (*Ibid.*) *Thy word suffices me*:—I. THE PERFECT READINESS OF CHRIST. II. THE CONSCIOUS ABILITY OF CHRIST. III. THE ABIDING METHOD OF CHRIST. He spake and it was done. 1. This coming back to the original form of working in creation. 2. This method suits true humility. 3. It pleases great faith. 4. It is perfectly reasonable. 5. It is sure to succeed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Divine Word enough.*—When William, Prince of Orange, was invited to come to England and be king, he promised certain offices to his friends, and he gave them written pledges. But when he offered such a pledge to the man who was to be his Lord Chamberlain, that nobleman replied, "Your Majesty's word is sufficient. I would not serve a king if I could not trust in his word." That saying pleased the king, and he who showed such faith in him became his favourite minister. Should we not be willing to take the word of the King of kings? *The Almighty Healer*:—I. AS AN ANSWER TO PRAYER. 1. Whose prayer was it that was here answered? A heathen's. 2. What was the prayer that was here answered? Not personal, but relative, for another. 3. When was this prayer answered—immediately? II. AS AN INSTANCE OF CONDESCENSION. III. AS A DISPLAY OF POWER. IV. AS AN EMBLEM OF HIS GRACE. (*W. Jay.*) *The centurion's faith and humility*:—1. The care of this centurion for his servant was commendable. 2. A beautiful instance of the conquest over prejudice. When prejudice shall be universally overcome, Turks and Hindoos will build Christian temples, and bigots of every sect will unite in seeking the Saviour's mercy for the wretched of our race. 3. An example of great humility. His situation was calculated to foster pride. 4. The power of grace to overcome all the obstacles of rank and condition. 5. His faith. (*W. H. Lewis.*) *The worth of humility.*—Look at the tops of the mountains. They represent pride. Nothing grows there. See how bare and barren they are! And then look at the quiet, low-lying valleys. They represent humility. And see how beautiful they are in their greenness and fertility! The highest branches of the vine or tree represent pride. You find no fruit on them. The low branches represent humility. These you will find bending down with the load of rich, ripe fruit that hangs upon them. A farmer went with his son into the wheat field to see if it was ready for the harvest.

"See, father," said the boy, "how straight those stems hold up their heads! They must be the best ones. Those that hang down their heads, as if they were ashamed, cannot be good for much, I'm sure." The farmer plucked a stalk of each kind, and said, "Look here, foolish child. This stalk that stood up so straight is light-headed, and almost good for nothing; while this that hung its head so modestly is full of the most beautiful grain." (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The greatness of faith*:—Christ knew all the man had gone through to arrive at faith. Faith is a hard work: and Jesus knows it. A man who is not a real Christian sometimes shows a trust which might well put to shame the truest child of God. I. WHAT COMPOSED THE GREATNESS OF HIS FAITH? 1. With few advantages the centurion had gone far in advance of the age. 2. Seizing the first opportunity with personal exertion, and on a loving purpose, he came to Christ. 3. Arrived in His presence, he was earnest, simple, devout. 4. At Christ's favour to him his faith rose higher, and his heart went lower. II. HOW DID THAT FAITH COME? By the ways you cannot see—a grace—a creation. What makes faith grow larger? 1. Look into the constitution of faith. First, it is a clear understanding of the truth; secondly, it is a converting of the abstract truth into a thing real in the mind; thirdly, it is an appropriation, a making your own the truth understood. To increase faith these three points must be cultivated. 1. Keep pure the affections; avoid sin. Faith grows by its own actings. 2. He who would enlarge faith must feed upon promises. 3. To have found Christ as a Saviour gives faith its best impulse. 4. The measurement of everything to a Christian is the falling and rising of his faith. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) It is evident that our religious attainments may not be equal to our opportunities of spiritual growth, and that we may be surpassed in moral excellence by those who have not enjoyed our mercies. I. OUR ADVANTAGES AS THE PROFESSED DISCIPLES OF CHRIST. "In Judah is God known; His Name is great in Israel." Our advantages may be considered as great. 1. In our birth and education. 2. That we have the inspired volume in our own language. 3. The ordinances of the Lord are with us. 4. That we enjoy religious liberty. II. CONSIDER OUR ATTAINMENTS IN THE WAYS OF GOD. "What do we more than others?" 1. Encouragement. If we have a little faith, it is a great mercy. 2. Reproof. Have we not loitered in the ways of God? 3. Instruction. Learn to do better. (*T. Wood.*) *A blessed wonder*:—What was there about the centurion's faith so remarkable that Christ wondered at it? I. THAT THERE WAS SUCH FAITH FOUND IN SUCH A PERSON. Did not expect to find it in a Gentile—a Roman—a soldier, &c. The most astonishing and acceptable faith may be exercised by the most unlikely persons. II. THE SUBJECT OF THE CENTURION'S CONFIDENCE—his servant struck with the palsy. His was a faith which took an impossibility into its hand and threw it aside, &c. There is no sin too black for His blood to wash out the stain. III. THE REALIZING ENERGY OF THIS MAN'S FAITH which led him to deal with the case in such a business-like way. So should we. IV. HE DID NOT ASK FOR A SIGN. Some want to feel "strong convictions," "extraordinary sensations," &c. We must accept the bare word of God in Christ Jesus as the basis of faith, for no other foundation is to be depended on for a moment. V. HIS CONVICTION THAT CHRIST COULD CURE HIS SERVANT AT ONCE. Usually, successful combat with disease requires time. Pardon, a present blessing—not the result of weeks of fasting, &c. VI. HIS DEEP HUMILITY, which instead of weakening his faith only strengthened it. How often the sense of unworthiness keeps from Christ—"I cannot believe, I am so great a sinner," &c. The simplicity of faith often makes it difficult. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Marvellous faith*:—This faith was remarkable, because it was—I. GREAT IN ITSELF. The centurion believed—1. That Christ had absolute power over disease. 2. That He could heal his servant at a distance. 3. By His word. II. GREAT AS COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE JEWS. They were favoured with many aids to faith, while the centurion had many obstacles, &c.; yet the faith of the latter far transcended that of the former. In this we have—1. Warning for privileged people. 2. Encouragement for those who labour under disadvantages. III. JOINED WITH GREAT HUMILITY. "Humility is both the fruit of faith and the companion of faith; an humble soul has a high esteem of Christ, and a low esteem of himself." The faith of the centurion was—IV. GLORIOUSLY REWARDED. 1. His servant was healed. 2. He himself was received as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. (*W. Jones.*) *The soldier and his slave*:—The suppliant's previous history. A centurion—a Gentile. 1. He was a good neighbour. 2. He was a kind master. I. Look at the CENTURION'S ADDRESS to the Saviour. 1. His humility. What words for a proud Roman to address to a poor Jew. 2. His faith. It took its colour from his soldier-life. II. The

SAVIOUR'S COMMENT on the conduct of this noble-minded soldier, and reflection to which it leads. 1. He announces, in connection with this remarkable display of faith, the inbringing of the Gentile nations. The Roman soldier was the earnest-sheaf of a mighty harvest yet to be reaped in heathen lands. 2. That in every profession and occupation of life a man may serve God. His military habits fed his faith. 3. Great faith is fostered in the midst of difficulties. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*). *The centurion's servant* :—1. The value of faith. 2. The value of intercession. 3. The value of Christ's intercession. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *The true disposition required in communicants* :—"I am not worthy." Personal humility, met, limited, and directed by personal faith. Many say of the Holy Communion that they are unworthy. 1. But this humility, if really what it ought to be, should lead us directly to the performance of this sacred duty. Our humility should take the form of that in our text. The communicant can't be worthy as far as real worthiness is concerned. 2. But it is at this point that our humility should be met, limited, and directed by our faith. The centurion's sense of unworthiness did not turn him aside from duty, from beseeching our Lord to help him; it delicately gave greater force to his request. 3. Our humility, if sincere, will issue in our greater confidence in God's mercy. (*J. Puckle, M.A.*) *Faith where not expected* :—On which side of the garden wall, children, would you expect to get the finest fruit—on the inside, where the gardener has carefully tended the fruit, or on the other side, where the seed has accidentally dropped and grown up by itself? On the inside, would not you say? And if you found on the other side more order and better fruit than inside, you would be very much astonished. So was Jesus when He found this heathen man with such a beautiful trust and character as He had not met with among His own people—the sons of Abraham. *Faith superior to circumstances* :—The temptations incident to a military life are neither few nor small. Camps are not churches. Barracks are often baleful. We may, therefore, safely affirm that if a holy life can be lived there, it can be lived anywhere. "God is able to make you stand," though your lot be cast in "slippery places." The leaves of some plants may be plunged in water and taken out dry. They are so defended by a fine, thick down all over their surface that water will lie in "miniature lakes" in their hollows for hours, and leave no tinge of dampness. By God's grace the plant of piety may be surrounded by evil influences and yet preserved from their power. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *A soldier's faith* :—One day when Napoleon I. was reviewing his troops in Paris, he let fall the reins of his horse upon the animal's neck, when the proud charger galloped away. Before the rider could recover the bridle, a common soldier ran out from the ranks, caught the reins, stopped the horse, and placed the bridle again in the hands of the Emperor. "Much obliged to you, captain," said Napoleon. The man *immediately* believed the chief and said, "Of what regiment, sir?" Napoleon, delighted with his quick perception and manly trust in his word, replied, "Of my guards," and rode away. As soon as the Emperor left the soldier laid down his gun, saying, "He may take it who will," and started for the Company of Staff Officers . . . and so the soldier came duly to his post as Captain of Napoleon's Guard. (*Sibbs.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **Many shall come from the east and west.**—*The extent of God's family* :—I. THAT THE NUMBER OF THE SAVED SHALL BE GREAT. "Many." Might expect the contrary from aspect of society. God has secret servants. II. THAT THE LARGE COMPANY SHALL BE MADE UP OF MEN FROM ALL NATIONS. "From the east and west." III. THAT ALL THESE PERSONS SHALL BE UNITED IN HEAVEN IN SOCIETY. "Sit down together." The happiness of heaven will not be solitary; it will not be without union. IV. THIS CHANGE TAKES PLACE IN HEAVEN. Must not take earthly conceptions of this celestial state; it is a state connected with God. V. WE MAY INFER SOMETHING WITH REGARD TO THE NATURE AND COMPLETENESS OF THE HAPPINESS THAT WILL BE ENJOYED BY THE SAINTS IN GLORY. 1. Rest. "They shall sit down." 2. Sovereignty. They shall sit on thrones as kings. (*J. W. Cunningham, M.A.*) The connection. Christ receives applications from all sorts of characters. The centurion—conscious of personal unworthiness—concerned for his domestics—unbounded confidence in the capacity of Christ. I. THE EXULTING PROPHECY. Implies that God is no respecter of persons (Isa. xlv. 6, lix. 19; Mal. i. 11); that many shall be saved; that heaven is an exalted state of felicity, rest, and social intercourse, &c. (Chron. xxv. 10, xxvi. 29; Luke xiv. 15, xxii. 30; Rev. xix. 7, 9). Loyal submission to the King, enjoyment of His presence, admiration of His glories; laud and magnify His name. II. THE AGENCY BY WHICH IT SHALL BE EFFECTED. Mani-

fold—chiefly by the preaching of the gospel (1 Cor. i. 21); adapted—to every stage of human society, to every order of mind, and to every moral condition; efficient—the power of the Holy Ghost, awakening, convicting, &c. (1 Thess. i. 5, &c.). "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." (*A. Tucker.*) *Bigotry must not limit the number of the saved:*—The readiest way in the world to thin heaven, and replenish the regions of hell, is to call in the spirit of bigotry. This will immediately arraign, and condemn, and execute all that do not bow down and worship the image of *our* idolatry. Possessing exclusive prerogatives, it rejects every other claim—"Stand by, I am sounder than thou. The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we!" How many of the dead has this intolerance sentenced to external misery, who will shine like stars in the kingdom of our Father! How many living characters does it not reprobate, who are placing in it all their glory! No wonder, if under the influence of this consuming zeal, we form lessening views of the number of the saved: "*I only am left*"—yes, they are few indeed, if none belong to them who do not belong to your party—that do not see with your eyes—that do not believe election with you, or universal redemption with you—that do not worship under a steeple with you, or in a meeting-house with you—that are not dipped with you, or sprinkled with you! But hereafter we shall find that the righteous were not so circumscribed. (*Jay.*) *Heathen converts:*—Mosheu, an African chief, visited Dr. Moffat at Kuruman. The missionary availed himself of the opportunity to speak of the "one thing needful," but without apparent effect. After some time Mosheu repeated his visit to Kuruman, bringing with him a very large retinue. He was agonizing to enter the kingdom of God. "When first I visited you," he said to Dr. Moffat, "I had only one heart, but now I have come with two. I cannot rest; my eyes will not slumber, because of the greatness of the things you told me on my first visit." *Heaven and Hell:*—I. A GLORIOUS PROMISE. 1. It is a land of rest—"sit down." 2. The good company they sit with, "Abraham and Isaac," &c. 3. *Many* shall come. I have no wish for a small heaven; many mansions. 4. Where they come from—from all places and classes, even the most hopeless. 5. The certainty—"shall." II. THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM CAST OUT. 1. Those noted for externals in religion. 2. The children of pious fathers and mothers. 3. They are to be cast out. Where to? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The heavenly state:*—1. Many will be there. What are "many" in the Divine authentic? Must not lower the standard of admission. 2. The imagery that of a banquet, the attitude assigned to the assembly. Rest and repose after labour and conflict. 3. The celestial citizens are to know one another, else it would little avail to sit down with Abraham, &c. The meeting-place of generations. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The wonderful M.:*—The Countess of Huntingdon used to say, "She thanked God for the wonderful letter M, for it turned 'any' into 'many;' thus the Word of God reads, 'Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called' (1 Cor. i. 26), therefore she could be found amongst the 'not many.'" The wonderful "M" shows forth the extent of God's grace. Man does not enter heaven by virtue of his poverty or his riches, sufferings or rejoicings, morality or immorality, but by virtue of the atonement and the shedding of the precious blood of Christ. None can rightly say, "I have had so much trial and trouble down here that I am sure God will provide a place for me;" nor can they say, "I am so noble, and have such power in this world that I surely must have a place above." God is no respecter of persons. All, whatever their station or circumstances, find but one entrance into eternal glory, even through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—the only door, the one way, by which alone any can be saved. *The children of the kingdom:*—I. BY THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM ARE INTENDED THE JEWS, who were God's peculiar people. 1. God was in an especial manner their King. He revealed Himself as their King and Saviour. He fought against their enemies. 2. As a king He laid down laws which they were to follow. 3. They were not only subjects of the kingdom; they were to be children of it. 4. The justice of that sentence, which, after their ejection, deprived the children of the kingdom of their glorious inheritance. II. HOW WERE THEY CAST INTO OUTER DARKNESS. 1. They were withdrawn immediately from that which is light even on earth—the enjoyment of God's grace, and the enlightenment of His Holy Spirit. This was outer darkness of soul. 2. They were driven into the darkness of sorrow and affliction. III. THE CAUSE why this happened—their unbelief. We are now the children of the kingdom; have God's laws written in our hearts. (*J. Garbett.*)

**Ver. 14. Sick of a fever.**—Peter was a disciple, yet affliction was permitted to

visit his domestic circle. *Affliction at home*:—1. Develops social sympathy. 2. Brings out family characteristics. 3. Unites the household in devotional exercises. 4. Evokes practical and affectionate gratitude. (*Dr. Parker.*) *Fevers at Capernaum*:—How do you account for the prevalence of fevers at Capernaum? for it was there, of course, that "Peter's wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever." Fevers are still prevalent in this region, particularly in summer and autumn, owing to the extreme heat acting upon the marshy plains, like that of El Batihah, at the influx of the Jordan. (*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*) *Domestic affliction an improving ministry*:—You would not be half the man you are but for your sick child; your tendency is towards bumptiousness, aggressiveness of speech, sternness, harshness. You have a magisterial cast and bearing in your life; but that little sick child has softened you, and been like a benediction upon your life. Men now take notice of your voice and say, "What new tones have subtly entered into it; how different the kind grasp, how noble the new bearing, how impressive the sacred patience, how touching and pathetic the sadness of the face!" Afflictions do not spring out of the dust: do not be impatient with them; we need something to soften this hard life. O, if it were all buying, selling, getting gain, outrunning one another in a race for wealth in which the racers take no time to recover themselves—there would be no gardens on the face of the earth, no places consecrated to floral beauty, no houses built for music, no churches set up for prayer. But affliction helps to keep us right, affliction brings us to our knees. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. **Himself took our infirmities.** *The preciousness of Christ's sympathy with our infirmities*:—Our Lord's union with our nature was actual and personal, &c. In this point of light, the truth of Christ's sympathy with our infirmities presents itself with an actuality and vividness the most realizing and personal. The proper discussion of our subject suggests the consideration of: I. THE INFIRMITIES WHICH APPERTAIN TO OUR HUMANITY. Physical—as the consequence of sin, and not in themselves sinful: New Testament illustrations. May become occasions of sin. But Christ's sympathy extends to all the infirmities to which His people are subject—the inbeing of sin; constitutional infirmities—varied; sufferings and persecutions, provocations, trials and temptations; proneness to look to the dark providences of God, rather than to His power, faithfulness to live in the providence, &c. II. OUR LORD'S PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THOSE INFIRMITIES. It was a *personal* act; by His assumption of our humanity; by taking upon Him our sins. III. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE VARIED INFIRMITIES OF HIS PEOPLE. Fitted to sympathize—"touched," &c. Let us be patient and sympathizing towards the infirmities of our fellow Christians. (*Dr. O. Winslow.*) *Christ's identity and sympathy with His people*:—I. THE COMPLETENESS OF CHRIST'S IDENTITY WITH HIS PEOPLE. 1. Our true nature. 2. In its entirety. 3. In our trials. II. THE CLOSENESS OF HIS SYMPATHY. Identity is the source of sympathy. Christ had sympathy with His followers. (*H. Stowell, M.A.*) *The sympathy of Jesus*:—The miracles which Christ had wrought. I. A REVELATION OF CHRIST—of the sympathetic heart of Jesus. The working of healing miracles not with Jesus a matter of calculation, rather the spontaneous forth-putting of endowment, in response to need; a revelation of the grace in Himself. They show His love even more than His power. II. A PROPHECY OF BETTER DAYS FOR THE WORLD. They are signs that disease does not belong to the true order of nature; a prophecy that the true order shall be restored. III. AN INSPIRATION TO ALL WHO HONOUR THE NAME OF CHRIST AND CHERISH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. We cannot do as Christ did; but we may adopt His aim, and work for it according to our ability. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*)

Ver. 19–22. **Master, I will follow Thee.** *Impetuous and hesitating discipleship*:—I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THE IMPETUOUS SCRIBE. He declares his determination to follow Christ, lead where He may. Christ checks rather than encourages the man. We may regard the determination of the scribe as—the resolution of an unreflecting emotionalist, and an ambitious worldling. Our Lord's words have important applications in our own day. II. THE SUGGESTIVENESS OF CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THE SHRINKING AND HESITATING DISCIPLE. Christ might have seen in this request a sensitive shrinking from the sacrifice and sufferings involved in following Him. The man had heard the words in verse 20, or Christ might have foreseen that to grant it, would be attended with fatal results to his yet unripened discipleship. Immediate decision was the essential conditions of his salvation. (*J. Taylor.*) *Followers on the sea-shore*:—I. THE FOLLOWERS ON THE SEA-SHORE. 1.

The hasty follo er who is the first who presents himself, and he is sifted by Christ. 2. The tardy follower is hastened by Jesus. He is called not to bury the dead, but to preac' the life-giving word. 3. The last of the three followers is halting with a divided heart, and is reproved. It is not the claims of family, but the clinging of His own unloosened attachment that divides and detains Him. II. THE PASSAGE ACROSS THE LAKE. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *The corrective test*:—I. High-sounding words are not always a proof of deeply rooted faith. II. Christ should be followed for what He is in Himself, as well as for what He has to bestow. III. The omniscience of Christ enables Him to detect the most hidden motives of men. IV. The poverty of Christ may well excite our wonder and gratitude. (*H. G. Parrish, B.A.*) *Following Christ*:—Every man has a "Master"; business, home, &c., command and we obey. Every person has a master passion, also every man *is* a master. Has the power of will; is a servant by consent. The resultant of these two facts, is necessitated relationship to something. I. Christ is a valuable companion because He embodies a lofty and PERFECT MORAL IDEAL, the expression of the grandest conception of truth this world has ever known. He gives the idea and the grace to imitate it. II. Christ is a PLEASANT companion. Imparts joy and sense of security—hope. III. Christ is a SAFE guide. But if a man is to follow Christ there are some conditions which he must observe. 1. There must be a fixed purpose. "I will" must be will and not impulse only. 2. You will require courage. 3. You will have to take on the habits of the Lord Jesus. You cannot follow Him and be selfish and narrow. (*J. R. Day, D.D.*) *The lower duty hinders the higher*:—It is not that you desire wrong things; it is not that you desire to avoid right things; but you say," Suffer me first to do the inferior, and then I shall be ready for the superior. Suffer me first to take care of myself. Suffer me first to take care of my household. Suffer me first to take care of my business. Suffer me first to take care of my party. Suffer me first to look after this enterprise, and *then*——." No! this constant habit of humbling the higher, and making it subordinate to the lower; this constant preference of the inferior to the superior, works demoralization. A man does not need to throw away his Bible, nor defy his God, nor sell his soul voluntarily. He only needs to say, "Suffer me first to do this lesser thing." The moment that is done, there will be another "Suffer me first" in its place. And so we shall put the inferior duties in the place of higher duties, and go through life, and fail at last. (*Beecher.*) *Religion must surmount difficulty*:—A man fascinated with the idea of raising fruit, goes to the country and sets out his orchards with bright anticipations as to the result. But no sooner have his trees got well started than all nature becomes his tormentor. The frost blasts the blossoms. The worms gnaw the roots. The insects sting both blossom and roots. And when he has toiled year after year, and brought his trees into such a state that he thinks that he is going to have a profusion of delicious fruit, the black wart seizes his plum-trees, and the gum-canker attacks his cherry-trees, and the winter-blight kills his pear-trees, and his apple-trees will not bear anyhow; and at last disgusted with raising fruit, he comes back to the city, and says, "I prefer, after all, that other people should be my pomologists. I have had enough of gardening." (*Ibid.*) *Religion more than resolution*:—Oh! what pictures there would be, if I could only take the trouble to learn to paint the things that I dream about! Such frescoes! Such magnificent renderings of magnificent scenes! Such portraitures! The trouble is, that while my imagination is fruitful enough, it is a shiftless and careless fruitfulness, and it never comes down lower than that, and dies in the nest where it was born. I think of things, and turn them over, and turn them over, and make pictures, and forget them, and make pictures, and forget them; but I am not an artist. An artist is a man whose wishes get down through his shoulders to his fingers; and he *makes* what he wishes he was going to make. He *does*. He turns into account that which would otherwise die as smoke or cloud. Men of reverie are like clouds that never rain. Men of function shower down resolutions in the form of drops, and results spring up from them. (*Ibid.*) *Religious impressions not to be checked*:—I. THE IMPORTANCE OF A PROMPT AND RESOLUTE DEVOTEDNESS OF MIND TO THE GREAT CONCERN OF RELIGION. This is to follow Christ, and includes: 1. The candid reception of His revelation. 2. It involves a surrender of ourselves to Christ as our Saviour and Governor. 3. It imparts an ardent solicitude for the prevalence of his religion. II. THE EGREGIOUS FOLLY OF STIFLING RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS IN FAVOUR OF SUCH DEVOTEDNESS, BY WORLDLY CONSIDERATIONS. "Let the dead bury their dead" 1. Some are prevented from an immediate compliance with their

convictions, by the notion that their happiness is to be found in the world, which they would be required to abandon. 2. Some by the remonstrances of worldly relatives and friends. 3. Some by some particular worldly object of pursuit, upon which, for the moment, they are intent, and which promises soon to leave them at liberty. (*J. Leifchild.*) I. THE MEN OF THE WORLD ARE BUT DEAD MEN. The sentence of death passed upon all men still abides: it is not repealed. As dead as men in their graves. You rotting above the ground, and they under (Rom. viii. 10). As there is in the sinner a seeming life, so is there in the righteous a seeming death. They may seek a new life. 1. They may become alive in their apprehensions of God. 2. They are alive in their devotions to God. 3. These awakened sinners are alive in their obedience to God. II. AS THE MEN OF THE WORLD ARE, SO ALSO ARE THE THINGS ABOUT WHICH THEY ARE CONVERSANT. They are dead things, they have no real life in them. They perish in the using. (*W. Gilpin, M.A.*) *Jesus a homeless wanderer:*—I. THE STRIKING FACT. II. REASONS FOR THIS. 1. As the Son of Man He was the federal representative of our race, in certain important respects.—He showed: (1) That man has forfeited all right to shelter upon earth. (2) That we should seek shelter elsewhere, and not look for our portion on earth. 2. In the work of our redemption it was needful for Jesus to stoop thus low. (1) It was part of the penalty He bore. (2) He went down to the lowest of men. (3) It was to illustrate the unearthliness of His religion. III. Some additional reflections: 1. Christian, adore the humiliation and condescension of your loving Lord. 2. Be willing if need be to suffer shame and poverty with Him. 3. If more happily circumstanced be amazed and overwhelmed with gratitude at your superior lot. 4. Yet set not your affections on earthly possessions. 5. Nor despise poorer brethren. 6. If offering to follow Christ, count the cost. 7. In another sphere, how this saying is reversed. (*T. G. Horton.*) *Not where to lay His head:*—A little boy, between four and five years old, was one day reading to his mother in the New Testament; and when he came to these words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head," his eyes filled with tears, his tender breast heaved, and at last he sobbed aloud. His mother inquired what was the matter; but for some time he could not answer her. At length, as well as his sobs would let him, he said, "I am sure, mamma, if I had been there, I would give Him my pillow." *The foxes and birds better accommodated than Christ:*—I. CHRIST'S REMARK ON THE PROVISION MADE FOR THE HABITATION OF THE INFERIOR CREATURES. Men have reason, are able to contrive habitations for themselves; Providence hath furnished them with trees, stones, &c., for this end. Suitable provision also made for the inferior creatures. Tame animals are accommodated by the care of man; wild beasts directed by instinct to proper places (Job xxxix. 27; Psa. civ. 17). II. CHRIST'S REPRESENTATION OF HIS OWN DESTITUTE CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. How wise and faithful was Christ in this representation; how much instruction doth it convey to His followers. A test of sincerity. 2. The condecension of Christ in submitting to these hardships is truly admirable. 3. How reasonable is it that the disciples of Christ should be humble when they have, and contented when they have not, the comfortable accommodations of life! 4. With how much pleasure should we think of the exaltation and glory of Christ in heaven. (*J. Orton.*)

Vers. 23–27. **And when He was entered into a ship.**—1. A storm arose while the disciples were following their Master. Sea of life. Storms in the voyage—even when sailing according to the Master's orders. 2. While the disciples were alarmed, their Master was asleep. It was the sleep of real innocence. He was free from fear. Peter. Argyle on the eve of his execution. It was the sleep of apparent indifference. Reasons. 3. In their distress the disciples implored their Master's assistance. Faith in His power and love. Leading to earnest prayer. Embodied in a brief sentence. 4. The disciples were reproved by their Master. Not for disturbing His repose. For their fears as indicative of their little faith. Faith is the true antidote against fear. Much fear, little faith: little faith, much fear. 5. The disciples were delivered by their Master. His dominion over nature. 6. The disciples uttered an exclamation of profound feeling in reference to the interposition of their Master. Gratitude, admiration, worship. (1) Be prepared for storms. (2) Amid all storms call on Christ. (3) Adore and praise Him for the deliverance He affords. (*Various.*) *The disciples in a storm:*—I. THE STORM AROSE WHILE THE DISCIPLES WERE FOLLOWING OUR LORD. II. WHILE HIS DISCIPLES WERE PERPLEXED AND ALARMED HE WAS ASLEEP. 1. Sleep of refresh-

ment. 2. Wonderful. 3. Designed. III. THEY CAME TO HIM AND AWOKE HIM, SAYING, "LORD, SAVE US." IV. OUR LORD REPROVES HIS DISCIPLES. V. WHAT EFFECT HAD ALL THIS UPON HIS DISCIPLES? 1. Admiration. 2. Praise. 3. Familiarize your minds with Christ as present with you in all difficulties. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ stilling the tempest*:—I. THE DANGER. May not the *body* of man be compared to a ship; and the soul which he carries within that body be likened to a treasure. The world as a current; trials like storms. The disciples may aptly represent the *Church*, and the hazard they were in, the extremity to which the Church is often reduced. One of the chief reasons why our Lord permitted His disciples to be thus tried was—1. To teach them humility. 2. To exercise faith and patience. II. THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE DISCIPLES UNDER THE DANGER. 1. Distrust of God. 2. Distrust of His goodness and ability. Just before they had seen Him cure the palsy, &c. 3. Reproof. 4. In one respect worthy of imitation, they had resource to Christ. III. THE GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE EFFECTED BY OUR BLESSED LORD. 1. The Divinity of our Lord. 2. How compassionate our Lord was to His timid disciples. 3. The man whose hope is in the Lord his God has no cause for alarm.—(*J. Seger, M.A.*) *The storm*:—I. The way of obedience leads through many a scene of boisterous trouble. II. Through whatever storms the way of Christian obedience may lie, they are for some good purpose. III. Whatever storms may overtake Christian voyagers, there is this consoling fact: Christ is with them in the ship. IV. Jesus not only comforts by His presence, He also gloriously delivers by His power. Christ's help may be deferred, but will be timely and complete. V. A prophecy of the blessedness which Christ's finished work is to bring to the world, and to those who embark with Him in the voyage of life—Peace. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Christ stilling the storm*:—I. THE STORM. We are closely connected with the material world, waves may dash against our spirits as well as our bodies. 1. The storm in the elements of nature. 2. The storm in the bosom of the Church. II. THE CALM. 1. In the elements of nature? 2. The calm in the kingdom of grace. Application:—1. Have you embarked with Christ? 2. Flee to Jesus now, and cry, 'Lord, save: we perish." 3. If we are embarked with Christ, learn His claims to confidence. 4. This miracle speaks to ministers. They must learn by experience the value of the Saviour they recommend. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) I. THE PASSAGE ACROSS THE LAKE. 1. Christ commands His disciples to pass over to the other side of the sea. He left the attractive for the repulsive. 2. The voyage is undertaken suddenly—"even as He was." Disciples should hold themselves ready to go at a moment's notice on their Master's service. 3. He takes the apostles with Him: the school of the prophets, in which He is training the ministers of the Word. Daily lessons in providence. 4. Besides Christ's immediate company in their own ship, a number of other disciples accompanied Him in "other little ships." II. JESUS ASLEEP IN THE STORM. 1. An apt figure of the homeless state of Jesus on earth. 2. The holy rest of the weary workman after earnest labour. He redeems this time for rest. 3. A quiet sleep in the midst of danger. 4. The sleep of innocence—a contrast to the sleep of Jonah in guilt. III. JESUS STILLING THE TEMPEST. 1. The calm is in answer to the earnest cry of the disciples. We should pray in time of need. The cry of the disciples brought deliverance to many around; we never pray for ourselves without benefitting others. 2. Jesus stills the tempest by His word. An image of many a believer's life. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *Miracles of power*:—In the former miracles love and mercy are prominent; in this, power.—(*H. Alford, D.D.*) *The stilling of the tempest*:—I. AN APPALLING SCENE TO CONTEMPLATE. 1. Of imposing grandeur. 2. Of no ordinary peril and distress. 3. Highly instructive in its symbolical signification. "The wicked are like the troubled sea." II. THE CONSTERNATION WHICH WAS FELT. 1. To whom they applied. 2. The language in which they addressed Him. The last of these cries given by St. Matthew. (1) It is short; (2) It is appropriate; (3) It is fervent. III. THE WONDERFUL POWER AND AUTHORITY THAT WERE MANIFESTED. This act. 1. By what it was preceded. He rebuked the disciples before rebuking the winds. 2. The manner in which it was done. 3. The result that followed. IV. THE AMAZEMENT WHICH WAS PRODUCED. 1. In their wonder there was considerable awe and terror. 2. Notwithstanding their excited emotions, they expressed themselves in language eminently befitting so memorable an occasion; not like St. Peter on Mount of Transfiguration. (*Expository Outlines.*) *A man destitute of fear*:—A simple but characteristic incident is recorded in connection with the early history of Lord Nelson. On one occasion his mother was telling him that he should fear a certain thing, and not go near to it; he at once turned round to her, and asked, "Mother, what is fear?" It was a

question which shows how true it is that the boy is father to the man; for if ever there was a character of dauntless intrepidity it was he. Now it is evident that there was no need for the disciples to have asked such a question; what fear was they well knew, and it was for giving way to it that they were now gently rebuked by our Lord. To us also He addresses the same words, for He would have each of us to say with the Church of old, "I will trust, and not be afraid;" and, among many other instances, the present case is intended, and peculiarly adapted, to strengthen the one feeling, and to remove the other. *Storms on the Sea of Galilee:*—Dr. Buchanan experienced one of these sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee. "While gazing on the suggestive scenery around us, our earnest conversation was suddenly disturbed by a movement among our Arab crew. All at once they pulled in their oars, stepped their mast, and began to hoist their long and very ragged lateen sail. What can the fellows mean to do with a sail in a dead calm? But they were right. There comes the breeze, rippling and roughening the lately glassy surface of the lake. It reaches us before the sail is rightly set. A few minutes more, and it is blowing hard. The bending and often-spliced yard threatens to give way, and the tattered leach of the sail seems as if it would rend right up, and go away in shreds. To go upon a wind with such a craft is impossible. There is nothing for it but to slack away, and run before it. . . . "And where are we going now?' was our first inquiry, when things had been got a little into shape. 'Where the wind will take us,' was the reply of the old greybeard at the helm. And away we went, the lake now all tossed into waves, and covered with foaming white heads, as if a demon had got into its lately tranquil bosom—an adventure that afforded us a fresh illustration of the reality of those events which the narratives of Scripture relate." (*Clerical Furlough in the Holy Land.*) *Fearless in danger:*—Some years ago, an officer in the army, who was a pious man, was drafted abroad with his regiment. He accordingly embarked, with his wife and children. They had not been many days at sea when a violent storm arose, which threatened the destruction of the ship, and the loss of all their lives. Consternation and terror prevailed among the crew and passengers; his wife also was greatly alarmed. In the midst of all, he was perfectly calm and composed: his wife, observing this, began to upbraid him with want of affection to her and her children, urging, that if he was not concerned for his own safety, he ought to be for theirs. He made no reply, but immediately left the cabin, to which he returned in a short time with his drawn sword in his hand, and with a stern countenance pointed it to her breast; but she, smiling, did not appear at all disconcerted or afraid. "What!" said he, "are you not afraid when a drawn sword is at your breast?" "No," answered she, "not when I know that it is in the hand of one who loves me." "And would you have me," replied he, "to be afraid of this storm and tempest, when I know it is in the hand of my heavenly Father, who loves me?" *Cæsar in the ship:*—One of the greatest of the old Romans was once overtaken by a storm at sea, and when the captain of the ship was full of terror, the conqueror said, "Why do you fear for the ship? Do you not know that it carries Cæsar?" Let us, as Christians, remember that the ship in which we must cross the waves of this troublesome world, is the ship of the Church, and that it carries Jesus. *A straight course:*—A certain noble family of England, which gained its position by the victories of an ancestor at sea, has for its motto the single word—*Thus*. That word is a nautical term of command, which means that the steerman is to keep the ship's head straight on the course which she is sailing. This is the true motto for a Christian. Let him keep his course straightforward, through the storm and tempest, through dangers and difficulties, steering the course of DUTY, with Jesus as his companion and his guide. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *Lord, save us, we perish:*—I. MAN IN HIS HELPLESS CONDITION AS A PERISHING CREATURE. II. SALVATION ALONE IS OF THE LORD. 1. It is of the Lord in its origin. 2. In its execution. 3. In its bestowment. III. PERSONAL APPLICATION TO CHRIST IS NECESSARY. 1. This implies knowledge of Christ. 2. Faith in His Holy Name. 3. Importunity of desire. IV. Such application to Christ shall never fail. 1. Because it is His own appointment. 2. It is His delight to save His people. 3. He never allows His believing people to perish. (*T. B. Baker.*) *In the storm:*—1. That we must not be fearful in the time of danger. 2. Not to be fearful in the storm of everyday life. (*Wilmot Buxton, M.A.*) *The Saviour in the ship:*—I. What absolute helplessness is. II. When, at last, the voyager comes sincerely and anxiously to that, and utters the prayer, Christ does not refuse him because he did not call sooner, or because when he prayed his prayer was not the purest and loftiest of prayers. III. The person of Jesus, Son of God and Son

of Man, is the actual bond of a living unity between the visible world of nature and the invisible world of God's spiritual kingdom. IV. The miracle thus discloses to us the true practical use both of the gospel miracles themselves, and of every other gift and blessing of heaven, in leading us up in affectionate gratitude to Him who stands as the central figure among all those visible wonders, and the originator of all the peace-making powers which tranquilize and reconcile the turbulences of the world. (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) *Christ's supremacy over nature* :—I. THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST OVER ALL TURBULENT AND SEEMINGLY UNCONTROLLABLE FORCES. 1. The act represents Christ's supremacy over the physical world. 2. This act is symbolical of Christ's supremacy over the mental and moral disorders which agitate the world. II. THE BEARING OF CHRIST'S SUPREMACY ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF TRUTH AND CONDUCT. 1. In relation to His promises to each of His disciples. He will fulfil His word both because He wishes and can. 2. In relation to the establishment of His kingdom on earth. 3. In relation to the day of resurrection and judgment. Christ's supremacy over nature affects diversely different classes of character. 1. It is an occasion of fear and dread to those who are alien in heart and life to Him. 2. Of consolation to those who are loyal to Him. (*C. Chapman, M.A.*) 1. Undertake no enterprize in which Christ does not accompany you. 2. Distinguish between storms which you have provoked, and the storms which God has appointed. 3. Be assured that all forces are under the control of Divine beneficence. (*Dr. J. Parker.*)

Vers. 28–33. **There met Him two possessed with devils.**—*Christ and the demoniac* :—I. The IMMEDIATE CONNECTION of the world of darkness WITH the evil heart. II. The GREAT POWER of the inhabitants of darkness OVER the evil heart. III. The UTTER IMPOTENCY OF MAN TO DELIVER THE POSSESSED from the power of the inhabitants of darkness. IV. THE WEAKNESS OF THE POWERS OF DARKNESS IN CONFLICT WITH CHRIST. Remarks: 1. Beware of tampering with evil. 2. The wish of evil will ever be self-destructive. 3. If Jesus has cured you show it by causing joy where you have caused so much misery—in your home. (*F. Wallace.*) *Sin and salvation* :—I. SOME ASPECTS OF SIN. 1. Its contagiousness. 2. Its anti-social tendency—"Neither abode in any house." 3. Its embrutalization of character. 4. Its dread of righteousness. II. SOME ASPECTS OF SALVATION. 1. It is begun in expulsion, not repression, of evil principles and desires. 2. God accounts as nothing whatever material loss may be incurred in its effectuation. Souls more than swine. 3. Its moral and spiritual results have a counterpart and external evidence in improved material and social condition. 4. The surest proof of the reality of its accomplishment is renunciation of personal preferences in obedience to Christ's commands. (*Pulpit Analyst.*) *The accusing conscience of the wicked* (ver. 29) :—1. Bad men must sooner or later acknowledge their deserts. 2. They believe that a "time" for punishment of their sins will come. 3. A guilty conscience dreads the presence of Christ. (*American Homiletic Monthly*). *Christ sending the demons from the man into the swine* :—I. THE MALICE OF SATAN. 1. The possession. 2. The dwelling of the man—among the tombs. A melancholy madness. 3. The fierceness of the demoniac—he could not be bound. II. THE GRACE AND JUSTICE OF THE SAVIOUR. 1. The grace displayed in expelling the demons from the man. The devils saw their Master. 2. The justice manifested in the entrance of the demon into the swine. III. THE RESULT OF THE MIRACLE. 1. The swineherds flee to carry the tidings. Fear gives wings to their feet. 2. The demoniac comes and sits at Jesus' feet. 3. The Gadarenes entreat Christ to depart, and He goes. 4. The recovered demoniac seeks to be allowed to follow Christ, and is refused. Learn :—1. Let us shudder at the malice, power, and misery of fallen spirits. 2. Fly for refuge to the power and grace of Christ, and dread the thought of desiring Christ to depart. 3. See the place and duty of those whom Christ has healed. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) *The authority of right over wrong* :—1. That this was not a work of authority done by our Master in His own country. He had passed from His own country. Truth knows no limitations; a man that has it owes it to mankind. 2. The sad spectacle that met our Lord was a man in ruins. 3. The moment our Saviour came into the presence of this man, he brought a distributing force. Two spheres came together that were antagonistic. Evil claims its rights, liberty. This is the keynote of the opposition in modern society to every attempt to make men better. 4. We should oppose these malign influences from self-interest, and in self-defence. It is not going away from our own affairs when we attempt to break down everything that is destroying the industry and virtue of

society. We are bound to meddle with the demonized part of society. Men ought to stand on the ground of goodness and assert the dignity of rectitude over immorality. (*Beecher.*) *A man in ruins*:—There is nothing sadder; and, sad to say, nothing more common. No one can see great desolation by conflagration without having a kind of commercial sympathy. The consumption of so much property, the waste and ruin of so many costly structures, is painful to behold. No man can learn that a storm has swept the sea, and that fleets and merchantmen have been wrecked or foundered, without a certain sadness. And yet all the ships on the sea might sink, and all the buildings on the globe might be burned, and the united whole would not be as much as to shatter one immortal soul. There is nothing in old dilapidated cities, there is nothing in temples filled with memorials of former glory, that tends to inspire such sadness and melancholy as to look upon a dilapidated soul, whose powers and faculties are shattered and cast down. (*Ibid*). *Evil to be opposed in self-defence*:—It is not going away from our own affairs when we attempt to break down everything that is destroying the industry, and order, and virtue, and the well-being of the young in society, and corrupting society itself. Every man is to a very great extent dependent for his own prosperity upon the average conditions of the community in which he lives. A man is very much like a plant. If you put a plant in a pot of poor earth, there is no inherent force in the plant by which it can grow. The atmosphere, too, which surrounds the leaf has much to do with the health and growth of the plant. But suppose a plant should be endowed with momentary intelligence, and should cry out and protest that it was potted in bad earth, and surrounded by poisonous vapours? and suppose the earth should say, "Mind your own business, and I will mind mine," and the atmosphere should say, "You take care of yourself, and I will take care of myself"? It would be very much like these enemies to society saying to us, when we raise our voices against them, "Mind your own business." That is just what we are doing. We are minding our own business. Our business is to breathe and to grow, and we must have pure air and good soil. And if we are living in a community where we find our roots starved, and our leaves poisoned, we have a right to take care of ourselves and defend ourselves. A man depends for his prosperity and happiness upon the average condition of the community in which he lives. A man that lives in a virtuous community is like a man that lives on some mountain side, where the air is pure. A man that lives in a corrupt community is like a man that lives where the air is impure. And for the sake of our own well-being, and the well-being of our households, we have a right to resist these men who are destroying society by corrupting it. (*Ibid.*) *Physical injury not tolerated*:—Let a man start a mill for grinding arsenic, and let the air be filled with particles of this deadly poison, and let it be noticed that the people in the neighbourhood are beginning to sneeze and grow pale, and let it be discovered that this mill is the cause, and do you suppose he would be allowed to go on grinding? No. Men would shut up his establishment at once. And yet, men open those more infernal mills of utter destruction—distilleries, and wholesale and retail dens for liquor; and you can mark the streams of damnation that flow out from them; and yet nobody meddles with them. One man is getting carbuncles; another man is becoming red in the eyes; another man is growing irritable, and losing his self-control; another man is being ruined both in body and mind; multitudes of men begin to exhibit the signs of approaching destruction; and the cause of all this terrible devastation may be traced to these places where intoxicating drinks are manufactured and sold. You would not let a man grind arsenic; but you will let a man make and sell liquor, though arsenic is a mercy compared with liquor. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 34. **Besought Him that He would depart.**—God coming near to us. I. THE WAY IN WHICH GOD FORMERLY PRESENTED HIMSELF TO MEN. II. THE WAY IN WHICH HE DOES SO NOW. III. THE WAY IN WHICH MEN DECLINE HIS PRESENCE. (*E. M. Goulburn.*) *God's goodness and man's ingratitude*:—The Gadarenes, in return for Christ's works of love, majesty, and mercy, besought Him to depart. They cared more for the swine which the devils had destroyed than for the poor man Christ had restored. (*A. Jones.*) *Man's dislike and dread of Christ*:—Still the same in our own day! Let us mark—I. THE COMING. It was a universal movement, and a most interesting one. A whole city flocking out to meet Jesus! How seldom had such a thing been seen, or is seen now. II. THE SEEING. They did not remain afar off, but came nigh—they saw for themselves, and that aggravated their guilt. III. THE REFUSING. An awful request in many ways. Was

there ever a request so sad, so fatal? Why was this? There was something in Jesus that drew them; but there was more that they disliked. They would like Him as the physician of the body, but not of the soul. His company seemed dangerous and terrible. So they besought Him to depart. Their "depart from us" is the foreboding of His "depart from Me" (Matt. xxv. 41). 1. How near salvation they were. 2. How they wronged the Saviour. 3. How they wronged themselves. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The case of the Gergesenes:*—That the rejection of Christ sometimes arises from imperfect knowledge of Him; and that deeper knowledge will frequently lead to deeper love. I try to place myself in the position of these people. 1. I observe that almost the whole knowledge which they had of our Lord was confined to the miracle of the destruction of the swine. Can we wonder that they wished to get rid of a visitor at once so powerful and destructive? True, they had another chapter of evidences, the healed men to bear witness to the healing and restoring character of Him who had destroyed the swine. There was a problem of loss and gain; some palliation of their error. 2. If these Gergesenes, instead of the last seven verses, had had the whole of this chapter before them, would they have asked Him to leave their coasts? I doubt it. 3. If they had heard His teaching contained in the Sermon on the Mount, would they have acted so? Think of the goodness and gentleness pervading it. 4. The magnitude of the responsibility of rejecting Christ—intellectually and speculatively, or rejecting Him virtually by despising and forgetting His precepts—depends upon the knowledge which we have of Him, and in spite of which we reject Him. Those who have, as it were, a casual visit from Christ may not be much better or worse for it; it is otherwise with those who have the whole picture of His life before them. (*Bishop of Carlisle.*) *The conduct of the Gergesenes explained:*—Why the Saviour is not welcome. 1. Because the need of Him is not felt. 2. They look upon Christ as a questionable Benefactor. He will take notice of everything unlawful and unholy. We like the aids of religion in domestic government, but not its restrictions. 3. The time will come when the Son of man will be admitted. Who may abide the day of His coming? He will not be shut out then. (*T. E. Hankinson, M.A.*) *Rejecting salvation:*—To me it is specially appalling that a man should perish through wilfully rejecting the Divine salvation. A drowning man throwing away the life-belt, a poisoned man pouring the antidote upon the floor, a wounded man tearing open his wounds, any one of these is a sad sight; but what shall we say of a soul putting from it the Redeemer and choosing its own destruction? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ should be welcomed:*—If you do but hear when the king is on his road to your town, you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entered the gates. The birds they rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our harps in praising God at the *appearance* of a mercy. (*Gurnall.*)

## CHAPTER IX.

**Vers. 1-8. A man sick of the palsy.**—*The highest cause for joy:*—I. THE MISERABLE CONDITION OF A HUMAN BEING. II. THE POWER AND LOVE OF JESUS. III. THE JOYOUS CHANGE PRODUCED. (*American Homiletical Review.*) *Sin and its forgiveness:*—I. OUR FAITH MAY BE EFFECTUAL IN SAVING OTHERS. The faith of the centurion obtained a cure for his servant. Such instances prove that, in all cases, we may help on the salvation of our friends; that in some cases our faith may stand in the place of theirs. Another one's faith may do for an infant, a lunatic, for one who has an insurmountable obstacle in the way of coming to Christ. Apply this to the case of sponsors in infant baptism. We are related to God, and members one of another. II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DISEASE AND SIN. Christ goes deeper than the outward evil, to that which is evil—sin. The consequence of sin often traced in suffering. The consequences of past deeds remain. III. CHRIST THE RESTORER OF HEALTH AND THE FORGIVER OF SIN. We have no right to argue there was no repentance: he felt his need of Christ. Christ spoke to the suffering sinner; giving first that we may return to Him of His own. There may be a crowd of evil thoughts, doubts between you and your Saviour; let none of these

hinder you. (*C. B. Drake, M.A.*) *Helplessness and its Master*:—There are three views of the outward miracles of our Lord, one as marvels of power, as demonstrations of benevolence, as seeing in them a Divine correspondence between the things of nature and the things of the spirit; between the facts of the outer and inner world. Thus, the multiplied bread a visible image of heavenly nourishment. I. IN THE TEXT PALSY STANDS FOR SPIRITUAL PROSTRATION AND INDIFFERENCE. Action and feeling are smitten; but not gone. II. THE CONDITION OF THE CURE. This patient does hear, does believe, and is ready to obey. Let us never despair of another. "They brought him"—notice this neighbourly and vicarious kindness. There are instances when the sick man alone lacks force to arise. In the fulfilment of the necessary condition faith and action are joined, and the action expresses the faith. These persons not only believe abstractly in Christ's power; they *brought* their sick neighbour where He was. It was not an experiment with them, but the faith of confident expectation. On our way to cure we have no time for speculation, or curiosity: but to draw near with faith. III. WHAT HE SAID TO THE SICK OF THE PALSY. 1. A title of endearment and an assurance of hope. Adaptation of Christ's treatment; he never administers rebuke to self-abasement. 2. The words reveal a deep insight into the relations of physical and moral evil. Pain, the result of sin; hence He removes disobedience, then discomfort. IV. THE LOW INSTINCTS AND PREFERENCES OF THE NATURAL MAN CHAFE AT THIS DIVINE FRIENDLINESS. These scribes represent jealous and selfish human nature. This friendliness is too wise, deep, holy, for their low desires. The scribes watch for the chance of hostile criticism. Self-will demands to be saved after its own manner. V. HERE THEN, IN THE CAVILS OF THESE SPECTATORS, THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN FINDS A NEW DISORDER MORE DEEPLY STRUCK THAN THE OTHER. His compassion; His patience. He changes the manner of His mercy, and is willing by any means to convince the people that He is Lord. All miracle is one, the cure of sick bodies and sick hearts. VI. THE MULTITUDE GLORIFIED GOD. The intended result was reached. (*Bp. Huntingdon.*) *Good cheer for sad hearts*:—I. SIN—ITS RELATION TO THE BODY. Its sphere of action is in "high places;" mere matter cannot sin. It lives secretly in the soul, but works terribly in the body. As sin works outward through the body, punishment strikes the body on its way to the seat of sin. Here is one of God's grandest temples lying in ruins; and God incarnate comes to restore it. He came not to deliver the body from the temporal consequences of sin, but the man from its power here, and its presence hereafter. II. SIN—ITS REMOVAL BY THE LORD. 1. It is by a free pardon that sin is removed and its eternal consequences averted. There is no other cure. 2. The Saviour to whom this needy man was brought has *power* to forgive sins. It is the acquired right of Him who bore the law's curse. 3. Christ has power to forgive *on earth*. While we are on this earth only. 4. The *Son of Man* hath power to forgive. The power lies in our brother's hands. 5. Christ the Saviour, in coming to a sinful man desires his safety hereafter, but also his happiness *now*—"Son, be of good cheer." Every man has his own way of seeking "good cheer"; some by money, lands, politics, war. (*W. Arnot.*) *The efficacy of grace*:—1. In awakening the dormant powers of the palsied man. 2. In calming the perturbed soul—"Be of good cheer." 3. In healing both soul and body. (*A. F. C. Wallroth.*) *The cure of the paralytic*:—I. THAT SIN IS A GREAT EVIL. II. THAT FAITH IS A GREAT BLESSING. III. THAT CHRIST IS A GREAT SAVIOUR. 1. His knowledge. He knew the real need of the paralytic. 2. His authority. It is good to have been afflicted. (*D. Rees.*) *The paralytic, or sickness improved*:—Why does our Saviour begin with the pardon of sin? 1. To display His sovereignty. 2. To show that the soul is the principal care. 3. Perhaps the man suffered more from spiritual distress than from bodily pain. 4. It would seem to emit a ray of His glory, and prove a test to try the dispositions of the company. Here are several things worthy of notice:—1. This cure was effected by a word. 2. He was ordered to return home. Christ did not seek His own glory. 3. Fix your eye on Jesus, the most prominent figure in the story. 4. How far the case of the paralytic resembles yours. (1) Are you distressed in mind and body too? (2) Has Christ healed thy body and not thy soul? (3) Has he spoken peace to thy conscience, and is thy body still under the influence of disease? (*W. Jay.*) *The forgiven paralytic*:—I. THE AFFLICTED SUFFERER BROUGHT TO THE SAVIOUR. II. THE RECEPTION GIVEN BY CHRIST. 1. Observe what it was that found its way to the heart of Christ. Not his suffering, but faith. 2. Mark the peculiarity of the reception he gave to the paralyzed man—"Son, be of good cheer," &c. III. THE CONTRADICTION OF SINNERS WHICH JESUS HAD TO ENDURE. "This man speaketh

blasphemy." IV. THE GREAT TRUTH TAUGHT US BY THIS NARRATIVE. 1. All men, till they come into saving contact with Christ, are carrying about with them two heavy burdens. 2. Christ has power to meet every case of accumulated guilt and heart-seated depravity. 3. What then is the nature of this blessing? (*P. Morrison. The mystery of sickness*:—1. The connection which subsists between the prevalence of sickness and the invasion of sin. 2. Why it is not always the case that when sin is pardoned sickness is healed. Not for want of power on the part of our Lord. Also in the case of the palsied man it was necessary that He should give to the Jewish people a proof that He possessed the power He claimed; this not necessary now. Christ does even now sometimes heal where all human remedy has failed; but not always. Then the discipline of continued affliction is good, impatience is subdued. Also we have given an evidence of the power of the gospel, in the triumph of grace over nature. (*S. Robjohns, M.A.*) *The paralytic healed*:—1. The terrible state of the patient. 2. The charity of his friends. 3. The compassion of Jesus, so ready and comprehensive. 4. The opposition of his enemies. 5. The patient, meek forbearance of our Lord. 6. The triumphant display of His Divine power. 7. Its effect upon the multitude, wonder, not repentance. (*The Clergyman's Magazine.*) *The story of a paralytic*:—One real case of bodily paralysis may help us to picture what above all things we ought to know, the state of our own inner life. I have seen this quoted from the medical records at Paris:—A man was attacked by a creeping paralysis; sight was the first to fail; soon after, hearing went; then, by degrees, taste, smell, touch, and the very power of motion. He could breathe, he could swallow, he could think, and, strange to say, he could speak; that was all; not the very slightest message from without could possibly, it seemed, reach his mind, nothing to tell him what was near, who was still alive; the world was utterly lost to him, and he all but lost to the world. At last, one day, an accident showed that one small place on one cheek had its feeling left. It seemed a revelation from heaven. By tracing letters on that place, his wife and children could speak to him, his dark dungeon-wall was pierced, his tongue had never lost its power, and once more he was a man among men. Strange this, and true; a parable too if we read it aright. The worst kind of paralysis, but, God be thanked, far the rarest of all, is that of the heart and conscience. There never was a man with no affections and no sense of right and wrong. But never must they be pronounced past cure. God alone knows our real state; there is always some tender spot in our nature, some sensitive place on which He can write in characters of love, and it may be some one's privilege to find it—the thought of a mother, of the days of childhood, of a little one who died, or whatever it be, God can still use that as a means of cure. (*H. S. Swithinbank, M.A.*) *Forgiveness, the primary need of the sinner*:—Not, "Be of good cheer, thy *health* is given thee," though that he had also; but "thy *sins* are forgiven thee." If a friend should come to a malefactor, on his way to the gallows, put a sweet posy in his hands, and bid him be of good cheer, smell on that; alas! this would bring little joy with it to the poor man's heart, who sees the place of execution before him. But if one came from his prince with a pardon, put it into his hand, and bade him be of good cheer; this, and this only, would cheer the poor man's heart, and fill it with a ravishment of joy. Truly, anything short of pardoning mercy is as inconsiderable towards pacifying a troubled conscience, as that posy in the dying prisoner's hand would be. (*Gurnall.*) *Christ sees the beginning and the ending of the patient's ailment*:—Sin is the well in which it springs, and perdition the sea to which it is flowing. When he looked on disease, he sees its beginning and its ending: his work is to cut short its course, ere it issue in the second death. He looks upward and downward: he will not confine his view to these symptoms which appear in the body, and pertain to time. (*W. Arnot.*) *Getting the palsied man to Jesus*:—Many Oriental houses have a court or quadrangle in front; the buildings which form the house occupy one or more of its sides. The internal part of such a house is often screened by a corridor below, having the various household officers behind it, and a gallery above, from which is the entrance to the family apartments. The gallery is roofed over, and its roof is about the same height as the roof of the house. Bearing this in mind we may account for what occurred in this way. The quadrangle was full of people; our Lord instructs them *from the gallery*; the Pharisees are in the family apartments adjoining the gallery; the friends of the sick man cannot enter the quadrangle from the street; or if this could be done, they cannot reach the corridor, from which there were steps leading to the gallery; they ascend, therefore, the stairs from the back or side of the house leading to the roof, and break

open the roof or verandah which covered the gallery. The house-roof was used for a terrace, and was built of strong materials; the gallery-roof was of very slight construction, of the same character as the covered balcony. (*Webster and Wilkinson.*)

Ver. 6. **But that ye may know that the Son of Man.**—*Forgiveness:*—This narrative is remarkable, 1. Because it is evident that while our Lord forgave the sick man's sins for his own sake, He healed his disease for the sake of those who stood by. 2. Because our Lord claims the power of forgiving sins, not because He is the Son of God, but because He is the Son of Man. 3. It is one of the very rare instances in which a miracle seems to have been performed for the purpose of convincing unbelief. What is this forgiveness? It must be the same thing as human forgiveness. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." It therefore cannot mean the remission of punishment. Forgiveness is reconciliation; the offence is no longer allowed to stand between the parties. When God forgives He receives us back to His favour. It is free, full, and outruns our repentance. But He does not destroy the consequences of sin; the punishment remains. But it entirely changes the character of the punishment. What we regarded as the blow of an angry Ruler, becomes the chastisement of a kind Father. Our Lord claims the power of forgiving sins, not because He is the Son of God, but because He is the Son of Man. Why does our Lord thus describe Himself? We are accustomed to think that the pardon of sin is a power possessed by God alone. When Christ calls Himself the Son of Man, He is displaying before our eyes a pattern of what we ought to be, and of powers we ought to possess. Were we perfect beings, the power of forgiving sins would be ours. The ministry of reconciliation is committed to man. The forgiveness of sins is the reconciliation of the sinner to God; people of great personal holiness have the power of reconciling sinners to God. This may fall short of the power to forgive; but it is because the holiest man falls short of the measure of Christ. We may now see why our Lord accepted the challenge of unbelief. He cured the man to show the bystanders that they ought to have like power. It was man, not God, who had made the way of forgiveness hard. Love raised the life that self-righteous scorn had trampled down. (*J. P. Wright, M.A.*) *The forgiveness of sins:*—Christ here addressed the soul of the man first; sometimes His first attention was given to the body. From the indiscriminate order of Christ's procedure in this matter, we like to see how body and soul are equally dear to God. The power which is given to Christ upon earth to forgive sins. 1. There is a beautiful justice in the fact that He who purchased the pardon, at such an untold price of suffering, should be the one to whom it is permitted to have the joy of giving it. 2. At the moment when our blessed Lord said these words the apostles were all standing by; and He did His own work, in His own solitude, to His own glory. 3. In these words "on earth" I read the blessed promise that so long as this earth shall last, more and more wicked though it may grow, He will never leave this earth while it is an earth, but will be always here to do His forgiving work. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The forgiveness of sins:*—I. AS THE GREAT WANT OF MAN. II. AS THE PECULIAR ACHIEVEMENT OF CHRIST. III. AS THE PRIMARY OFFER OF THE GOSPEL. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) 1. The force of the name "Son of Man," implying (1) Divine origin. (2) Representative of manhood. Not the Son of the Jew, or carpenter. (3) Brotherhood. (4) Manlike sympathy. 2. His grand prerogative—"power on earth to forgive sins." Forgiveness is His own right by virtue of His (1) Sacrifice; (2) Intercession (Acts v. 31). 3. The great blessing—"forgiveness." "The soul might have been healed and the body untouched; but the paralysis, both moral and physical, was removed. (1) Forgiveness is obtainable "on earth." (2) Many realized it now. (*J. Harris.*) *The Son of Man:*—"There have been two men in the world," says St. Paul: "the fallen Adam, with his infantile and undeveloped perfections; and the Christ, with His full and complete humanity." All other men are fragments; He is the "Entire and perfect Chrysolite." "Aristotle is but the rubbish of an Adam," and Adam is but the dim outline sketch of a Jesus. And between the two there have been none. The one Man as God meant Him, the type of man, the perfect humanity, the realized ideal, the home of all the powers of manhood. (*Dr. Maclaren.*) *Eastern beds:*—The Oriental frequently spreads a mat upon the ground and sleeps in the open air. In the morning he rolls up his mat, and carries it away. (*A. Carr, M.A.*) *Forgiveness personal:*—The Rev. H. Wilkins, Cheltenham, in "Good Cause for Good Cheer," writes: "It is no general statement, but a personal assurance of

the forgiveness of sins. Looking with His own keen glance of love into the sick man's eyes, He says: 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' The general truth of the pardon of sins is not enough for us, we want a personal forgiveness. One day when Martin Luther was almost overwhelmed with despair in his cell at Erfurth, an old monk tried to comfort him by repeating the article of the Apostles' Creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' Luther often repeated the same words. 'Ah!' said the good old monk, 'it is not enough to believe in the forgiveness of David's sins or Peter's sins; this the devils believe. God's command is to believe that our own sins are forgiven.' This was the assurance that Jesus gave here. He knew this man's life-history; He knew, probably, that there was a close connection between his suffering and his sin; but whatever his sins were, they were frankly forgiven."

Ver. 9. **He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom.**—*The following Christ:*—Whom are we to follow, and on what road, and to what place? I. WE ARE TO FOLLOW CHRIST. Do not the soldiers follow their captain? Do not the redeemed follow their deliverer? Do not the disciples follow the teacher? We must follow Him further and further. Immediately, lest we never have the invitation given us again. He has something worthy to be obtained by such as follow Him. Will a man shut his ears to such a merciful invitation? If a rich man were to call a famished man to come into his house and be fed, would he not instantly follow? The state of those who refuse is one of miserable bondage. II. WHAT IS THE WAY ALONG WHICH HE CALLS US TO FOLLOW? Christ has opened a new and living way, in every sense of the word. Our old, corrupt nature dislikes a new way. Christ gives the power, hence no excuse. But is this new way unpleasant? It has good company and entertainment; at the end, the house of the Almighty Father. III. TO WHAT PLACE. (*R. W. Evans, B.D.*) *The calling of Matthew:*—I. CONSIDER THE EVENT AS ILLUSTRATIVE OF DIVINE GRACE. God seeks whom He will to serve Him. The change rapid. II. WE ARE TO FORSAKE ALL INORDINATE LOVE OF RICHES. Discriminate between the possession of riches and inordinate love of them. III. Subsequently to his conversion Matthew ENTERTAINED HIS MASTER, INVITING GUESTS FROM HIS FORMER COMPANIONS—a proof of the sincerity of his conversion. We should silently and sedulously seek others. What mariner, rescued from the fury of the waves, would refuse to extend a charitable hand to his companions who are plunging in the abyss he has escaped. (*Pitman.*) *The calling of St. Matthew:*—I. THE CALL. 1. It was a call of sovereignty. There was no miracle; the attraction of personal authority. 2. It was a call of grace. What was there in St. Matthew to recommend him? 3. It was a call of love (1 John iii. 1). II. THE ANSWER. 1. It was an answer of faith. He followed because he believed—had trust — in Christ. 2. It was an answer of decision. 3. It was an answer of self-sacrifice. (*Canon Titcomb, M.A.*) "*A man called Matthew:*"—I. HIS CALL SEEMED ACCIDENTAL AND UNLIKELY. II. HIS CALL WAS ALTOGETHER UNTHOUGHT OF AND UNSOUGHT. 1. He was in a degrading business. 2. He was in an ensnaring business. 3. He would not have dared to follow Jesus even if he had wished to do so. III. HIS CALL WAS GIVEN BY THE LORD, WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. Jesus "saw a man named Matthew." 1. He saw all the evil that had been in him. 2. He saw his adaptation for holy service. 3. He saw all that He meant to make of him. IV. HIS CALL WAS GRACIOUSLY CONDESCENDING. V. HIS CALL WAS SUBLIMELY SIMPLE. 1. Few were the words. 2. Clear was the direction. 3. Personal was the address. 4. Royal was the command. VI. THE CALL WAS IMMEDIATELY EFFECTUAL. 1. He followed at once. 2. He followed spiritually as well as literally. 3. He followed wholly. 4. He followed growingly. 5. He followed ever after. VII. HIS CALL WAS A DOOR OF HOPE FOR OTHERS. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *St. Matthew's Day:*—I. We may learn also THE NECESSITY of our immediate and cheerful obedience to the commands of God. When our Saviour called him to arise and follow Him, He (1) called him to give up a gainful profession for a life of hardship, toil, and danger. (2) To expose himself to the mockery of his former companions. (3) To the scoffs of the wise, and the (4) persecution of men in power. (5) To enter into a situation for which neither his former habits, nor, as he might plead, his general education suited him. Should we have wondered if, under such circumstances, St. Matthew had offered an excuse? II. ST. MATTHEW DID NOT ANSWER, "NOT YET, LORD, WHILE SO MANY PERSONS ARE LOOKING ON; at night I will come to Thee. Not yet, Lord, while my fortune is beginning to thrive; another year and I will give up my business." 1. He arose immediately, and followed Him. 2. With joy, as having attained the highest honour which mortal man could obtain. 3. To prove that joy

he makes a great feast: calls together his brother publicans. 4. In defiance of their ridicule or wonder. III. COMPARE THIS CONDUCT WITH YOUR OWN. (*Bishop Heber.*) *St. Matthew's Day*:—I. THE CALL; in a word of command, "Follow me": a word very well befitting the Captain of our salvation, when He was to list soldiers or officers in His militia. Some have not come at the call. Others, though they have come, have not followed Him as they should do. II. THERE IS SOMETHING ON OUR PART, WHEN WE ARE CALLED, TO BE DONE BY US. There must be concurrence and obedient compliance of our will. Else we may resist the word as well as the Spirit. III. THE OBEDIENCE—"He arose and followed Him." His rising up shows (1) reverence and respect, as well as (2) resolution. (3) Henceforth he owns Christ as his master. (4) He was wealthy, but now sees nothing before him but poverty and persecution. Yet he accepts the condition at first word. IV. THE CONSTANCY. 1. He followed his master to the end. 2. Till His departure. 3. Till his own death. (*Adam Littleton, D.D.*) *Receipt of custom*:—Some articles of produce are taxed as they are brought into the town. A booth of branches, or a more substantial hut, is erected at every entrance into the city or village, and there, both day and night, sits a man at the "receipt of custom." He taxes all the produce, piercing with a long, sharp iron rod the large camel-bags of wheat or cotton, in order to discover concealed copper-wire, or other contraband. (*Van Lennep.*) *Custom of sitting at work*:—The people of this country *sit* at all kinds of work. The carpenter saws, planes, and hews with his hand-adze sitting upon the ground, or upon the plank he is planing. The washer-woman sits by the tub, and, in a word, no one stands where it is possible to sit. Shopkeepers always sit; and Levi sitting at the receipt of custom is the exact way to state the case. (*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*) *The commencement of a religious life easy for some men*:—How easy it is for some men to rise and follow Christ, as compared with others. They seem to fall into the way of faith: it is like bringing the sun to bear upon a bud that wants to open, and that is just waiting for light in order that it might unfold its deep and sacred beauty. It is so easy for some men to pray: they seem to be walking up a gentle green slope to meet God at the height of it. When other men try to pray it is like climbing up a rugged, steep rock, some of the stones loose, and if you put your foot upon them you will fall. It is so easy for some men to do the act of benevolence. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *When Christ calls, He also draws*:—"Come," says the sea to the river. "Come," says the magnet to the steel. "Come," says the spring to the sleeping life of the field and forest. And, like the obedience of the river to the sea, of the steel to the stone, of the earth's charmed atoms to the spring's effectual call, is the obedience of the soul to Christ's wondrous spirit. (*C. Stanford.*) He that said "Let there be light," says now, "Follow me." That power sweetly inclines which could forcibly command; the force is not more irresistible than the inclination. When the sun shines upon the icicles, can they choose but melt and fall? When it looks into a dungeon, can the place choose but be enlightened? Do we see the jet drawing up straws to it; the loadstone, iron? And do we marvel if the Omnipotent Saviour, by the influence of His grace, attract the heart of a publican? (*Bishop Hall.*) *St. Matthew*:—1. We must remember how in business may be found a service for Christ. 2. We may learn not to think too much of daily work, and set too great a price on it. 3. We shall seek to give of the fruits of our trading to Christ. 4. The true servant of Christ will be willing to give up, not only of the fruits of daily work, but daily work itself for Christ. (*T. Gasquoine, B.A.*)

Ver. 10. **As Jesus sat at meat in the house.** I. Levi's CALLING. II. Levi's FEAST. 1. It probably did not immediately follow the call, but was a fit token of the joy of its acceptance. 2. St. Matthew the blessed means of bringing together the Saviour and the lost whom He came to redeem. (*A. M. Stuart.*)

Ver. 11. **Publicans and sinners.**—*Appreciation an elevating influence*:—You cannot elevate, you cannot improve any man whom you utterly despise. You cannot bring the best out of a man if you do not believe that the best is somewhere in him. There is a shocking insolence in human judgments, and the tendency of them is to crush men down to their own base level, till the whole world is all thistles and all mole-hills, never a mountain and never a forest tree. When Cowper was a Westminster boy, he was despised as a shrinking, moping, ineffectual creature; it was not until the age of fifty, that in the warmth of loving appreciation, like flowers in the sun, the powers unfolded within him, which made him one of the sweetest of

English poets. When Clyde became the hero of Plassy and the conqueror of India, his father said that he did not think the booby had so much sense. When Dalgarno, the ablest and most eloquent man of his day, went to an English countess as a candidate for the post of tutor to her sons, she insulted him with the remark that she could not possibly engage a person so stupid. So it is, we judge men not by what they are, not by what they might be, but by our own dull prejudices and ignorant misconceptions. *Men are elevated by an appeal to their best qualities* :—My brethren, the love that sees goodness and beauty in all human nature helps to make goodness, and to make beauty in human nature. The moon turns but one side to the earth; it has another side in which there may be silver lights and shades undreamed of, seen only by the angels of God. So there are two sides to your character and mine. The woman whom you despise when you meet her as so dull and commonplace is an angel of God to her husband, and the man whom you think so singularly stupid and ineffectual is a very idol to his mother and his sisters. What makes the difference? The man is the same. It is love makes the difference, it is appreciation, it is sympathy. To those in whom the man is not one of a class, he is not a publican or a sinner, or a heretic, or a Samaritan, but he is a human soul, who walks in the transfiguring glory of their affection. You think a person dull—why, that is because you are dull. An angel has been with you and you have known it not, and I imagine that to a spirit full of malice and self-conceit an angel would be very dull. Each human soul is like a cavern full of gems. The casual observer glances into it through some cranny, and all looks dark and sullen and forgotten. But let light enter into it; lift a torch up to the walls, let God's sunlight fall into it and flood its open recesses, and lo! it will flash with crystals and with amethysts, and each separate crystal will quiver under the touch of brightness with a transporting discovery of its own nature. If souls do not shine before you it is because you bring them no light to make them shine. Throw away your miserable, smouldering, fuming torch of conceit and hatred, lift up to them the light of love, and lo! they will arise and shine; yea, flame and burn with an undreamt of glory. (*Canon Farrar.*)

Ver. 12. **They that be whole need not a physician.**—*The heavenly physician* :—I. WHO NEGLECT THE HEAVENLY PHYSICIAN? 1. Those who depend for salvation upon their own good lives. 2. Those who depend for salvation upon their religious duties. 3. Those who depend for salvation upon their correct notions. II. THOSE WHO VALUE THE HEAVENLY PHYSICIAN—"They that are sick." A general invitation to this Physician. Reasons why some of you are still uncured. How will His medicine affect you? Think of His love. (*C. Clayton, M.A.*) I. THERE IS A MORAL DISEASE IN THE HEART AND CHARACTER OF MAN. 1. Depraved mental appetite. 2. The faculty of moral vision is impaired. 3. Moral stupor and lethargic disposition of mind. 4. Feverish excitement of disposition. 5. Moral weakness and want of activity. II. THE PECULIAR CHARACTERISTICS BY WHICH THIS MORAL DISEASE IS DISTINGUISHED. 1. Universal in extent. 2. Disastrous in results. 3. Incurable by anything less than Divine energy. III. THE REMEDY PROPOSED. 1. Universally adapted. 2. Absolutely free. 3. Infallably efficacious. (*The Pulpit.*) *Jesus the Physician* :—I. WE ARE ALL SICK. Many are our ailments. Sin the great malady. We need a Physician. The world has no medicines. II. WHAT A PHYSICIAN HE IS. 1. He is appointed of God (Isa. lxi. 1). He is adapted for it. Understands all cases. Neglects none. III. THE REMEDY. He makes use of many means of recovery. 1. Sometimes he makes use of the affections as a means of restoring health. How many have to trace that recovery to loss of a dear object! 2. Sometimes He makes use of a reproving conscience. 3. The main remedy is His own precious blood: (1) it is no small mercy to feel our spiritual malady; (2) the remedy must be received or our soul's sickness cannot be healed; (3) beware of false, superficial healing; (4) beware of losing the healing; (5) take heed of expecting a more perfect cure than scripture warrants; (6) admire the costliness of the remedy, its freeness, universality, and, above all, the Giver. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *Christ the great Physician* :—I. THAT SIN IS THE DISEASE OF THE SOUL. 1. Sickness destroys our power of action. 2. It deprives a man of rest. 3. It frequently occasions delirium. 4. It deforms the body. 5. It is the forerunner of death. II. THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. III. THAT MEN ARE GENERALLY TOO INSENSIBLE OF THEIR SINS TO APPLY TO CHRIST. IV. THOSE WHO KNOW THEIR TRUE CONDITION ARE VERY DESIROUS OF HIS HELP. (*G. Burder.*) *The Physician and His patients* :—I. A DEFENCE, complete and

unanswerable. Christ did not come despising the people, but as a Healer of the sick. II. A DIRECTION to His followers. 1. Christianity is remedial. 2. Christianity is hopeful. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *The healing work healthy*:—A physician once told us that he kept himself in health by going to see patients. Whenever he discontinued this, and insisted on patients coming to him, or when he tried to go out of practice altogether, he fell into lethargy, and lost both physical and mental power; but so soon as he resumed active efforts to heal others, his own health returned. Let servants and handmaids of Christ take the hint. He who desires a sound, strong, spiritual life and health in himself should go and try to heal others, showing patience, sympathy, and hopefulness. This is to walk as Christ walked. (*Ibid.*) *The characteristics of the whole and sick, in a spiritual sense, considered and contrasted*:—There are none of the sons of men who are really whole. The whole and sick in contrast are these: 1. He that is whole has never had a clear affecting sight and sense of sin; but he that is sick is fully convicted, and deeply sensible of it. 2. They that are whole are generally easy and serene, and unapprehensive of danger; but the sick soul is alarmed and anxious, and can't be easy till it perceives some appearances of recovery. 3. They that are whole are unwilling to apply to a physician, or to follow his prescriptions; but to the sick a physician is welcome, and they will submit to his directions, however self-denying. (*S. Davies, M.A.*) *Christ no specialist*:—Properly we have amongst ourselves now special studies of special cases. One man undertakes the brain, another the heart, another the blood, it may be, another the bones and joints. This is right, amongst ourselves; for probably hardly any one man has the time, even if he had the capacity, to master with sufficient adequateness all the details and necessities of our wondrous bodily frame. But Jesus Christ said to the leper, "Be thou clean," to the man sick of the palsy, grievously tormented, "I will come and heal him." When he went into Peter's house and saw his wife's mother laid and sick of the fever, he touched her hand and the fever left her, he put out the fire with his touch. He is no specialist, he has not a necromancer's power over any *one* department of human life or human suffering. His healing was fundamental and all-inclusive. He made the well-head pure, and the flowing stream was as pure as the fountain whence it flowed. It is so in spiritual matters. There is not in the Church a doctor who cures lying, and another who makes a special study of drunkenness, and a third who is gifted with peculiar ability in dealing with persons of felonious disposition. There is one Mediator between God and man: he makes the *heart* right, and then all the accidental local diseases, with all their train of ever-varying symptoms, are cleansed and utterly expelled. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Jesus Christ can attend to all who come to Him at the same moment*:—I once went with a friend who wanted to see a great physician. But there were ever so many other people waiting to see him, and they went in by turns one by one, and we had to wait a whole hour before our turn came. The physician could not attend to more than one person at a time. But if all you dear children were to pray to the Saviour this evening at the same moment, and tell Him all your wants, He could listen to you all at the same time, and help each of you according to your need. (*W. Harris.*) *Jesus is always at home*:—If your little sister was taken very ill and you were sent for the doctor, you would run with all your speed; yet when you came to his house he might be just gone out, and your sister might die before he came home. But this is never the case with Jesus. Whenever you call upon Him, you will find Him. He is always where people can find Him directly they want Him, and you know he can heal people without coming to them in His bodily presence. (*Ibid.*) *Unconscious of danger*:—Sometimes people are in a very dangerous state, and yet they do not feel pain. In a sad railway accident which happened some time ago, a young lady was taken out of one of the carriages, and she said she was not hurt at all, she felt no pain. She stood up and tried to walk and then fell back dead. She had received a very serious injury, and yet she did not feel it at the moment. So it was with these Pharisees, they had a sin within their hearts which would ruin them if it was not taken away. That sin was pride. This sin is so dangerous, because it keeps people from feeling how sinful they are, and so keeps them from coming to Jesus Christ to be healed. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Physician of souls*:—I. SIN IS THE SICKNESS OF THE SOUL. It is the disease of the soul that makes the sinner a sick man. 1. Sickness brings pain and torment to the body, so does sin to the soul. 2. Sickness takes away the beauty of the body. Sin spoils the beauty of the soul. 3. Diseases are death's cords which are sent before it to bind the prisoner. Sin

tends to spiritual and eternal death, and will bring it on if it be not cured. II. WHAT IS IN SIN THAT SICKENS THE SOUL? 1. The guilt of it, the obligation to punishment. 2. The stain. It brings a blot with it, that defiles the soul. 3. The reigning power of it. Sin keeps its throne. It commands and receives obedience. 4. The indwelling power of it. III. WHAT ARE THE PROPERTIES OF SOUL SICKNESS? 1. It is spiritual. They are the most dangerous disorders that affect the vital parts. 2. It is an universal sickness, spreading itself through the whole man. All the faculties of the soul are injured and disordered by it. It darkens the mind, wounds the conscience, pollutes the heart, disorders the affections, and weakens the memory for good. 3. It is an infectious sickness. 4. It is hereditary, natural to us. We are born with it. 5. It is a growing disease. 6. It is mortal disease. IV. IS SIN THE SICKNESS OF YOUR SOUL? 1. Go quickly to the Physician for the cure of the disease of the soul which you labour under. Delay no longer. 2. Time is flying. No medicine will cure that wound, no argument will persuade it to return. Yesterday has taken its eternal farewell. The candle burnt to the snuff will not light again. Your only time is the present. 3. Death is approaching. If death take us away under the power of that sickness, there is no cure for it hereafter. 4. Make frequent application to Christ. Such people as can take little food at once, had need to take it frequently. Alas! the few addresses which we make to the throne of grace, look like as we thought ourselves whole, little needing the Physician. (*Thomas Boston.*) *Christ's way of curing souls*:—Three things concur to the cure of the soul. I. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. II. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. III. THE WORD OF CHRIST. 1. "He sent His word and healed them." 2. The waters of the sanctuary are healing waters. (*Ibid.*) *Christ cures all who come to Him*:—Why does He undertake and perform the cure of souls? I. BECAUSE HE HAS HIS FATHER'S COMMISSION FOR THAT EFFECT. II. BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE AND PITY TO MEN. Love provided the remedy and applies it also. III. BECAUSE HE HATH BEEN AT VAST EXPENSE TO PREPARE THE REMEDY AND MEDICINE FOR THEIR SOULS. IV. FOR HIS OWN GLORY. 1. The glory of the Mediator is highly exalted by His curing sick souls. 2. The glory of God is displayed in the cure. 3. Had the sick been left to be swallowed up by death, justice would have been exalted, but now justice, mercy, grace, and truth, are all glorified in their salvation through Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Physician of souls*:—Come to Him for the cure of your spiritual diseases. I. YOU HAVE NEED OF HIM. Let necessity drive you to Him. The less you see your need, the more need you have of Him. Some diseases are very common among us. 1. Blindness of the eyes of the mind. 2. Spiritual dumbness. 3. Hardness of heart. 4. Falling evil of backsliding. 5. Pride and self-conceit. 6. Decay of grace. II. CHRIST IS SKILFUL. 1. He knows what will suit your disease. 2. He is successful. Some diseases are the reproach of medicine; none can baffle Him. III. HE CURES FREELY. 1. Other physicians are enriched by their patients, but He enricheth His making them heirs of glory. 2. He is the only physician. 3. Either you must die or come to Him. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 13. **I will have mercy and not sacrifice.**—*Mercy preferred to sacrifice*:—God prefers it. I. Because it indicates more clearly man's relation to Himself. Cannot judge of man's character by outward ordinances, but when he struggles against sin. II. Because it is more serviceable to our neighbours. Religious exercises may do us good, a pure life useful to others as well. III. Because it brings the greatest happiness to us. (*Seeds and Saplings.*) *Instituted religion not intended to undermine natural*:—I. THAT NATURAL RELIGION IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL INSTITUTED AND REVEALED RELIGION. Our Lord owns that which the Pharisees objected, but purified it—1. By telling them that it was allowed to a physician to converse with the sick in order to their cure. 2. By endeavouring to convince them of the true nature of religion, and of the order of the several duties thereby required. Natural and moral duties more obligatory than ritual and positive; showing mercy is a prime instance of these moral duties; sacrifice is an instance of positive and ritual observances. 1. That the Jewish Scriptures everywhere speaks of these as the main duties of the Jewish religion. 2. That no instituted service of God, no positive part of religion, was ever acceptable to Him, when these were neglected (Isa. i. 11; Jer. vii. 4, 5). 3. The great design of the Christian religion is to restore and reinforce the practice of the natural law (Titus ii. 11, 12; James i. 27). II. THAT NO REVEALED RELIGION WAS EVER DESIGNED TO TAKE AWAY THE OBLIGATION OF NATURAL DUTIES, BUT TO ESTABLISH THEM. 1. That all revealed religion calls men

to the practice of natural duties. 2. The most perfect revelation that ever God made, furnishes helps for the performance of moral duties. 3. The positive rites of revealed religion are shown to be subordinate to them. (*J. Tillotson, D.D.*) *The Saviour's tenderness*:—It is a characteristic of all false religions to make more of the outward sacrifices we could offer to God than of the infinite mercy He is willing to show to us. I. THE TENDERNESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S CHARACTER. 1. In connection with what has been revealed to us concerning His mission and life and work. This harmonizes with all the prophetic intimations given of His character. The tenderness of His character has accompanied Him to heaven, a permanent condition of His nature. II. VIEW THIS COMPASSIONATE ATTRIBUTE OF OUR LORD IN ITS BEARING ON SOME OF THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. How should we be comforted by it under our early convictions of sin, and doubts of the Divine forgiveness. 2. It should be comforting under the weakness of our failing hearts, when it is hard to grasp the promise, and faith is uncertain. 3. As it bears upon our slow progress in the Divine life, and fluctuations of religious feeling. 4. In adversity and temptation the Christian has a strong refuge in Christ's tenderness. 5. In death he feels the Saviour's tenderness. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The religion of tenderness*:—A domestic illustration of this principle occurs to me. Suppose that when a father is engaged in earnest prayer for the salvation of the world, there rings through the house the cry of one of his children in pain, perhaps in danger, will he be doing right to spring to his feet and go to the little one's help? Certainly he will. Let it be remembered that God is a Father, and there will be no two thoughts about that. And, as for the prayer for the world's salvation, God can and will open His ear when you go again to speak to Him, and the salvation of mankind will be none the farther off, but somewhat nearer, because you succoured your little one. I will put it from the child's point of view. What do you think would be his conception of God if he knew that God would not allow his father to come and help him when he was in trouble? I will put it, so to say, from God's point of view. What would He think of those who supposed Him to be indifferent to a child's cry? (*J. P. Gledstone.*) **I came not to call the righteous.**—*The main object of Christ's ministry, to call sinners to repentance.* 1. He calls sinners by making appeals to the conscience. 2. By preaching an all-sufficient atonement for sin. 3. By means of an offer of reconciliation. 4. By raising in their minds hopes of future glory. (*R. Burgess, B.D.*) *Christ not for the self-righteous*:—A young man was recommended to Diogenes for a pupil; and his friends, thinking to give Diogenes a good impression concerning his intending disciple, were very lavish in his praises. "Is it so?" said the old philosopher; "if the youth is so well accomplished to my hands, and his good qualities are already so many, he has no need of my tuition." As little are self-righteous people fit for Christ. (*Toplady.*) *Christ for the needy*:—Suppose a man of learning, in company with two persons: the one really ignorant, but highly conceited of his knowledge, and consequently unteachable; the other ignorant too, but sensible of it, and therefore desirous of instruction. Suppose he should turn from the self-conceited creature, and carry on conversation with the other, who was likely to profit by it: and suppose the former should resent it, and say, "If he were indeed a scholar, as he pretends to be, he would not be fond of the society of such an ignorant dunce, but would rather choose me for a companion." How properly might a teacher reply, "Oh, you are a wise man, and have no need of instruction—but this poor ignorant creature is sensible of his want of instruction, and therefore, it is most fit I should converse with him." Such a reply has a peculiar pungency and mortifying force in it, and such Jesus used in the case before us. (*President Davies.*) *The sinner awakened*:—Suppose some of you, who have come here to-day vigorous and healthy, should suddenly discover the spots of a plague broken out all over you, how it would strike you with surprise and horror! Such is the surprise and horror of the awakened sinner, thus he is alarmed and amazed. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 15. **Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn?**—*The joy of the Jesus circle*:—"The children of the bride-chamber," how much this name tells us as to the spirit that reigns in the Jesus circle. Like a wedding party. This bliss was not an accident, or an affair of temperament. It was the natural effulgence of the new life imparted to those who joined the society of Jesus. Christ was a man of joy. He had (1) the joy of his vocation. (2) The joy of one whose religion is an original thing, a fountain of fresh intuitions of truth. Sweet after the routine of religious mechanism. Into these joys of Jesus the twelve more or less entered. 1. They had the joy of fresh religious intuitions. 2. The joy of spiritual freedom. (*A. B.*

*Bruce, D.D.*) *Right response to circumstances*:—Let there be liberty in God while there may; girding up in ourselves, by forced exercise and discipline, when there must; let the soul go by inspiration when the gale of the Spirit is in it, and when it has any way stifled or lost the Spirit, let it put itself down upon duty by the will; when the Divine movement is upon it, let it have its festal day with the bridegroom, and when the better presence fades or vanishes, let it set itself to ways of self-compulsion, moving from its own human centre. (*Horace Bushnell, D.D.*) *Liberty and Discipline*:—We may figure in a certain coarse analogy, that we live in a city having two supplies of water for its aqueduct: one upon high ground back of it, whence the water runs down freely along the inclinations of the surfaces; and the other in some lake or river on its front; whence, in case that fails, or the ducts give way, a supply is to be received by forcing, or the dead lift of the pump. (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual espousals*:—With Messiah begins the holy union between the soul and God, so often declared by the prophets. The first hour of spiritual espousals must needs be one of joy. A sorrowful moment will soon come; there are sure tokens of it already in the malice of the rulers of the hierarchy, ready to break forth on every occasion. (*E. de Pressensé, D.D.*) *Putting ourselves in position for God*:—The navigator of a ship does nothing for the voyage, save what he does by setting the ship to her courses, and her sails to the wind. A seed must have position, else it cannot grow; if it is laid on a rock, or buried in sand, or sunk in water, or frozen up in ice, it will be inert as a stone; but in good warm soil, and sun, and rain, and dew, it will quicken easily enough, because it is in position. A tree will die out of position, a clock will stop out of position, a plough wants holding, a saw wants guiding, a compass wants setting; nothing in the world works rightly that has not position given it. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. **A piece of new cloth unto an old garment.**—*Christ the great Innovator*:—The boldness with which Christ asserted the novelty of Christianity. His was not the apologetic, half-hearted tone, so common amongst those who have some thing fresh to tell the world. I. IN WHAT RESPECT WAS THE GOSPEL OF JESUS NEW? 1. In its idea of God. Jesus was the first to teach effectively the Fatherhood of God. The legal idea of God fell into desuetude. The old Jewish view of God was as an exactor; the new God of Jesus was a giver. 2. Along with the new idea of God came naturally a new conception of the kingdom of God; rather than law, it was viewed as love. 3. These thoughts were accompanied by a new way of life, the typical feature of which was neglect of fasting, which meant a conscience freed from legal scrupulosity. II. THE COURAGE OF JESUS WAS NOT LESS CONSPICUOUS THAN HIS ORIGINALITY IN THOUGHT AND CONDUCT. 1. As He believed, so He spoke publicly, habitually. 2. He was equally unreserved in His action. 3. He was fearless in defence of His conduct when assailed. 4. The gloomy foreboding was not a mistaken one. The Bridegroom was taken from the sorrowing society. The duty arising out of these facts. To glorify Christ as the Maker of the new world. How is this to be done? 1. By recognizing to the full extent the service rendered, by forming to ourselves a broad, comprehensive idea of the vast change introduced into the world by the action of our Saviour. 2. By becoming ourselves children of the new era, appreciating and using to the full the liberty of a Christian man. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Religious patchwork*:—It is WRONG—I. IN RITUAL. II. IN THEOLOGY. III. IN HUMAN CHARACTER. 1. Disfigurement—"agreeth not." 2. Injury—"the rent is made worse." (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The parable of the new piece of cloth*:—By an old garment I understand is meant a man's own righteousness. It may be so compared. 1. Because it is old as Adam. 2. Because it is worn out. 3. It was once a new, good garment. 4. It needs mending. But why is righteousness compared to a garment? 1. Because it is to cover nakedness. 2. Because it covers the shame of mankind. 3. Because of the usefulness of it. 4. In respect of ornament. 5. Because it tends to keep a man warm in winter. 6. It preserves from thorns and briars. (*B. Keach.*)

Ver. 17. **New wine into old bottles.**—*Garments and wine skins*:—By these illustrations our Lord conveyed a lesson on the charm of naturalness and the law of congruity in religion. 1. As old cloth and new cloth are one in being cloth, old wine and new are one in being wine; so the religion before Christ and that which He introduced are essentially one in kind, if not in quality. 2. The effect of the forced junction of the old and new would be injurious to both. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *What is meant by old bottles?*—Why is the carnal heart compared to an old bottle?

1. Because a bottle is a proper receptacle of liquor, so is the heart of man a proper receptacle of Divine knowledge, grace, joy, &c. 2. Because a bottle of itself is an empty thing, and must be filled; so the heart of man is naturally empty of good. 3. Because a broken bottle cannot hold new wine, nor can an unrenewed heart hold saving peace, joy, &c. (*B. Keach.*) *Making skin bottles*:—As soon as the animal (goat) is killed, an opening is made in the skin large enough to introduce the lips, and a man begins to blow between the skin and the flesh until the two are completely separated from each other throughout. The head and feet are then cut off, and the entire body of the animal is drawn out of its skin through the opening at the neck. The hair is sometimes partially removed and the skin tanned. In Persia the skins are saturated with pitch. The opening at the neck is used for filling and emptying the vessel, while the four feet are tied or sewed up. The grape-juice which is to undergo the process of fermentation is put into skins, which are either entirely new or which have been carefully examined and found able to withstand the pressure. (*Van Lennep.*)

Ver. 20–22. **And touched the hem of His garment.**—*Touching Jesus*:—I. How many evils sin hath brought into the world. II. We are too much disposed to seek human help instead of going directly to God. III. However deep-seated and desperate the condition of the soul's health, the Saviour can help us. IV. The secrecy with which the afflicted woman sought help of Jesus. V. The impression which the suffering woman had formed of Jesus. (*J. H. Norton.*) *Christ the Healer*:—The sinner and the Saviour. I. THE WAY IN WHICH THESE TWO ARE THROWN TOGETHER. As we say by chance this woman crosses His path; it was a by-errand of the Son of Man. II. THE OCCASION OF THEIR BEING BROUGHT TOGETHER. It is the incurability of her disease by earthly skill that throws her upon the heavenly Physician. Man's failure brings her to One who cannot fail. III. THE POINT OF CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM. IV. THE WOMAN'S NEED OF CHRIST. V. CHRIST'S NEED OF THE WOMAN. The sun needs the earth as truly as the earth needs the sun. You may say, What would the earth be without the sun? Yes; but what would the sun be without an earth to shine upon? What would become of its radiance? All wasted. It would shine in vain. So Christ needed objects for the exercise of His skill, love, and power. The Lord hath need of us. VI. THE WOMAN'S THOUGHTS OF CHRIST. She is modest, earnest, humble; so full of faith that she deems a touch enough. Like the garden, He cannot but give out His fragrance. The simplest form of connection with Him will accomplish the cure. (*A. Bonar, D.D.*) *Faith's approach to Christ*:—I. Faith comes with a deep despair of all other help but Christ's. II. Faith has a Divine power to discover Christ. III. Faith comes with an implied trust in Christ. IV. Faith seeks for its comfort, close contact with Christ. V. Faith, with all its imperfections, is accepted by Christ. VI. Faith feels a change from the touch of Christ. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *The patient of many physicians*:—I. ONE TOUCHING OUT OF MANY PRESSING ON JESUS. There was love, power, and nearness enough for all the crowd, yet only one touched Christ for healing. We are near Christ in the house of God and at the holy table, yet perhaps do not by faith touch. II. HER CASE IS THE WORST OF ALL. 1. She is the weakest in all the crowd, yet she presses through till she reaches Jesus. Our inability a needful lesson, but earnestness is a power. By grace are we saved. There is always a crowd between Christ and the inquiring soul—a crowd of past sins, evil spirits, &c. 2. She is the vilest of all, the most unfit to touch the Holy One, for her very touch defiles. Christ is cleansing for the vile. 3. Her coming is the worst-timed of all applications; it was unseasonable. He was in the midst of another case. The coming ill-timed He does not refuse. 4. Her coming seems to be in the very worst way; none other appears to have come so ill. She comes by stealth. III. HER IMMEDIATE HEALING. 1. Her coming to be healed is late, and yet immediate; late in reference to the past, immediate in the haste of this afternoon. The reason humbling, because she has spent all. The sinner does not come to Christ first, but after every other refuge has failed. 2. Her cure is immediate, complete, conscious. 3. She cannot depart in health without confessing Christ the Healer. The comer need not, but the follower must bear the cross of Christ; it is lighter to bear afterward. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *The issue of blood healed*:—I. THE WOMAN'S CONDITION, AND TOUCH, AND CURE. 1. Her condition represents that of every sinner. (1) Diseased. (2) Unclean and separate from the fellowship of God and His people. (3) Hopeless of help from earthly physicians. 2. Difference between her touch and that of the crowd. 3. Her faith successful, though imperfect and mixed with error.

II. WHY DID NOT JESUS LEAVE THE WOMAN IN THE CONCEALMENT SHE SOUGHT? 1. That she may confess and glorify Christ before others. 2. That He may confess her and confirm her faith, and confer upon her further and higher blessings. (1) He confesses her. (2) He approves and confirms her faith. 3. He adds a further and spiritual blessing—"Go in peace." This a word of power. (*T. M. Macdonald, M.A.*) *The true Healer tried last*:—Was not the same struggle seen in the case of Luther, issuing, too, in the same result? That cell in Erfurth heard sounds and saw sights of conflict and sorrow enough to make our hearts bleed. What tears that monk shed, what prayers he offered, what lacerations he inflicted upon his flesh to chase away its lusts, what hunger he endured that he might starve his appetites to submission, until he nearly killed the body in seeking to kill its sins, and he was found once and again nearly lifeless on the floor! But what of his sins? They were as vigorous as ever. Plied by many physicians, they yielded not; scourge, hunger, thirst, nightly vigils, all failed; and he had spent nearly all that he had, and was "nothing the better, but rather the worse." Nearly all, I say, for he had still a little left. One more physician he had not tried, and that was the eternal city of Rome, which he must see; and there, amid its sanctities and miracles, he must find a perfect cure. He must climb on his bare knees the wondrous stairs of the Santa Scala, and there the burden will roll from his soul for ever. But the burden presses heavier as he climbs; and in the moment of his blackest despair, a remembered text rings in his ears like music from heaven's gate, "The just shall live by faith," and he rushes from the scene rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and putting no confidence in the flesh. Thus it is that men must despair before they can hope. (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *An imperfect faith no hindrance to moral cure*:—The sun can send some of its light and heat through very murky skies, and the Sun of Righteousness can do the same, and even more. (*Ibid.*) There may be much earthly rubbish in the soul that comes to Christ; but if there be in it one gleaming grain of the gold of faith, Christ will receive that soul with all its rubbish; for He knows well that in due time all that is worthless will drop away, that the eye of faith will sweep over a vaster horizon of truth from day to day, until we shall be light in the Lord, and shall not walk in darkness. (*Ibid.*) *Moral healing sought from selfish desire*:—Most of the religion of mankind begins in what may be viewed as selfishness, and then becomes transformed into love. Most of religion did I say? I might have said, the natural life of every one of us from childhood has followed the same law. Where is the child that began life with love? Life begins with hunger and other needs. The infant is a bundle of imperious and constant necessities. It loves no one, can love no one. Love has to be begotten, to be wakened up little by little as months roll on, and the expanding babe learns who it is that feeds and fondles it, whose arms they are that enfold it, whose face it is that reflects upon it the very light of heaven. Can anything be more selfish than the cries of the child which seeks nourishment and comfort, caring nothing from whom they come if they do but come? But can anything be more unselfish than the love which at length rises up in the soul? A love which makes the name of mother the sweetest, dearest name on earth; a love which will traverse seas and not be chilled by distance, and which feels that no tears are too many which are shed on the grave where she rests in peace. We *cannot begin our* Christian life at the highest point, or with the highest motives, any more than our natural life. (*Ibid.*) *The woman's idea in touching the hem*:—The notions which the woman entertained of Christ were very confused. She was timid and shrinking—a woman probably of a sensitive temperament, her nervous system possibly injuriously affected by her disease; but only ignorance and superstition could have suggested the idea of a furtive touch of our Lord's garments. *H. Allon, D.D.*) *Sense helps to faith*:—Some instrumentality for connecting the faith of our souls with Christ we all, perhaps, require. Without it the faith even of the strongest might have difficulty in realizing Christ. Sense is the minister of the soul. We grasp Christ best when the hand of spiritual faith rests upon sensible things; only let us be sure that it is the Christ our spirits grasp, and not the mere sensible thing. (*Ibid.*) *Brazen figures at Cæsarea Philippi*:—This woman was a native of Cæsarea. At the gates of her house, on an elevated stone, stands a brazen image of a woman on her bended knee, with her hands stretched out before her, like one entreating. Opposite to this there is another image of a man erect, of the same materials, decently clad in a mantle, and stretching out his hand to the woman. Before her feet, and on the same pedestal, there is a certain strange plant growing, which, rising as high as the hem of the brazen garment, is a kind of antidote to all kinds of diseases. This figure is a statue of Jesus Christ, and it has

remained even until our times, so that we ourselves saw it whilst tarrying in that city. (*Eusebius.*) *Curing straightway:*—The woman had not to undergo a tedious process, but was cured straightway. Physicians require time, and must use proper means. They physic you and diet you, and thus cure you gradually. The Redeemer never physicked or dieted His patients. He cured them straightway. (*J. C. Jones.*) The cure was perfect—not better, but whole—every whit. All traces of the disease vanished. Complete—perfect. (*Ibid.*) *Faith goes to Christ:*—Can you tell why the needle trembles to the pole? The buds feel their way to the spring? Flowers to sunlight? They are made for it, and souls are so made for Christ. (*Dr. J. Ker.*) "*If I may:*"—I. "IF I MAY" BE ALLOWED. 1. There is nothing to forbid your coming and resting your guilty soul upon Christ. 2. The very nature of the Lord Jesus Christ should forbid your raising a doubt about your being permitted to come and touch his garment's hem. 3. Think of the fulness of Christ's power to save and make a little argument of it. 4. Suppose you do come, you will not injure Him. 5. You shall rather benefit than injure Him. 6. Others just like you have ventured to Him, and have not been refused. II. BUT CAN I? Faith in Christ is the simplest action that anybody ever performs. III. "I SHALL be made whole." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Confident timidity:*—I. Unobstrusively. 1. "She said within herself," &c. 2. Came behind Christ. II. Unceremoniously. 1. Came when Christ was engaged. 2. Touched His hem. III. Undoubtingly. "I shall be whole." Her faith was undoubting, therefore strong to overcome difficulties. 1. Subjective difficulty. 2. Objective difficulty. 3. Undoubting, hence strong to draw blessings from Christ. (*J. S. Swan.*) *Faith in its manifestations:*—We may regard the act of this woman as an expression of her faith. 1. Faith is a simple thing as an act. You exercise it when you consult your physician. In religious experience acts of faith are simple, but behind them there is a mental state, mysterious and sublime. 2. Great faith is compatible with great modesty. There may be great faith before God, yet fear before men. 3. Great faith is compatible with great ignorance. 4. Faith saves and then becomes an incentive to holiness. (*F. C. Polton, D.D.*)

Vers. 23–25. **The maid is not dead, but sleepeth.**—*The healing of Jairus's daughter:*—On His way to perform one act of love, He turned aside to give His attention to another; He had a heart ready to respond to every species of need. Love is universal, humanity is the sphere of its activity. Delay was only apparent; it was impossible to convey a spiritual blessing to one who was not spiritually susceptible. The soul of Jairus by the miracle wrought on the woman was made more capable of blessing than before. This is the principle of the spiritual kingdom. I. THE USES OF ADVERSITY. 1. The simplest and most obvious use of sorrow is to remind of God. 2. The misuse of sorrow. We may defeat the purposes of God in grief by forgetting it, or by over-indulging it. Sorrow is the school for all that is highest in us. II. TO COME TO THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH A MIRACLE RESTS. 1. The perception of it was confined to the few. Peter, James, John, and the parents. Spiritual susceptibility necessary. 2. It is the intention of a miracle to manifest the Divine in the common and ordinary. They show that Christ is the Saviour of the body. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *God confers His gifts with distinct reminders that they are His:*—He gives us for a season spirits taken out of His universe: brings them into temporary contact with us: and we call them father, mother, sister, child, friend. But just as in some places, on one day in the year, the way or path is closed in order to remind the public that they pass by sufferance and not by right, in order that no lapse of time may establish "adverse possession," so does God give warning to us. Every ache and pain: every wrinkle you see stamping itself on a parent's brow: every accident which reveals the uncertain tenure of life and possessions: every funeral bell that tolls—are only God's reminders that we are tenants at will and not by right—pensioners on the bounty of an hour. He is closing up the right of way, warning fairly that what we have is lent, not given: His, not ours. (*Ibid.*) *The simplest use of sorrow is to remind of God:*—Jairus and the woman, like many others, came to Christ from a sense of want. It would seem that a certain shock is needed to bring us into contact with reality. We are not conscious of our breathing till obstruction makes it felt. We are not aware of the possession of a heart till some disease, some sudden joy or sorrow, rouses it into extraordinary action. And we are not conscious of the mighty cravings of our half Divine humanity; we are not aware of the God within us, till some chasm yawns which must be filled, or till the rending asunder of our affections forces us to become fear-

fully conscious of a need. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus moved by all kinds of sorrow*:—Here, too, we find the Son of man the pattern of our humanity. His bosom was to mankind what the ocean is to the world. The ocean has its own mighty tide; but it receives and responds to, in exact proportion, the tidal influences of every estuary, and river, and small creek which pours into its bosom. So it was in Christ; His bosom heaved with the tides of our humanity: but every separate sorrow, pain, and joy gave its pulsation, and received back influence from the sea of His being. (*Ibid.*) *The ruler's daughter*:—1. On the way to the Ruler's house, Jesus meets with an unlooked-for cause of delay. It must have been trying for the ruler to see Jesus stop and ask, "Who touched Me?" But he is patient. 2. Meanwhile those at home are witnessing the death of the child. Unbelief says it is useless to trouble the Master any more. On our providential blessings the Lord writes death before He grants resurrection and life. Sight has gone; he must walk by faith. The dead child restored:—1. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and He restores out of death in all its stages. 2. Jesus bid them not to weep, because the maiden is not dead, but only asleep. The body sleeps, not the soul. 3. Christ raises her with His *word;* for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. 4. Jesus commands that something be given her to eat. Let young converts be duly nourished by word and doctrine, then let them go and work for Christ. 5. The parents are enjoined to tell no man; they are to make no noise about her, but to keep the child and the matter quiet. She was to be brought up quietly in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *The insolence of sense, as opposed to faith*:—The eye of faith can discern what to the eye of sense is often invisible; and looks with simple conviction to what the other as simply rejects. "They laughed Him to scorn," &c. And were they not right as far as their knowledge went? Could not Jesus who had opened the eyes of the blind raise the dead? They might have reasoned thus. They were too wise in their own conceit to think of looking with the eye of faith. How often does this strange levity of the people of Capernaum take the rein of men's thoughts even in the most solemn subjects—the doctrines of Christianity; the sacraments—which appeal to no outward sense—they will "laugh to scorn." So to with the humble duties of the Christian and the lowly means with which he works; how often treated with contempt. How much there is in which a devoutly-trained faith may discern truth and comfort and promise of good, where the mere human eye might discover nothing but perplexity or disappointment. (*J. Puckle, M.A.*) *A science of palmistry*:—"*Thy* hand—are not all hands alike? Is there a science of Palmistry—are there those who read the man in the hand—are not all grips of the same intensity? Why say, "*Thy* hand"—could no other hand be found? We are sometimes shut up to the help of one man, even in our lower life. "O for our own doctor: his very voice would do the patient good. O for our own physician: he knows just what to give when the sufferer is in this crisis of agony. O for our old mother: there was healing, there was comfort in her gentle hand. O for the old father—if he had been here he would have found the key to open this gate. O for the old pastor that first showed us the light and brought us to prayer—he would know what to say to us just now." We have, therefore, analogy to help us in this matter. In the great crises of life there is often only one hand that can help us. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Hired mourners*:—I joined the mourners on the third day. Directly I entered the house, I heard the minstrels and the loud cries of the people. Professional mourners were in constant attendance to keep up the excitement, and dances and dirges succeeded each other, with intervals of wild and hysterical weeping and shrieking. There are girls who have a morbid taste for the excitement, and are celebrated for the facility with which they fall into fits of uncontrollable weeping. The real mourners and the amateur actresses in these scenes are usually ill afterwards, but the professional assistants do not appear to suffer from the fatigue or excitement, and they do not lose their self-control for a moment (*Mrs. Rogers.*) *Differing expressions of grief*:—The South and North differ greatly from each other in this respect. The nations of the North restrain their grief—affect the tearless eye, and the stern look. The expressive South, and all the nations whose origin is from thence, are demonstrative in grief. They beat their breasts, tear their hair, throw dust upon their heads. It would be unwise were either to blame or ridicule the other, so long as each is true to Nature. Unwise for the nations of the South to deny the reality of the grief which is repressed and silent. Unjust in the denizen of the North were he to scorn the violence of the Southern grief, or call its uncontrollable demonstrations unmanly. Much must be allowed for temperament. (*F.*

*W. Robertson.*) *The death of children:*—Ah! we sometimes, I fear, compel Jesus to take away our children, that through the bereavement He may overcome and melt savingly our callous hearts. It mindeth one of another little story worth telling. A shepherd had folded safely and well a flock of ewes—all save one, which would not enter, do what he would. The gate was flung wide open, and with all gentle restraint he sought to guide it in, sparing it the rough bark of his dog. But no! still it would run back. At last, for the shades of evening were falling, and folded all must be, if he were not to be too late for home himself, he sprang out, seized her lamb, raised it tenderly to his bosom, laid it right upon his heart, as he would his own nestling babe, and carrying it within the fold placed it down there. Then, ah! then, the poor ewe ran in after her little lamb, and was saved with it. It is a parable. But fathers, mothers, still away from the Good Shepherd, and grieving sorely over your Willie or Mary, will you not run in after your little lamb? Will you compel Him to take another and another? (*Grosart.*) *A dying daughter:*—As a little girl of four lay dying, the following conversation took place between her father and herself. "Papa, does the doctor think I am going to die?" With a bursting heart, her father told her the truth. "Papa, the grave looks very dark. Won't you go down with me into it?" "I cannot go until the Lord calls me." "Then, papa, won't you let mamma go with me?" It almost broke the father's heart to utter the same truth as before. Turning her face to the wall, she wept; but then, having before this been taught of God, prayed. Soon, therefore, she looked up with a joyful face and said, "Papa, the grave is not dark now, Jesus will go with me!"

Ver. 29. **Then touched He their eyes.**—*The opened eye:*—The power, glory, rewards of faith form the theme of this chapter. I. The faith described in the text was THE FIRST OUTGROWTH AND EXPRESSION OF A DEEP AND LIVELY SENSE OF WRETCHEDNESS AND DARKNESS. Faith often springs out of such convictions; it also amounts to a conviction that light is possible. II. The faith in this instance was INTELLIGENT. They had settled it in their minds that Jesus was the Son of David, that He had come to open the eyes of the blind. Their faith conceived the grandeur of His mission. Faith is not merely an emotion; it is a conviction of the understanding. III. This faith of the blind men was EAGER AND IMPORTUNATE. They followed Jesus. It was not crushed by having to wait for mercy. IV. The faith of these individuals was A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. V. The faith here referred to APPRECIATED CHRIST'S POWER TO SAVE. VI. The faith here mentioned APPROPRIATES and applies the Divine Power to its own case. (*H. R. Reynolds, B.A.*) *The blind men restored to sight:*—1. A SIMPLE PRAYER. Their prayer was (1) united. Union is strength. (2) Earnest. (3) Persevering. II. AN IMPORTANT INQUIRY. "Believe, ye," &c. 1. What it involves. The dignity of Christ. 2. On account of the principle it sets forth. He required no personal worthiness in those He cured; faith only. 3. Because of its spiritual application. Faith stands in same relation to healing of the soul. III. A GRACIOUS ACT. 1. When He did so—as soon as they professed faith. 2. The words with which the act was accompanied. 3. The result that ensued. IV. AN EXPRESS INJUNCTION. "See that no man know it." The reasons:—1. The malice of His enemies. 2. The misguided zeal of the multitude. 3. The manner in which it was regarded. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The measure of the faith, the measure of the gift:*—1. The broad law of the gospel is that God gives all He gives to faith. 2. That the measure of faith is the measure of His gift. 3. The chief ways to multiply faith are (1) to live much on the promise; (2) to love and cherish in the heart the inward voices of the Holy Spirit; (3) to act out whatever grace God has already given. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The ways of Eastern poor folk:*—Most of the poor make their wants known to the public by begging. Paralytics are laid down at the doors of the rich, or of the church or mosque, with the idea that men are most inclined to be charitable when they come from the house of feasting or of prayer. The blind lift up their voices as they grope their way from door to door along the streets. (*Van Lennep.*) *Our Lord's question to the blind men:*—I. THE SEEKERS.—the two blind men. 1. They were in downright earnest. 2. They were thoroughly persevering. 3. They had a definite object in their prayers. 4. They honoured Christ in their prayers. 5. They confessed their unworthiness. II. THE QUESTION WHICH WAS PUT TO THEM. 1. It concerned their faith. 2. It concerned their faith in Jesus—"Believe ye that I am able to do this?" 3. Believe ye that I am able to do *this?* Some think their hearts too hard. III. THAT QUESTION WAS A VERY REASONABLE ONE. Else why do you pray? IV. THE ANSWER. 1. It was distinct. 2. It was immediate. V. OUR LORD'S

RESPONSE TO THEIR ANSWER. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith receptive of blessing*:—Why is faith so essential? It is because of its receptive power. A purse will not make a man rich, and yet without some place for his money how could a man acquire wealth? Faith of itself could not contribute a penny to salvation, but it is the purse which holds a precious Christ within itself, yea, it holds all the treasures of Divine love. If a man is thirsty a rope and a bucket are not in themselves of much use to him, but yet, sirs, if there is a well near at hand the very thing that is wanted is a bucket and a rope, by means of which the water can be lifted. Faith is the bucket by means of which a man may draw water out of the wells of salvation, and drink to his heart's content. You may sometimes have stopped a moment at a street fountain, and have desired to drink, but you found you could not, for the drinking-cup was gone. The water flowed, but you could not get at it. It was tantalizing to be at the fountain-head and yet to be thirsty still for want of a little cup. Now faith is that little cup, which we hold up to the flowing stream of Christ's grace: we fill it, and then we drink and are refreshed. Hence the importance of faith. It would have seemed to our forefathers an idle thing to lay down a cable under the sea from England to America, and it would be idle now if it were not that science has taught us how to speak by lightning: yet the cable itself is now of the utmost importance, for the best inventions of telegraphy would be of no use for purposes of transatlantic communication if there were not the connecting wire between the two continents. Faith is just that; it is the connecting link between our souls and God, and the living message flashes along it to our souls. Faith is sometimes weak and comparable only to a very slender thread; but it is a very precious thing for all that, for it is the beginning of great things. Years ago they were wanting to throw a suspension bridge across a mighty chasm, through which flowed, far down, a navigable river. From crag to crag it was proposed to hang an iron bridge aloft in the air, but how was it to be commenced? They shot an arrow from one side to the other, and it carried across the gulf a tiny thread. That invisible thread was enough to begin with. The connection was established; by-and-by the thread drew a piece of twine, the twine carried after it a small rope, the rope soon carried a cable across, and all in good time came the iron chains and all else that was needed for the permanent way. Now, faith is often very weak, but even in that case it is still of the utmost value, for it forms a communication between the soul and the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Blind people swarm in Oriental cities*:—In our own streets we meet here and there with a blind beggar, but they swarm in Eastern cities. Ophthalmia is the scourge of Egypt and Syria, and Volney declares that in Cairo, out of a hundred persons whom he met, twenty were quite blind, ten wanted one eye, and twenty others were more or less afflicted in that organ. At the present day every one is struck with the immense number of the blind in Oriental lands, and things were probably worse in our Saviour's time. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 32, 33. **And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake.**—*The dumb made to speak*:—Jesus had just touched the eyes of the blind; now a dumb man is brought to Him. Speech the special gift and privilege of man. It is the revelation of thought; the aqueduct of the soul; the medium of companionship. Dumbness one of the greatest blights of life. The highest privilege of speech is found in the Divine sphere. I. SPIRITUAL DUMBNESS IS A GREAT CALAMITY. Through four thousand years God was approaching a dispensation of tongues for the highest expression of His life to men. From Abraham to Christ was the dispensation of dreams. Not to use the tongue for the propagation of Divine truth is to cut it off from its highest usefulness. Dumbness and deafness are allied: not to speak for Christ is not to be able to hear Christ's words to your own soul (Rom. x. 9). II. SPIRITUAL DUMBNESS IS OCCASIONED BY DEMONIACAL POSSESSION. When Christ cast the devil out the dumb spake. 1. Some complain that their intellectual culture is not sufficient to enable them to speak to edification. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God hath ordained praise. The demon of intellectual pride must be cast out. 2. Some say, "I have very little ability, others can do so much better." God does not want ability so much as availability. The demon of selfishness must be cast out. 3. Others say, "I can't and I won't use my tongue in the Church's service, I have not been used to it." The demon of wilfulness must be cast out. III. CHRIST'S WORK AMONGST MEN IS TO CAST OUT DEMONS THAT POSSESS THE HUMAN SOUL. (1 John iii. 8.) (*J. F. Clymer.*)

**Ver. 35. Healing every sickness.**—*Christ the Physician*:—Christ's healing activity

had this double value: it was evidence of His Divine authority as a Teacher; it was a picture in detail addressed to the sense of what, as a restorer of our race, He meant to do in regions altogether beyond the sphere of sense. But these aspects of His care for the human body were not primary, but incidental. We may infer with reverence and certainty that His first object was to show Himself as the restorer of human nature as a whole—not of the reason and conscience only, without the body. Thus our Lord has thrown radiance upon the medical profession, associating it with His redemptive work. 1. The physician can point out with authority given to no other man the present operative force of some of the laws of God. The connection between indulgence and decay. He can give physical reasons for moral truth. 2. The physician can point out the true limits of human knowledge. He knows the ignorance of science. 3. The medical profession may be a teacher of reverence—reverence for the body as the tabernacle of the soul. 4. The profession of medicine is from the nature, I had almost dared to say from the necessity, of the case a teacher of benevolence. (*Canon Liddon.*)

Ver. 36. **But when He saw the multitudes.**—*Christ's look of sympathy*:—I. WHAT HE SAW. 1. Not reasons for admiration. 2. Not grounds for discouragement. 3. But a call for pity. II. THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE. 1. Faint. 2. Scattered. 3. Shepherdless. III. HIS COMPASSION ENLISTED FOR THEIR SUCCOUR. 1. The grace of the Father. 2. His own prevailing intercession. 3. The gifts of the Spirit. 4. The service of His messengers. (*H. A. Cornell.*) *Compassion for souls*:—I. THE SIGHT WHICH PRESENTED ITSELF TO OUR LORD. Christ was moved with the sight of physical suffering; here it was spiritual disease. 1. The number of the sheep. 2. The condition of the sheep. 3. The reason of their condition—their having no shepherd. II. THE EFFECT WHICH THIS SIGHT HAD UPON OUR LORD. The fact that our Lord felt compassion when He saw the fearful sight. Unless there is a feeling of compassion there will be no spiritual effort. (*E. Bayley, M.A.*) *Partial views of humanity*:—There are men who take partial views and come to partial and, therefore, erroneous conclusions about everything. There are those who seat themselves within some vernal enclosure or summer paradise, and say, with a foolish chuckle, that the earth is not so bad a place after all. They see a bed of blooming flowers, fiery-hued or gentle-tinted, and they hear birds in the branches twittering, trilling, singing, and making melody in their hearts, and they say the earth is a very lovely place, notwithstanding all the croakers say to the contrary. Now observe how they confound the partial term with the larger word. They see a *garden* and then speak of the *earth*, they see a bed of geraniums and then speak of the globe; there is no balance in their sentences, their words do not correspond with one another at both ends of their declarations. The garden is beautiful, the flowers are lovely beyond all that it is possible for the colouring of human heart fully to represent. The painter paints the *form*, but he cannot touch the *fragrance*. We admire their poetical sympathy within given limits, but go beyond the garden wall, go into the rough streets, go into the desolate places, take in the wilderness, throw the line around the entirety, bring the whole elements within your purview, and then say what it is. The angel sees it, and says, "Mourning and lamentation and woe." Jesus sees it, and cannot cease His prayer; Jesus looks upon it, and is moved with compassion. (*Dr. Parker.*) *A Christ-like judgment of men*:—I. CHRIST TEACHING US HOW TO LOOK AT MEN. II. CHRIST TEACHING US HOW TO FEEL AT SUCH A SIGHT. III. CHRIST TEACHING US WHAT TO DO WITH THE EMOTION. 1. Personal work. 2. Prayer. 3. Help. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *A portrait of Jesus*:—His compassion manifested in—I. The great transactions of His life. II. The foresights of compassion. 1. The Bible for our guidance. 2. The minister to speak to man. 3. The Holy Spirit to comfort. 4. The mercy-seat as our resort. 5. The promises as our food. 6. The ordinances. III. Our personal recollections prove this compassion. 1. He tempered our convictions with intervals of hope. 2. He has moderated our afflictions. 3. He has put us to graduated tasks. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Emotion leading to action*:—You cannot indulge in the luxury of feeling (if you will excuse a Lancashire metaphor), that you do not use to drive your spindles, without doing yourselves harm; it is never intended to be blown off as waste steam and allowed to vanish into the air. It is meant to be conserved and guided, and to have something done with it. Therefore, do not get into the habit of indulging in that sentimental contemplation of the missionaries and heathenism. (*Ibid.*) *Compassion sustains service*:—Nothing but compassion will carry you through any tragedy in life; you cannot go through it merely for its own sake. The hireling will fall asleep over the sick child, but the

mother will drive sleep away from her dwelling-place till she has rescued her little one from the power of the enemy, if it be within the scope of her endurance and skill to win so great a triumph. Her compassion keeps her awake, her love makes the night as the day, her pity stops the clock, so that she takes no note of time. Every other emotion grows dumb; wonder must sometimes close its eyes, admiration palls upon itself, sates its appetite and dies of the satiety, but compassion grows by what it feeds on, and is of the very nature of the love of God. He grows in the development of his compassion; he will succeed yet. (*J. Parker, D.D.*)

Ver. 38. **Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest.**—*The spiritual harvest-field*:—1. How closely connected the spiritual commission of the apostles was with deep sympathy for the physical wants of humanity. 2. That it is the Lord of the harvest who has power to send forth labourers into His harvest. We rely too much on our own agencies. 3. The strong expression of constraint which the Lord here uses—"that He may cast out." It has been so with the more eminent saints at all times. (*S. Leathes, D.D.*) *The harvest-field and the harvest labourers*:—I. THE FIELD is the world. 1. It is precious, in the very fact that it is a harvest-field. MEN are the fruit for the sake of which the world was made. 2. It is plenteous. (1) Pagans. (2) Mahomedans. (3) Papists. 3. It is ripe. 4. It is perishing. II. THE HARVEST LABOURERS. 1. All who try to win souls are in His eye as reapers gathering the wheat into the garner. Labourers are not a high class of functionaries, and need not expect to get all their own will as to the times and places of their toils. 2. In the judgment of our Lord labourers are few. His heart is so enlarged toward a lost world that He will complain, Few are coming. Few, in proportion to the world's need—a contrast to the multitude pressing to the natural harvest. 3. When additional labourers enter the field, they are sent into it by the Lord of the harvest. They are grasped by the Providential hand of God. 4. The Lord of the harvest presses labourers into the field in answer to the prayers of His people. (*W. Arnot.*) *The multitudes pressing to the natural harvest*:—The pressure has slackened of late; but a few years ago you might have seen, any day about the beginning of autumn, dense crowds of Irish labourers clustering like bees about the wharves of Liverpool and Glasgow. On one occasion the master of a Londonderry steamer, on arriving at Glasgow, was prosecuted for admitting a much greater number of passengers than his ship was legally entitled to carry. His defence was that the men rushed on board in spite of his efforts to prevent them, and took forcible possession of the deck. Such were the numbers that poured into the Scottish harvest-fields at that time, and such the eagerness of each man to get a share of the work and the reward. (*Ibid.*) *The harvest-field near*:—Exercise is provided for the spiritual life. None shall be able to say that the field was too distant, and that he consequently had not an opportunity of rendering service as a reaper. A man cannot sit at meals in his own family, walk along the streets, or pursue his daily toil on the farm or in the workshop, without passing along this laden harvest-field. Everywhere precious fruit, ready to perish, offers itself to the reaper's hand. (*Ibid.*) *Labourers wanted*:—I. CHRIST MANIFESTED AN INTENSE ZEAL FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD. "And Jesus went about all their cities," &c. 1. Christ was the great Teacher—"Teaching in their synagogues," &c. 2. Christ was the great Physician—"and healing every sickness." II. CHRIST DISPLAYED THE TENDEREST SYMPATHY WHILE EVANGELIZING THE WORLD. The spirit in which Christ did His work, almost as important as the work itself. 1. Christ was deeply affected by the spiritual depression of the people—"they fainted." 2. Christ was deeply affected at the spiritual destitution of the people—"were scattered abroad." III. CHRIST ENJOINED A DEVOUT SPIRIT FOR EVANGELIZING THE WORLD—"Pray ye therefore," &c. 1. Christ indicated the right spirit for the work—"Pray ye." 2. Christ indicated the right men for the work—"Labourers in His harvest," &c. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Harvest-men wanted*:—I. OUR LORD STATES THE CASE. The people who gathered round Him He likened to harvest-fields: wherein lay the similarity? 1. The thought of multitude rises naturally from the sight of a harvest-field. You cannot count the ears of corn, neither will you be able to count the sons of men. 2. The second idea was that of value. He did not speak of blades of grass, but ears of corn. The souls of men precious in the sight of God. 3. The idea of danger. Fear lest it should perish. 4. Accessible. Multitudes are near at hand. 5. Immediate need. II. THE SERVICE NEEDED. Labourers are wanted. We must not despise instrumentalities. God could do without them, but does not. 1. They must be labourers. Idler no use. 2. They must go down into the wheat. 3. He cuts right through. Delicate words useless. The preacher

must not file off the edge of his scythe for fear it should hurt somebody. 4. He binds it together. III. OUR LORD DIRECTED HIS DISCIPLES HOW TO OBTAIN A SUPPLY. 1. Pray *ye*. 2. Pray ye *therefore*. 3. Pray to the *Lord*. IV. THE LORD JESUS HEARD THEIR PRAYERS. "And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power," &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

## CHAPTER X.

VER. 1. **And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples.**—*The preparatory mission of the apostles*:—I. THEIR MISSION. II. THEIR CHARGE. 1. He prescribes their route. 2. He prescribes their doctrine. 3. He prescribes their work. 4. He prescribes the spirit they should display. III. THEIR RETURN. (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) *Gave them power*:—At first the apostles had a smaller gospel (they had not got the cross to preach) and a larger power of miracles; afterwards less miracles but more gospel; but always a sufficient equipment. You have not to make bricks without straw; Christ gives you power for every duty. (*R. Glover.*) *Healing the sick*:—MEDICAL MISSIONS. Dr. Duncan Main of the Mid-China Medical Mission, gives a remarkable instance, quoted in the Church Missionary Society's Report, of what he terms a remarkable case of cure both of body and soul. The Chinese woman he tended is the wife of a tailor, living at Ju-yang. "She was," says the doctor, "brought to our hospital in the beginning of 1883, suffering from an ulcerated leg of the very worst description. As soon as I saw the advanced state of the disease, I told the husband that there was nothing for the limb but amputation." To this the man most decidedly refused his consent, "and," continues Dr. Main, "pleaded with me to allow her to remain in the hospital and attempt a cure on other terms. She remained six weeks, and at the end of that period no signs of healing were apparent, and as the husband could not consent to the operation, he reluctantly took his poor wife home, carrying her on his back from the hospital, both of them in tears. A few months later I visited Ju-yang, where the patient was carried to the Mission-room in a large basket. She was by this time worse in every way, so that when they entreated me to re-admit her and perform the amputation, I declined the risk, until overpowered by their pitiful condition. A week later she was again in the female ward, and after some time devoted to raising her system by diet and tonics, I decided at the husband's renewed request to attempt the operation. Whilst attending her daily in this interval, Mrs. Main had spoken frequently to her about salvation through Christ, and she gave good evidence of being a new creature in Christ Jesus, which seemed to justify our acceding, with the bishop's approval and assistance, to her request for baptism, before she underwent the hazardous trial. This was done, and special prayer was offered in the ward next day before the operation commenced. Her cheerfulness at the time was remarkable, and contributed to secure the extremely favourable result. The stump healed rapidly, and a fairly satisfactory wooden leg being made by a native joiner, under my directions, she was actually taken to church, more than a quarter of a mile, to return thanks and confess her faith in Christ, so we had the joy of seeing her walking and praising God. Her husband, who wished to be baptized on that occasion, but was deferred for further instruction, has since been admitted to the church at Ju-yang, whither they returned shortly after the completion of the cure. Her age, as well as the extremity to which suffering had reduced her system, made the successful amputation a subject of special thankfulness to myself and all connected with the hospital." And we have many well-authenticated instances on record of marvellous answers to prayer in the cure of sickness, even when, from some circumstance or other, medical aid was not at hand. Of course, fanaticism has exaggerated this, and has tried to prove that medicine is of no use, and that it is sinful to consult physicians. As is well known a sect has arisen, professing these doctrines, and calling itself "The Peculiar People," but this must not blind us to real facts. Here is an instance from a German tract. "A remarkable answer to prayer is furnished to us by the true Christian and upright statesman, J. J. von Moser, during the time of his long and unjust imprisonment in the fortress of Hohentivial in Wurtemberg, from 1759 to 1764. 'In Hohentivial,' he writes, 'I was for a long

time seriously ill from lumbago and other severe pains in the limbs. I could scarcely move, and had to support myself with a stick in one hand and a crutch in the other. On one occasion, three gentlemen paying me a visit in my prison, I apologized to them for not being able to rise and receive them. One of my visitors, Dr. Eppli, perceiving the crutch and staff lying on the table, exclaimed, "Heaven preserve us. What horrible tools!" I replied, "I thank God that He has made the wood which furnishes these useful supports." Scarcely had my visitors gone, ere I found myself able to stand. I walked up and down a step or two, and found myself perfectly able to dispense with crutches.' He never used them again." *Christ the preacher's power*:—Let our one theme be Christ, not our own whims and fancies and crotchets, but *Him*. Rather ourselves out of sight, unknown, unthought of, hidden in the excess of light which streams from Him. You are familiar with the story of the artist who undertook the task of painting the portrait of our Lord. When complete, you remember, he thought it needed some embellishments, which were therefore supplied. When the picture was exhibited, to his horror and disappointment the attention of the beholders was diverted from the grand central figure to the flowers and trees which grew around. Without the slightest hesitation or remorse, he grasped his brush and obliterated everything that withdrew the mind from that which should fascinate every eye. The moral is obvious. (*Burr.*)

Ver. 2. **Now the names of the twelve apostles.**—*Thoughts on a list of names*:—A good deal may be made out of a list of names, but it depends on whose names they are. There is a BOOK which has nothing in it but names—that book would interest the universe—"the Lamb's book of life." We may look on the men—I. OFFICIALLY. 1. They are selected, chosen, set apart by Christ as apostles. The marvellous results which have flowed from this selection. Their story has moved the world. The world persecuted them, but now falls at their feet. 2. The little power naturally there would seem to have been in these men to have produced any great results. Men of no rank. If the work had not been of God, it could not have been done. 3. There is the list complete. Twelve men are selected, yet few of them stand out in full length in the history. Every true worker God observes. 4. The name may be in the list of the apostles, but the man may not be there. Judas in the list, *he* not there. II. PERSONALLY. We may read it as a list of persons in the Church. 1. The gospel embraces persons of different tempers and tastes, yet all part of one Church. 2. How the good cause may be advanced by relationship. Here are three pairs of brothers in the list. 3. That a catalogue might be made out of a church book of those whose previous lives had been rather questionable. 4. How we can understand the Christian mellowing with age, the better nature grows and is perfected. (*T. Binney.*) *Called to the ministry*:—The attorney that pleads at the bar may have as good gifts as the judge that sits upon the bench; but he must have a lawful commission before he sit as a judge: if it be thus in civil matters, much more in church matters, which are of higher concern. Those, therefore, who usurp the work of the ministry without being solemnly set apart for it, discover more pride than zeal, and they can expect no blessing. (*T. Watson.*) *Groups of apostles*:—It can hardly be without significance that in all the apostolic lists they are divided into the same three groups. In the first group we should naturally expect to find the men of the largest and strongest make—those whose capacity and force of character would fit them to lead the rest. And this expectation is justified by the event. Peter and Andrew, James and John, are the natural leaders of the apostolic company. We might almost call them the Boanergic group, so marked and emphatic is the strain of passion in their service. In the second group are well-known and well-marked men. They are all reflective men, all sceptical men. Philip is the leader, and he was a man that would rather see than believe. They are excellent and thoughtful men, but they will not do much for the world apart from men of a more forward and adventurous spirit than their own. They all believe, but they all have a good deal of unbelief in them. The third group we may call the Hebraistic or practical group—Hebraistic in virtue of one set of qualities which they have in common, and practical in virtue of another set of qualities. They held stoutly to the older Hebrew forms of truth and righteousness; and they were at least as much Hebrew as Christian even to the end. But, on the other hand, all the apostles of this group were men of evidently practical gifts; and this is especially seen in Judas "of the apron," Judas "of the bag," a man chosen to carry the bag because he was careful, prudent, busy, good at buying

and selling, conversant with the world. (*T. T. Lynch.*) *Early Church symbols of the apostles*:—In a series of enamels, by Leonard Limousin, in the Church of St. Peter, at Chartres, the apostles are represented with different insignia. St. Peter with the keys, as commissioned with the power to bind and to loose. St. Paul with a sword, as a soldier of Christ, armed with the "sword of the Spirit." St. Andrew with a cross, shaped as the letter X, the form of the cross on which he is supposed to have been martyred. St. John with a chalice, in allusion to Matt. xx. 23. St. James the Less with a book and a club, in allusion to the supposed manner of his death. St. James the Elder with a pilgrim's staff, a broad hat with scallop shells, and a book, he being regarded as the patron of pilgrims. St. Thomas with an architect's square, as patron of architects and builders. St. Philip with a small cross, the staff of which is knotted like a reed, and indicates the traveller's staff, and marks the apostle as the preacher of Christ crucified to *distant* nations. St. Matthew with a pike (or spear); St. Matthias with an axe; St. Bartholomew with a book and a knife; St. Simon with a saw; these indicating the different modes of their death, according to the legendary accounts. (*Dict. of Antiquities.*) **John his brother.**—God often unites by grace those whom He has before united by nature; to show us, that although nature be not a step towards grace, yet it is not always a hindrance to it. (*Quesnel.*)

Ver. 3. **Matthew the publican.**—*Matthew the publican*:—I. THE POWER AND GRACE OF THE DIVINE CALL. Power is measured by the amount or degree of resistance which it is able to overcome. There were three chief obstacles in the way of this man's conversion. 1. His business exposed him constantly to temptations which were well nigh irresistible. 2. The standard of morality recognized by his associates was proverbially low. 3. He had no character to sustain. II. A SINNER'S CONVERSION IS A CAUSE OF JOY. III. CONVERTED SOULS DESIRE TO PROMOTE THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS. IV. MATTHEW'S CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC WAS HUMILITY. (*W. F. Bishop.*) *The tax-collector who became a bishop*:—St. Matthew's example led to one of the holiest lives recorded in the annals of the early Church. One of the most able and useful men of the North African Church was the Bishop Nulgertius. He had originally been a receiver of taxes, but it one day occurred to him: "May I not be like Matthew, become from a tax-gatherer a preacher of the gospel." He accordingly left his worldly employment, became an ecclesiastic, and was ultimately a most useful bishop. *A humble acknowledger of an unworthy past*:—We read the histories of such persons with vast interest and pleasure; and there is one circumstance which you generally meet with, and which always peculiarly engages our attention, and that is, the remembrance which these men had in their elevation of the poverty and obscurity from which they had been raised. You will commonly find that they had kept about them some memento of the insignificance of their origin, as though they felt a pride in reminding others and themselves how little they owed to the achievments of ancestors. In the splendid halls in which their latter days were spent, they have delighted to hang pictures of the hovels in which they were born: so that the stranger passing through the magnificent scene, after admiring a thousand gorgeous works of art, and confessing the grandeur and taste of their owner, might come suddenly on the representation of a lowly cottage, and learning that this cottage was the home of the parents of the man who had possessed himself of all this glory, might have a feeling of far higher reverence and wonder, than if there had been spread before him the evidences of a most illustrious pedigree. And it is very curious to observe how the biographers of such a man will labour to throw some kind of lustre around his origin, as though they could not bear that their hero should be deficient in aught to which the world attaches worth. (*H. Melvill.*)

Ver. 4. **Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.**—*A chapter in human biography*:—I. EARLY OPPORTUNITY. Called to be an apostle. Sharing, too, in the prayers of Christ (Luke vi. 12, 13). His gifts marked him out for certain work. That work fell to his lot. Possibilities of such a calling. II. GROWTH OF EVIL (John vi. 64–71; xii. 1–6). III. THE PRICE OF A SOUL (John xiii.; Matt. xxvi. 14–16). IV. THE END (John xviii. 2–5; Matt. xxvii. 3–5; Acts i. 18–25, with Matt. xxvii. 5). The sentence of the Master upon his life and his work is this, "It were better for this man that he had never been born. (*G. T. Kerble.*) *A wicked minister*:—Let us adore the unsearchable judgment of God, in the choice of a wicked minister, whose unworthiness He knew. Let us learn from hence that no

merit gives a right to the ministry, but the sole choice of God alone. Jesus Christ would not put saints into it, to oblige us not to judge of the holiness of the Church by certain of her ministers. He would not put into it any of the rich, noble, powerful, or learned, for fear lest men should affix ecclesiastical dignities to temporal advantages. Let us bear with the bad patiently; let us adore Jesus Christ and His authority degraded in them, yet without the virtue of His ordinances thereby suffering anything; and herein let us be assured that it is Jesus Christ who effects all in them, even by the most unworthy workmen. (*Quesnel.*)

Ver. 5. **These twelve Jesus sent forth.**—*Unrecorded workers and heroes:*—Half of "these twelve" are never heard of again as doing any work for Christ. That fact may suggest some considerations worth pondering. I. THIS PECULIAR AND UNEXPECTED SILENCE SUGGESTS THE TRUE WORKER IN THE CHURCH'S PROGRESS. Let us not over-estimate men. What confidence it ought to give us as we think of the tasks and fortunes of the Church! II. SUGGESTS WHAT THE REAL WORK OF THOSE DELEGATED WORKERS WAS. III. HOW OFTEN FAITHFUL WORK IS UNRECORDED AND FORGOTTEN. IV. FORGOTTEN WORK IS REMEMBERED, AND UNRECORDED NAMES ARE RECORDED ABOVE. (*Dr. A. Maclaren.*)

Ver. 7. **And as ye go, preach.**—*Preaching and going:*—I. WHO are to preach? II. WHAT are they to preach? "The kingdom of heaven." &c. Then we must speak of the King. Tell them He is King of grief, grace, and glory. III. WHEN are they to preach? "As ye go." 1. We are always on the go in this busy world. 2. "As ye go"—travelling. 3. While you are walking. 4. As long as you live. IV. WHERE are we to preach? "Go not into the way of the Gentiles," &c. To kith and kin first. V. WHY are we to preach? "Freely ye have received." (*T. Spurgeon.*) *Preaching first to our own kith and kin:*—Do you remember how it was with Samson? He found honey in the carcase of the lion which he had himself destroyed; and when he found the honey he, like a very sensible man, took of it and did eat; and he went along eating, with his hands full of honey. I do not know whether he had not time to eat it all up before he got to the end of the journey; but I am inclined to think that he was not so selfish as to wish to keep it all to himself. At all events, we read that when he got to the house of his father and of his mother he gave them of the honey, and they did eat. Hast thou found honey? Have it not to thyself? Take it home to those who have it not. And, Saviour, there is no honey that drops from earthly honeycombs like Thy love—"sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 8. **Heal the sick.**—*Heal the sick:*—I. A confirmation of our SINCERITY. II. An illustration of the COMPLETENESS of Christianity. 1. Its concern with the whole nature of man. 2. Its care for the individual. III. A REVELATION of the Spirit of the Lord. IV. An undoubted MODE OF SERVING the Christ Himself. (*U. R. Thomas.*) **Cleanse the lepers.**—*History of leprosy:*—Leprosy is a disease with which we are happily so little acquainted in Western lands that the miraculous power exerted by our Lord and His apostles in connection with it does not strike us with the wonder and admiration it must have occasioned in early times. It is, in the passage before us, distinguished from sickness—"Heal the sick" and "Cleanse the lepers," being distinct commands. For leprosy was the special disease of Palestine; was looked upon as a type of sin, was in most cases incurable, and was one that necessitated separation, as indeed it does at the present day, though what is now termed leprosy, *Elephantiasis Græcorum*, is distinct from the *Lepra Mosaica* to which the Israelites from the period of their bondage in Egypt to the time of our Lord, were subject. But the former disease, like the latter, is of Eastern origin, and is thought to have been brought into Europe by the Crusaders, while others affirm that it was introduced in the tenth and eleventh centuries by the Moors and Arabs, who not only conquered the larger part of Spain, but penetrated much further into Europe than is generally known, reaching, it is believed, even as far as Switzerland. Its frequency in various parts of Europe through the Middle Ages is shown by the word "Lazar," for hospital, which referred to Lazarus, because he was "full of sores," and these hospitals were intended primarily for lepers. Most great towns in England had their "St. Giles's Gate," outside which these wretched beings were housed to avoid infection, St. Giles being the patron saint of lepers. This was generally a particularly low and wretched part of the town—St. Giles's Church in London and the Gilligate at Durham are instances. The laws to prevent

the spread of leprosy were very stringent, sometimes even cruel. At Edinburgh, for instance, there was at one time a statute that if any person harboured a leper in their house, he was, among other penalties, to be branded in the cheek. There is only one country in Northern Europe in which this dire disease is still frequent, Norway. From want of vigorous measures to stamp it out leprosy is common in that country, and there is a large leper hospital at Christiania, the capital. In England isolated instances are met with—for instance, at Marazide, in Cornwall, there lived some years ago a person most grievously afflicted with *Elephantiasis Græcorum*, a form of the disease in which the extremities swell to a great size, and sometimes fall off. In the Holy Land, at the present day, as well as in Greece and Spain, this form of leprosy is far from uncommon. Ewald gives a thrilling account of a village near Jerusalem which is exclusively inhabited by lepers—about one hundred in number at the time he visited it. "This unfortunate and pitiable race," he says, "are compelled to live separate from all. The malady appears generally when they are about twelve or fourteen years old, and increases every year, till they lose literally one limb after the other. As they grow older their sight fails, their throat and lungs become infected, till death ends their protracted sufferings. They live upon the alms which they receive from pilgrims and others." In South Africa the disease is very frequent, more especially among the negroes and Hottentots. Very little care was taken to tend or isolate these unfortunate sufferers while the Dutch were in possession of Cape Colony, since they mostly belonged to the despised black race, but when the English came into power in 1810 a settlement was appointed for the lepers at a place called by the Dutch Hemel en Aarde (Heaven on Earth), which seems a most inappropriate name, but that the devoted labours of the Moravian missionary Lehmann sweetened the lot of these unhappy ones. In 1845 the settlement was removed to Robber Island, nearly opposite Cape Town, where the lepers, it was thought, would be more completely isolated, and would enjoy the benefit of sea-air. There the devoted Lehmann continued his ministrations, having under his spiritual charge a motley assemblage of English, Germans, Frenchmen, Malays, Swedes, Africans, only alike in their misfortune. **Freely ye have received, freely give.**—*Freely ye have received, freely give*:—I. A VERY PROFITABLE RECOLLECTION. Have you received at all? *How* have we received? "*Freely.*" 1. Look at your own personal salvation. 2. Look at the abundance of grace given you. 3. Look at the treasures set before you. II. THE CONSTRAINING OBLIGATION—"Freely give." 1. Think what you have to give, give your own selves, your substance, your prayers. 2. How you are to give. (*C. Bridges, M.A.*) I. CONSIDER THE PRIVILEGES WHICH HAVE BEEN SO FREELY BESTOWED UPON US. The value of the gospel seen—1. From our Lord's commission to His disciples. 2. The labours attendant on the execution of that commission. II. THE DUTY RESULTING FROM THESE PRIVILEGES. 1. Freely give your money, influence, and ability. 2. Freely give your friends and relatives to engage in this great missionary work. 3. Freely give yourselves, your lives to this great work. 4. Freely give your prayers. (*J. B. Sumner, M.A.*) *The philosophy of benevolence*:—I. Giving is an act of consecration. II. It is an act of grace. III. It is an act of communion. IV. It is a privilege. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Freely ye have received*:—1. Manifested in creation. 2. Redemption. 3. Assurance. 4. All these blessings come freely. 5. The favourable administrations of providence. (*R. Alliott.*) *The best place for a fortune*:—When a gentleman, who had been accustomed to give away some thousands, was supposed to be at the point of death, his presumptive heir inquired where his fortune was to be found. To whom he answered, "that it was in the pockets of the indigent." *The gospel gratis*:—In *The Indian Female Evangelist* for September of this year, we meet with rather a pleasing illustration of this verse, in the report given by a native Bible-woman, who accompanied the missionary, Mr. Harding and his wife, on an evangelizing tour of 180 miles in the Bombay Presidency, in a bullock-cart. At one place they came to, she says, "We had so many openings in the town here to-day. There were several of us who went, and at times we divided into two companies. We must have gone to six places. One interesting-looking lad followed us around, waiting patiently for his turn to come, when we could follow him to his home. We gladly did so, and had a large company in front of his mother's house and yard. He tried to slip a few coppers into our hands but we refused, for as we have *received freely*, we are glad to *give freely*." But the boy's offer was gratifying, as showing how the work was appreciated. *Freely.* . . . St. Helanon healed very many sick persons, but would not receive any gifts from them, not so much as a morsel of bread; for he was wont to say, "*Gratis* ye have

received, *gratis* give." He replied to a certain nobleman whom he had delivered from a legion of devils, and who urgently pressed him to receive a gift, at least that he might distribute it among the poor, "Be not grieved, my son, at what I do, for I do it for thy sake as well as my own. If I should receive this I should offend God, and the legion would return to thee."

Ver. 9. **Provide neither gold.**—*The enthusiasm of poverty* :—It is impossible not to admire the noble enthusiasm of poverty which showed itself in the literal adoption of such rules by the followers of Francis of Assisi, and, to some extent, by those of Wiclif; but the history of the Mendicant Orders, and other like fraternities, forms part of that teaching of history which has led men to feel that in the long-run the beggar's life will bring the beggar's vices. Yet here, as in the case of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, the spirit is binding still, though the letter has passed away. The mission work of the Church has ever prospered in proportion as that spirit has pervaded it. (*E. H. Plumptre.*) *Without a purse* :—The word *purse* here literally signifies *girdle*, those worn by the Jews were made hollow, so as to contain money. A sort of purse convenient, light, and secure. In like manner, the long sleeves worn by the Japanese serve them in lieu of purses. This custom of missionaries going out with little store of money is carried out in its greatest literality among the Moravians, who give their missionaries the incredibly small salary of five pounds a year. For anything they require beyond what this sum will procure, they have to apply to the committee of the missionary society. Once, when St. Antony was on a journey, he saw an immense piece of gold. He admired the size of the piece of metal, and ran as fast as he could to his mountain, as though he were running from a fire. Whenever money was offered to St. Vincent as he was preaching through the villages, he refused it, and forbade his companions accepting it. St. Francis was wont to say that "money to the servants of God is nothing else than a devil and a poisonous snake." Our Lord gave His disciples this precept for three reasons; (1) That being free from all earthly affections and cares, they should depend entirely upon God's providence; (2) That they should be wholly intent upon preaching the gospel, and give all their thoughts and cares to that; (3) That they might give to all nations an illustrious example of simplicity, poverty, and contempt of riches, whereby they might draw all men to love and admiration of the heavenly life.

Ver. 10. **Neither two coats.**—*No need for two coats* :—Eastern people are accustomed to sleep in the garments they have on during the day; and in this climate such plain people experience no inconvenience from so doing. (*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*)

Ver. 11. **And there abide.**—Why? (1) That they might not appear changeable; (2) That they might not hurt the feelings of their first host; (3) That they might not incur the charge of being gluttonous hankerers after the boards of the rich. (*Lapide.*) *Free hospitality in the East* :—When travelling in the East no one need scruple to go into the best house of any Arab village to which he comes, and he will be received with profuse and gratuitous hospitality. From the moment we entered any house, it was regarded as our own. There is not an Arab you meet who will not empty for you the last drop in his water-skin, or share with you his last piece of black bread. The Rabbis said that paradise was the reward of willing hospitality. (*Ernest Renan.*)

Vers. 12, 13. **And if the house be worthy.**—*The happy family* :—Illustrate the transcendent importance of religion by presenting some of the leading characteristics of the family which is governed by its influence. I. THE GENERAL AIM OF ITS ARRANGEMENTS. II. ITS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. III. ITS EVERY-DAY PURSUITS —its ordinary habits and dispositions. IV. Amid the sacred employment of the SABBATH. V. In its seasons of PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY. VI. In its final UNION IN HEAVEN. (*J. Nilson, A.M.*) *The peaceful salutation* :—1. The clergyman is to be the minister of peace. 2. But it all depends upon adaptation—the peace is to the house, but the question whether "the house" or any one in it can have the "peace" turns upon the point of adaptation. "If the house is worthy"—*i.e.*, if there be fitness in the house to receive it. What that peace means: 1. It is peace with God. 2. It is peace through the blood of Jesus Christ. 3. It is a peace within. 4. It is peace with the whole world. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Spiritual adaptation* :

—It is a principle which pervades everything. To select the congenial soil, or by art to make it congenial to the seed, is the secret of husbandry. The man of physical science is certain of the properties and powers of natural substances; but his difficulty is to secure that the state of the recipient match with its virtues. In the most exquisite and delicate of modern inventions, the capability of the ray of light to leave its impression, is invariable and undoubted; the science lies in procuring a material which is capable to take and to retain it. Nothing lives, nothing really exercises its being, but in that to which it stands in a certain sympathy and proportion. So grace is to the gracious, and "peace to the men of peace." (*Ibid.*) *Saluting a house*:—When a Persian enters an assembly, after having left his shoes without, he makes the usual salutation of "Peace be unto you," which is addressed to the whole assembly—as it were, saluting the house. (*Morier.*)

Ver. 14. **Shake off the dust of your feet.**—The sin of the Sodomites was single, but that of those rejecting the apostles would be manifold, including (1) infidelity; (2) disobedience; (3) ingratitude; (4) inhospitality; (5) rebellion and contumacy against God, contrary to the law of nature, and in defiance of the grace of God. (*Lapide.*) *The danger of defilement*:—The danger of course was not from dust on the feet, but from defilement on the life and in the heart. Every apostle was to let his impenitent countrymen know that they were "as heathen men in the sight of the Messiah," impure in the estimation of the infinitely Holy One. The spirit of the injunction runs through all the ages, and has come down to our day. Its spirit, but its spirit only. And hence a very heavy responsibility rests on that minister of the gospel who gives no intimation of any kind to the impenitent with whom he associates, that they are impure in the sight of God, and in danger of eternal separation from the good. (*Jas. Morison, D.D.*)

Ver. 16. **Behold, I send you forth.**—Christ foretells coming evils and persecutions to His apostles (1) that they may learn His foreknowledge; (2) that they may not suppose such things happen through lack of power in their Master; (3) that they may not be suddenly overcome; (4) that they may not be troubled at the time of the Cross. (*Chrysostom.*) *The forlorn hope*:—Albanus, the Captain-General of the army of Charles V., had four hundred stout and resolute youths, who were prodigal of life and devoted to death, called the forlorn hope. In a battle he despatched these against the strongest part of the enemy's ranks, that by their audacity and determination to die, they might throw those ranks into confusion, and so prepare the way for victory. Thus devoted and prodigal of his life let the messenger of Christ deem himself, that he may subdue unbelievers to Christ the Conqueror. Such a one did Xavier deem himself, when he was going to India, and said to his weeping friends, "Do merchants at such expense and such peril, prodigal of life, sail to India from zeal for earthly merchandize; and shall not I go thither for the sake of God and souls?" **Wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.**—*The union of simplicity and prudence*:—These words were addressed by Christ to His disciples when He sent them for the first time to publish the kingdom of God. The *dove* has been regarded by all nations as the symbol of innocence. *Harmless* signifies properly in the original what is not armed with horns to attack, what has not teeth to bite, what has not a sting to wound; in a moral point of view, what has no intention to injure. Thus SIMPLICITY is unsuspecting, and is the companion of innocence. It extends to all the parts of our being. It knows the truth by intuition. It trusts itself calmly to God. It passes through the most impenetrable labyrinths without embarrassment. PRUDENCE, on the contrary, supposes the existence of evil in man and in the world. We have to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" (Matt. xvi. 6). We must COMBINE simplicity with prudence. Some Christians are simple without having prudence; some are prudent without simplicity. Without knowing how to unite the two, you may by a badly enlightened and rash confidence in Divine Providence reckon on help which you ought to have sought by the right use of means, and so compromise success in the family, or plan, or Church. Through not having tact to choose your means of action, and apply them to different persons, you may do more harm than good for Christ. Through over-confidence you may commit yourself to the first hypocrite. On other occasions the goodness of your heart leads you astray. At other times you hurry on what ought to have been done gradually. Prudence may go too far (1) when you have undue fear of the approbation of the world for all you do: or when you are destitute

of all fear of its opposition; (2) when it gives undue attention to difficulties which the imagination likes to magnify. (*Dr. Grandpierre.*) *The serpent*:—The serpent as a teacher. Jesus says that, in view of every kind of danger, we are to be as sagacious and prudent as the serpent. The serpent is very careful about its—I. HEART. Be anxious for the safety of your bodies and minds. Be doubly anxious about the safety of your hearts. Why the Bible says so much about the heart. II. EYES. As your bodies have eyes, so have your souls. It is with the eyes of your souls that you are to see your duties to God and man, and the way in which you are to be saved—"Open thou," &c. Read a part of the Bible every day. III. AN APPROACHING STORM. Knows when a storm is coming, &c. There are moral as well as physical storms. Jesus is the refuge from the storm. IV. TEMPTATION. In the East there are a great number of serpent charmers, &c. Guard against every form of music which is not healthy, pure, and godly, &c. (*Dr. Alex. McAuslane.*) *Sheep among wolves*:—I. THEIR PROMINENT VOCATION—"Behold, I send you forth." 1. These disciples had been with Him, and had been taught by Him, that they might teach in His name. The mode of operation in the kingdom of God is, first make disciples, teach them, and then let them go forth and do the same with others. When one light is kindled other candles are lit therefrom. Drops of heavenly water are flashed aloft and scattered all around like dew upon the face of the earth, and behold each one begetteth a fountain where it falls, and thus the desert is made to rejoice and blossom. 2. To go after the lost sheep. 3. He sent them forth to work miracles. We have not this power; it is more to God's glory that the world should be conquered by the force of truth than by the blaze of miracles. II. THEIR IMMINENT PERIL—"As sheep in the midst of wolves." 1. Amongst those who will not in any way sympathize with your efforts. The bleating sheep finds no harmony in the howl of the wolf. 2. Amongst those who would rend them. 3. Amongst those who would hinder their endeavours. 4. We are powerless against them. What can a sheep do if a wolf sets upon it? 5. It is trying work for the sheep. 6. It is testing work. 7. It is teaching work. III. THEIR EMINENT AUTHORITY—"I send you forth." 1. The Lord of the harvest. 2. "I," who prize you. 3. "I," who have gone on the same errand Myself. 4. "I," who overcame in the very character in which I send you." "The Lamb shall overcome them." IV. THEIR PERMANENT INSTRUCTIONS. 1. Be prudent and wise as a serpent. (1) It gets out of the way of man as much as it can. (2) It glides along very quietly. (3) Famous for finding his way where no other creature could enter. 2. The innocence of the dove. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Grace blending the subtle with the gentle*:—Grace knows how to pick the good out of the evil, the jewel out of the oyster shell, the diamond from the dunghill, the sagacity from the serpent; and by a Divine chemistry it leaves the good which it takes out of the foul place as good as though it had never been there. Grace knows how to blend the most gentle with the most subtle; to take away from prudence the base element which makes it into cunning, and, by mingling innocence with it, produce a sacred prudence most valuable for all walks of life. (*Ibid.*) *Wherein we should not be like the serpent*:—1. The serpent eats dust (Isa. lxv. 24.) 2. The serpent is deceitful. 3. The serpent casts the coat, but another new coat comes in the room; we should not cast off one sin, and another as bad come in the room. 4. The serpent is a venomous creature, and is full of poison (Psa. lviii. 4.) 5. The serpent is given to hissing; we should not hiss out reproaches. 6. The serpent stops her ear. 7. The serpent casts her coat, but keeps her sting; we should not cast off outward acts of sin, and keep the love of sin. 8. Serpents are chased away with sweet perfumes. *Wherein we should be like the serpent*:—1. The serpent hath a subtlety in his eye, a singular sharpness of sight. Get the serpent's eye, have a quick insight into the mysteries of religion. 2. The serpent hath a prudence and subtlety in his ear: will not be deluded by the voice of the charmer. 3. The serpent hath a chief care to defend his head; so we our head from error. *We should be as doves*:—1. In respect of meekness. 2. In respect of innocency. 3. In respect of purity. *Wherein does the Christian join these two together*:—1. To be sensible of injury but not revenge it. 2. To be humble but not base. 3. To defend the truth by argument, and adorn it by life. (*J. Watson.*) *In doves there are many things commendable*:—1. Beauty. 2. Chastity. 3. Fruitfulness. Most months in the year they bring forth young. 4. Amity. They love their mates. 5. Unity. They live in companies. 6. Their innocence. (*T. Adams.*) *Prudence of serpent and wisdom of dove*:—I. WHAT OUR LORD RECOMMENDS to our thoughts, esteem, and practice. Wisdom is a solid knowledge of things spiritual, especially such as relate

to practice. Harmlessness or innocence intimates purity, and meekness, mildness, and wrathlessness. II. THE WAY OUR LORD TAKES TO INSINUATE HIS ADVICE. 1. The standard that is fixed, or the creatures of whom we are to learn the things recommended. 2. The conformity that is required to that standard. III. THE CONNECTION FIXED BETWEEN THE TWO THINGS RECOMMENDED. 1. There is no real inconsistency between them. 2. They mutually help each other to appear with greater lustre. (*E. Calamy.*) *Prudence combined with innocence*:—This beautifies a Christian, when he hath the serpent's eye in the dove's head. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not betray the truth; and the wisdom of the serpent, that we may not betray ourselves. In short, religion without policy, is too weak to be safe; policy without religion is too subtle to be good. When wisdom and innocency, like Castor and Pollux, appear together, they presage the soul's happiness. (*T. Watson.*) Wise—not as foxes, whose cunning is to deceive others; but as serpents, whose policy is only to defend themselves, and to shift for their own safety. (*Matthew Henry.*) *The 'dove' qualification helpful in Christian work*:—As Francis Xavier was preaching in one of the cities of Japan, a man went up to him, pretending he had something to communicate in private. Upon his approach Xavier leaned his head, to hear what he had to say. The scorner thus gained his object, which was to spit freely upon the face of the devoted missionary, and thus insult him in the most public manner. Xavier, without speaking a word or showing any sign of annoyance, took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and went on with his sermon, as if nothing had happened to interrupt him. By such a heroic control of his passions, the scorn of the audience was turned into admiration. The most learned doctor of the city, who happened to be present, said to himself that a law which taught men such virtue, inspired them with such courage, and gave them such complete mastery over themselves, could not but be from God. Afterwards he desired baptism, and his example was followed by many others. So effectually did the meekness of the missionary promote the success of his work.

Ver. 20. **For it is not ye that speak.**—*The Christian ministry a ministry of the Spirit*:—The text applied—I. To THE APOSTLES. 1. The primary reference is to the apostles. 2. The fact of the Spirit of the Father speaking in the apostles is evident from the effects produced by their word. II. To OURSELVES. 1. This is the dispensation of the Spirit. 2. The minister of the Spirit prepares diligently for his pulpit ministrations. (*C. Clayton, M.A.*) *The intuitional element in life*:—The disciples were a helpless body of men for thinking purposes, and could not imagine beforehand, in their simplicity and rudeness and ignorance, what would be best for them; but if they gave themselves wholly to the ministry of Christ, and then were called before magistrates, it would be given them in that hour what they should say. The range of saying was very limited. It was not that they should understand all theology, providence, learning; but the power of self-defence against magistrates. They were to maintain innocency and simplicity; not to be tricked into casuistry. 1. The nation and times from which the sacred Scriptures came were anterior to the philosophizing period which was ushered in later. Facts, events, things, emotions, belong to the periods which generated the Scriptures. 2. Every man recognizes the fact that the mind acts with different degrees of clearness and certainty under different conditions. The range of the eye is limited, but in perfect health you can see more clearly than when health is impaired; also when atmospheric conditions are favourable. So it is with faculty. The faculties of the mind have a wonderful power of development. The limit to which you can draw out the mind—for that is the meaning of education—is immense. But that is not the only limit of the expansible faculties of the mind. They are subject to instantaneous development. As a grain of powder, which is small, but which, when touched by fire, expands instantly into a thousand times its bulk and diameter, and generates a power that was unsuspected before, so the mental faculties can be touched with a fire that shall give them an immense flash and scope and penetration utterly unlike the ordinary experience of men in life. (*Beecher.*) *A latent prophetic gift in man*:—There is a latent spirit of prophecy in everybody who is highly organized. This action of the mind is seen in lower forms. Take, for example, the inspiration which fear breeds. If a man's leading idea is gold, he has an instinct by which he avoids things unfavourable. Others work on the plane of philosophical power. Scholars have the "critical judgment." These flashings of inspiration are of the highest value; in business, art. There may be error in these intuitions; so there is in ordinary experience. These flashes of prophecy

should be corrected. 1. The primary benefit that comes from these moral intuitions is comfort and direction of the individual. They clear his reason, they furnish an ideal; they redeem him from bondage. 2. These inspirations work mostly beyond the senses, in the invisible. Is it unreasonable to expect a certain degree of excitability of mind in the Divine realm? (*Ibid.*) *Intuition begotten of fear*:—A man is walking sluggishly home, and thinking of the drudgery of the day, and he hears the fire-bell, and instantly he says, "Why, that is my district; how did I leave things?" Instantly he thinks of the way in which he left his shop and the fire; and then he says to himself, "If it is there, what treasure I have in that shop, open and exposed! Why, there is powder there!" In an instant that man, not by any slow process of analyzing, but with a flash, thinks of a thousand things; and they are all material things; they are not higher thoughts and realities at all. (*Ibid.*) *Intuition illuminates, but does not create, facts*:—Of course, when the flash of inspiration comes to a man in practical matters, there must be material for it to illuminate or act upon. If in a gallery of pictures there is a central electric fire, and the light flashes into the room, a spectator who has a liking for pictures, standing there, feels the inspiration in a minute; and if the light instantly goes out, he exclaims, "I have seen them: I know them; let the light go out;" but if a man is in an empty room, where there is nothing on the walls, if the light were to flash, he might look around and not know anything more than he did before. Let a man store his mind with knowledge, with facts, with realities, with materials of various kinds, and then, when swelling, flashing revelations come, he has something for them to inspire; but they never inspire emptiness or ignorance; they merely give to what a man does know, facts, principles, materials, spiritual or ethical forms and proportions and revelatory power for the future. (*Ibid.*) *Intuition needs correction*:—We know, too, that these intuitions, these flashes of prophecy should be corrected. We dig gold out of a vein, and we know that there is dross in it. Gold absolutely pure is seldom found anywhere; but we do not reject the ore if there is only ninety per cent. of gold in it. I think that men who buy dry mines, and spend good money on nothing at all, ought to be willing to take a mine that has ninety per cent. of pure metal in it. If it has fifty per cent. or forty per cent., or even twenty per cent., it is worth working: it more than pays expenses. (*Ibid.*) *Luther before the Diet of Worms*:—Never perhaps has this promise been more clearly fulfilled than in the case of Luther before the Diet of Worms. The intrepid monk, who had hitherto boldly braved all his enemies, spoke on this occasion, when he found himself in the presence of those who thirsted for his blood, with calmness, dignity, and humility. There was no exaggeration, no mere human enthusiasm, no anger; overflowing with the liveliest emotion, he was still at peace; modest, though withstanding the powers of the earth; great in presence of all the grandeur of the world. This is an indisputable mark that Luther obeyed God, and not the suggestions of his own pride. In the hall of the Diet there was One greater than Charles and than Luther.

Ver. 22. **But he that endureth to the end shall be saved.**—*Enduring to the end*:—We must not enter the work of the ministry without counting the cost. I. PERSEVERANCE IS THE BADGE OF THE SAINT. 1. It is the Scriptural mark. 2. Analogy shows us that it is perseverance which must mark the Christian. The winner in the race. 3. The common-sense judgment of mankind tells us, that those who merely begin and do not hold out, will not be saved. II. PERSEVERANCE IS THEREFORE THE TARGET OF ALL OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES. 1. The world. 2. The flesh. 3. It will try our perseverance in service, in suffering, in steadfastness, in doctrine. III. PERSEVERANCE IS THE GLORY OF CHRIST. IV. PERSEVERANCE SHOULD BE THE GREAT CARE OF EVERY CHRISTIAN. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Only he who reaches the goal may be accounted a Christian*:—A ship starts on a voyage to Australia—if it stops at Madeira, or returns after reaching the Cape, would you consider that it ought to be called an emigrant ship for New South Wales? It must go the whole voyage, or it does not deserve the name. A man has begun to build a house, and has erected one side of it—do you consider him a builder if he stops there, and fails to cover it in or to finish the other walls? Do we give men praise for being warriors because they know how to make one desperate charge, but lose the campaign? Have we not, of late, smiled at the boasting despatches of commanders, in fights where both combatants fought with valour, and yet neither of them had the common sense to push on to reap the victory? What was the very strength of Wellington, but that when a triumph had been achieved, he knew how to reap the harvest

which had been sown in blood? And he only is a true conqueror, and shall be crowned at the last, who continueth till war's trumpet is blown no more. It is with a Christian as it was with the great Napoleon: he said, "Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me." So, under God, conquest has made you what you are, and conquest must sustain you. (*Ibid.*) *Perseverance in the midst of trial*:—When Mr. Smeaton had built the lighthouse upon the Eddystone, he looked out anxiously after a storm to see if the edifice was still there, and it was his great joy when he could see it still standing, for a former builder had constructed an edifice which he thought to be indestructible, and expressed a wish that he might be in it in the worst storm which ever blew, and he was so, and neither himself nor his lighthouse were ever seen afterwards. Now you have to be exposed to multitudes of storms; you must be in your lighthouse in the worst storm which ever blew; build firmly then on the Rock of Ages, and make sure work for eternity, for if you do these things, ye shall never fall. For this Church's sake, I pray you do it; for nothing can dishonour and weaken a Church so much as the falls of professors. A thousand rivers flow to the sea, and make rich the meadows, but no man heareth the sound thereof; but if there be one cataract, its roaring will be heard for miles, and every traveller will mark the fall. A thousand Christians can scarcely do such honour to their Master as one hypocrite can do dishonour to Him. (*Ibid.*) *Final perseverance*:—It cannot be guaranteed by—1. Habit, which may extend only to the outer framework, and not to the spirit, motive, temper of the religious life. 2. Determination. The will can do almost everything except be sure of itself amid circumstances which go against the grain. 3. Indefectible Grace. This doctrine is no part of the New Testament teaching. It reduces the sacraments and ordinances of religion to mere charms. It brings probation to an end, for it practically abolishes freewill. The Christian's perseverance may be morally, but it is assuredly not mechanically, certain. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The causes which make endurance difficult*:—1. Persecution arising because of the Word. 2. False christs and false prophets, which in our day may mean a sceptical friend, an insidious article in a magazine, or merely the dangerous atmosphere of the social circle in which we live. 3. The spiritual weariness which steals over the soul with the lapse of time. We cannot sustain ourselves for ever on the mountains; we must, sooner or later, descend to the plain. Depression ensues, and we find it difficult to struggle on. 4. Trifling with conscience—not necessarily in great matters, but in a number of little matters—omissions or curtailments of daily prayers, neglect of a regular review of conscience, carelessness as to objects on which money is spent, recklessness in intercourse with others. These, and like matters, help forward a dull and inoperative state of conscience, which is itself preparatory to a great failure. (*Ibid.*) *How to secure perseverance*:—1. A sense of constant dependence on God. To be self-confident is to be in danger, for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. 2. Prayer for this special grace. To win perseverance, prayer must persevere. Be not discouraged, although your prayer does not seem to be answered all at once. God may be testing your integrity of purpose. It is after describing all the parts of a Christian's armour—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of preparation, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit—that the apostle adds, "Praying alway, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." 3. Keeping the mind fixed, as much as possible, on the end of life, and on that which follows it. Death is as certain for each one of us as the how, the when, and the where of its occurrence are uncertain. Let us then set lightly by this life, and embark something less than the best half of our hearts in its concerns and interests. The shore may still be distant, but the sailor keeps his eye on it as he prays for the skill and the strength to weather the passing storm. On those heights which are beyond the valley of death, the eyes of the predestinate constantly rest, and the sight sustains them in times of trouble, darkness, and despair, which would otherwise prove beyond the powers of their endurance. The end is well worth the effort; and, since we are in the hands of infinite Love, the effort will be enduring, if the end be kept steadily in view. (*Ibid.*) *Staying power*:—It is not the fiery, headlong running in the course, nor the rapid, hurried stroke in the boat, which mean victory. The man who has what is called *staying power*, who "endureth to the end," wins. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) Perseverance is the only triumphing grace. (*St. Bernard.*)

Ver. 23. **But when they persecute you in this city.**—They may go out of the

way of danger, though they must not go out of the way of duty. (*Matthew Henry.*) *An exception to flight* :—Polycarp (the friend and pupil of St. John) was eighty-six years old at the date of his martyrdom, and this took place, it seems almost certain, in 155 or 156. There had been a long and bitter persecution of the Christians in the East, and the reports of martyrdom after martyrdom reached the aged man in his bishopric of Smyrna, "but," we are quoting Mr. Holland, "he was not disturbed at the reports, and wished to stay in the city at home; but at the entreaties of his friends, he withdrew to a little field-house, not far from the town, and stopped there, with a few companions, praying continuously for all men, and for the Churches . . . . as was was his habit. As he prayed, he saw a vision . . . his pillow seemed to him all burning in flames, and he turned to those with him, and said, 'I shall be burnt alive.' And to escape the pressure of his pursuers he moved to another field-house, and they, the pursuers, came just after to his first hiding-place, and caught two boys, one of whom, under torture, confessed where his hiding-place was. . . . It was the hour of the evening meal . . . when the officer of the peace came with fourteen horse and arms, as if against a thief. . . . Polycarp could have fled again, but he refused." His prediction came true, he was burnt, but God caused his sufferings to be brought to a speedy end by a providential circumstance, which, on first reading it, one is inclined to think too miraculous to be true, but which seems well-authenticated, though the description given by his biographer is probably unintentionally exaggerated. The wind so caught the flames that were to consume him that they took the shape of a hollow, or a sail swollen by the wind, and they despatched him with a sword. Polycarp is thought to have been the angel (*i.e.*, messenger) of the Church of Smyrna addressed in Revelation ii. 8.

Ver. 24. **The disciple is not above his Master.**—*The Master and His disciple* :—Jeremy Taylor, in exhorting to patience the afflicted of his day, many of whom were sufferers for conscience' sake from loyalty to Church and king, reminded them that they had seen their sovereign (the unfortunate Charles the First) imprisoned and put to death, and that he had borne his misfortunes with exemplary fortitude. Guatemala the sovereign of Mexico, whom the Spanish conquerors in their cruel greed tortured to make him show them treasures they believed him to have concealed, bore all they inflicted upon him with stoical heroism. One of his followers, also put to the torture, complained of his treatment, and was disposed to give way, at which the chief reproachfully exclaimed, "And I too, am *I* upon a bed of roses?" or, as it ought perhaps to be more literally rendered, "Am I enjoying the luxury of the bath?" If the example of suffering patience in an earthly monarch be so powerful, how much more when it is set us by the King of kings?

Ver. 27. **What I tell you in darkness.**—*God's message and its proclamation* :—I. Here is A PREPARATORY PRIVILEGE FOR ALL CHRISTIANS. "What I tell you in darkness," "and what ye hear in the ear." 1. It is the great privilege of Christians to realize that Christ is still living with and conversing with them; this consciousness fits for service. 2. Feeling the gospel spoken by Christ directly and distinctly to our own soul. II. HOW THIS PRIVILEGE REALLY DOES BECOME A PREPARATORY PROCESS. 1. If you get your message directly from Christ there will be a personality about it. 2. It will also give us the truth of God in proportion and purity. 3. If you go to Christ for all you preach you will preach with unction. 4. It will enable you to be certain about the truth. III. Close by trying to fulfil the command TO PUBLISH UPON THE HOUSETOPS WHAT THE MASTER HAS SPOKEN TO US IN SECRET. 1. That there is pardon for the greatest guilt. 2. That by faith the ruling power of sin is broken. 3. That faith in Christ can save a man from every sort of fear in life and death. These things have been whispered in my ear. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Proclamations from Housetops* :—On the occurrence of a death in the dwelling, mourners, especially priests, are stationed upon the housetops, and attract public attention by their lamentations. And a proclamation is often made, as well as an address to the people, from the flat roof of a government-house which looks down upon the meidan, or public square. Even the call to prayer is proclaimed from the housetop, where there is no minaret or church-bell. (*Van Lennep.*) *Illuminating words* :—You sometimes see a man in the community who is always a source of light to his fellow-citizens. His words cast their illumination round every subject. When a great crisis comes men stand and listen until they hear him speak, and when he has spoken the city knows its duty. But do we think that every conviction leaped in a moment into his consciousness? that he has never struggled into the certainties which he gave to other

men so clearly? that it is not by some transmission through his experience, often clouded by doubt and bewilderment, that the abstract truth has passed into the clear, sharp, tangible statement of duty which his fellow citizens catch from him? But nowhere was this more evident than in the history of Christ's disciples. Two books stand next to one another in the New Testament—The Gospel of St. John and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. What are the pictures in the two books? In the one the disciples are hearing Christ speak, and always missing His real meaning. Again and again, on page after page, we seem to see that wistful, disappointed look upon the Preacher's face. They will not understand Him. He is speaking to them in darkness. In the other book those same apostles are preaching clear, strong, definite truth from Jerusalem to Rome; that which was vague and dim has passed into them and come out from them sharp and bright; the light has been focussed in their natures and characters, and the hearts of men are springing up under its influence as it comes to them. What Jesus had told them in darkness they are now speaking in light. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) There is a higher motive than fear, viz., trust in the Father who cares even for the sparrows. (*Benham.*)

Ver. 28.—**Fear not them which kill the body.**—It is prudent to give up the *body* in order to save the *soul;* it is like casting the *cargo* of the vessel into the sea to preserve the *crew* from destruction. (*Quesnel.*) *Body and soul:*—I. That human nature is made up of body and soul. II. That the body may be destroyed, while the soul remains uninjured. III. That the honest working out of duty may expose the body to destruction. IV. That the neglect of the duty exposes both body and soul to destruction. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God to be feared rather than man:*—Christ cautions His disciples against three particular things. 1. Bodily torments. 2. Disgrace. 3. Death. Which last He cautions against for these three reasons. 1. Because it is but the death of the body. 2. Because hell is more to be feared. 3. Because they live under the special care of God's ever-seeing Providence, and cannot, therefore, be taken away without His permission. The words of the text pregnant with great truths. 1. That it is within the power of man to divest us of all our temporal enjoyments. 2. That the soul of man is immortal. 3. That God has absolute power to destroy the whole man. 4. That the thought of damnation ought to have greater weight to engage our fears than the most exquisite miseries that the malice of man is able to inflict. The prosecution of this lies in two things. I. IN SHOWING WHAT IS IN THOSE MISERIES WHICH MEN ARE ABLE TO INFLICT THAT MAY LESSEN OUR FEARS OF THEM. 1. They are temporal, and concern only this life. 2. They do not take away anything from a man's proper perfections. 3. They are all limited by God's overruling hand. 4. The good that may be extracted out of such miseries as are inflicted by men is often greater than the evil that is endured by them. 5. The fear of those evils seldom prevents them before they come, and never lessens them when they are come. 6. The all-knowing God, who knows the utmost of them better than men or angels, has pronounced them not to be feared. 7. The greatest of these evils have been endured, and that without fear or astonishment. II. IN SHOWING WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BODY AND SOUL IN HELL WHICH MAKES IT SO FORMIDABLE. It is the utmost Almighty God can do to a sinner. When tempted, ponder man's inability and God's infinite ability to destroy. The case of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Fear, anxious and prudential:*—There are two kinds of fear. 1. A fear of solicitous anxiety, such as makes us let go our confidence in God's providence, causing our thoughts so to dwell upon the dreadfulness of the thing feared as to despair of a deliverance. And with such a kind of fear Christ absolutely forbids us to fear those that kill the body; it being very derogatory to God, as if His mercy did not afford as great arguments for our hope as the cruelty of man for our fear. 2. The second kind of fear is a prudential caution, whereby a man, from the due estimate of an approaching evil, endeavours his own security. And this kind of fear is not only lawful, but also laudable. For, to what purpose should God have naturally implanted in the heart of man a passion of fear, if it might not be exercised and affected with suitable objects—that is, things to be feared? Now under this sort of fear we may reckon that to which Christ advises His disciples in these expressions—"Beware of men," and "Flee from one city into another. (*Ibid.*) *Prison better than hell:*—Pardon me, Emperor, thou threatenest me only with a prison; but God threatens me with hell. (*A Primitive Martyr.*) *Fearing God rather than man:*—Bishop Latimer having one day preached before Henry VIII. a sermon

which displeased his majesty, he was ordered to preach again the following Sunday, and to make an apology for the offence he had given. After reading his text the bishop thus began his sermon:—"Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease. But then, consider well, Hugh; dost thou not know from whence thou camest—upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God, who is all-present, who beholdeth all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliver thy message faithfully." He then proceeded with the same sermon he had preached the Sunday before, but with considerably more energy. Afterwards, the king sent for him, and demanded of him how he dared preach in such a manner. He, falling on his knees, replied, his duty to his God and his Prince had enforced him thereto, and he had merely discharged his duty and his conscience in what he had spoken. Upon which the king, rising from his seat, and taking the good man by the hand, embraced him, saying, "Blessed be God, I have so honest a servant." *Persecution:*—The devil drives but a poor trade by the persecution of the saints; he tears the nest, but the bird escapes; he cracks the shell, but loses the kernel. (*Flavel.*)

Ver. 29. **And one of them shall not fall to the ground.**—I. THE DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE. It is involved in difficulties. The text justifies the assertion that it is comprehensive and even universal, especially engaged on behalf of man, more particularly directed to the safety, prosperity, and increase of the Church. The special providence of God extends to every individual among His people. II. THE SUBJECT IS CAPABLE OF VERY EXTENSIVE AND IMPORTANT APPLICATION. Recognize the hand of God in all the events of life. No such thing as chance. Submit to God amid all trials. For comfort and confidence. Let it guide your practice. A powerful argument to recommend religion to the choice of all men. (*D. Katterns.*) *A particular providence:*—I. TO ILLUSTRATE AND CONFIRM THE DOCTRINE WHICH THESE WORDS EXHIBIT THAT THERE IS A PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE. The Bible reveals this doctrine—"His kingdom ruleth over all." 1. The providence of God extends to a meaner order of things—to raiment, birds, lilies; thus it is concerned with events great and small. 2. The providence of God is more extensive and minute than the care of any one part of the creation over another. The most tender mother never counted the hairs of her child, but God's providence extends to this. 3. The notion which the Scriptures give us of God. He is said to be Governor, but how can He be unless He attend to all the concerns of those over whom He rules. Where is His wisdom if events take place to meet which He is not provided; or His power, if circumstances transpire over which He has no control. 4. If we reject providence, one great part of Scripture must be resigned, that which we call prophecy. II. TO POINT OUT THE PURPOSES OF UTILITY—EXPERIMENTAL AND PRACTICAL—TO WHICH THIS DOCTRINE IS TO BE APPLIED. 1. It is calculated to cheer the ministers of Christ under the various difficulties to their success to which they are exposed. 2. It is calculated to console the true Church of God in all parts of the earth. 3. It may serve to sustain the heart of every individual disciple of Christ. 4. It tends to calm the mind while watching the various dispensations of Providence as it respects nations or individuals. (*J. Clayton.*) *Particular providence of God:*—In viewing the attributes of God and His relations to us, there are two questions to be considered. 1. Has God the gracious will, the benevolent inclination, to observe and direct the works of creation? and has He sufficient power to discern all His creatures, and to regulate everything respecting them according to His will? 2. What is thus taught us from the consideration of God is confirmed by an attention to our feelings; a persuasion of the superintending providence of God is incorporated with our very nature. 3. An attention to the history of the world shows us that the providence of God is universal. God has used the smallest things to produce the greatest consequences. 4. In the holy volume (1 Sam. ii. 6; 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12; Job v. 9; Psa. lxxv. 6, 7). (1) It is of unspeakable importance to keep the remembrance of God's providence fresh upon the mind; the forgetfulness of it is often mentioned in Scripture as an occasion of sin. (2) This subject excites deep melancholy when we reflect how many oppose the providence of God, and sin against it. (3) This subject is full of consolation to the pious. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Sparrows turned preachers:*—I. "Though common in human eyes, God cares for me," chirps the sparrow;

"then, man, fear not." II. "Though ignorant, God cares for me," chirps the sparrow; "then, man, fear not." III. "Though feeble and mortal, God cares for me," chirps the sparrow; "then, man, fear not." (*G. T. Coster.*) *Sale of sparrows*:—At the present day the markets of Jerusalem and Jaffa are attended by many fowlers, who offer for sale long strings of little birds of various species, chiefly sparrows, wagtails, and larks. These are also frequently sold, ready plucked, trussed in rows of about a dozen on slender wooden skewers. (*H. B. Tristram, LL.D.*) *A minute providence not unworthy of the Divine Majesty*:—The continued and universal exercise of wisdom and goodness cannot be inconsistent with majesty. The sun, the brightest natural emblem of its Creator, loses none of its excellence, because it not only enlightens powerful emperors, but also permits insects to sport in its beams. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Special providence in peril*:—When George Washington had been graciously preserved amidst the terrible carnage which attended Braddock's defeat, he was not ashamed to leave on record this evidence of his faith:—"By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me." His friend, Dr. James Craik, who was with him in the battle, was often afterward heard to say:—"I expected every moment to see him fall. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him from the fate of all around him." Let unbelievers in the special providence of God listen also to the language of the matter-of-fact Dr. Franklin, whom no one will suspect of giving the least countenance to vain theories and "old wives' fables." The Convention was in session at Philadelphia to frame our Federal Constitution. Weeks and weeks had passed, but strife and confusion so far prevailed that no perceptible good was done. A proposition was then made for daily prayers, and Franklin rose in his place and said: "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the Divine protection. Our prayers were heard and graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favour. To that kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we forgotten this powerful FRIEND? or do we no longer need His assistance? I have lived a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. (*J. H. Norton.*) *God's care removes our fear*:—I remember once entering a room where a little blind girl sat on her father's knee, with one of his arms clasping her. Without saying a word, or making a sign, I stepped quietly up, unclasped his arm, and lifted the child away. As I took her out of the room, her father said, "Louie, are you not afraid? You don't know who has you." She answered at once, "No, I don't know who has me, and I'm not afraid, for *I* know that *you* know." (*J. Culross, D.D.*) Said Martin Luther, as his eye caught sight of a little bird among the leaves of a tree, one evening, "This little fellow has chosen his shelter for the night, and is quietly rocking himself to sleep, without a care for to-morrow's lodgings, calmly holding by his little twig, and leaving God to think for him." *Small value of sparrows*:—The value of a sparrow is just about as little as anything that could come under appraisement. Two of them are sold for a farthing (less than a penny of our money). Two for a farthing, says one evangelist; five for two farthings, says another. "A charming discrepancy," says some one—and, indeed, when we think of it, the discrepancy takes us into the very market-place, and we see the humble trading going on. "How much?" "Two for a farthing; but if you take two farthings' worth, you shall have one thrown into the bargain; you shall have five. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*)

Ver. 30. **But the very hairs of your head.**—*Hairs of your head are all numbered*:—1. This is spoken in relation to the body. "Fear not them which kill the body." 2. Our Lord is giving His disciples arguments against fear. (1) He is their avenger. (2) Be sure that you are never afraid to pray about the smallest thing. (3) Do not shrink from feeling yourself a centre about which God is making all manner of kind things to circulate. Love never hurts any one. (4) Go without anxiety, for it not only hurts you, but grieves God. 3. That man may be said to have the most of the mind of God who attaches the greatest importance to the trifles of life. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*). *Jewels catalogued*:—God does not expose His jewels till He has catalogued them. (*Ibid.*) *The exquisite mechanism of the hair*:—A "hair"

is a very little thing; but its structure is made up of a world of parts. There is a root and there is a stem, and there is a vein, and there is a fluid, and there is a membrane; and every part is arranged, fitted, guarded, and fed; and a thousand functions are going on to sustain that little thread-like thing. (*Ibid.*) *Providence*:—I. The MINUTENESS of providence. Providence over little circumstances; over minutes of time; in the use of little things. The minuteness of providence seen in the fact that even the thoughts of men are under God's hand. II. THE KIND CONSIDERATION OF GOD IN TAKING CARE OF HIS PEOPLE. 1. In keeping them alive before they were converted. 2. In keeping them out of temptation. 3. In arranging their places. 4. In providing their daily bread. III. WHAT SHOULD BE THE SPIRIT AND TEMPER OF THE MEN WHO BELIEVE THIS TRUTH. 1. We ought to be a bold race of people. 2. In bereavement, not excessive grief. 3. A calm which renders life happy. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The difference between fate and providence*:—Fate is blind; providence has eyes. Fate is blind, a thing that must be; it is just an arrow shot from a bow, that must fly onward, but hath no target. Not so, providence; providence is full of eyes. There is a design in everything, and an end to be answered; all things are working together, and working together for good. They are not done because they must be done, but they are done because there is some reason for it. It is not only that the thing is, because it must be; but the thing is, because it is right it should be. God hath not arbitrarily marked out the world's history; He had an eye to the great architecture of perfection, when He marked all the aisles of history, and placed all the pillars of events in the building of time. (*Ibid.*) *Taken by the Master*:—You have taken great care with a certain number of roses; you have trained them up, and there they are, blooming in their beauty. You pride yourself upon them. You come one morning into the garden, and you find that the best rose has been taken away. You are angry: you go to your fellow-servants, and charge them with having taken the rose. They will declare that they had nothing at all to do with it; and one says, "I saw the master walking here this morning; I think he took it." Is the gardener angry then? No, at once he says, "I am happy that my rose should have been so fair as to attract the attention of the master. It is his own: he hath taken it; let him do what seemeth him good." (*Ibid.*) *The numbered hairs*:—I. FORE-ORDINATION. 1. Its extent. 2. Its source. 3. Its lessons. 4. Its influence. II. KNOWLEDGE. 1. Its character (1) Minute; (2) Pre-eminent; (3) Tender; (4) Constant. III. VALUATION. IV. PRESERVATION—from loss, accident, persecution, &c. (*Ibid.*) *Heads more than hairs*:—If God numbers their hairs, much more does He number their heads, and take care of their lives, their comforts, their souls. (*M. Henry.*)

Ver. 31. **Ye are of more value.**—*The value of man's nature*:—Causes—I. From the CAPACITIES of that nature. II. From the fact that he is the object of the special regard and care of Divine providence. III. From its everlasting DESTINY. IV. From the fact that it has been REDEEMED with the blood of the incarnate Son of God. (*Dr. H. W. Williams.*) *Bought at a great price*:—Do we not hold those things precious which we have bought at a great price. Count we not those things among our treasures, for which we make the most careful provision. Are not those things reckoned the most valuable things upon earth, which receive and give out again to our eyes the beams of light, the rays of the sun, as gold and silver, jewels and precious stones? Will not men venture everything, life and all, for them? And shall not, therefore, Almighty God reckon for precious, them, whom His only begotten Son hath redeemed with His most precious blood? Shall He not hold in exceeding value those for whom He has reserved mansions in His heavenly house, where they may abide for ever? Shall they not be to Him as pearls of great price, as jewels to be numbered up with joyful care, who, being conformed to the image of His Son, who is their light and their righteousness, shine in their works, and glorify their Father. (*R. W. Evans, B.D.*)

Ver. 32. **Shall confess Me before men.**—I. The NATURE OF THAT CONFESSION which Christianity requires. An open avowal of the Person and Messiahship of Jesus. A conscious adherence to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. A declaration of the benefits received. Zealously promoting the cause of Christian truth. II. THE HONOURABLE DISTINCTION with which a steady course of Christian fortitude will be crowned. By an act of reparation. By an approving plaudit. By making them the partakers of His glory. Learn: That the human heart is, by nature, decidedly hostile to the spirit of the gospel. That entire change is

essential to a scriptural confession of Christ. That the Christian cannot ultimately be a loser by suffering for righteousness' sake. (*Omricon.*) *Confession of Christ:*—I. WHAT DOES OUR TEXT REQUIRE? Our confession of Christ before men. The subject of this confession. The persons before whom this confession is to be made. The manner in which this confession is to be made—verbally, practically, passively. Why? Because it falls in with the nature and design of Christianity, to prove your sincerity, in order to be useful, and because He deserves it. II. WHAT IT ENSURES? His confession of us. More than recognition. The confessor before whom this confession is to be made; the season when this confession shall be made. (*W. Jay.*) *Confessing Christ:*—I. A great DUTY recommended to us. 1. What is meant by our confession of Christ. 2. What by confessing Him before men. II. A suitable REWARD and encouragement annexed to it. What is implied in Christ's confessing us before His Father. To confess Christ aright is (1) To acknowledge and adore the Divinity of His Person; (2) To believe the Divinity of His doctrine; (3) To acknowledge and rely upon the all-sufficiency of His merits and mediation for us: (4) To show the efficacy of our belief upon our lives. We must confess Christ both before good men and bad men. (*Matthew Hole.*) *Mutual confession of Jesus Christ and His disciples:*—I. THIS CONFESSION OF CHRIST BY MEN. 1. Before we can speak openly of Christ according to His true character, we must know and appreciate Him. Knowledge is ability to confess; appreciation is disposition to confess; both are power. 2. This confession is variously made. (1) In season it is a verbal acknowledgment of Christ; (2) By the observance of His ordinances; (3) By the reception of His disciples and servants, especially of such as most represent Him; (4) By the worship of His holy name; (5) By the endurance of shame and persecution for His sake; (6) By living to Him and living for Him. II. THE CONFESSION OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. It is connected here with the confessing of Christ by men. 2. It is both present and future. 3. It is full and complete. Lessons: secret discipleship can never fulfil our duties, or exhaust our obligations. (*S. Martin.*) *The duty of confessing Christ before men:*—I. THE DUTY specified (Rom. x. 10). 1. To confess Christ before men is to show that we are uniformly influenced by a supreme regard to His will (Titus i. 16; Luke vi. 46; John xv. 14; Neh. v. i.). 2. To publicly attest the reality of those hopes and joys which Christianity professes to inspire, and claims as peculiarly her own. 3. To manifest a decided attachment to His people (Matt. x. 40; xxv. 40). II. THE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDANT ON THIS DUTY. Such a decided and consistent testimony to Christ will be attended with difficulties (Matt. x. 36). 1. Common temptations. 2. Ridicule. 3. Calumny. III. THE PROMISE ANNEXED TO THE DISCHARGE. Christ will confess His people; it is not said He will do so before men; by striking interpositions of providence. While they are partially confessing Him on earth, He is graciously confessing them in heaven. (*E. Cooper.*) *Double confession:*—I. MAN'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST. It implies (1) Knowledge of Christ; (2) Belief in Christ; (3) Love to Christ: (4) Reception of Christ. Its characteristics. 1. It is a personal confession. 2. It is a public confession. 3. It is an honourable confession—"ME." II. CHRIST'S CONFESSION OF MAN. 1. It is a return for our confession. 2. It is a personal confession. 3. It is a confession on the greatest occasion. 4. It is a confession before the greatest Being. (*T. O. Griffiths.*) *Confessing Christ:*—Something more than fifty years ago there was a small dinner party at the other end of London. The ladies had withdrawn, and under the guidance of one member of the company the conversation took a turn, of which it will be enough here and now to say that it was utterly dishonourable to Jesus Christ our Lord. One of the guests said nothing, but presently asked the host's permission to ring the bell, and when the servant appeared he ordered his carriage. He then, with the courtesy of perfect self-command, expressed his regret at being obliged to retire; but explained that he was still a Christian. Mark the phrase, for it made a deep impression at the time—"Still a Christian." Perhaps it occurs to you that the guest who was capable of this act of simple courage must have been a bishop, or at least a clergyman. He was not. The party was made up entirely of laymen, and the guest in question became the great prime minister of the early years of Queen Victoria. He was the late Sir Robert Peel. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The greatest King:*—On a certain occasion one of the bravest officers of Frederick the Great declined the king's invitation to dinner, because he intended next morning to receive the Holy Communion. The next time he was present at the royal table the king and his guests began to rally him for his scruples, and to mock at the sacred ordinance. The old man rose, saluted the king, who was no man to be trifled with,

and told him respectfully but firmly that there was a greater King than Frederick, and that he never allowed that Holy One to be insulted in his presence. The courtiers looked on in amazement, trembling for the safety of the general; but Frederick, instead of resenting the rebuke, clasped the hand of his brave servant, and expressed his sorrow that *he* could not believe so firmly, or declare his faith so fearlessly. (*Canon Ashwell.*) *Confessing Christ.—Signing the Scotch Covenant:*—As the hour drew near, people from all quarters flocked to the spot, and before the commissioners appeared, the Greyfriars Church and Churchyard, Edinburgh, were densely filled with the gravest, the wisest, and the best of Scotland's pious sons and daughters. The long roll of parchment was brought, the meaning and purpose of the covenant explained. Then a deep and solemn pause ensued: not the pause of irresolution, but of modest diffidence, each thinking every other more worthy than himself to place the first name upon the sacred bond. An aged nobleman, the venerable Earl of Sutherland, at last stepped slowly and reverentially forward, and with throbbing heart and trembling hand, subscribed Scotland's Covenant with God. All hesitation in a moment disappeared. Name followed name in quick succession, till all within the church had given their signatures. It was then removed into the churchyard, and spread out on a level gravestone. Here the scene became still more impressive. The intense emotions of many became irrepressible. Some wept aloud: some burst into a shout of exultation; some after their names added the words "till death;" and some, opening a vein, subscribed with their own warm blood. When every particle of space was filled there was another solemn pause. The nation had framed a covenant in former days, and had violated its engagements; if they too should break this sacred bond, how deep would be their guilt! Such seems to have been their thoughts, for, as if moved by one spirit—the One Eternal Spirit—with low, heart-wrung groans, and faces bathed in tears, they lifted up, with one consent, their right hands to heaven, avowing by this sublime appeal that they had now joined themselves unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant, which should not be forgotten. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *True confession of Christ:*—Some confess, but believe not, as hypocrites; others believe, but confess not, as timorous and Peter-like professors in the days of persecution; others do neither confess nor believe in Christ, as atheists; others both confess and believe, and they be true Christians. (*D. Willet.*) *The best use of the mouth:*—Had the faith of the *heart* been sufficient, God would not have given thee a *mouth*. (*Chrysostom.*) *The sin of denying Christ:*—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY DENYING OF CHRIST before men? It is (1) to deny His mission and Messiahship; (2) to disown Him for the Son of God and Saviour of the world; and (3) not to receive Him for the person annointed and appointed of God for the redemption of mankind. It is (*a*) to deny the Divinity of Christ; (*b*) the Incarnation or manhood of Christ; (*c*) the satisfaction of Christ for sin; (*d*) the resurrection of Christ; (*e*) the authority of Christ over His Church and kingdom. II. What are THE MOTIVES or inducements that lead men thus to deny Christ? The two principal are (1) Fear of persecution; (2) Hopes of preferment. Both clap a wrong bias upon the mind, that turns it from Christ to Belial. III. How, OR IN WHAT MANNER, IS THIS DENYING DONE? (1) Sometimes *in verbis*, by words and oral expressions; (2) Sometimes *in scriptis*, by blasphemous writings; and (3) sometimes *in operibus*, by wicked works. IV. WHAT IS MEANT BY CHRIST DENYING OF MEN BEFORE HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN? It must be His disowning the deniers of Him, as false and deceitful followers of Him, the misery whereof is inexpressible. (*Matthew Hole.*) *Interest deposed and truth restored:*—I. HOW MANY WAYS CHRIST AND HIS TRUTHS MAY BE DENIED: AND WHAT IS THE DENIAL HERE CHIEFLY INTENDED. 1. By erroneous, heretical judgment. 2. By oral confession. 3. By our actions and practice. II. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES INDUCING MEN TO DENY CHRIST IN HIS TRUTHS. 1. The seeming supposed absurdity of many truths. 2. Their unprofitableness. To be pious is the way to be poor. 3. Their apparent danger. III. HOW FAR A MAN MAY CONSULT HIS SAFETY IN TIME OF PERSECUTION WITHOUT DENYING CHRIST. 1. By withdrawing his person. 2. By concealing his judgment. IV. WHAT IT IS FOR CHRIST TO DENY US BEFORE HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN. 1. The action itself—"He will deny them." 2. The circumstance—"Before His Father," &c. A man's folly will be spread before the angels. V. THE USES WHICH MAY BE DRAWN FROM THE TRUTHS DELIVERED. 1. Confess Him in His truth. 2. In His members. 3. The baseness of a dastardly spirit. (*R. South, D.D.*)

Ver. 34. **Think not that I am come to send peace.**—I. WHY IT MIGHT NATURALLY BE SUPPOSED THAT CHRIST DID COME FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF SENDING PEACE

ON EARTH. Consider the way in which His kingdom was ushered into the world—"Glory to God," &c. The tenor of much of His teaching, and the final result of the preaching of the gospel, would lead us to suppose it. II. THAT NOTWITHSTANDING OUR NATURAL THINKINGS ON THE SUBJECT CHRIST CAME, NOT TO SEND PEACE, BUT A SWORD. Christ's own life an illustration. Also, the entire history of the Church, and the life of every individual Christian. (*R. Abercrombie, M.A.*) *Christian conflict:*—These words represent the aggressive, combative side of Christianity. 1. Sin is a fixed, unyielding power. 2. There is an overpowering force which can and will conquer sin. It is Christianity. 3. What results from this conflict, heroically maintained? 1. Victory. 2. Moral beauty. (*Bishop Hurst.*) *Moral beauty derived from victory:*—What results from this conflict, heroically maintained? Victory. Moral beauty as well. More keenly, perhaps, than any other American writer, has Hawthorne seen into the human heart, and he somewhere remarks that the human face never is so beautiful as when the soul has passed through some great struggle; when it has triumphed in this unseen battlefield, and there is a divine irradiation of the countenance, such as Jacob's face must have had, when, after that night of wrestling with the angel, the morning light, breaking over the mountains of Gilead, revealed in his features the celestial halo that crowned them. All moral beauty is secondary. It comes from conflict and victory. Thus was the shepherd David fitted to become the monarch of the nation, and the persecuting Saul the preacher Paul. Linnæus and Humboldt have found, on icebergs, in far-off forests and on Alpine peaks, flowers that had no fragrance; but to which, when care, skill, and patience had been lavished on them, a secondary nature was given, so that to-day, under wintry skies, we have them in our conservatories, sweet, as well as fair. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's Mission:*—I. THE STRANGENESS OF THE FACT. This appears when you remember—1. The object of Christ's coming. 2. The law of Christ's kingdom. 3. The character of the King. II. EXPLANATION OF THE FACT. 1. By the position Christ assumed towards sin. 2. By the character of the gospel. 3. By the natural character of man. III. PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. The greatness of Jesus Christ. He has set the world on fire. 2. The slowness of the progress of the gospel in the world, and of sanctification in the believer, is accounted for. (*C. Lankester, B.A.*)

Ver. 35. **To set a man at variance against his Father.**—*The great separation.* I. THAT UNION OF FAMILIES IN RELIGION IS DESIRABLE. Because all its members have the same interests at stake; they are all under substantially the same obligations; it promotes the happiness of a family, gives consolation in times of affliction, promotes the eternal welfare of all. II. THAT RELIGION DOES, IN FACT, MAKE A SEPARATION IN FAMILIES. It divides families at the Communion table; in respect of their prospects of future glory, and at the judgment-bar with unerring accuracy. Lessons: Pray more for impenitent children, &c.; contemplate the possibility of a family being united in heaven. (*Dr. A. Barnes.*) Those who are most near, are most easily divided. (*Bengel.*) *Children and parents:*—There is a climax of three degrees. Brother shall be against brother, parent against child, child against parents—each worse than the preceding. The history of the Church has many illustrations of this. Such were the histories of Perpetua and Felicitas, in the persecution of Severus, where the children refused to listen to parents' entreaties to give up Christ, and died in their steadfastness; and such was the dreadful speech recorded of Philip II. of Spain, who thought that he was showing zeal for God by declaring of the Protestants, "If it were my own son, I would bring the faggot." (*W. Benham.*) *Domestic variance occasioned by religion:*—Too often is this prediction fulfilled in the case of converts (especially those from Judaism) even at the present day—the most devoted son or daughter has too often to feel that their adopting Christianity has severed them from beloved parents. The Rev. Moses Margdionth, in a narrative drawn up in the year 1842, illustrates this by his own experience. Mr. Margdionth had been led, by a remarkable chain of circumstances, to embrace Christianity. He was a native of Poland, but did not receive baptism until his arrival in London, having left his country for the purpose of study, and more especially of acquiring religious knowledge. He felt it his duty as soon as possible to acquaint his parents with his change of faith, and his father at first wrote him an affectionate answer, entreating him to come home and recant his apostacy, but finding that nothing would induce him to renounce Christianity and return to his house, ceased to answer his letters, and for a long time seemed to ignore his existence. Still, however, Margdionth persevered in writing, and at length, to use his own words—"I received

a most severe letter from my father, telling me that if I did not return immediately to his house, I should never be permitted to call myself his son, that he should hate me with perfect hatred, and that he should prohibit my writing to him any more. My dear mother wrote again with affectionate sadness, telling me that she had not ceased to weep for me, and had even injured her eyes with weeping." It is consolatory to find that Mr. Margdionth, who spared no effort or exertion to win back the heart of his father, was rewarded at length by a complete reconciliation, though we have no ground to believe that his parents ever embraced Christianity. Yet sadder tales meet us in the annals of missions among the heathen. Harriet Winslow, the devoted American missionary in Ceylon, mentions the very sad case of a youth named Tupyen, who had become interested in Christianity by reading part of a Tamil Bible, lent him by another young man. He begged permission to attend the mission school at Tillipally, but when it came to his father's knowledge that he had there avowed himself a Christian, the poor fellow was, when he next returned home, shut up, and otherwise most severely treated. Once he made his escape to Tillipally, and there told the missionary, Mr. Peel, what had befallen him. He took a Testament, and pointing to this very passage (Matt. x. 34–39), said, with tears—"*That very good.*" But again falling into the hands of his father, Tupyen was beaten, tabooed, threatened, insulted in every possible way, so that at length, alas, he signed a recantation of Christianity. *Social obstacles to religion*:—I. THE REASONS WHY MEN LABOUR TO PREVENT THEIR FELLOWS FROM RISING TO A VITAL CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. 1. We are to remember that social life is not merely the accidental juxtaposition of man with man; it organizes itself. Men stand related to each other in such a way that if one goes out of the circle, it is like the going of one out from a quartette of singers. 2. It is frequently the case that the escape of one from a circle towards a true and high religious life, is hindered on account of the social ambitions which prevail. Circles defend themselves against men going to desert for religion. 3. Another reason why persons endeavour to prevent the escape of men to a higher religious plane, is the judgment and rebuke which is always reflected, by such a course, upon their own career. II. WHAT THE MOTIVES ARE BY WHICH THIS SOCIAL HINDRANCE WORKS. 1. There is the battle of fear into which men go. 2. Next is the battle of interest. Men try to dissuade their fellow-men from true religion on account of the effects which it will have upon their interests in life. 3. Then there are persons who are peculiarly sensitive to praise. They cannot bear the shady side of men's opinions. A circle, by a judicious silence, can make a man feel as though the fogs of Newfoundland were on him. 4. Then there is the battle of dissuasion. III. THE MODES OF RESISTANCE THAT ONE MAY LAWFULLY SET UP AGAINST THESE THINGS. 1. It should be made clear that you are in earnest and sincere. 2. That that which is upon you is not a mere whim. 3. Remember that you need and shall have the help of God. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The soul's longing for God not hindered by social obstacles*:—As birds, when their time of emigration comes, and they feel the impulse to fly to the summer-land, and will not be stopped, either by the snap of the fowler's gun or by the sweep of the hawk, or by any solicitation, but rise, and fly through night and through day, to find that summer-land: so souls feel the fascinating call of God, and, rising, soar—and must, because the Holy Ghost is upon them. (*Ibid.*) *Society troubled by men leaving it for a better life*:—The smallest wheel in my watch, emigrating, would leave all the rest of the wheels, big and little, in a very sorry plight. Although it may be very small, and stand on its own rights as a wheel, yet, after all, it has been cogged, and notched, and adjusted, so that the whole structure depends on that. You might as well smash the watch as to take that out. Frequently it is the case that the members of a circle are so affiliated, so exactly fitted to each other, that if you take one out, all the rest are dissevered. And it is not surprising, it does not imply any great degree of depravity, to say that where a number of men are living an ordinary, an average, social life, and one of them is inspired with a higher, a holier religious purpose, and desires and means to go up on a level that none of them have been standing on, his emigration upward wrenches them all. And it is not strange that they try to stop it. (*Ibid.*) *Unrest a vital process*:—The unrest of a Christless soul, a Christless nation, a Christless world, is really the beginning of a vital process, which in its first stages is always a travail. The Lord is not afraid of the storm of strife and frenzy which He stirs in the world. We think that these are death pains; He knows that they are birth pains, through which the glorious golden future is being born. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*) *A boy's foes at school*:—When a boy first comes from home, full of the natural desire of doing his duty, of improving

himself, of getting on well, he is presently beset by the ridicule of all the worthless and foolish boys around him, who want to sink him to their own level. How completely true it is that his foes are they of his own household—that is, they who are most immediately about him, those of his own age, and his own place in the school. They become his idol; before their most foolish, most low, and most wicked voices, he gives up his affections, his understanding, and his conscience; from this mass of ignorance, and falsehood, and selfishness, he looks for the guide of his opinions and his conduct. (*T. Arnold, D.D.*)

Ver. 37. **He that loveth father or mother more than Me.**—*The Saviour's claims on our supreme affections*:—There are three sources from which love, considered as a sentiment, originates in the heart:—1. The love of sympathy. 2. The love of gratitude. 3. The love of moral esteem. In all these respects Christ is entitled to supreme affection. Is love valued in proportion as it is disinterested? Compared with Christ's love man's is selfishness. Or does the greatness of sacrifice testify to the greatness of love? On this ground Christ claims our supreme love, as no human being has sacrificed so much for us as He, no earthly benefactor so great as He. (*H. White, M.A.*) *Christ worthy of our highest esteem*:—Our Saviour puts Himself and the world together as competitors for our best affections, challenging a transcendent affection on our part, because of a transcendent worthiness on His. By "father or mother" are to be understood whatever enjoyments are dear to us; and from the expression, "he is not worthy of Me," the doctrine of merit must not be asserted. I. WHAT IS INCLUDED AND COMPREHENDED IN THAT LOVE TO CHRIST HERE MENTIONED? 1. An esteem and valuation of Christ above all worldly enjoyments. 2. A choosing Him before all other enjoyments. 3. Service and obedience to Him. 4. Acting for Him in opposition to all other things. 5. It imparts a full acquiescence in Him alone, even in the absence and want of all other felicities. II. THE REASON AND MOTIVES WHICH MAY INDUCE US TO THIS LOVE. 1. He is the best able to reward our love. 2. He has shown the greatest love to us. III. THE SIGNS AND CHARACTERS WHEREBY WE MAY DISCERN HIS LOVE. 1. A frequent and, indeed, continual thinking of Him. 2. A willingness to leave the world, whenever God shall think fit, by death, to summon us to nearer converse with Christ. 3. A zeal for His honour, and impatience to hear or see any indignity offered Him. (*R. South, D.D.*) *No divided devotion*:—1. The audacity of the claim—seemingly opposed to natural affection. 2. Its naturalness on the lips of Christ—all of a piece with His other words and deeds. 3. Either, then, Jesus is God and deserves all He claims, or else an impostor and blasphemer. 4. The dilemma—we must either crucify Him or acknowledge His pretensions. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) *Christ more than the nearest relatives*:—A striking illustration of the love to Christ, that proves so ardent as to supersede that felt for parent or child, is furnished by the history of Vivia Perpetua, the martyr of Carthage. This lady, who was a matron of high position, young (not being more than twenty-two at her death) beautiful, and with everything to make life desirable and attractive to her, met death with dauntless heroism. We are not told whether her husband was a Pagan or a Christian; but her aged, and still heathen, father, obtaining entrance into her prison, endeavoured by every possible argument to shake her constancy, and, as a last appeal, brought her infant son, and conjured her, by her love for himself and for her child, to abjure Christianity and live. But to all these entreaties Perpetua turned a deaf ear; Christ was dearer to her than either her parent or her son, and she bravely met death by being exposed to an infuriated animal in the arena. She suffered about A.D. 205. Even in these modern days instances might be brought forward, from the annals of missionary labour, of those who from love of Christ are willing to leave dearest earthly friends; but in some instances these close human ties become the great obstacles to the reception of the gospel. Speaking of a school at Chumdicully, Ceylon, the missionary, Mr. Fleming, says (quoted in the Church Missionary Society's report for 1881–82): "There are secret believers in Christ who are not ready to give up all for Him. One of them has confessed that he would like to follow his sisters, who have come out, but his parents look to him to perform the funeral rites for them when they die, and he shrinks from causing them grief . . . like the man whom Christ called, but who said, 'Suffer me first to go and bury my father.'" *Christian love triumphant over maternal*:—Leclerc, says D'Aubigné, was led to the place of execution. The executioner prepared the fire, heated the iron which was to sear the flesh of the minister of the gospel, and, approaching him, branded him as a heretic on the

forehead. Just then a shriek was uttered—but it came not from the martyr. His mother, a witness of the dreadful sight, wrung with anguish, endured a violent struggle between the enthusiasm of faith and maternal feelings; but her faith overcame, and she exclaimed, in a voice that made the adversaries tremble, "Glory be to Jesus Christ, and His witnesses!" Thus did this French woman of the sixteenth century have respect to the word of the Son of God: "He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." So daring a courage at such a moment might have seemed to demand instant punishment, but that Christian mother had struck powerless the hearts of priests and soldiers. Their fury was restrained by a mightier arm than theirs. The crowd falling back and making way for her, allowed the mother to regain, with faltering step, her humble dwelling. Monks, and even the town sergeants themselves, gazed on her without moving. "Not one of her enemies," says Beza, "dared put forth his hand against her."

Ver. 38. **He that taketh not his cross.**—*Cross-bearing:*—I. WHAT IS MY PECULIAR CROSS? "He that taketh not *his* cross." 1. It may be the giving up of certain pleasures. 2. The endurance of reproach or poverty. 3. The suffering of losses and persecutions for Christ's sake. 4. The consecrating all to Jesus. 5. The endurance of my heavenly Father's will. II. WHAT AM I TO DO WITH IT? 1. I am deliberately to take it up. 2. I am boldly to face it. It is only a wooden cross after all. 3. I am patiently to endure it, for I have only to carry it a little way. 4. I am cheerfully to resign myself to it, for my Lord appoints it. 5. I am obediently to follow Christ with it. What an honour and a comfort to be treading in His steps! This is the essential point. It is not enough to bear a cross, we must bear it after Jesus. I ought to be thankful that I have only to bear it, and that it does not bear me. It is a royal burden, a sanctified burden, a sanctifying burden, a burden which gives communion with Christ. III. WHAT SHOULD ENCOURAGE ME? 1. Necessity: I cannot be a disciple without cross-bearing. 2. Society: better men than I have carried it. 3. Love: Jesus bore a far heavier cross than mine. 4. Faith: grace will be given equal to the weight of the cross. 5. Hope: good to myself will result from my bearing this load. 6. Zeal: Jesus will be honoured by my patient endurance. 7. Experience: I shall yet find pleasure in it, for it will produce in me much blessing. The cross is a fruitful tree. 8. Expectation: glory will be the reward of it. Let not the ungodly fancy that theirs is a better lot: the Psalmist says, "many sorrows shall be to the wicked." Let not the righteous dread the cross, for it will not crush them: it may be painted with iron colours by our fears, but it is not made of that heavy metal; we can bear it, and we will bear it right joyously. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Following Christ by way of the cross:*—When Alexander the Great marched through Persia, his way was stopped with ice and snow, insomuch that his soldiers, being tired out with hard marches, were discouraged, and would have gone no further, which he perceiving, dismounted his horse, and went on foot through the midst of them all, making himself a way with a pickaxe; whereat they all being ashamed, first his friends, then the captains of his army, and, last of all, the common soldiers, followed him. So should all men follow Christ their Saviour, by that rough and unpleasant way of the cross that He hath traversed before them. He having drunk unto them in the cup of His passion, they are to pledge Him when occasion is offered; He having left them an example of His suffering, they are to follow Him in the selfsame steps of sorrow. (*John Spencer.*) *The cross taken up:*—The cross is easier to him who takes it up than to him who drags it along. (*J. E. Vaux.*) *The cross not to be made:*—We are bid to *take*, not to make our cross. God in His providence will provide one for us. And we are bid to *take it up;* we hear nothing of laying it down. Our troubles and our lives live and die together. (*W. Gurnall.*) "No man," said Flavel, "hath a velvet cross." As an old Yorkshire working-man, a friend of mine, said, "Ah! it is blessed work cross-bearing when it's tied on with love." (*Newman Hall.*) Welcome the cross of Christ, and bear it triumphantly; but see that it be indeed *Christ's* cross, and not *thine own.* (*Wilcox.*) *The cross a sweet burden:*—Christ's cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbour. (*Samuel Rutherford.*) *A procession of cross-bearers:*—The Saviour here, in His character of *Seer*, looks into His own future, and moulds His language accordingly. He sees the *cross* in the distance. He connects Himself with it. He comes out of Himself, as it were, to look at Himself with His cross. He sees Himself bearing His cross. The vision grows into a complete picture. His followers are bearing crosses too! And thus

the heavenly procession moves on, until a point is reached where time melts into eternity, and earth is the stepping-stone to heaven. At that point there may occur what men call execution; but, looked at on its upper side, the event is coronation and glorification. The crown surmounts the cross. (*James Morison, D.D.*)

Ver. 39. **He that findeth his life.**—*The love of life*:—I. THE NATURE AND END OF THIS LOVE OF LIFE. This attachment not engendered since the fall—a degraded exhibition of some early beauty. Adam loved life; but the life he loved was a fragment of immortality. He loved it as an unbroken walk with the Eternal; we commonly cling to life as a removal from His presence. Adam loved an immortality begun; we an immortality put off. But a Divine purification of our nature and the old lineaments shall start forth from the canvass. This love of life of Divine implantation; it survives all pleasure in life; and is not accounted for by dread of the future. The Almighty appointed that it should act as a powerful engine in the furtherance of His several dispensations. Take it away, and society is shaken in every part. Evidence that man is far even from original righteousness in the eagerness with which he clings to absence from his Maker. The love of life a perpetual source of honour to God by the opportunity afforded for the display of His grace. II. WHEN THE PRINCIPLE TAKES A RIGHT DIRECTION, AND WHEN A WRONG DIRECTION. We have shown that the principle which in fallen man is the love of life, was in unfallen man the love of immortality; hence as it is our own aim to return to the privileges of the unfallen state, we give the principle its right direction when we draw it off from the mortal, and fasten it upon the immortal. To find by losing is the principle rightly applied; for this is the mortal surrendered to the immortal. To lose by finding is the principle wrongly applied; for this is the immortal basely exchanged for the mortal. We call upon you to love life, but you must understand what life is; not mere existence. (*H. Melvill.*) *Nothing to lose*:—He that would *lose* nothing, must learn to *have* nothing. (*Farindon.*) *Finding by losing*:—A remarkable instance of the literal fulfilment of this promise, even with regard to this life, is furnished by a circumstance lately mentioned to us by one who knew the subject of it well. A devoted Christian woman had been in the habit of carrying on extensive religious work in a large and important town, especially in the infirmary of the workhouse, which she was constantly in the habit of visiting. When no longer young, in fact she must have been nearly fifty, Miss G—— became seriously ill, and her medical advisers pronounced it their opinion that she could not recover. She requested to be told how long, according to their calculation, she could possibly live, and the reply was, "At the longest about a year, but you must take perfect rest, and give up all work and exertion." "No," replied Miss G——; "if I am to live so short a time, I must work all the more heartily for my Master." She did so, continuing her classes, visits, &c., but it did not shorten her life. At the present time, fifteen years after, Miss G—— still lives, and still works actively, though between sixty and seventy years of age. *Losing life for others*:—Ernest entered heartily into the sport of marble-playing when that season came round; and, as he played for "keeps," it was not long before complaints began to be made against him. He was a good player and did win a good many marbles; and nobody likes to lose at play, be it money or marbles. Ernest resented the hard talk about his playing, and one day when he met his pastor he told him how unjust and unkind the boys were. The pastor listened kindly; he was one of the men who have the good sense and the good taste to love boys. When Ernest paused he said: "Well, Ernest, you do win a good many marbles, don't you?" "Why, yes, sir; of course I do." "I wonder, now, if you ever ask the Lord Jesus about this marble playing?" "Yes, sir; I do," answered Ernest, heartily. "And what do you ask Him?" "I ask Him to let me hit." "Ernest, do you ever ask Him to let another boy hit?" "No, sir; of course I don't." "Why not?" "Why, I want to get all the marbles I can." "It seems as if the other boys might like to win sometimes," said Mr. Burch, thoughtfully. "Ernest, are you trying to show God to the boys?" "Yes, Mr. Burch; I am," very earnestly. "Do you ever talk to them about God?" "Yes, sir, I do; I'd like to have the boys know Him." "Well, do they seem to want to love Him much?" "No, Mr. Burch; I think the boys don't care much about God." "Well, Ernest, I don't know that I wonder much at it. The God that they see is your God. He lets you have all that you want, but does not tell you to ask Him to give them anything! You are not showing them the God who laid down His life." "What do you mean by that, Mr. Burch?" "Giving up the thing that we want is the very heart of Christ's religion.

Christ laid down His life for us, and we are to lay down our lives for others. If we lose our life—that is, our will, our way, our pleasure, our advantage—for Christ's sake, we shall find the real life, which He only can give. Try it, Ernest; lose your life among the boys, and see if they won't think better of your God."

Ver. 41. **He that receiveth a prophet.** *The reception of a prophet:*—I. WHAT, IN THE BIBLE MEANING OF THE TERM, IS A PROPHET? 1. There is first what may properly be called the "seer," men with burning eye to take in visions of the unseen. 2. Then the word prophet merges into our word preacher. 3. But there are two conditions without which no man has a right to this name; a godly life, a special message from God. II. THE TRUE SPIRIT IN WHICH A PROPHET SHOULD BE RECEIVED. 1. The true exercise of our receptive faculties is an important element of our responsibility. 2. Let us receive without prejudice. 3. Let us receive with humility. 4. That such a reception will bring us a "prophet's reward." (*J. Brierley, B.A.*) *Goodness essential to a true Prophet:*—In other walks of life a man may attain high distinction without this condition. He may be a successful lawyer, and, as some modern examples have shown, obtain the chief prizes of his profession without possessing moral character that will bear inspection. A man may obtain fortune and fame as an artist, and be all the while, like Turner, addicted to the lowest pleasures. In fact, a recent French writer has given us the exquisitely French doctrine that immorality is a great auxiliary to art. A man may be a success on the Stock Exchange, and have in him no scintilla of spiritual principle. All this is possible, but a man who in any age takes the name and function of prophet of God, proclaimer of His truth and message, and who at the same time keeps not step in his life to the sublime music of heaven's highest law, is a self-confessed monstrosity. (*Ibid.*) *The true prophet has spiritual knowledge at first hand:*—Like a man who has been teaching geography in a school. His time has been occupied with maps, atlases, globes, and text-books of geography. He knows all the mountains in Europe by name, and the length of the principal rivers. His head is full of this, and he has tried to fill the heads of his pupils with this, and to him and to them it has been a business unspeakably dry. By-and-by he gets a vacation, and somebody fills his purse for him, and says, "Now go off somewhere and enjoy yourself." He goes to Switzerland. He sees Mont Blanc and the Rhine, and the Lake of Geneva. It is not a bit like the geography book. These fresh breezes that blow, the deep blue of the glorious lake, the glint up yonder of the everlasting snows, whisper no hint of page sixteen in that odious text-book with its endless names and figures. This is the difference between knowledge at second hand and at first hand. (*Ibid.*) *The responsible use of our receptive faculties:*—Physiologists tell us we have two sets of nerves, the afferent and the efferent; the one bringing to us impressions from without, the other acting on the muscles and carrying to the outside world the tides of force that are within. Life is just this contrast, giving and receiving, and the one process needs as much watching as the other. It is not enough to look after the activities of the soul. The call may be for courtesy, sympathy, and unless these are forthcoming, in spite of activities, the man is a failure over half his nature. (*Ibid.*) When God's rains are descending, and His gracious breezes blowing from off the everlasting hills, keep the soul open. It is a grand opportunity on the receptive side. (*Ibid.*) *The principle of future recompenses:*—1. By our works shall be decided the degree of our future reward. 2. The reward affixed to an action may be obtained though the action itself has not been performed. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet is to obtain the recompense as though he were himself a prophet. There must be division of labour; all working to the same end receive same reward. 3. If our works are susceptible of reward, it seems necessarily to follow that there will be differences in reward, so that the future portion of the righteous will be far from uniform. What the "prophet" receives is not what the "righteous man" receives. 4. That no good work is so inconsiderable as to be excluded from recompense. "Cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple." But if the "cup of cold water" is not to lose its reward, it must be proffered when he who gives it has nothing better to give. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Difference of office does not preclude sameness of recompense:*—For instance, what wholly different spheres of duty are assigned to the clergy and the laity! And we are told that he who labours with great earnestness in the work of a clergyman has a reward of peculiar splendour within reach, inasmuch as "they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." But it is evident from our text that the same reward is attainable by others

who have never been called to the clergyman's work. They who have not been "prophets" may "receive a prophet's reward;" and if an individual have upheld a clergyman in his arduous and most responsible calling, strengthening him by such assistances as the occasion demands, sustaining him when assailed, cheering him when disheartened, and all out of love for his office, and desire for his success, so that he receives the pastor in the name of a pastor, we may say of such an individual that in God's sight he takes part in the clergyman's labours. (*Ibid.*) *Sympathy with a character involves likeness to that character:*—The power of sympathizing with any character is the partial possession of that character for ourselves. A man who is capable of having his soul bowed by the stormy thunder of Beethoven, or lifted to heaven by the etherial melody of Mendelsshon, is a musician, though he never composed a bar. The man who recognizes and feels the grandeur of the organ music of "Paradise Lost" has some fibre of a poet in him, though he be but a "mute inglorious Milton." (*Dr. Maclaren.*) *Sympathy, not action, the condition of reward:*—The old knight that clapped Luther on the back when he went into the Diet of Worms, and said to him, "Well done, little monk!" shared in Luther's victory and in Luther's crown. He that helps a prophet because he is a prophet, has got the making of a prophet in himself. (*Ibid.*) *Holding the ropes:*—"I am going down into the pit, you hold the ropes," said Carey, the pioneer missionary. They that hold the ropes, and the daring miner that swings away down in the blackness, are one in the work, may be one in the motive, and, if they are, shall be one in the reward. So, brethren, though no coal of fire may be laid upon your lips, if you sympathize with the workers that are trying to serve God, and do what you can to help them, and identify yourself with them, and so hold the ropes, my text will be true about you.—"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." They who by reason of circumstances, by deficiency of power, or by the weight of other tasks and duties, can only give silent sympathy, and prayer, and help, are one with the men whom they help. (*Ibid.*) *Participation in service:*—As there is a way of partaking of other men's sins, so in other men's holy services. (*Gurnall.*)

Ver. 42. **A cup of cold water.**—*The cup of cold water:*—The doings of this life are had in remembrance: that no humble action in its relation to high principles is lost; but is retained in a future judgment. I. THE DUTY OF ACTING FROM CHRISTIAN MOTIVES. 1. Our Saviour points out this by three examples. 2. The duty derives its importance from God's omnipresence and omniscience. The cup of cold water comes under the Divine notice. II. THE INFLUENCE OF OUR ACTIONS UPON THE DESTINIES OF THE FUTURE. 1. The history of nations and individuals proves how the past acts upon the future. 2. The promise of reward by Christ shows how every simple act done with reference to Himself is made to react upon ourselves in a way we should not anticipate apart from revelation. 3. Things done out of Christ, having no connection with His love, will perish. (*W. D. Horwood.*) *Giving to the needy giving to Christ:*—St. Martin, before he was baptized into the faith of Christ, and while still a soldier, showed a rare instance of love and charity. In the depth of winter, a beggar, clothed in rags, asked an alms of him for the love of God. Silver and gold he had none. His soldier's cloak was all he had to give. He drew his sword, cut it in half, gave one portion to the poor man, and was content himself with the other. And of him it may be truly said, "He had his reward." That night, in a vision, he beheld our blessed Lord upon His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. And as Martin looked more steadfastly on the Son of God, he saw Him to be arrayed in his own half-cloak; and he heard Him say, "This hath Martin, unbaptized, given to Me." *Zeal for the young rewarded:*—I. THE OBJECTS OF COMPASSIONATE REGARD ALLUDED TO. 1. In their inherent depravity and their solemn destiny as intended for a state of unending being. 2. In their natural condition of helplessness and weakness amid the circumstances of peril to which they are exposed in their progress through the world. 3. In their influence for good or evil upon the world, and the final account they shall give at the bar of God. II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO, UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN MOTIVES, SHALL MAKE THE YOUNG THE OBJECTS OF THEIR DEVOTED CARE. 1. They shall have their reward in the lovely and appropriate fruits with which the objects of their compassionate regard shall be adorned. 2. In the beneficial influence they shall thus originate and perpetuate. 3. In the approbation of their Saviour and their God. (*H. Madgin.*) *A good passport:*—Some few years ago, three small children—a

boy and two girls, aged respectively ten, seven, and four—arrived in St. Louis, having travelled thither all the way from Kulin in Germany, without any escort or protection beyond a New Testament and their own innocence and helplessness. Their parents, who had emigrated from the Fatherland and settled in Missouri, had left them in charge of an aunt, to whom, in due time, they forwarded a sum of money sufficient to pay the passage of the little ones to their new home across the Atlantic. As the children could not speak a word of any language but German, it is doubtful whether they would ever have reached their destination at all, had not their aunt, with a woman's ready wit, provided them with a passport, addressed, not so much to any earthly authority, as to Christian mankind generally. Before taking her leave of the children, the aunt gave the elder girl a New Testament, instructing her to show it to every person who might accost her during the voyage, and especially to call their attention to the first leaf of the book. Upon that leaf the wise and good woman had written the names of the three children, and this simple statement: "Their father and mother in America are anxiously awaiting their arrival at Sedalia, Missouri." This was followed by the irresistible appeal—their guide, safeguard, and interpreter throughout a journey over sea and land of more than 4,000 miles—"Verily I say . . . unto Me." Many were the little acts of kindness shown to the little travellers, many the hands held out to smooth their journey, by those who read that appeal; and at length they reached their parents in perfect health and safety. *Christ's appreciation of little services*:—1. Because they often have great results. A cup of cold water is mentioned here; we can hardly mention a service which one would more naturally think of as a little service, than the giving of a cup of cold water; and yet it may be great in its results. It may allay the fever, and drive away the coming madness of the man who is consumed by thirst—there may be life in a cup of cold water. The fainting traveller in the desert, where the greedy sun has licked all the water up, would die but for the cup of cold water which a provident pilgrim brings to him. Many a castaway on the ocean, drifting on his raft—many a wounded soldier, writhing among the heaps of the smitten on the battle-field—has spent his last breath in crying for a cup of cold water; and a cup of water given at a critical moment would have saved life. 2. When they are the best a man can render. 3. When they are truly rendered to Him. The giving of the cup of cold water, you observe, acquired its character of moral worth from its being given "in the name of a disciple"—given for Christ's sake. It is possible to work in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and not serve Christ at all. A soldier may go out in his country's wars, and make for himself, by his courage and success, an imperishable name, and yet never really serve his country or his king, but only himself; his one impulse throughout may be not loyalty, not patriotism, but the desire of fame, the desire of power, a motive which never takes the man out of himself. (*A. Hannay.*) *Slight services for Christ*:—1. Slight services are often all we have it in our power to render. What can I do for Christ? 2. Slight services are sufficient to show love for the Saviour. 3. Slight services, after all, may be invaluable services—trivial—"cup of cold water." 4. Slight services shall be richly requited—"He shall in no wise lose his reward." (*J. Gage Rigg, B.A.*) *A small act the embodiment of self-sacrifice*:—In Bonar and MacCheyne's narrative of their mission to the Jews in Palestine (Edinburgh, 1839), an incident occurs, illustrative of this passage. "During our ramble" (near Gaza), ". . . a kind Arab came forward from his tent as we passed, offering us the refreshment of a drink of water, saying, 'Jesherhetu moie?'—'Will you drink water?'" The promise of our Lord seems to refer to cases like this, where the individual, unasked, seeks out objects on whom to show kindness. The least desire to bless shall not lose its reward. We all know how precious a gift a cup of cold water may be, and what self-denial it may involve, from the well-known story of Sir Philip Sidney and the wounded soldier on the battle-field. Sidney, mortally wounded on the field of Zutphen, was about to drink a glass of water which some one had humanely brought him to assuage his agonizing thirst. Just, however, as he was about to press it to his lips, he saw a soldier, in like plight with himself, looking wistfully at it. Unable to resist the pleading eyes of his fellow-sufferer, Sidney handed the glass to him, exclaiming, "*Thy necessity is greater than mine.*" It is well-known that in Western Australia there is a great want of water, the rivers in that part of the island-continent being few. Mrs. Millett, in her "Life in an Australian Parsonage," describes the feeling of distress, approaching to despair, experienced by a mother and her child who had missed their way in a remote part of the colony, and who had the dreary prospect,

as night came on, of being many hours before they could hope to assuage their thirst; and their astonishment and delight, when, in that remote region, they saw, suddenly emerging from the trees, a woman and a girl each carrying a bucket. "Perhaps," says Mrs. Millett, "my friend mentally compared the incident to that of an angel's visit, when the strangers showed her a spring at no great distance, whither they were already on their way to fetch water, having already walked two miles from their own home." We ourselves remember with pleasure a hot summer evening many years ago, when, tired with a long walk in the neighbourhood of Heidelberg, we asked the mistress of a picturesque German cottage for a glass of water. Readily was it brought, and the peasant-woman, on our thanking her, replied in a tone of true courtesy, "*Masser haben wir genug.*"—"We have sufficient water." But, as Jeremy Taylor says, he will have no reward, who gives only water, when his neighbour needs wine or a cordial, and he could give it.

## CHAPTER XI.

VERS. 1–5. **Art Thou He that should come?**—*John's inquiry*:—I. THE INQUIRY MADE BY THE BAPTIST. It was suggested by the incredulous state of his disciples. (1) Because if Jesus was Messiah He had not exerted His power for the deliverance of John from prison; (2) Because they observed that our Saviour had as yet made no public claim to the title; and (3) Because the manner of our Saviour's life and conversation had less appearance of sanctity than the life of their master. II. THE REPLY MADE BY THE SAVIOUR. 1. As to the manner of it. It is not direct and positive, but enables them to answer their question themselves. 2. As to the matter of it. Three things deserve to be weighed by us. (*a*) The remarkable gradation and rise there is in the particulars there mentioned; (*b*) The appositeness of it in relation to the inquirers; (*c*) The general force and evidence of the argument contained in it. (*Francis Atterbury.*) *Marks of convincing miracles*:—I. They must be above the known powers of all natural causes. II. They must be done publicly and in the face of the world, that there may be no room to suspect artifice and collusion. III. The doctrines which they are brought to vouch must be every way worthy of God. IV. They should carry marks of good-will and beneficence to men. V. It is the more convincing if such miracles were foretold, and VI. If there be no appearances of self-interest and design in the worker of such miracles. (*Ibid.*) *John's message to Jesus*:—It will appear odd that John should entertain any doubt, or require any satisfaction about this matter. . . . John sent this message, not from any doubt which he himself entertained of the matter, but in order that the doubts which his disciples had conceived about it might receive an answer and satisfaction from the fountain head. From our Lord's answer we are entitled to infer that—I. The faith which He required was a rational assent and faith founded upon proof and evidence. These were given in His miracles. II. Our Lord's miracles distinguished Him from John. III. Our Lord distinctly put the truth of His pretensions upon the evidence of His miracles. IV. Our Lord fixes the guilt of the unbelieving Jews upon this article, that they rejected miraculous proofs which ought to have convinced them. (*W. Paley.*) *Proving Jesus to be the Messias*:—I. THE EVIDENCE WHICH OUR SAVIOUR GIVES OF HIS BEING THE TRUE MESSIAH, and to prove this three things were necessary:—1. To show that He was sent by God, and had a peculiar commission from Him, by the miracles which He wrought. 2. This will more clearly appear by the correspondency of the things here mentioned with what was foretold by the prophets concerning the Messias. (1) It was foretold of the Messias that He should work miraculous cures (Isa. xxx. 4–6); (2) That He should preach the gospel to the poor (Isa. lxi. 1); (3) That the world should be offended at Him (Isa. viii. 14). II. AN INTIMATION IN THE TEXT THAT NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THE EVIDENCE CHRIST GAVE OF HIMSELF YET MANY WOULD BE OFFENDED AT HIM. 1. Consider how the poor came to be more disposed to receive the gospel than others. They had no earthly interest to engage them to reject the Saviour. They enjoy little of the good things of this life, and are willing to entertain good news of happiness in another. 2. What those prejudices are which the world had against Christ. That He wrought miracles by diabolical

skill; that He kept company with sinners; that He profaned the Sabbath. (*J. Tillotson, D.D.*) *The Messiah*:—I. The prophets declared that the Saviour should be Himself the Everlasting God (Mic. v. 2). II. The family of the Messiah was foretold (Isa. xi. 1). III. The prophets foretold the time at which the Saviour should be born. IV. The place of the Saviour's birth was foretold. V. The character of the Messiah was the subject of prophecy. VI. The offices the Messiah was to sustain for His people were foretold by the prophets. VII. The prophets plainly foretold the manner of Christ's death, resurrection, and exaltation. Application:—1. To those who treat with unholy mirth this sacred season. 2. There may be some whose faith in the incarnate Son of God is assaulted by Satan, and perplexed by cruel doubts. 3. There are those who have been effectually taught by the Spirit to believe in Him who came in the flesh. "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost." (*E. Blencowe, M.A.*) *Third Sunday in Advent*:—I. THE WORD OF THE LORD STANDS FIRM. Forty centuries had passed since the promise of the seed of the woman had been given. II. THE WORK OF THE LORD GOES ON. Men may not understand it; His own servants may be perplexed about it. But there is the secure ongoing of the eternal plan. III. THE CONSUMMATION COMETH—all that pertains to Messianic work He will perform. God has no cause for haste. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) I. JOHN'S DOUBT. The subject of the doubt—the Messiahship of Jesus. II. JOHN'S WAY OF ACTING UNDER THE DOUBT. 1. What he did not do. He did not boast of His doubt. He was not content to remain in this state of doubt without making an effort to rise out of it. III. CHRIST'S ANSWER TO JOHN'S DOUBT. John's question is, in substance, the question of to-day. But the answer of Jesus is distinct, calm, dignified. (*Dr. Ritchie.*) *Doubting*:—I. That there is NO SIN IN DOUBTING. Some doubts are sinful, when born of irrational prejudices, or bred of an unregulated life. But doubt, of its own nature, cannot be sinful. Must be hesitation till evidence be sufficient. II. BUT FAITH IS BETTER THAN DOUBT. We are never encouraged in Scripture in cultivating an inner habit of intellectual or moral scepticism. Doubt is only a means to faith. III. There may exist honest doubt, NOTWITHSTANDING DILIGENT EFFORTS MADE TO REMOVE IT. 1. In any attempt to subdue scepticism, regard should be had to the proximate cause of it, or to the real cause of it. Much perplexity has a physical cause. The gospel for the body: rest, change, ocean, may remove this. Doubt has intellectual cause; not to be forced down by acts of will, but by prayer for more light. There are doubts which have a moral origin. Let conscience speak and remove them. 2. That nearly all doubts concerning Christ or Christian truth, ought to be brought in some way before Christ Himself, and given as it were into His own hand for solution. Christ's reply to the Baptist was clear, prompt, convincing. It is an argumentative reply; fresh evidence is presented. Christ's work is always open to examination, and testifies to His Messiahship; if it does not then do not believe. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Doubt, a means to faith*:—What would be thought of a chemist who should conduct an experiment, day after day, making a number of little variations in his method, but always withholding the deciding element from the crucible, or else persistently refusing to look at the result? Or, what would be thought of a merchant, always reckoning up his figures, but never writing down the final sums? Or, what of a captain who should sail his ship in a circle? Or, of a traveller always on the road, never reaching home or inn? (*Ibid.*) *Conflicts with unbelief.*—Martin Luther, of a kindred spirit with the Baptist, and with a like task to perform, had many days of despondency, and passed through many conflicts of unbelief. He writes: "One may overcome the temptations of the flesh, but how hard it is to struggle against the temptations of blasphemy and despair." Again: "Having all but lost my Christ, I was beaten by the waves and tempests of despair and blasphemy." Bunyan, who, with his wonderful imagination, could body forth the things unseen and spiritual, as if he could see them with his eyes, hear them with his ears, and touch them with his hands, had many conflicts with unbelief. "Of all temptations I ever met with in my life," he says, "to question the being of God and the truth of His gospel is the worst, and worst to be borne. When this temptation comes it takes my girdle from me, and removes the foundation from under me. Though God has visited my soul with never so blessed a discovery of Himself, yet afterwards I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort were with which I had been refreshed." *Natural melancholy obstructs the sense of Divine comfort*.—As it is in clear water, when it is still and transparent, the sun

shines to the very bottom; but, if you stir the mud, presently it grows so thick that no light can pierce into it. So it is with the children of God: though their apprehensions of God's love be as clear and transparent, sometimes, as the very air that the angels and glorified saints breathe in heaven, yet if once the muddy humour of melancholy stirs they become dark, so that no ray of comfort can break into the deserted soul. (*Bishop Hopkins.*) *Morbid self-suspicions*:—Colton declares that in moments of despondency Shakespeare thought himself no poet; and Raphael doubted his right to be called a painter. We call such self-suspicions morbid, and ascribe them to a hypochondriacal fit; in what other way can we speak of those doubts as to their saintship, which occasionally afflict the most eminently holy of the Lord's people! *Truth not afraid of the light*:—Here is One evidently, who is not afraid of the light. He will not seek the homage of superstition. Depend on it, Christ is glad of the science of to-day, and its investigations, when carried on in the spirit of reverence and earnestness. He is glad for the broadening light, and for every new coign of vantage whence we can look at Him. Shall we, then, be afraid of the light? When we take a rose, a lily out of the garden, we put it in the clearest light that all its beauty may be seen. We are not afraid of the light for it. We say, "Get the microscope, and let its lenses concentrate the rays upon these flowers of God, and they will glorify Him all the more." Shall it not be so with this Rose of Sharon, this Lily of the Valley! Ask your question! Push your inquiry! Who is afraid of it? Not Christ. Not we. (*J. Brierley, B.A.*)

Ver. 5. **And the poor have the gospel preached to them.**—*The right of the poor*:—I. LET US STATE THE SENTIMENT OF THE TEXT. We understand it to intend the poor in condition, and not the poor in spirit. 1. The gospel is not preached to the poor in order to mix itself with the questions of civil distinctions. 2. It is not that the gospel regards social distinctions as chiefly important. 3. It is not that the gospel takes the same view of these respective classifications which we are accustomed to entertain. 4. It is not that the gospel is merely adapted to the humble spheres and employments of life. 5. It is not that the gospel is unworthy the attention of the most educated minds. 6. This announcement is not only declarative but predictive. II. WHY IS THE GOSPEL ESPECIALLY PREACHED TO THE POOR? 1. To demonstrate the Divine independence. 2. To explain the apparent inequalities of Providence. If the poor are denied worldly wealth; they can have durable riches. 3. To establish the necessity of a Divine revelation. The poor show the perplexity of other systems; Christianity commenced where they failed. 4. To exhibit the true importance of man. 5. To relieve the heaviest severity of present trouble. The gospel is "the tender mercy of our God." 6. To unfold the true genius of the Christian faith. 7. To intimate the spirituality of Christian blessings and rewards. 8. To place before us the value of predispositions in the reception of Christianity. 9. To bind the institutions of the gospel with the perpetuity of an inevitable human condition—"The poor ye have always with you." III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY, ARISING OUT OF THIS FACT, REMAINS TO BE ESTABLISHED. 1. It was the accomplishment of prophecy. 2. It distinguished it from all other systems of philosophy and religion. 3. It took a survey of human nature profound as it was new. 4. It reflects most amiably on the character of the Christian Founder. 5. Its Divine efficacy is proved to be complete. 6. The truth of Christianity borrows new evidence from its operations on the poor, when we remember the nature of the principles which it has inculcated. 7. In this progress of the gospel we must seek an adequate cause. (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*) *The gospel of the poor*:—We shall more clearly see how it is that Christ's gospel is for the poor, if we contrast it with some of the many human schemes which we are assured are an excellent substitute for the gospel of Christ. 1. There is that parody of the gospel of Christ which I will call the gospel of philanthropy. This gospel says educate the poor, refine their tastes, open your museums on the Sunday. These things have softening and humanising influence, so long as they are not made substitutes for religion. But there is a refined sensuousness as well as a brutal. These things will not save man. 2. There is the gospel of science. This gospel says to the poor man, "Your condition is the result of inevitable laws. It is the rule of nature that in the struggle for existence the weakest shall go to the wall. If therefore you are weak you must submit to the common lot." This gospel gives no comfort. 3. There is the gospel of socialism. This says "All men have equal rights. The rich are your oppressors; your poverty is the result of cruel laws made by the rich for their benefit." Wreck

these and you will soon correct the inequality. This is a gospel of hate. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of power, for it is the gospel of good tidings; of Him who was poor. And what makes this gospel so strong and attractive is that it is a gospel of sympathy. It is also a gospel of hope, because it is the gospel of the resurrection. It is a gospel of brotherhood. (*Dean Perowne, D.D.*) *Poverty and the gospel*:—Christ's gospel was one of mercy to the poor. His conduct fortified His words. His earliest life was of poverty. His miracles were not philosophical enigmas; but of mercy to helpless sufferers. Thus Christ represented the best spirit of the Old Testament. The genius of the Jewish Scriptures is that of mercy to the poor; the prophets denounced avarice. This view of the gospel also fits in with the order of the unfolding of human life and human society. It takes sides with the poor, and so the universal tendency of Providence and of history, slowly unfolded, is, nevertheless, on the whole, going from low to high, from worse to better, and from good toward the perfect. When we consider, we see that man begins as a helpless thing, a baby zero without a figure before it; and every step in life adds a figure to it and gives it more and more worth. On the whole, the law of unfolding throughout the world is from lower to higher, and though, when applied to the population of the globe, it is almost inconceivable; still, with many back-sets and reactions, the tendency of the universe is thus from lower to higher. Why? Let any man consider whether there is not of necessity a benevolent intelligence somewhere, that is drawing up from the crude toward the ripe, from the rough toward the smooth, from bad to good, and from good through better toward best; and the tendency upward runs like a golden thread through the history of the whole world, both in the unfolding of human life and in the unfolding of the race itself. Thus the tendency of nature is in accordance with the tendency of the gospel as declared by Jesus Christ—namely, that it is a ministry of mercy to the needy. The causes of poverty are worthy consideration. 1. Climate and soil have much to do with it. Men whose winters last nine months, as in extreme north, cannot be rich. Some live on borders of deserts. 2. Bad government is a public source of poverty. Property is insecure. 3. Ignorance or undevelopedness of mind is a great cause of poverty. All property is matter that has been shaped to uses by intelligent skill. It is the husbandman who thinks, foresees, and calls on natural laws to serve Him whose farm brings forth one hundred fold. 4. The appetites and passions of men are the causes of poverty. The men of animalism are always at the bottom of society. All these causes indicate that the poor need moral and intellectual culture. To preach the gospel to the poor is to awaken the mind of the poor. It is a gospel of prosperity. Its primary result is to develop the man himself; to give him such qualities that he will not need relief. The gospel changed from a spirit of humanity into a philosophical system of doctrine, is perverted. Churches organized upon elective affinities are contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Art and intellectual communion right; but must not abandon humanity. The church needs poor men; it needs familiarity with universal human nature. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Tendency of the gospel to "level up"*:—So, make the common people grow, and there is nobody tall enough to be much higher. When you cross the continent on the Union Pacific Railway and reach the Rocky Mountains, you do not know it. You have been running up at a rate that seemed as if you were in a valley almost. It simply was because the grade was so easy on this side that when you got up to the top of the mountains they do not seem any higher than the plains below, and it is rising so gradually that first made them seem so low. But when you begin to go on the other side, and plunge down the gorges and canons, the mountains seem very high from those low points. The general tendency of Christian democratic institutions is to raise the average of mankind, and as the average goes up it becomes harder and harder for single men to stand as much above the level of their fellow-men as they did formerly. (*Ibid.*) *Preaching for the Poor*:—1. That the gospel must be preached where the poor can come and hear it. 2. It must be preached attractively before the poor will come to hear it. 3. It must be preached simply. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The climax of wonders*:—1. That the tendency of the gospel is to raise society. 2. That the gospel dignifies man independently of his outward circumstances. 3. The great simplicity of the gospel. 4. The freeness of the gospel. 5. The inherent power of the gospel. (1) The gospel is the only system adapted to man. (2) It is the most favourable system to the working class. (3) That it is by the influence of the gospel alone that the world can be reformed. (4) That those only who believe the gospel can enjoy its blessings. (*H. E. Thomas.*)

*The gospel preached to the poor*:—The law. I. ITS EXCELLENCY. This provision of the gospel for the poor was a new thing; it was a charity unknown before. The excellency of its effects. What exaltation of hope and character it substitutes for cheerless poverty. It cultivates the moral wilderness. II. THE OBLIGATION IT LAYS UPON US. III. THE MEANS OF FULFILLING IT. (*N. Paterson.*) *The gospel preached to the poor*:—I. THE SALVATION OF GOD AS BROUGHT BEFORE US IN THE TEXT—"the gospel." II. THE MODE OF ITS ANNOUNCEMENT—"preached." 1. Clearly. 2. Fully. 3. Affectionately. 4. Faithfully. 5. As the Word of God. III. THE OBJECTS WHICH ARE ESPECIALLY BROUGHT BEFORE US IN THE TEXT—"the poor." The gospel knows no partiality. The poor in spirit also have the gospel preached to them. (*H. Allen, M.A.*) *The gospel especially addressed to the poor*:—1. Because it is peculiarly adapted to their capacities. 2. Also to their means. It is not a costly purchase. 3. It is suited to their opportunities. It is not limited to time or place, but is a thing of the heart, and can be professed consistently with daily toil. The gospel is glad tidings to the poor. 1. It elevates in rank. 2. It promotes the terrestrial happiness. 3. It lights up the hope of immortality. (*H. Stowell, M.A.*) *The gospel kindles noble principles within the heart of the poor*:—Let me here state a simple fact relative to Sunday School instruction by way of illustration. The earliest Sunday School which was instituted, as far as I have been able to collect, was in a valley in Gloucestershire, by a manufacturer, who, though not a man of piety himself, was moved by the state of ignorance of the little ones released on the day of rest from their labours in the factory, and from all restraint; he built a school, and employed a holy old man to bring them into this fold, where they were fostered in simplicity and security. Years rolled on, and that rich manufacturer was reduced by vicissitudes in trade to great distress; and as he was walking in the streets in the midst of his poverty, he was accosted by a man in the garb of a soldier, who said, "How glad am I to see you." The manufacturer replied, "I know you not." The man rejoined, "Ah! but I know you, sir; it was in your school that I was taught to read the Word of God, which has been my comfort in all my wanderings." "It cheers me," said the man of sorrows, "changed as you see me; I was then rich, but am now poor." "Say you so?" exclaimed the soldier, "I have just received a pension; you cannot work for your bread, but I can work for mine, and that pension shall be yours." He pressed upon him his little all, for which he had toiled and bled in his country's defence. "Never," said the afflicted man, when relating this incident, "did I before comprehend the meaning of that promise, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and it shall be found after many days.'" Oh, what a sublime description—or rather, what a sublime action! It is worth ten thousand sentiments. There was the magnificent character and majesty of soul, which nothing but Christian principle can give, and compared with which, all the deeds of ordinary philanthropy are but the glow-worm's light to the splendour of the mid-day. That poor man had no learning but what he derived from the gospel; but see how it elevated his soul. (*Ibid.*) *The gospel for the poor*:—It is the high-born chiefly that approach the person of the sovereign, enjoy the honours of the palace, and fill the chief offices of the state. Royal favours seldom descend so low as humble life. The grace of our King, however, is like those blessed dews that, while the mountain tops remain dry, lie thick in the valleys; and, leaving the proud and stately trees to stand without a gem, hang the lowly bush with diamonds, and sow the sward broadcast with orient pearl. This is the kingdom for the mean, and the meek, and the poor, and the humble! (*Dr. Guthrie.*)

Ver. 6. **And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.**—*The prejudices against Christianity considered*:—I. THOSE PREJUDICES AND OBJECTIONS WHICH THE WORLD HAD AGAINST THE SAVIOUR AND HIS RELIGION AT THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE; also to inquire into those which men at this day insist upon; and to show the unreasonableness of them. 1. That Christianity was a great innovation, and contrary to the received institutions of the world. 2. They objected against the plainness and simplicity of the doctrine. 3. That it wanted demonstration. 4. That the low and suffering condition of our Saviour was unsuitable to one that pretended to be the Son of God. II. To consider THE PREJUDICES AND OBJECTIONS WHICH MEN AT THIS DAY INSIST UPON AGAINST OUR SAVIOUR AND HIS RELIGION. 1. Some that relate to the incarnation of our Saviour. 2. To the time of His appearance. Why did He not come sooner? 3. That we have not now sufficient evidence of the truth of Christianity. 4. That the terms of it seem very hard, and to lay

too great restraints upon human nature. 5. That it is apt to despoil men, and to break the vigour and courage of their minds. 6. The divisions and factions that are among Christians. 7. The wicked lives of the greatest part of the professors of Christianity. III. How HAPPY A THING IT IS TO ESCAPE THE COMMON PREJUDICES MEN ARE APT TO ENTERTAIN AGAINST RELIGION—"Blessed is he," &c. This will appear if we consider—1. That prejudice does many times sway and bias men against the plainest truths. 2. Prejudice will bias men in matters of the greatest concernment, in things that concern the honour of God and the good of others and our own welfare. 3. The consequences of men's prejudices in these things prove many times fatal and destructive. 4. There are few in comparison who have the happiness to escape and overcome the common prejudices which men are apt to entertain against religion. (*J. Tillotson, D.D.*) *Taking offence at the gospel*:—WHAT ARE THE OFFENCES WHICH ARE GENERALLY TAKEN AT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST? 1. The poverty and meanness in which our Saviour appeared was the earliest objection to the gospel. This prejudice arises from a false conception of the power and majesty of God, as if the success of His purposes depended upon the visible fitness of the instruments He made choice of; or as if the majesty of God wants the little supports of outward pomp as that of man does. But would the advantages with respect to men have been greater had Christ appeared in greater splendour? The majesty of God must be veiled to be seen by the human eye. But did not Christ give sight to the blind, and triumph over death? Do princes and greatest men perform such works? Do these not manifest Divine power? 2. The next offence is that men do not find the wisdom they seek after in the gospel. (1) But this objection must rise to our creation, with God for not making us wiser than we are. (2) This objection does not affect the practice of religion. (3) That the gospel has given us the greatest evidence for the certainty of those things that can be desired. 3. The last offence is that the gospel contains mysterious truths. (1) This objection does not reach the gospel use of the word, nor can affect the mysteries contained in the gospel. (2) That the use of the word, which is liable to this objection, does not in any way belong to the gospel; nor are there any such mysteries in the gospel as may justify the complaint made against them. (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*) *Offended with Christ*:—I. THERE ARE SOME WHO ARE SO OFFENDED IN CHRIST THAT THEY NEVER TRUST HIM AT ALL, OR ACCEPT HIM AS THEIR SAVIOUR. 1. Some in His own day were offended with Him because of the humbleness of His appearance. They said, "He is the son of a carpenter." 2. There are others who reject Him because of the fewness of His followers. 3. Some are offended with Christ because of the grandeur of His claims. He claims to be God. 4. Some are offended with our Lord because of His atonement. 5. Some are offended because of the graciousness of the gospel. They prefer works. 6. Some are offended because of the holiness of His precepts. They like liberty to sin. II. THERE ARE SOME WHO JOIN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST WHO AFTER A TIME ARE OFFENDED. 1. Because the novelty wears off. 2. Because they thought that they were always going to be happy. 3. Because they have met an opposition they did not expect from their enemies. 4. Because they began to find that religion entailed more self-denial than they had reckoned upon. 5. Because of the hard speeches of those who ought to have encouraged them. 6. Because of the ill conduct of professors. 7. Through trials of providence. III. THERE ARE SOME WHO ARE NOT OFFENDED IN CHRIST, AND THEY ARE DECLARED TO BE BLESSED. 1. Apart from anything else it is a blessed thing to have grace enough given you to hold fast to Christ under all circumstances. 2. Then you shall find a blessedness growing out of your fidelity. 3. But what blessedness awaits you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. WHO ARE THE PERSONS THAT ARE OFFENDED AT CHRIST? 1. Those who discredit the authenticity of His Word. 2. Who deny the Divinity of His Person. 3. Who reject the efficacy of His atonement. 4. Who despise the influences of His Spirit. 5. Who backslide from the profession of His name. II. THE THINGS AT WHICH THEY ARE OFFENDED. 1. The meanness of His birth. 2. The sufferings of His life. 3. The simplicity of His doctrines. 4. The poverty of His followers. 5. The ignominy of His death. III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT OFFENDED AT CHRIST. 1. Divine peace (Psa. cxix.). 2. Divine comforts (Psa. lxxxix. 16). 3. Divine care (1 Peter v. 7). 4. Divine honours (1 Sam. ii. 30). 5. Eternal reward. 6. To be offended at Christ displays the greatest ignorance. (*The Pulpit.*) *The offence of Christ*:—I. WITH REGARD TO THOSE THINGS WHICH RENDER THE REDEEMER AN OFFENCE TO THE WORLD. 1. The mysterious constitution of His nature. 2. The humbling tendency of the doctrines. 3. The exclusive character of His religion. II. THE

BLESSEDNESS OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT OFFENDED IN THE SAVIOUR. How is it that some embrace the Saviour, and others are offended at Him? The reception of Him is the result of Divine illumination. III. THE BEST MEANS OF ATTAINING THIS BLESSEDNESS. 1. Earnest Prayer. 2. Seek God in His Word. 3. A holy life. (*E. Thompson, M.A.*) *Offences against Christianity no just grounds for infidelity*:—1. The objections grounded on the nature of the religion, and what it has effected. 2. On the controversies about it. 3. On the conduct of its professors. (*S. Jenner, B.A.*) *Offended in Christ*:—The fact that our Lord directed His reply to John himself, for his personal satisfaction. John knew that Jesus was Messiah, but he did not know that His kingdom was to be a spiritual, not a temporal one. Two objections were taken against Christ of old. Jews pretended that His condition of life was too low and mean for what their prophets had taught them to expect; and the Gentiles objected to His doctrine, as not displaying enough of what they called wisdom. He should have come as a philosopher, or as a temporal king. But He did come, unassisted by human power, or dignity, or wisdom, and thus He was—I. Enabled to be the pattern of all virtue. II. The spread of His kingdom in so short a time, the more fully displays the hand of God. III. His miracles acquire a greater degree of evidence, and—IV. What He taught is now not liable to be charged with those suspicions, which royalty and conquest would justly have raised. (*Zachary Pearce.*) *Offences taken at Christianity*:—I. It is not to be expected that a religion, though truly Divine, should be entirely exempt from everything of difficulty, or liable to no manner of objection. II. Not a few of the offences taken at religion, at that of Jesus in particular, may, they do in fact, arise entirely from men themselves, rather than from any real occasion that religion gives for them. III. Many of the particular occasions of offence taken at the Saviour had been themselves actually predicted. IV. No objections brought against Christianity should be considered alone; they, and the evidence it produces in its favour, should be considered together. The chief objections are—(1) The needlessness of any supernatural revelation; (2) the want of universality in Christianity; (3) the weakness of the evidence produced in its favour; (4) the difficulties found in some of the peculiar and sublime doctrines of the gospel; (5) the disagreements among those who profess the gospel; (6) the stress which Christianity lays upon *faith*; (7) the difficulties of its precepts; (8) the inconsistencies of professors. (*John Hodge.*) *Message of Christ to one beginning to be offended*:—John, in prison, hears of the great progress of the kingdom he has heralded, and cannot understand why he is left unaided, seemingly unpitied, to perish. Not for want of power, surely; the hand that healed the sick could open the prison. If for want of will, can this be the real King? Why does the axe not smite the overshadowing tree of wickedness; why does the fan not winnow the evil from the good? So he sends his message of remonstrance and indignation. To this Christ gives a twofold answer. He bids John's disciples tell their master of His works and of His word, of His miracles and of His teaching. I. MIRACLES, *i.e.*, not merely things to wonder at, but signs that the supernatural kingdom of righteousness wrought by a power, a will, a voice outside of and acting on nature; telling us that this order of nature may yet be completely changed for a higher and better, in which it shall be as unnatural for man to suffer, sorrow, and die, as it is now natural. But the exercise of this power was limited. Only *some* of the sick were healed and dead raised. To assure us that eventually all shall be, we need, besides the evidence of Christ's works, the declaration of His—II. WORD—"to the poor the gospel is preached." Why is this significant? Because poverty is only another word for human imperfection and weakness. The life of humanity on earth is a life of struggle with nature. In proportion as man subdues the earth, progress, civilization, and wealth increase. But all are not equally fitted for this struggle; hence, while the strong frame, keen intellect, resolute will, conquer circumstances, the weak suffer and hunger. But in the kingdom of heaven there is a gospel for the poor. God has another world, in which to redress the inequalities of this, where the poor shall hunger and thirst no more, and where God shall wipe away the tears from all eyes. This gospel for the poor is no myth or mirage begotten of the fevered thirst of man's soul. Deeprooted in historic fact lie the reasons of this promise. The city of God that is to come down from heaven has had its foundation-stone laid already upon earth. The gospel for the poor is the gospel of the resurrection. He who preaches it, stands beside an open grave. Moreover, the glory to come is linked with present suffering as its result and fruit. The law of the heavenly kingdom requires that the sin which hinders our happiness should be burnt out by sorrow, and that we should bear the chasten-

ing cross in this life. While the rich man is told that if he would walk heavenward he must be ready to part with riches and become poor at Christ's bidding, the poor man is comforted with the knowledge that weariness, sorrow, toil, suffering, and disappointment, if taken up as a cross, if lifted as a burden the Saviour has appointed, will bear rich fruit in heaven. Thus, out of suffering comes joy; out of sorrow, eternal peace; and so the trials of the poor man in this world are made his spiritual wealth in the world to come. (*Bishop W. C. Magee.*) *Offended by faithful preaching:*—Mr. Dodd, having preached against the profanation of the Sabbath, which much prevailed in his parish, and especially among the more wealthy inhabitants, the servant of a nobleman, who was one of them, came to him and said, "Sir, you have offended my lord to-day." Mr. Dodd replied, "I should not have offended your lord, except he had been conscious to himself that he had first offended my Lord; and if *your* lord will offend *my* Lord, let him be offended." *The ready way to blessedness:*—I. WHAT IT IS TO BE OFFENDED IN CHRIST. 1. It supposes some offer and revelation made to us, that grace is brought home to us and salvation offered to us. 2. It implieth such an offence that either they are kept off from Christ, or else drawn away from Him. II. UPON WHAT OCCASIONS MEN WERE OFFENDED IN CHRIST. 1. They were displeased with His Person. 2. They were offended at His doctrine. 3. The great stumbling-block of all was His sufferings. III. WAS IT NOT PROPER TO THAT AGE ONLY? There is danger still:—1. Because, though the name of Christ be had in honour, yet the stricter profession of godliness is under reproach. 2. It may happen that the stricter sort of Christians are the poorer, and so may be despised of men. 3. Though men be not distasted against Christianity as a whole, yet in part, at some of its ways. 4. There is no man but if he run up his refusal of Christ to its proper principle he will find it to be some dislike, either from the inward constitution of his own mind, or the external state of religion in the world. What is likely to offend since Christ's exaltation into heaven? 1. The many calamities which attend the profession of religion. 2. They may take offence at Christ's doctrine, at the purity, self-denial, the simplicity, the mysteriousness of it. IV. THE KINDS OF THIS SIN OF BEING OFFENDED IN CHRIST. 1. There is an offence with contempt, and an offence with discouragement. 2. There is an offence of ignorance, and an offence of malice and opposition. 3. There is a total, and there is a partial, offence. V. HOW IS IT TRUE THAT THOSE THAT ESCAPE THIS SIN ARE IN THE READY WAY TO SALVATION? 1. He that is not offended but evangelized, hath the power and virtue of the gospel stamped upon his heart. 2. The esteem produceth uniform obedience. 3. We are better fortified against temptations to apostasy—errors, scandals, and persecutions. VI. MAKE USE OF THIS CAUTION. Take heed of being offended in Christ. 1. Who are in danger of it. 2. The heinousness of it. (1) It is unreasonable. (2) Natural. (3) Dangerous. 3. What shall we do to avoid it? (1) Get a clear understanding; (2) a mortified heart; (3) a fervent love. (*T. Manton, D.D.*)

Vers. 7–9. **What went ye out into the wilderness to see?**—*The attractiveness of John the Baptist:*—What is it in human character that exerts the most powerful influence over the hearts of men? 1. Is it what is generally called amiability? Is it "a reed shaken by the wind?" a character that bends at the first expression of adverse opinion? Is this the character that wins the human heart? That which really draws us to itself is the man who is strong enough to resist with tenderness. 2. Are we, then, generally attracted by the attributes of high station? "Clothed in soft raiment." Few people are insensible to the attraction of high station; it has often the charm of old associations and achievements. But does it draw our hearts? His life may contradict the high ideal his position would lead us to expect; and these decorations are outside the man. 3. Is it mental power which most powerfully affect us? Many a man bows down to intellect who would not to wealth. Intellect is attractive, but its attraction is not universal; it is not powerful; there are large regions of heart in our nature where it does not touch. Intellect may forfeit its power by being divorced from goodness—"More than a prophet." 4. The feeling which is always inspired by a great religious soul of whose consistency we are well assured, but which we only half understand. Such a character lives before us evidently in constant communion with God while shrouding from the public eye much which our curiosity would fain explore. Without analyzing their feelings, the multitude felt that in coming near to the Baptist they were like men who stood at the base of a mountain which buries its summit in the clouds of heaven. John was not discredited by his imprisonment; he was a prophet still;

so our Lord would have them understand. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Conceptions of religion*:—I. THERE ARE THOSE WHOSE IDEA OF RELIGION IS A WEAK, VACILLATING, OR VAGUE PRINCIPLE. It has no strong hold in their minds or hearts. To how many is religion hardly more than a mere curiosity, or a transcient excitement, like wind blowing among reeds. But these words are meant to describe the preconceptions of the multitude respecting John. For, after all, it may be said of the mass of men that their feeling in regard to religion is not one of curiosity; there is a deep sense of something in the thing itself, and not in the mere manner of presenting it: but it is not held to be a strong principle, fitted for maturity, or, if they do not conceive it to be vacillating and weak, they hold it fitfully, or else it is merely in a traditional way that men hold religion; or perhaps religion is held by them because it is respectable. II. THAT THERE IS A CLASS TO WHOM RELIGION IS MERELY AN AFFAIR OF SENTIMENT. They are represented by those people who expected to see the Baptist clothed in soft raiment. There are those to whom religion is a matter of æsthetic beauty. In another view, religion is to some a matter of soft raiment, from the idea that it is merely a matter of comfort and consolation. Others do not like a religion that has anything to do with agitation or reform. There are some who do not like to hear hard, sharp epithets from the preacher. III. THERE ARE THOSE WHO REGARD RELIGION IN ITS SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER. They look for nothing less remarkable or worthy than a prophet. They view religion solely in its connection with miracles. The supernatural is not the exclusive element in religion; religion touches our common daily life. What is religion to you? (*E. H. Chapin.*) *The only real moral power influencing the world is courage in acting up to our convictions*:—Those who have not this are reeds. They may be classified thus:—1. The irresolute; the soul which never can be got to take a decided line. But it puts off this necessary reformation; and so, although it has got a full flowery head of good intentions, they all blow away in the wind. 2. The backsliding; sincere in its weak, watery way, desiring to do what is right, but never able to stand alone—always falling for want of a prop. 3. The frivolous; unable to form a serious purpose, or take a grave view of its responsibilities. The frivolous mind is a mind outside the person; there is only emptiness within, and the mind is occupied only with externals. It is a more mischievous reed than the preceding; the winds that blow it about are fashion, folly, pleasure. 4. The timorous; a weak little rush, harmless, not noxious. It will not undertake a duty, lest it should not have strength to carry it on. (*S. Baring-Gould, M.A.*) *A reed is*—1. A light man, inconsistent, tossed to and fro; at one time, impelled by the words of flatterers, he asserts something; again, being driven by detractors, he denies it, as a reed is blown in different directions by different winds. 2. A man devoid of truth, virtue, and consistency—without stamina. 3. One who has no fruit of good works to show. 4. He who is delighted with, and feeds upon, the fluctuating pleasures of the world. For a reed is *dry*, yet it grows beside the waters. (*Lapide.*) *The ends of the Sacrament*:—Based on the expression, "What went ye out for to see?" When we are going to an ordinance, we should consider our aim, and what we are going about. In every action we should reflect upon the principles and ends, the reasons that move us to any duty. The ends of the Lord's Supper are—I. TO BE A BADGE OF PROFESSION. Profession is a great matter for two reasons. 1. Cases may happen in which profession is like to cost us dear. 2. We are bound to a profession, not in word only, but in deed. He is not a professor whose life is not a hymn to God. What are the excellences of the Christian profession? Sure principles of trust, or commerce, between us and God, for mercies of daily providence, pardon, and life, excellent rewards, and holy precepts of purity and charity. Now if we transgress any of these, we dishonour our profession. II. TO BE A SEAL OF THE COVENANT. On our part an obligation to obedience; God bindeth Himself to be our God, and we bind ourselves to be His people. III. TO BE A PLEDGE OF HEAVEN. IV. TO BE A SIGN, MEANS, AND PLEDGE OF OUR COMMUNION WITH CHRIST. V. TO BE A MEANS OF OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND NOURISHMENT. VI. TO BE A MEMORIAL OF CHRIST'S DEATH. VII. TO BE A PLEDGE OF HIS COMING. If these be the ends of the sacrament, you see what need there is of *preparation*. (*Thomas Manton.*) *How may we give Christ a satisfying account why we attend upon the ministry of the Word?*—I. THOSE THAT ATTEND UPON THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD SHOULD PROPOSE UNTO THEMSELVES SOME END WHY THEY DO IT. 1. Some propose no end at all. 2. Some propose ends downright sinful. 3. Some propose ends frivolous and trifling. II. THOSE THAT PROPOSE A GOOD END MUST CALL THEMSELVES TO A STRICT ACCOUNT HOW THAT END IS OBTAINED OR LOST. 1. He must give such an account as a

scholar to his teacher, of what he learns. 2. As a steward to his master. 3. As a debtor to his creditor (Matt. xviii. 23, 24). 4. As a malefactor to a judge (Matt. xii. 36, 37). III. THE STRICT ACCOUNT WE TAKE OF OURSELVES MUST BE FREQUENT Inferences: 1. It is not the bare hearing of the best preachers that will save you. 2. Remove those hindrances which prevent any soul business. 3. Call yourself to account before and after hearing the Word of God. 4. Christ asks thee here in this world, that thou mayest stand at the last day, when there will be no time to rectify. 5. If you do not give Christ an answer which He will accept, it is vain to expect relief from any other. (*S. Annesley, D.D.*) *Christ praising the Baptist: The time to praise:*—Due praise is to be given to the good parts and practices of others; but rather behind their backs than before their faces, lest we be suspected of flattery, than which nothing is more odious. Aristobulus, the historian, wrote a flattering book of the brave acts of Alexander the Great, and presented it to him. He read it, and then cast it into the river, telling the author that he deserved to be treated as his book was. (*John Trapp.*) *Men see what they go out to see:*—A geologist and a botanist take a walk together. They go over the same country, but the geologist sees the lie of the strata, the botanist sees the wild flower under the hedge. So it is in the world of the moral and the spiritual. What we are spiritually all goes into our vision. (*J. Brierley, B.A.*) *The reed of the Jordan:*—Mr. Macgregor, known as Rob Roy, gives the following precise description of this reed. "There is first a lateral trunk lying on the water and half submerged. This is sometimes as thick as a man's body, and from its lower side hang innumerable string-like roots, from three to five feet long, and of a deep purple colour. On the upper surface of the trunks the stems grow alternately in oblique rows; their thickness at the junction is often four inches, and their height fifteen feet, gracefully tapering until at the top is a little round knob, with long, thin, brown, wire-like hairs, eighteen inches long, which rise, and then, recurving, hang about it in a thyrsus-shaped head."

Ver. 10.—**Which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.**—*Preparations for Christ's coming:*—God does not seem, as a rule, to allow any great truth or blessing to burst upon the world without some sort of preparation. In this case two series of preparations: (1) Prophecy, educating religious souls among the Jews to look out for a Messiah; and (2) St. John Baptist, to point Him out when He had come. John's business was, first of all, to gain the ear of his countrymen, and then to say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and afterwards to announce Jesus as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Thus John was, in the kingdom of grace, like those gifted men in the world of thought, or in the world of practical life, who are always ahead of the mass of people around them; they have the inspiration not of supernatural grace, but of natural genius, which is itself a gift of God, though of a different order of value and power. They are like lofty mountains whose summit the sun has already lit up, while he has not yet poured his beams upon the plain beneath. They are alone on their watch-tower; and, if they say what they think, it is only to be smiled down as enthusiasts. Two requisites for work like that of John Baptist: I. COURAGE to tear the mask from evils and abuses, and this implies (1) a firm, definite conviction that certain things are absolutely true, worth working for, suffering for, and (if need be) dying for; and (2) Independence, *i.e.*, detachment from those motives of subservience which, at critical times, stay the hand and silence the tongue of ordinary men. II. DISINTERESTEDNESS. A man may be brave, and yet he may be selfish; he may work and endure, yet only for himself. John Baptist had to resist this temptation. Some of his disciples would have liked him to become the founder of a new religious school. But he himself never yielded to the temptation to make selfish capital, in the way of influence or consideration, out of his popular power. He ever regarded it as his highest work and glory to bury his own miserable self beneath the surpassing greatness of his commission from Heaven. (*Canon Liddon.*) *John as forerunner of Jesus.* I. 'Tis written in the prophets that such a messenger should go before and prepare the way of the Messias. II. St. John was the person, or he of whom this was written. III. In what manner did he prepare the way of the Lord? 1. Not with any worldly pomp or splendour. 2. Not by calling upon the inhabitants of the earth to meet their Lord in state and magnificence. 3. It was by preaching repentance, and turning men from their sins. (*Matthew Hole.*)

Ver. 11. **There hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist.**—*The least in the kingdom of heaven:*—Is it contrary to any true theory of John's prophetical

mission that he should be for once seized with a spasm of doubt? Great men are not at their greatest at all times. The heavenly treasure is in earthen vessels. There are two sufficient reasons for his doubt:—1. Things were turning out somewhat differently from his own programme. He was falling into the mistake we often make of fancying ourselves architects in God's world, whereas we are only day labourers. 2. John's message came from the inside of a prison. A man of his temperament, flung back from great activities to mope by himself, was almost sure to get a little strained in his views of things. For such men the difficulty is not to do hard things, but to be kept back from doing them. Note, now, the way in which Christ deals with this message. How is the doubter received? No word of anger or remonstrance. 1. He gives the messengers clear proof of His Messiahship, and then, when their back is turned, He speaks to the multitude of John in terms of commendation. 2. Observe what Christ says concerning John—"What went ye out for to see." Men go out to see what there is to see: what we bring to a thing conditions what we shall bring away from it. "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." We are all of us higher up than John. We are so by virtue of belonging to a dispensation beyond his. The baptism of Pentecost lifted the world to a higher stage, and we are on that higher stage. It is a glorious thought that, under God, the human race is continually advancing. 3. Take two particulars as regards our dispensation:—1. We have the advantage of John in the testimony we bear, from the facts we deal with, as compared with those of which he spake. He sketched the Christ in outline; we have the picture filled up. 2. The advantage of the worker in the Christian Church over the Baptist is seen in the kind of effort to which he puts his hand. John's work was to bring men to repentance; this its limit. But in the Christian Church this work is to be carried on through all the process of sanctification, till it lifts the soul to the topmost heights of holiness. The element of the remarkable and extraordinary is not always the measure of real value. John's career was extraordinary. We do a work thousands have done before. Yearn not to be eccentric, but deep and real. (*J. Brierley, B.A.*) *The infinite possibility of manhood:*—Each generation is on higher ground than the last. Fathers, respect your children, they are older than you. Do people speak of me as some forty years of age, more or less? Nonsense. I am 6,000 years old, at least. I have in me the sum of the lives and consciousness of all who preceded me, and something new added besides. We are trees which, through the root, drink up the virtue of the soil around them—soil made up of the buried generations of trees—and bring forth also something new in their own fruit and flower. In the light of this, what business have we to be always looking to the past, as if there were nothing of goodness or value in the world but what is hundreds and thousands of years old? You get people who, in religion, are nothing if not antiquarian. If Quakers, they think there were never such days as those of George Fox; if Methodists, there will never be the like again of John Wesley and his fellows; if Churchmen, they grope about amongst the fathers, and hold that wisdom and worth died with them. This is a wrong mood of mind. We want to take in all our predecessors can teach us; but, oh, if we have faith in the living God we shall have belief in the boundless possibilities also of the present and of the future. Man is going on. He is pushed up from behind. He is drawn up from above. Yes! John is mighty in his generation. But those who come after are higher than he. Onward, upward! Oh, that we may not hinder the progress in ourselves, but spread every sail, stretch every stitch of canvas to the breeze that bears us along to the celestial country! (*Ibid.*) *Greater than the Baptist.*—I. THE MEANING OF THE TEXT. The first clause is simple enough; it states that John Baptist was greater than all who preceded him. The second clause is the difficulty—"least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." What is intended by "the kingdom of heaven"—the kingdom of glory, or of grace, or both? It is of course true that the least in heaven is greater and more privileged than John. It is better to be with Christ than on earth. But the kingdom of glory is not meant here. The term is almost universally used with reference to the kingdom of God on earth. "The kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, cometh not with observation." This refers to earth; the heavenly kingdom will come with splendour. The gospel dispensation is intended. Who are the least? Not the apostles, but the saint. II. THE REASON. In what sense John was greater than all who preceded him. 1. One might take the personal character of John, and his superiority will be seen. His zeal was great. He was the messenger before our Lord. This establishes the great superiority of John. No prophet

actually prepared the way of the Saviour. Real greatness is approximation to God. The man who knows God best is greatest. Who was ever brought into such near connection with God as John? He was the friend of the Bridegroom. The dispensation of John was peculiar; he stood between the law and the gospel. How is it that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John? Observe the expression "least *in* the kingdom of heaven." John was not in the kingdom of heaven. It all turns upon this. Our Lord draws the contrast. John was the greatest of all who went before him; but the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he—not in heaven, but on earth. The kingdom of heaven, in the sense here intended, commenced with the day of Pentecost; it is essentially connected both with the in-dwelling and out-pouring of the Holy Ghost. John said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." 1. The least in the kingdom of heaven is participator of all that the God of heaven can bestow. Nothing more can be given him. 2. The least in the kingdom of heaven is a member of the bride's. 3. The least in the kingdom of heaven is a temple of the Holy Ghost. 4. The least in the kingdom of heaven has the spirit of adoption—the spirit of a son. 5. The least in the kingdom of heaven is brought into relationship with each of the Persons in the Trinity, in a sense which John was not. 6. The least in the kingdom of heaven may therefore become the greatest. Let us realize the greatness of the gospel dispensation. (*Capel Molyneux, B.A.*)

Ver. 12. **The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.**—*Earnestness in religion*:—1. Earnestness is a distinguishing mark of race-elevation. 2. Earnestness is characteristic of great epochs. 3. Earnestness is a criterion of individual character, men weight according to earnestness; it is more than ability. 4. Of all places for earnestness, religion is the most important and natural. Reasons for earnestness in religion:—I. IT IS DEMANDED BY THE NATURE OF RELIGION ITSELF. It is an earnest thing, demands our best power (1) as a scheme of worship; (2) as a series of works; (3) as a system of duty; (4) as a revelation of future rewards and punishments. II. EARNESTNESS IN RELIGION IS DEMANDED BY EARNESTNESS IN THE GOD WHOM RELIGION REVEALS. No epicurean deity, careless of men. 1. God's earnestness visible in nature. It is a whirl of terrible forces. 2. It is visible in things permitted and accomplished in Providence. 3. Earnestness visible in God's self-revelation. God comes nearer to man at every step up to incarnation. 4. The language of scripture as revealing earnestness in God. It contains tender pleading, strong remonstrance. The only thing that can answer God is earnestness in us. III. EARNESTNESS IS DEMANDED BY THE DIFFICULTIES IN BEING RELIGIOUS. 1. These are real—"Many are called; few chosen." The promises are "to him that overcometh." 2. They are not difficulties in religion itself. Abundant grace is supplied. 3. They are in us. (1) Our unbelief. (2) Love of the world. (3) Spiritual indolence. 4. These are complicated by our surroundings. 5. And there is no accommodation of conditions. Religion no respecter of persons. IV. EARNESTNESS IN RELIGION IS DEMANDED BY OUR ACTUAL DANGERS AND NEEDS. 1. Religion is a scheme of pardon as well as a system of truth. Our exposure is imminent. 2. Here is the supreme reason for earnestness in seeking the kingdom of heaven. It is your life. V. NOW CONTRAST THE EARNESTNESS SO EVIDENTLY DEMANDED BY OUR SITUATION AND THE LIGHTNESS WITH WHICH SOME TREAT THE WHOLE MATTER. 1. Contentment with slight grounds for unbelief. 2. Then see the lightness with which some turn away to business. 3. Lack of earnestness shown in deferred prayers and broken promises. 4. The feeble beginnings speedily abandoned. Application:—1. Remember the religious earnestness to which Christ exhorts is no fanatical excitement. 2. Remember how soon difficulties melt away before earnestness. 3. Examine the reasons why indifference replaces earnestness. 4. Earnestness is demanded by your conduct in anything else which you believe will be to your advantage. 5. Appeal for immediate decision. These, the best things for earnestness; will please God; come to them as they come to you. (*S. F. Scovel.*) *The kingdom of heaven taken by violence*:—I. FROM THE FACT THAT THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES LOST THE KINGDOM WITH EVERYTHING IN THEIR FAVOUR, whilst the "violent" won it with everything against them, we gather that every natural advantage may be forfeited by non-improvement, and that its want may be compensated by strenuousness of exertion. II. HE WHO WOULD BE SAVED MUST BE SAVED BY VIOLENCE, and, nevertheless, he can be saved only by grace. Many charge the doctrine of justification by faith with a tendency to undermine exertion. But there is more effort necessary to be saved by grace than by works. Man's strongest inclinations are

on the side of meriting heaven by works; hence the need of violence to resist this. And the violence done to nature by the act of believing, faith, as working by love, will keep men in perpetual activity. A life of faith is a life of self-denial. It is not easy, though God's grace will prevent it being too difficult. III. With this proof that they who would be saved must use violence there is given A DEMONSTRATION THAT, NEVERTHELESS, THEY CAN BE SAVED ONLY BY GRACE. The faith which prompts and enables the violence is no human principle, but is of celestial gift. Faith, and all its results, must be attributed to grace. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Christian must use force*:—If the wrestler must use force when the athletic arm is raised against him, then must we, for we wrestle with principalities and powers. If the warrior must use force when the army cometh against him, then must we use force, for there are squadrons between us and everlasting rest. If the captive must use force when he would wrench off his chains, then must we use force, for the fetters of an evil nature bind us to the earth. If the traveller must use force when there are mountains to be scaled, then must we use force, for a rugged land is before us, and the rocks and the torrents block up our path. Or if the suppliant use force—the force of earnest entreaty, unwearied solicitation, burning tears, and passionate cries, when he would gain a favour from a great one of the earth; then must we use force; we must "pray always and not faint;" we must besiege the mercy-seat, seeing that all we need must come from God; and earnest supplication is the condition on which God bestows. (*Ibid.*) *The kingdom of heaven taken by force*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE FORCE HERE SPOKEN OF. 1. A resolution of mind to receive the doctrine and precepts of strict holiness and virtue, though contrary to the ordinary bias of men's appetites and inclinations. 2. The quitting favourite notions and prejudices, upon sufficient evidence, and with mature, serious, and diligent consideration. 3. Quitting some present worldly advantages for the sake of the gospel, and making a profession of the truths of religion, against much opposition, and notwithstanding difficulties and discouragements. II. There is also intended A REFERENCE TO THE WILLING FORWARDNESS and resolute zeal of many in embracing the principles of true religion, who, to outward appearance, were the most unlikely of any to have a share in the blessings and privileges of the gospel: such as men of mean rank and low education, men of unreputable character, and Gentiles. (*Nathanael Lardner.*) *Taking the kingdom by violence*:—I. THE NECESSITY FOR THESE STRONG EXERTIONS arises from the immense difficulties in the way:—1. The world, as comprehending both objects of attention and objects of attachment. 2. The devil and his angels. 3. The flesh with all its passions and lusts. 4. The difficulty of dissolving long-connected associations, of breaking up long-established habits, and of issuing forth into new courses of action. II. THE NATURE OF THE VIOLENCE INTENDED. 1. It must be accompanied with supreme desire, and with corresponding earnestness and diligence. 2. It must be accompanied with true repentance. 3. It must be marked with submission. 4. You must offer the prayer of the destitute. Apply: 1. To those who are opposed to any great earnestness or any uncommon movement in religion. 2. To awakened sinners. 3. Where will the prayerless sinner appear? (*E. Griffin, D.D.*) *Religious earnestness*:—I. THE CHARACTERISTIC EARNESTNESS OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION. 1. These are the provisions of the gospel, complete and full. 2. Its early history. 3. Its work and mission. 4. Its finality. II. ITS EFFECTS AMONG MEN; THEIR TREATMENT OF IT. 1. Many enter the kingdom violently. (1) Violence exhibited in their repentance. (2) In their efforts to believe and acquire holiness. (3) In the difficulties they are called to overcome. 2. Enemies. (*Anon.*) *A visitation of strong religious desire*:—Not one or other among us, but probably every man who hears me, either has already had, or will have, at some time of his life, a strong desire to obey God. One man is checked or is favoured in this respect in one way, another in another. We cannot avoid seeing that some men have, almost by nature, religious feelings which are not given in equal measure to others. But still it is with respect to religion as it is with regard to our own prosperity in life. It is said there is no man who has not once or twice in life a lucky chance, and it depends on the skill with which he uses it whether he turns out a prosperous man or not. So it is with our religious character. However unfavourable his position, however strongly a character may have taken a cold or irreligious tone, still there is scarcely a man who is not now and then awakened by some of what we call the accidents of life, but which are in reality calls from God, and who does not often see Him and His will distinctly—as it was said of Balaam, "having his eyes open." But did Balaam, when his eyes were open, obey? Did he to whom, more than to God's own

servants, it was given to know God's will, follow it? No! He was contented to know about God, and made his knowledge of Him a substitute for the obedience he ought to have rendered. So it is with us all, if we forget that the wish to press—nay, the very pressing itself into God's kingdom, is but the first step towards winning it. It may be a great step; it may change the direction of a man's whole life; it may realize the proverb, that "well begun is half done;" while it may also be the mere turning away for a few weeks, or even days, from vice. God's kingdom can be really won by nothing but steady, manly perseverance; it is a matter which demands a lifelong energy of prayer and watching, lest at any time we let it slip. (*Dean Lake.*) *The most religious, the most energetic:*—Whosoever shall do most violence to Christ shall be accounted most religious by Him. We desire to take His kingdom, His riches, and His life. And He is so rich and so liberal that He does not resist. He does not deny, and after He has given all, He still possesses all. We attack Him, not with swords, nor staves, nor stones; but with meekness, good works, chastity. These are the weapons of our faith, by which we strive in the contest. But, in order that we may be able to make use of these arms in doing violence, let us first use a certain violence to our own bodies, let us carry by storm the vices of our members, that we may obtain the rewards of valour. For, to seize the Saviour's kingdom, we must first reign in ourselves. (*St. Ambrose.*) *A struggle to reach heaven:*—In the life of Perpetua and her fellow-martyrs, we read that in a dream she beheld a golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven, which was hedged in and surrounded on all sides by knives and sharp swords. By this ladder they had to climb up to heaven. At its foot lay a horrible dragon, who sought to hinder the climbers. She saw, moreover, one of her companions, Satyrus by name, bravely mounting the ladder, and inviting his companions to follow him. When she had related her vision, they all understood that they were to suffer martyrdom. And so it happened. Thus let each believer consider that with his utmost energy he must struggle up to heaven, by means of a ladder hedged about with knives. *Heaven taken by storm:*—The claim for admission into the covenant had hitherto, from Abraham to John the Baptist, been a national one; it now became a solely moral one. 1. We lay down as our first principle that indomitable earnestness is the soul of our religion and the key to all progress. 2. Let no man suppose that this will clash with the doctrines of Divine grace. 3. It is easy to see that there are two ways of taking the kingdom, a weak way and a violent way. Faith may be merely of an educational kind, or strong and personal; the inner life of man may go on easily from day to day, or it may contend with evil influences; prayer may consist in empty cries. 4. The promise of success is to the violent. (1) Not because God is unwilling, but because it is His way to exercise grace that He may increase it. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Fighting a way into the kingdom:*—The Interpreter took the pilgrim again by the hand, and led him into a pleasant place, where was built a stately palace, beautiful to behold; at the sight of which Christian was greatly delighted. He saw also upon the top thereof certain persons walking, who were clothed all in gold. Then said Christian, "May we go in thither?" Then the Interpreter took him, and led him up toward the door of the palace; and behold, at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a book and his ink-horn before him, to take the name of him that should enter therein; he saw also that in the doorway stood many men in armour to keep it, being resolved to do to the men that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in amaze. At last, when every man started back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance, come up to the man that sat there to write, saying, "Set down my name, sir;" the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put a helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force; but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely. So that, after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying,

"Come in, Come in,
Eternal glory thou shalt win."

So he went in, and was clothed with such garments as they. (*John Bunyan.*) *Practical religion requires energy:*—When we look at towns on a map we think

the way to them easy, as if our foot were as nimble as our thoughts; but we are soon discouraged and tired, when we meet with dangerous and craggy passages, and come to learn the difference between glancing at the way and serious endeavours to traverse it. So in matters of religion, he that endeavours to bring Christ and his soul together, before he hath done, will be forced to sit down and cry, Lord, help me! (*T. Manton.*) *Earnest prayer*:—Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously, with all his might. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Need inspires energy*:—After Sir Colin Campbell's silent retreat from Lucknow in the last Indian war, Captain Waterman was left behind. He had gone to his bed in a retired corner of the brigade mess-house, and having overslept himself was forgotten. At two o'clock in the morning, to his great horror, he found all was deserted and silent, and that he was alone in an open entrenchment with 15,000 furious barbarians just outside. Frightened, he took to his heels and ran himself nearly out of breath, till he overtook the retiring rear-guard, mad with excitement, and breathless with fatigue. But was not his earnestness reasonable, seeing that he realized his danger? And if unconverted sinners realized their danger, would they not be desperately in earnest? (*A. Tucker.*)

Ver. 15. **He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**—*Hearing the word*:—I. Take heed THAT ye hear. 1. This implies willingness to hear; it pre-supposes a mind exempt from prejudice. 2. It implies devout earnestness to hear. II. Take heed HOW ye hear. 1. This means that we should seek to understand the gospel. 2. That we should endeavour to experience the gospel. 3. That we should reduce what we learn to practice. III. Take head WHAT ye hear. 1. You should desire to hear the Word of God. 2. The pure Word of God. 3. The plain Word of God. 4. The sure Word of God. 5. The living Word of God. (*J. C. Jones.*) *Capacity involves responsibility*:—What a man can do, that he ought to do. If he can hear, let him hear; yes, and if he can see, let him see; if he can serve, let him serve; if he can pray, let him pray. Men can hear much that they do not hear. An average ear, we are told, is able to recognize about a thousand musical tones. Speaking roughly, the human ear is so constructed that all tones, from that which is caused by fifty vibrations in a second to that which is caused by five thousand vibrations in a second, can be distinctly received and discriminated. How much we lose, for example, in walking through a wood, if we are ignorant of the notes of the various birds we hear around us; how much the scene gains in interest and charm when we have learned to recognize them, and can call up a picture of the birds in their several haunts. Nay, how many more distinct tones we hear in the sweet general babble of the woods, if we are able to recognize the several notes of which it is composed (*Carpus*, in "*Expositor.*") *Our Lord's keenness of hearing*:—Remember what lovely and pathetic parables our Lord was for ever hearing, as well as speaking, when He dwelt among us. For Him the whole realm of Nature was instinct with spiritual significance, and all the relations, occupations, and events of human life. For Him they had voices, and voices that disclosed their inmost secret. The birds of the air spoke to Him, and the lilies of the field, and the sower going forth to sow, and the housewife sweeping her floor or making her bread, and the very children as they played and wrangled in the market-place. What a world that was through which He moved; with what sweet and delicate voices it greeted Him; what tender and lovely stories they were always telling Him; what spiritual messages and consolations and encouragements and hopes they were for ever bringing Him. (*Carpus*, in "*Expositor.*") *Hearing fulfilled in doing*:—When Julius Mascaron preached before the French Court, some envious persons would have made a crime of the freedom with which he announced the truths of Christianity to King Louis XIV. His Majesty very spiritedly rebuked them, saying, "He has done his duty; it remains for us to do ours." (*Percy.*) *The word planted in the heart*:—There is a story of two men, who, walking together, found a young tree laden with fruit. They both gathered, and satisfied themselves for the present; but one of them took all the remaining fruit and carried it away with him; the other took the tree, and planted it in his own ground, where it prospered and brought forth fruit every year; so that though the former had more at present, yet this had some when he had none. They who hear the Word, and have large memories and nothing else, may carry away most of the Word at present; yet he that can perhaps but remember

little, who carries away the tree, plants the Word in his heart, and obeys it in his life, shall have fruit when the other has none.

Ver. 16. **But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets.**—*Excuses of sinners:*—The Great Teacher on the watch that He might spiritualize what passed before Him; He was probably standing in a Jewish market-place when He uttered these words. The Jews used the pipe at marriages and funerals. This instrument of music, therefore, like our church bells, served alike for the joyful and mournful occasion. I. THE APPLICATION OF THE PASSAGE TO THE JEWS. There was a marked difference between the ministry of the Baptist and that of our Lord; John presented piety under the form of austerity; Jesus, on the contrary, mingled freely with the people. Thus was brought to bear upon the Jews a great variety of moral assault. Both were unheeded. The Baptist had been too repulsive, and now the Redeemer was too conciliating. If they had melancholy music, they wanted lively, and if they had lively they wanted melancholy. They were like sullen children resisting all efforts to interest them. II. THE APPLICATION OF THE PASSAGE TO OURSELVES. God's dealings with sinners are still mixed. *In the preaching of the Word there is variety of assault:*—Boanerges and Barnabas are sent. If the preacher is vehement, then you say that frightening men is not the right way of dealing with them; if he is pathetic, you say there ought not to be an attempt to master the feelings without carrying the judgment. *The occurrences of daily life are so many endeavours on the part of the Almighty to win men from unrighteousness.* Both prosperity and adversity; men resist the combination. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Caprice and inconsistency:*—Our Lord clearly charges upon those to whom He personally preached, that they were childish in their treatment of religion. I. HOW INCONSISTENT AND CAPRICIOUS ARE MANY OF THE OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY. They assume contradictory forms. Look at some of these objections. 1. "A Divine revelation," say such men, "ought to exhibit a Divine power." Is it reasonable to say that Christianity has no power because its work has not been completely finished in eighteen centuries? Then he does not believe in any superhuman power which rises above the laws of nature. The very man who said the gospel wanted power! 2. You find the same principle in regard to the way in which such men treat the evidence on which Christianity is based. Men do well to look to foundations. They object to evidence of religion in books, and cry for something to affect the moral nature; but if you point him to characters changed by religion he says that he "does not believe in a religion that depends for proof on inward experiences." 3. But nowhere is this determination not to be pleased so apparent as in their judgment of the personal character and conduct of Christians. Fidelity to truth may not please men, but, by God's blessing, it will save them. II. CHRISTIANITY ADMITS OF VARIETY IN INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER AND WORK. 1. Variety in experience. 2. In doctrine, too, Christianity admits of variety. 3. In Christian work the religion of Jesus admits of great variety of individual peculiarity. (*Bishop Cheney.*) *Varied ministries in vain:*—Have you never attempted the culture of certain plants which "refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely"? Trust to the showers to furnish them sufficient moisture, and suddenly you find their leaves are drooping as if a drought had cursed the soil. Try to refresh them with water, and you find the roots softening with decay, and the leaves incrusting themselves in mildew. Put them out in the open border, where nature manifests her kindest care, and the sun scorches them like the breath of a furnace. Remove them where a friendly shrub offers its shade, and forthwith they spindle up with a pale and ghastly growth, at once worthless and unhealthy. Fit types of many of the objections with which the faith of the Saviour has been met from the beginning! (*Ibid.*) *Varied workers:*—And above all, in Christian work the religion of Jesus admits of great variety of individual peculiarity. Rising before the dawn you saw the morning star climb slowly up the purple ladder of the eastern sky. It had its work to do. God gave it that work. But no one expects it to light the world and turn darkness into day. That the rising sun must do. Even so widely different was the work of John the Baptist and Jesus the Sun of Righteousness. Both were to work the works of Him who sent them—but in ways utterly unlike. (*Ibid.*) *Man naturally seeks variety:*—In the great print-works of the land are men whose only duty is to make new patterns to be impressed upon the white surface of the snowy cotton. The countless combinations of colours which the kaleidoscope presents are reproduced in an infinite variety of designs. The men whose vast wealth is invested in looms and spindles comprehend human nature, and they know that it demands variety.

Just in proportion as tyranny has established its supremacy, it has tried to reduce all the race to a single pattern. The idea of beauty which has filled the mind of despots has always been that of the Dutch gardeners, who clipped and pruned trees that nature would have made lovely in luxuriant growth till each one was precisely like every other. How different when our Lord Jesus Christ came to establish His supremacy. Two men could hardly have been more widely different than Jesus of Nazareth and John the Baptist. (*Ibid.*) *Critics hard to please*:—If a Christian be reserved in his habits and a lover of retirement, they describe him as narrow and ungenial. If he be frank and accessible, they shake their heads over his worldliness and inordinate love of society. He is never quite right in their eyes. He is too strict or too yielding; too gloomy or too happy; too cautious or too bold; too shrewd or too simple. Let not such judgments of men disconcert or discourage any who with an honest heart endeavour to be true to Christ. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *Transition periods*:—There are three great periods in religion. 1. The period of law; in which the motives are hope and fear—hope of reward and fear of punishment. 2. The period of the gospel; in which the motive is simply the love of what is good without regard to personal results. 3. The transition period, which is that of John the Baptist; when there is the light of the gospel, and yet the terror of the law behind it; in which men, though they love God a little, are still afraid of Him. *The impossibility of pleasing the enlightened conscience and the carnal mind*:—When a man's conscience is pulling one way, and his heart is pulling him another way, nothing pleases him. If you ask him to do his duty, and tell him what he ought to be, his conscience assents, but he does not like it. If, on the other hand, you make excuses for him, and tell him he is all right, then his feelings are soothed, but his conscience remonstrates, because he knows you are wrong in saying so. Selfishness is thus always ill at ease, and has no inward unity so long as there is any conscience left. *Fault not in the gospel, but in the evil heart*:—The trouble is in the men themselves, and not in the institutions that surround them. They are like sick children. Whatever the nurse may bring, whether it be of food, or of drink, or of some object of amusement, the child pushes it pettishly away. Nothing suits the child. It is not because the picture is not beautiful; it is not because the drink is not cooling and palatable; it is not because the food is not good; it is because the irritable nerve is such that nothing seems good, no matter how good it may be, and nothing seems desirable, no matter how attractive it may be. And there are hundreds of men in every community who refuse to bow down the pride of their nature, and who refuse to accept the service of Christ, because of the heart that they carry in them, although the reasons which they allege are reasons of exterior religion. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 19. **The Son of man came eating.**—*Christ and common life*:—I. We have here a strong PROOF OF THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST. "The Son of man." His oneness with men; not exempt from the necessities of our nature; He was subject to the laws under which we live. No manna fell from heaven for Him. II. Christ ate and drank WITH MEN. Not only *as* others, but with others. He was no recluse. Jesus represents the new order, which is a life of liberty, because a life of love. Religion must be able to endure the strain of life. III. Here Christ SANCTIFIED THE COMMON DUTIES OF EVERY DAY. Nothing is so common as eating and drinking; it is commonplace. The temptation is to make the hours for meals mere feeding times, or to become an epicure. Christ's example guards against this. He taught the dignity of our bodies. He who recognizes the body as God's gift will never dishonour its appetites. The daily meals may be family sacraments cheered by Christian intercourse. Christ came to fit men for this world as well as for the next. (*W. S. Jerome.*) *Wisdom is justified of her children*:—I. THE DIFFERENT COURSES OF LIFE WHEREIN JOHN AND JESUS APPEARED. 1. That God sendeth forth His servants with divers dispositions. 2. That men are qualified according to the dispensation wherein God useth them. John, a preacher of repentance, was austere; Christ, as a giver of pardon, mild. 3. That men are apt to complain. 1. Except against what is done by God, and whatsoever methods are used to reduce them to a sense of pardon. The censures of the two things disliked in Christ were not just. 1. His diet. All our food should be sanctified. 2. His company. II. THE REASONS WHY HE CHOSE THIS SORT OF LIFE. 1. Because He would not place religion in outward austerities and observances. 2. Christ would live a strict, but sociable and charitable life; and did not observe the laws of proud pharisaical separation, but spent His time in doing good. 3. Christ came to set us an example, and would take up that

course of life most imitable by all sorts of persons. 4. It was fit His form of life should suit with the nature of the kingdom. 5. Because Christ would not gratify human wisdom, as He would not gratify sense, by choosing a pompous life, so He would not gratify wisdom by choosing an austere life. 6. To show us the true nature of mortification, which consists not in abstinence and retreat from temptations, but in a spirit fortified against them. III. THE OBSERVANCES WHICH WE MAY BUILD THEREON. 1. We may observe the humanity, goodness, and kindness of that religion which we profess, both with respect to ourselves and others. 2. That external holiness which consisteth in an outside strictness without love usually puffeth up men. 3. That a free life, guided by a holy wisdom, is the most sanctified life. (*T. Manton.*) **A friend of publicans and sinners.**—*A friend of publicans and sinners:*—I. OUR LORD PROVED HIMSELF IN HIS OWN TIME TO BE THE FRIEND OF SINNERS. 1. He came among them. 2. He sought their good by His ministry. 3. He showed His patience toward them by the contradiction He endured from them. II. WHAT CHRIST IS DOING NOW FOR SINNERS. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. CHRIST A FRIEND. In a friend we anticipate finding sincere attachment, affectionate concern to promote our welfare, freedom in fellowship and communication, unflinching fidelity. II. THE DUTY WE OWE TO HIM. Friendliness, gratitude, fellowship, integrity, constancy. III. THE ADVANTAGES RESULTING FROM THE PERFORMANCE OF IT. The friendship of Christ affords rich consolation, exhaustless supplies, requisite instruction, eternal inheritance. Address the enemies of Christ, the undecided, and His friends. (*Rd. Treffy.*) **But wisdom is justified of her children.**—*Wisdom justified of her children:*—I. HOW WISDOM BECOMES JUSTIFIED TO HER CHILDREN. Notice those respects in which the scheme of Christianity is considered foolishness by the world. 1. A strong natural dislike of Christianity is founded on the meanness of the Saviour's life and the ignominy of His death. The Christian's great struggle is with earthly attachments, and he acknowledges with thankfulness the wisdom of any arrangement whose direct tendency is to help him in the struggle. 2. They often allege the disproportion of the means to the end. Reason cannot decide how much the pardon of a sin must cost. The converted man sees the heinousness of sin. He sees that only an infinite sacrifice could put it away. 3. It is regarded as unsuited to the ends which it proposes to effect, and no heavier charge could be brought against its wisdom. The idea of substitution is said to encourage men in sin; but where can we find higher morality and truer friendship than amongst men who are trusting in Christ? II. WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED THROUGH HER CHILDREN TO OTHERS. This wisdom is so manifest in the effects of Christianity on the lives of its disciples, that enemies are inexcusable in charging it with foolishness. The children of God must vindicate the wisdom of religion. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Wisdom justified in her children:*—I. WHAT IS THE WISDOM TO WHICH REFERENCE IS HERE MADE. Some suppose our Lord to have meant Himself; in Proverbs it is declared that by "Wisdom" God created the heavens. The term wisdom is also applied to the doctrine of the true God. "The fear of the Lord that is wisdom." II. TO SHOW HOW IT HAS BEEN IN ALL AGES EXPOSED TO THE INDIFFERENCE, CONTEMPT, OR THE MISAPPREHENSION OF MANKIND. 1. Deny her doctrines. 2. Forget her commands. III. How IT HAS BEEN NEVERTHELESS JUSTIFIED IN ITS CHILDREN. 1. In the life of every saint who has arrived in heaven. "A cloud of witnesses" prove wisdom is justified of her children. 2. Wisdom is justified in all the social relationships of life. Is he a husband? wisdom will have given him a new affection. (*T. Jackson, M.A.*) *The world's estimate of religion:*—I. Evangelical religion IS CHARACTERIZED AS WISDOM. As it rightly applies the sublimest knowledge; as it diligently studies the most approved rule; as it zealously prosecutes the most enduring interest. II. Evangelical religion HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH FOLLY. Its principles, its feelings, its practices, have been accounted foolishness. III. Evangelical religion is JUSTIFIED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF ITS POSSESSORS. They receive her doctrines, avow her service, obey her precepts. (*Studies.*) *Wisdom justified:*—I. WHAT IS THE WISDOM OF GOD IN THE WAY OF SALVATION PRESENTED BY THE GOSPEL? The end of the means. II. THAT THIS WISDOM IS DESPISED AND CONTRADICTED BY THE CARNAL WORLD. III. HOW AND WHY IT MUST BE JUSTIFIED BY THE SINCERE PROFESSORS OF THE GOSPEL. 1. It must be approved and received by themselves. 2. It must be professed and owned when it is in contempt in the world. 3. This profession must be honoured and recommended to others by a holy conversation. Why? 1. Because of the charge that is put upon us to testify for God, and justify His ways. 2. Wisdom deserveth to be justified by us. 3. Those who condemn wisdom by their tongues, justify it in some measure by their consciences. 4. If we do not justify religion, we

justify the world. 5. Christ will one day justify all His sincere followers. 6. Because of the necessity of justifying wisdom in the times we live in. (*T. Manton.*)

Ver. 20–24. **Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!** *The damnation under the gospel more intolerable than that of Sodom:*—I. THERE SHALL BE A DAY OF JUDGMENT. II. IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT SOME SINNERS SHALL FARE WORSE THAN OTHERS. III. IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT THERE WILL BE A DISTRIBUTION OF SINNERS' PUNISHMENTS ACCORDING TO THE EXACT RULES OF JUSTICE. IV. IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT IT WILL BE MORE TOLERABLE FOR SODOM THAN CAPERNAUM. These two cities may be considered under a threefold distinction. 1. Nominal. 2. Local. 3. Moral. V. THAT THE WORST OF THE HEATHEN WHO NEVER HAD CHRIST PREACHED TO THEM SHALL FARE BETTER IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, THAN THOSE THAT CONTINUE IMPENITENT UNDER THE GOSPEL. Why? 1. Because impenitency under the gospel hath more of sin in it, than any sin of the heathen. It is without excuse. Cannot plead ignorance. 2. Impenitency under the gospel is a resisting the loudest calls of God to repentance. The heathen called to repentance by natural conscience, creation; now by the Holy Spirit. Higher motives are laid before sinners. 3. There is the highest contempt of God in it (1) of His authority: (2) of His goodness; (3) of His threatenings. 4. This impenitency is a disappointing of God in His end. 5. This impenitency hath much folly in it, as well as sin. 6. Impenitency under the gospel shows greater wilfulness in sin. 7. Impenitency under the gospel is attended with the greatest resistance of the Spirit. Wherein the greater intolerableness will consist? 1. Such will suffer greater torments from their own consciences. 2. More than others from the devil and his angels. 3. Christ Himself will appear in greater severity against such. 4. Witnesses will rise up against these more than other sinners. APPLICATION. 1. We may hence learn what to judge of the heathen who have not heard of Christ. 2. The greatest favour and privilege to a people, may be the occasion of the greatest evil. 3. How ineffectual the best outward means are of themselves to bring a people to repentance. 4. What little reason men have to boast of their knowledge of gospel privileges, when these may turn to their surer condemnation. 5. To awaken us who have gospel favours above most people under heaven. (*M. Barker, M.A.*) I. DOES GOD GRANT TO ALL MANKIND A SUFFICIENCY OF MEANS OF REPENTANCE. II. IS IT ANY CONTRADICTION TO HIS GRANTING A SUFFICIENCY TO ALL, THAT IN THE HIGH EXERCISE OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY HE GRANTS TO SOME SPECIAL ASSISTANCE.—He gave time to Chorazin and Bethsaida what He granted not to Tyre and Sidon. When I read that Tyre and Sidon would have repented with the same means of grace that were given to Chorazin, I naturally inquire whether the means actually afforded to Tyre were sufficient. Then I ask if Tyre only wanted additional means, how could it consist with the justice of God's dealings to have refused those means? Lay it down as an axiom that the Judge of all the earth must do right. *We forget that Chorazin and Tyre were under different dispensations*, one under light of the gospel, the other in darkness of heathenism; one would be judged by the standard of revelation, the other not. And what is there incredible in the supposition that the means afforded to Tyre, in order to obedience, were as ample as those given to Chorazin for raising her to the loftier elevation which the gospel demanded? *Means must be judged in connection with this end, and in this connection could their difference or equality be decided.* If one man be required to lift one thousand tons, and another only one, it is obvious the arm of either must receive strength before it could accomplish the task. But they do not need the same strength. Tyre had as much help as Chorazin in view of her duties; less is required of the heathen. *There are mysteries about the doctrine of election.* But why does not God give to each of us grace as His omniscience sees will be effectual? But has not God given us enough to render our condemnation just? We have sufficient for our salvation. *Means must be kept within certain limits.* Means which exceeded them not in Chorazin, would not in the case of Tyre. The means consistent with responsibility in Chorazin might have destroyed it in Tyre. (*H. Melvill, M.A.*) *The danger of impenitence where the gospel is preached:*—I. I observe from this discourse of our Saviour, THAT MIRACLES ARE OF GREAT FORCE AND EFFICACY TO BRING MEN TO REPENTENCE. II. THAT GOD IS NOT OBLIGED TO WORK MIRACLES FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS. III. THAT THE EXTERNAL MEANS OF REPENTANCE WHICH GOD AFFORDS TO MEN, DO SUPPOSE AN INWARD GRACE OF GOD ACCOMPANYING THEM, sufficiently enabling men to repent, until by obstinate neglect and resistance we provoke God to withdraw it from the means, or else to withdraw both the grace and the means from us. IV.

That an irresistible degree of grace is not necessary to repentance, nor commonly afforded to those who do repent. V. That the sins and impenitence of men receive their aggravation, and consequently shall have their punishment proportionable to the opportunities and means of repentance which those persons enjoyed and neglected. VI. THAT THE CASE OF THOSE WHO ARE IMPENITENT UNDER THE GOSPEL IS OF ALL OTHERS THE MOST DANGEROUS, and their damnation shall be the most severe. (*J. Tillotson, D.D.*) *The sentence of Chorazin*:—We can conceive some inhabitant of these Jewish towns demanding with astonishment how the heathen could be preferred in their stead. The Almighty Judge, in apportioning rewards and punishments regards not the actual amount of profligacy and virtue, but also the means of improvement enjoyed. He could see in Tyre and Sidon, debased as they were, a disposition not indifferent to those proofs of Divine revelation which to Bethsaida and Chorazin were exhibited in vain. He judges according to that hidden temper, not by the acts done. He judges of a degree of faith never actually called into existence. I. THE first conclusion to be drawn relates to the future condition of those millions of men, who depart this life in ignorance of a Saviour's name. II. The probability of our being mistaken in our views of the future judgment. III. Warning against drawing hasty conclusions from anything which we can interpret as a manifest interference of Divine Providence for the punishment of sin. IV. Such is the sentence against ourselves if we know these things and do them not. (*C. Girdlestone, M.A.*) *The woe of Capernaum*:—While Christ was unmoved at the foreseen decay of Capernaum, He wept at the thought of the desolation of Jerusalem; a sign of His perfect manhood that He should thus have most sympathy with those who were His countrymen. I. WHAT IS IMPLIED BY THE DENUNCIATION OF CAPERNAUM AS EXALTED UNTO HEAVEN. The Bible finds man in a garden, it leaves him in a city; intimating that the highest kind of life is social. We are not to regard the accumulation of men into great communities as an unmixed evil. It may be a source of temptation; it is also the means of drawing out some of the holiest charities of the soul, some of the noblest endowments of the mind. It is this self-exaltation which is the snare of every man who is one of a great community. The concourse of men has a tendency to put God at a distance. Hence arises an independent spirit. If we would lead a life safe from the casting down of shame and care, we must keep before us the thought of an ever-present, personal God. Distraction of mind makes men wretched. This is produced by absence of religious obedience. Men are worn out with the eternal strife to reconcile impossibilities. In putting our life under God, lies its own safe exaltation. II. But it is not only the being independent of God which our Lord charges upon Capernaum; He speaks of it as being IN AN ESPECIAL DEGREE INSENSIBLE TO HIS OWN WONDER-WORKING POWER. Here Christ appears to lay bare another fault to which large and flourishing communities are peculiarly liable, viz., insensibility to distinct religious impressions. This shows itself by the small proportion of people who attend public service or partake of the Lord's Supper. Not difficult to see the reason why this should be the besetting sin of those who live in large cities. 1. The personal insignificance of each individual in this place is a snare. One man is nothing in the mighty throng. 2. There is never wanting in a vast population the support of others. 3. In living amongst large numbers, we become acutely suspicious of being deceived and misled. We learn to distrust our best feelings. Not more mighty works were done in Capernaum than in our own streets if we have hearts to receive them. All that savours of the supernatural in religion, finds men apathetic. For a little while we catch a glimpse of what is, we know what it is to believe; and then the cold black flood of worldliness and unconcern rolls back and the solemn union grows indistinct and fades away. The spirit of insensibility possesses us again. Then awaits that man a fall more disastrous than ever overtook any earthly city—not the casting down of walls, but the undermining of every high resolve, the decay of every unselfish principle, the ruin of every goodly hope. (*J. R. Woodford, M.A.*) *The sin and danger of abusing religious privileges*:—It is a sin of the deepest dye. 1. A great contempt and affront are cast upon God. 2. It shows a man's determined hardness of heart. 3. Let us consider the privileges we enjoy in this favoured land. (*E. Cooper.*) *Judgment on Capernaum*:—I. CAPERNAUM WAS EXALTED TO HEAVEN because of Christ's preaching and performing so many miracles there. 1. Here He performed most of His miracles. 2. Here Jesus preached. 3. Here Jesus prayed. 4. Here the Holy Spirit descended, for conversion of souls. So Scotland has been exalted to heaven. (1) By the preaching of the gospel. (2) By the pouring out of the Spirit. II. CAPERNAUM REPENTED NOT. 1. Some would not go to hear. 2.

Some went for awhile. 3. Some followed Him all the time, but did not repent. III. CAPERNAUM WAS BROUGHT DOWN TO HELL. 1. According to justice. 2. According to truth. 3. In the nature of things. (*McCheyne.*)

Ver. 25. **Because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.**—*Why God reveals to babes* :—The babe is the representative of the receptive spirit—trusting, open to impression, free from prejudice. Wisdom—like wealth and power—is an obstruction, not in itself, but in the temper and frame of mind it is apt to produce. On the other hand, there is, in this preference of the child-spirit, no encouragement of spiritual pride, as if ignorance and mental indolence were things of dignity and worth in themselves. The prime requisites in the child-spirit are unconsciousness and humility. The grounds for God's dealing thus are as follows:—I. TO REVEAL TO BABES HARMONIZES WITH GOD'S CHARACTER AS A FATHER, AND ILLUSTRATES IT. "Babe" is counterpart to "Father." A father's heart is not attracted to the brilliance or power in his family, but to the want. The child who knows his father will have a knowledge of things beyond the reach of research. II. TO REVEAL TO BABES GLORIFIES GOD AS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. The higher and mightier you conceive God to be, the more necessary it is to know that he is lowly, and to have abundant proof of it. But oh! how near God comes; how dear He is to us by His frequent close relationship to the poor and lowly. We are drawn to the mighty God who is drawn to the babes. III. GOD THUS MANIFESTS THE SUPREMACY OF THE MORAL ELEMENT. The understanding has but a narrow horizon; the spirit embraces eternity and God. Intellect is the fibre of the plant, the moral and spiritual are the sap that turns everything into flower and fruit. Knowledge and ingenuity are as nothing without righteousness. What inventiveness or brilliancy could ever supply the place of honesty, faithfulness, goodwill in the homes of men? IV. GOD THUS SHOWS HIS DESIRE TO REVEAL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND TO AS MANY AS POSSIBLE. Had He revealed specially to intellect, to the wise and understanding, what a little circle, what a select coterie it would have been! The great mass of mankind are burdened with labour, and cannot develop greatly their intellectual nature. But by revealing to babes, God gives hope to universal humanity. While few can be wise and learned, all may become babes. It is *man himself* that God wants, not his accomplishments, his energies, his distinctions. (*J. Leckie, D.D.*) *The great paradox* :—Ignorant men have argued from these words that sound knowledge is incompatible with the child-like spirit. It is possible to forget in the wisdom of this world Him whom the world by wisdom never knew. Our Lord uttered these words when He permitted His disciples to listen to His communings with the Father. We know more of each other when we pray than when we teach. I. THE APPARENT PARADOX INVOLVED IN THESE WORDS. "Thou hast hid," &c. All revelation is to some extent a concealment. The veil is drawn aside, but never taken away. When an infinite God reveals Himself to man, by necessity of our nature He hides far more than He manifests. The special revelation which God has made to some individuals, is the very process by which he has concealed Himself from others; for there are two conditions of Divine revelation by which God brings his truth to bear upon the human heart. 1. The external circumstance and event. There can be no special revelation to any man without a willingness on God's part to confer upon some events or some teacher His own authorization, and a willingness on man's part to receive the revelation as such. Therefore the revelation made to some is necessarily a concealment from others. 2. The mental pre-requisites, subjective state or moral condition capable of receiving a Divine revelation. All conditions of understanding and emotion are not equally receptive; hence it is concealed from those who have not right moral conditions. It becomes of great importance to know what is the disposition which most of all fits us for the reception of the Divine message? The highest revelations of God are made to the moral nature, other knowledge is illumined by the higher spiritual wisdom. The humble heart knows more than the massive intellect. It may be mortifying, but it is patent. II. THE REDEEMER'S JUDGMENT, AND GRATITUDE CONCERNING IT. 1. He attributes this arrangement to the universal Lord—"O Lord of heaven and earth." The apparent paradox is a Divine arrangement, not an unfortunate accident. There is not more conformity between the eye and light, between the ear and sound, than between the child-like soul and God's revelation of heavenly things. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." He has determined with royal independence, through what organs, to what condition, He will reveal Himself. 2. The Saviour acquiesces in this arrangement, not simply as

an act of universal sovereignty, but as most merciful and good; as the Father's good pleasure. It was a fatherly way and method. 3. Christ does more than throw the responsibility on God; He thanks God that it is so. He rejoiced because He felt the amplitude of this provision. This principle of discrimination was the widest and noblest that can be conceived. Had it been to intellect only a few could have received the revelation; moral conditions are possible to all. Christ rejoiced in this mode because it satisfied the yearnings of His own heart, for He proceeds to say to the weary "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," &c. To man distracted by the wisdom of the world He thus appeals. (*H. R. Reynolds, B.A.*) *The proud and the lowly*:—I. THE INHERENT PROPRIETY OF THIS ARRANGEMENT. 1. There were great moral disqualifications in the wise and prudent. (1) They were covetous. (2) They were proud. (3) They were prejudiced. 2. There were great preparatory qualifications in the babes. (1) They were humble. (2) They were tractable. (3) They were conscious of their needs. In what frame of mind do you seek gospel blessings? II.—SEE THE REASONS OF THIS ARRANGEMENT IN RELATION TO THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST. 1. His position was one of self-humiliation, and therefore it was unsuitable that the rich and mighty should be among His followers. 2. His work was peculiarly a work of God, therefore He avoided the appearance of using the wisdom of this world, or any of its carnal agencies. 3. He came for the sake of all classes, and it was needful, in order to elevate all, that He should begin at the lowest. (*The Congregational Pulpit.*) "*Even so, Father*":—I. THE SAVIOUR WOULD HAVE US ATTAIN TO AN ENLIGHTENED APPREHENSION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD. II. Christ would have us carefully observe THE DISCRIMINATING CHARACTER OF GOD'S GRACE. III. THE SAVIOUR WOULD HAVE HIS PEOPLE'S HEARTS IN PERFECT AGREEMENT WITH THE RULE AND ACTION OF GOD. IV. PRACTICAL USE OF THE TEXT. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The kingdom of God hid from the wise and revealed unto babes.* I. THE CHARACTERS NAMED in the text from whom certain truths are hidden. 1. "The wise" seem to be those who are seeking to become acquainted with Divine truth by the exercise of their natural faculties. 2. The "prudent" man is one who always shapes his course in the path which is most consistent with his worldly interests. 3. "The babe" is the direct opposite of those we have described, and yet one to whom the Lord graciously condescends to reveal these things which He hides from them. The feature of the babe is (1) helplessness, (2) ignorance. But we need not limit the "babe" to the age of infancy. (3) Great teachability. II. WHAT ARE THESE THINGS THAT GOD HIDES FROM ONE CHARACTER AND MAKES KNOWN TO THE OTHER? 1. The workings of godly fears in the soul is a branch of Divine truth which the Lord hides from the wise and prudent and reveals unto babes. 2. God hides from the wise and prudent a spiritual acquaintance with His law. 3. The operations and exercises of a living faith in a tender conscience are hidden from the wise and prudent. 4. God hides from them the exercise of a living hope. 5. The breathing forth of spiritual affections he hides. 6. He hides all the savour, and unction, and sweetness, and power of truth. (*J. C. Philpot.*) *Revelation a concealment*:—The belt of light thrown over some divisions of the great sphere of knowledge leaves the rest in apparently deeper shade. All language by expressing some thoughts conceals many others. Much is repressed by every effort that we make towards expression. If we try to unbosom our hearts to each other, we hide as much as we reveal. We wrap ourselves round in mystery when we are most communicative. All art is concerned as much in hiding what ought to be concealed as in making known what is meant to be expressed. (*H. R. Reynolds, B.A.*) *Revelation addressed to the heart of man*:—It should not surprise us when men of acute and powerful understandings more or less reject the gospel, for this reason, that the Christian revelation addresses itself to our hearts, to our love of truth and goodness, our fear of sinning, and our desire to gain God's favour; and quickness, sagacity, depth of thought, strength of mind, power of comprehension, perception of the beautiful, power of language, and the like, though they are excellent gifts, are clearly quite of a different kind from these excellences—a man may have the one without having the other. This, then, is the plain reason why able, or, again, why learned men are so defective Christians, because there is no necessary connection between faith and ability; because faith is one thing and ability is another; because ability of mind is a gift, and faith is a grace. Who would ever argue that a man could, like Samson, conquer lions, or throw down the gates of a city, because he was able, or accomplished, or experienced in the business of life? Who would ever argue that a man could see because he could hear, or run with the swift because he had "the tongue of the learned"? These gifts are different in kind. In like manner, powers of mind and religious principles and

feelings are distinct gifts; and as all the highest spiritual excellence, humility, firmness, patience, would never enable a man to read an unknown tongue, or to enter into the depths of science, so all the most brilliant mental endowments, wit, or imagination, or penetration, or depth, will never of themselves make us wise in religion. And as we should fairly and justly deride the savage who wished to decide questions of science or literature by the sword, so may we justly look with amazement on the error of those who think that they can master the high mysteries of spiritual truth, and find their way to God, by what is commonly called reason, *i.e.*, by the random and blind efforts of mere mental acuteness, and mere experience of the world. (*F. W. Newman.*) *Hidden for want of sight*:—Unconverted men often say. "If these things are so, if they are so clear and great, why cannot we see them?" And there is no answer to be given but this, "Ye are blind." "But we want to see them. If they are real, they are our concern as well as yours. Oh, that some preacher would come who had power to make us see them!" Poor souls, there is no such preacher, and you need not wait for him. Let him gather God's light as he will, he can but pour it on blind eyes. A burning glass will condense sunbeams into a focus of brightness; and if a blind eye be put there, not a whit will it see, though it be consumed. Light is the remedy for darkness, not blindness. Neither will strong powers of understanding on your part serve. The great Earl of Chatham once went with a pious friend to hear Mr. Cecil. The sermon was on the Spirit's agency in the hearts of believers. As they were coming from church, the mighty statesman confessed that he could not understand it all, and asked his friend if he supposed that any one in the house could. "Why yes," said he, "there were many plain unlettered women, and some children there, who understood every word of it, and heard it with joy." (*Hoge.*) *The Mysteries of the gospel hid from many.* I. WHAT MAY BE INTENDED BY THESE THINGS? 1. In general, the things pertaining to salvation. 2. More particularly, those doctrines which are in an especial sense peculiar to the gospel, seem here to be intended, such as (*a*) the Divinity of Christ, (*b*) distinguishing grace, (*c*) the new birth, (*d*) the nature of the life of faith. II. WHERE, AND IN WHAT SENSE, ARE THESE THINGS HID? 1. They are hid in Christ (Col. ii. 3); therefore (*a*) you can attain to no saving truth, but in and by the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (*b*) Whatever seeming knowledge you have, if it does not endear Him to you it is nothing worth. 2. They are hid in God's Word. (*a*) They are contained there. (*b*) Yet though contained there, they are not plain to every eye. They are not hid in the sense that seekers shall not find, but that those who seek to cavil shall meet with something to confirm their prejudices. Application: Do not entertain hard and perplexing thoughts about the counsels of God, either respecting others or yourselves. (*John Newton.*) *Concealment and Revelation*:—I. Divine things CONCEALED. Not through any deficiency of revelation, nor by arbitrary will. II. Divine things REVEALED. The revelation of Divine realities is made to prepared souls. Elicits thankfulness. III. THE UNWILLING ALONE SUFFER PRIVATION AND LOSS. God will not force His truth and mercy upon man. (*M. Braithwaite.*) *Saintliness better than learning*:—There died five-and-twenty years ago in France a village priest, the Curé of Ars, a small hamlet about thirty miles north of Lyons. He was so devoid of worldly learning that he was long unable to obtain orders, until some bishop had the wisdom to perceive that saintliness was a better claim to orders than technical learning. In that village this priest ministered for many years, preaching, lecturing, hearing confessions all day long. Sceptics came from Paris; and the bursts of his spiritual fire burnt deep into their consciences. During the last year of his life no less than 80,000 persons flocked to his church to listen to his religious advice. Such as he was, a standing argument for Christianity, a standing evidence of its being a living influence, such may every one of us be; for it was not knowledge but holiness that constituted his power. The secret of his strength was his weakness. His power was not his own. His soul lay at the foot of the Cross, his body at the foot of the altar; he was made a temple of the Holy Ghost. He was an epistle known and read of all men. (*Canon Adam S. Farrar.*) *The things of revelation cannot be seen unless shown*:—Let me suppose a person to have a curious cabinet, which is opened at his pleasure, and not exposed to common view. He invites all to come to see it, and offers to show it to any one who asks him. It is hid, because he keeps the key; but none can complain, because he is ready to open it whenever he is desired. Some, perhaps, disdain the offer, and say, "Why is it locked at all?" Some think it not worth seeing, or amuse themselves with guessing at the contents. But those who are simply desirous for

themselves, leave others disputing, go according to appointment, and are gratified. These have reason to be thankful for the favour, and the others have no just cause to find fault. Thus the riches of Divine grace may be compared to a richly-furnished cabinet, to which Christ is the door. The Word of God is likewise a cabinet, generally locked up, but the key of prayer will open it. The Lord invites all, but keeps the dispensation in His own hand. They cannot see these things, except He shows them; but then He refuses none that sincerely ask Him. The wise men of the world can go no further than the outside of this cabinet; they may amuse themselves and surprise others with their ingenious guesses at what is within; but a child that has seen it opened can give us more satisfaction, without studying or guessing at all. If men will presume to aim at the knowledge of God, without the knowledge of Christ, who is the Way, and the Door; if they have such a high opinion of their own wisdom and penetration as to suppose they can understand the Scriptures without the assistance of His Spirit; or if their worldly wisdom teaches them that these things are not worth their inquiry, what wonder is it that they should continue to be hid from their eyes? They will one day be stripped of all their false pleas, and condemned out of their own mouths. (*Newton.*)

Ver. 26. **Even so, Father: for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.**—*Submission to our Father's will*:—In order to cherish such feelings in the heart—1. Take fatherly views of the character of God—"Even so, Father." 2. Remember that nothing could have happened to you, unless it had been first good to you in God's sight that it should be—"It seemeth good in Thy sight." 3. The unfoldings of eternity will solve the problems of this world, and justify God in His moral government. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Ver. 27. **All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.**—*All things delivered unto Christ*:—I. THE IMPORTANT DECLARATION HERE MADE. 1. All nations of the earth are delivered to Him. 2. All power in heaven and earth is given to Him. 3. All hearts are His. 4. The gifts and graces of the Spirit are His. 5. Principalities and powers are His. II. THE GROUND ON WHICH THIS DECLARATION WAS MADE. His mediatorial character—"*Wherefore* God hath highly exalted Him," &c. III. TO MAKE A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT. We may think that if all things are given to Christ, He does not need our puny efforts. 1. That the command of God on this point is imperative and binding upon every one who professes to know His name. 2. God works in and by the use of means. 3. A principle of gratitude will constrain the real Christian to engage, and that heartily, in this glorious work. 4. The Christian will not only be influenced by love to his Saviour, but also by a deep and tender compassion to the souls of his fellow creatures. 5. A dreadful curse is denounced against those who refuse to lend a helping hand to the cause of God. 6. There is encouragement to active exertion in that Christ has promised a reward to every effort made to promote His glory. (*W. Bolland, M.A.*) *A striking declaration*:—I. OF OUR LORD'S PERSONAL AND MEDIATORIAL DIGNITY. His personal dignity—the Son of God. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him. His mediatorial dignity as the Son of Man. All things are delivered unto Him. II. OF THE STANDING METHOD OF THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS. It is indispensable to the safety and happiness of man that he should become acquainted with God. God, abstractedly considered, is absolutely unintelligible and unapproachable to guilty man, except through a Mediator. Learn: the need of Divine teaching; the importance of humility; the encouragement to the humble seeker. (*J. Hirst.*) *Christ officially delegated*:—In times of distress, every man is at liberty to do his best for the public welfare; but the officer commissioned by his sovereign is armed with a supreme right to give counsel or to exercise command. Away there in Bengal, if there are any dying of famine, and I have rice, I may distribute it of my own will at my own charge. But the commissioner of the district has a special warranty which I do not possess; he has a function to discharge; it is his business, his vocation; he is authorized by the government, and responsible to the government to do it. So the Lord Jesus Christ has not only a deep compassion of heart for the necessities of men, but he has God's authority to support Him. The Father delivered all things into His hands, and appointed Him to be a Saviour. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. The inconceivable dignity of His PERSON—"No man knoweth the Son but the Father." 1. Nor the wisest man in a state of nature. 2. Neither do His own people know Him in the sense of the text. How little is plain because their love is so faint. 3. The glorified saints and holy angels, who behold as much

of His glory as creature can bear, do not know Him as He is. A vessel cast into the sea can but receive according to its capacity. 4. This proves His Divinity. II. His authority. III. His OFFICE—"The Son will reveal Him." (*Bishop Newton.*)

Ver. 28. **Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden.**—*The burdened directed to Christ*:—I. THE PERSONS WHOM OUR LORD HERE ADDRESSES. 1. As burdened with convictions of sin and the keen remorse of a wounded conscience. 2. That sinners under these circumstances labour to be released from their burden. (1) They resolve in their own strength to forsake their sins. (2) There are others who are ignorant of the righteousness of God, and go about to establish their own righteousness. (3) In looking to the mercy of God irrespective of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice. II. OUR LORD'S TENDER SOLICITUDE FOR THE HAPPINESS OF SUCH. 1. The invitation is condescending. 2. It is extensive and unconditional. III. THE PROMISE ANNEXED. 1. Rest in your conscience from the dread of Divine wrath. 2. Rest in the will from its former corrupt propensities. 3. Heavenly rest for the people of God. (*R. May.*) *Rest in Christ for the heavy-laden*:—I. WHAT IT IS. "Rest," not rest in sin, not rest from trouble. It is rest from sin—its guilt, misery, power. It is rest *in* trouble. II. OF WHOM IS THIS BLESSING TO BE OBTAINED. The conscious greatness these few simple words indicate. Have you ever tried to comfort a troubled heart? Beyond your power. It is the prerogative of Him who made the soul to give it rest. There is more power in Him to comfort than in the world to disquiet. III. WHO MAY OBTAIN THIS REST FROM HIM—"All that labour." These words express the inward condition of man. We do indeed toil. Some weary themselves to work iniquity. The world has worn some of you out. The burden of affliction; guilt—our corruptions. IV. HOW THEY WHO DESIRE MAY OBTAIN IT—"Come." 1. Literally, when He was on earth. 2. Faith in operation. Hagar went to the well and drank, and was saved. Those who have found rest in Christ, remember where you found it. See on what easy terms we may find rest. Some know they are sinners, but are not weary of sin. (*C. Bradley.*) *Rest for the weary*:—1. The promise is faithful. 2. It is a precious promise. 3. It is an appropriate promise. 4. It is one of present accomplishment. (*D. Rees.*) *The way of coming to Christ*:—1. The most obvious is Christ historically taught. 2. Men seek to come to Him speculatively. Who can find out a being by a pure process of thought? 3. There are those who seek Christ by a sentimental and humanitarian method. This will not fire zeal. How then are men to come to Christ? Through a series of moral, practical endeavours to live the life which He has prescribed for us. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's word to the weary*:—There are three sorts of trouble. 1. There is head-trouble—to do what is right. 2. There is heart-trouble. The interior grief. 3. There is soul-trouble. Christ gives rest from these. (*W. G. Barrett.*) *A special invitation*:—1. It is personal—"Come unto *me*." God directs to Christ, not to His members. 2. It is present—"Come" now, do not wait. 3. So sweet an invitation demands a spontaneous acceptance. 3. He puts the matter very exclusively. Do nothing else but come to Him. Arguments which the Saviour used:—1. Because He is the appointed mediator—"All things are delivered unto me of My Father." 2. Moreover the Father has given all things into His hands in the sense of government. 3. Christ is a well-furnished mediator—"*All things* are delivered unto Me." He has all the sinner wants. 4. Come to Christ because He is an inconceivably great mediator. No man knows His fulness but the Father. 5. Because He is an infinitely wise Saviour. He understands both persons on whose behalf He mediates. 6. He is an indispensable mediator—"Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Invitation based on saving power*:—In a previous verse our Lord had said, "All things are delivered unto me by My Father: meaning that all power is given unto Him for the instructing, ruling, and saving of mankind; from whence He infers those comfortable words in the text. I. A gracious invitation made by our Saviour. II. The persons invited. III. A promise of ease and benefit. IV. The way and manner of coming to Christ. V. A farther encouragement hereunto, from an inward sense and feeling of the promised rest. VI. A good reason to back and enforce it—"My yoke is easy." (*Matthew Hole.*) *Ways of coming to Christ*:—Coming to Christ and believing, are in Scripture used to signify one and the same thing. I. The first step in coming to Christ is by baptism. II. The next step is by prayer. III. A farther step is by repentance and confession of sin. IV. We are said to come to God by hearing His Word, and receiving instruction from Him. V. Also by receiving His Holy Supper: and—VI. By putting our whole trust and

affiance in Him, relying upon Him for salvation, and placing all our hopes and confidence in His merits and satisfaction. (*Ibid.*) *Coming to Christ*:—This implies three things. I. ABSENCE: for what need is there of our coming to Christ unless we are previously at a distance from Him? Such is the condition of every man. Naturally, all are without Christ as to saving influence; as to a proper knowledge of Him, love to Him, confidence in Him, and union and communion with Him. II. ACCESSIBLENESS. We come to Him; we can find and approach Him. Not to His bodily presence. As man He is absent; as God He is still present. He said to His apostles, "Lo, I am with you always; even unto the end of the world." III. APPLICATION. For this coming to Him is to deal with Him concerning the affairs of the soul of eternity. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ's rest*:—I. A NEGATIVE DESCRIPTION. (1) Rest, not lethargy. A condition in which the powers of the soul are quickened, rendered alive to its capacities, duties, and privileges. (2) Rest, not inactivity. Release from weariness rather than from labour. (3) Rest, not confinement. Not isolation or routine. (4) Rest, not leisure. Not a brief season of relaxation, but a lasting state of peace and strength. II. A POSITIVE DESCRIPTION. (1) Rest, that is, peace. Conscience is at ease. The mind is satisfied. The heart is filled with love. (2) Rest, that is, fearlessness. Not only is there present satisfaction, but assured confidence in the future. (3) Rest, that is, fortitude. The burden may not be removed, but Christ gives us such a temper that we are as happy with our burden as though we were without it. (4) Rest, that is, security. He shields us from every adverse power. He gives us ground for our confidence. (*Stems and Twigs.*) *Christ relieving us of natural burdens*:—1. Spiritual burdens. 2. Mental burdens. 3. Providential burdens. 4. Physical burdens. (*Bishop Simpson.*) *Christianity lightens physical burdens*:—Go to-day into heathen countries, into Mohammedan lands, and what do you find? The village on the hill top, the old walls, the spring down near the foot of the hill, the water carried by hand, the pitcher, the goat skin—just as it was in ancient times. The burden is borne by men upon their backs. Go to China, and travel from place to place. It is difficult, and oftentimes the traveller must be carried by men, and, if not by men, by a rude cart. When I was in Palestine, a year ago, there was only one wheeled vehicle in the whole territory, and that had been brought there by the Russian Embassy. Burdens were borne on the back, and in the simplest way. Turn to Christian lands, and what are they? See what you call civilization—that is, Christianity affecting the minds and occupations of men—how it works! How is this city of a million and a quarter supplied with water? A great engine pumps it up from the river; iron pipes carry it to every house. You turn the tap and have it in almost every room. There is no broken back or burdened frame carrying from some spring this water. Go into countries partly civilized, and you find a few public pumps or wells, and the multitudes go there. It is a mere physical thing, you say. Yes; but it is God working in the subjugation of nature to man's comfort. Moreover, you turn these taps in your room without thinking of it; and yet you have here a proof that God is taking care of the labour-burdened, and ought to remember how Christ has said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Go out into the fields. What was the old way? Men, bowed down in the heat of an August sun, took the sickle in hand, and tried to reap the harvest. Now the reaping-machine, drawn by horses, moves into the field, throws out its bound-up sheaves without human toil: and the harvest is gathered without man being bowed down to the earth. What is it? "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Go into the house: long ago, needlewomen, from early morn until night, and late into the night, stitched carefully, slowly, regularly, on their endless task. Now look at the sewing-machine, and see the amount of work that can be done without, comparatively speaking, human toil. Turn your eyes over to this light, and whence comes it, and how? Look at the little lamp of old, with its lard and wick, then the tallow candle; and now, wandering through all these pipes, comes this air or gas to be lighted, and what a change in human labour! From the darkness, from the atmosphere around us, man are gathering this electric fluid, and throwing light over the darkest of streets and alleys of your city, and thus enabling thousands of men to work as by daylight in your manufactories. What a change in human labour! There must still be labour, but it is not to be of that toilsome character that it once was. (*Bishop Simpson.*) It is not a *local* coming to Christ, which is now impossible, but a movement of heart and mind to Him. I. THE CLASS OF PERSONS that our Saviour was supposed to have in view. 1. Such as were laden with the burden of

ceremonial obedience. The observances of Christianity were few and simple, neither occupying much time, nor incurring much expense. They recommended themselves by their significance and force. 2. Such as are oppressed and burdened with a sense of guilt. 3. Such as are endeavouring to erect an edifice of righteousness out of their own performances. 4. Those who are overwhelmed with worldly calamities—the victims of worldly sorrow. 5. Those who are engaged in a restless, uncertain pursuit after felicity in the present state. 6. Those who are heavy laden by speculative pursuits in matters of religion. (*Robert Hall, M.A.*) *A word in season to the weary*:—Causes of weariness. 1. Wounded affections. 2. The disappointment of our desires. 3. Vacancy of mind and the sence of monotony. 4. The load of a guilty conscience is fatiguing. 5. The burden of earnest thought and noble endeavour. (*E. Johnson, M.A.*) *Desire outruns faculty and causes weariness*:—The result would be something monstrous if their energies and abilities grew as fast as their aspirations or their ambitions. As the eye carries the mind in the flash of a moment over a space of country which it would require hours to traverse in the body, so the hot speed of human Desire outruns our slow and pausing faculties. And this a great cause of fatigue; we cannot keep up with ourselves; one part of our nature lags behind another. Or, no sooner is the goal which we had thought a fixed one reached, than another starts up in the new distance, and Desire is still goading us on, refusing us rest. (*Ibid.*) *Rest not found in mere ceremonial observances*:—Both the Wesleys, and Whitefield also, fell for a time into the same mistake. In their endeavours to obtain peace of conscience, in addition to attending every ordinary service of the church, they received the sacrament every Sunday, fasted every Wednesday and Friday, retired regularly every morning and evening for meditation and prayer; they wore the coarsest garments, partook of the coarsest fare, visited the sick, taught the ignorant, ministered to the wants of the needy; and, that he might have more to give away, John Wesley even for a time went barefoot. And yet, with all this, they did not obtain the peace for which their souls craved. (*R. A. Bertram.*) *The reality of rest*:—"Come," saith Christ, "and I will give you rest." I will not *show* you rest, nor barely *tell* you of rest, but I will *give* you rest. I am faithfulness itself, and cannot lie, I *will* give you rest. I that have the greatest power to give it, the greatest will to give it, the greatest right to give it, come, laden sinners, and *I* will give you rest. Rest is the most desirable good, the most suitable good, and to you the greatest good. Come, saith Christ—that is, believe in Me, and I will give you rest; I will give you peace with God, and peace with conscience: I will turn your storm into an everlasting calm; I will give you such rest, that the world can neither give to you nor take from you. (*Thomas Brooks.*) *Rest only in God*:—Lord, Thou madest us for Thyself, and we can find no rest till we find rest in Thee! (*Augustine.*) *The weary welcome to rest*:—A poor English girl, in Miss Leigh's home in Paris, ill in body and hopeless in spirit, was greatly affected by hearing some children singing, "I heard the voice of Jesus say." When they came to the words, "weary, and worn, and sad," she moaned, "That's me! That's me! What did He do? Fill it up, fill it up!" She never rested until she had heard the whole of the hymn which tells how Jesus gives rest to such. By-and-by she asked, "Is that true?" On being answered, "Yes," she asked, "Have you come to Jesus? Has He given you rest?" "He has." Raising herself, she asked, "Do you mind my coming very close to you? May be it would be easier to go to Jesus with one who has been before than to go to Him alone." So saying, she nestled her head on the shoulder of her who watched, and clutching her as one in the agony of death, she murmured, "Now, try and take me with you to Jesus." (*The Sunday at Home.*) *Rest for all*:—There are many heads resting on Christ's bosom, but there's room for yours there. (*Samuel Rutherford.*) *Rest not inaction*:—It is not the lake locked in ice that suggests repose, but the river moving on calmly and rapidly, in silent majesty and strength. It is not the cattle lying in the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, that gives you the idea of repose with strength and motion. In creation, the rest of God is exhibited as a sense of power which nothing wearies. When chaos burst into harmony, so to speak, God had rest. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Rest in trouble*:—I say that men want rest *from* their troubles, and that the only worthy rest is rest *in* our trouble. We have our first real impression of what toil is, when we begin, as an apprentice, to learn some trade. Our first real impression of toil brings the first real desire for rest. But all the rest the young man thinks of is the rest of laying down his tools, and leaving the workshop or the warehouse to spend the evening in manly sports. He has no

thought yet of that higher rest, which will come, by-and-by, out of skill and facility in the use of tools. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Resting on the Bible*:—In Newport church, in the Isle of Wight, lies buried the Princess Elizabeth (daughter of Charles the First). A marble monument, erected by our Queen Victoria, records in a touching way the manner of her death. She languished in Carisbrook Castle during the wars of the Commonwealth—a prisoner, alone, and separated from all the companions of her youth, till death set her free. She was found dead one day, with her head leaning on her Bible, and the Bible open at the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The monument in Newport church records this fact. It consists of a female figure reclining her head on a marble book, with our text engraven on the book. Think, my brethren, what a sermon in stone that monument preaches. Think what a standing memorial it affords of the utter inability of rank and high birth to confer certain happiness. Think what a testimony it bears to the lesson before you this day—the mighty lesson that there is no true rest for any one excepting in Christ. Happy will it be for your soul if that lesson is never forgotten.

Ver. 29. **Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.**—*The school of Christ*:—I. There must be docility, obedience, willingness to learn of that Teacher. II. The school is in the recesses of the soul—it is everywhere. III. Branches of instruction. 1. Humility. 2. Patience. 3. Fortitude. 5. Love. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ an effective Teacher*:—I. Christ's FITNESS to be man's Teacher. 1. He understands man's nature. 2. He understands all those things which man has need to know. 3. He understands perfectly the art of imparting knowledge. II. The METHODS by which He teaches man. 1. By His words, works, character, as made known in the Bible. 2. By the truths He now imparts to the human heart through the Holy Spirit. III. The EFFECT of Christ's teachings—"Rest." 1. This instruction leads to the pardon of sin. 2. To the assurance that we are reconciled to God. 3. To the removal of all fear of evil. Observe—1. The evidence that we are learning of Christ is that we are becoming like Him. 2. All should submit to be taught by Christ. (*American Homiletic Review.*) *Unspoken teaching*:—We are taught, and we teach, by something about us that never goes into language at all. (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) *The advantages of humility*:—I. WHENCE WE ARE DIRECTED TO LEARN IT. We are to learn it from Christ, because it is a grace so peculiarly Christian, that no other institution will furnish us with it. All ancient schemes of morality are chargeable with this defect. They are advanced rather as arguments for men of learning to dispute than as directions of life to be reduced to practice; humility left out of them. And though some have declaimed with great zeal on the contempt of glory, yet we find these men to have declined the applause with greater vanity than others pursued it. The Jews were rendered proud by their privileges. Christianity first taught the true doctrine of humility; Christ its pattern. His circumstances, disciples, are all of lowly character. II. Recommend from the encouragement here given, THAT IT WILL BRING REST TO OUR SOULS. Tranquillity of mind is the spring of our present felicity; without it all acquisitions are insipid. When we remember the miseries which arise from resentment of real or fancied injuries, humility recommends itself to us as a support and protection. The humble will keep, without inconsistency, within the bounds of justice and sobriety, neither impatient in prospect nor fretted in the event. Before honour is humility. Humility softens the terrors of death. If we are His disciples, let the humility of the Master correct the pride of His servants. How much our own happiness depends on this disposition. (*J. Rogers, D.D.*) *Our Saviour's humility*:—I. Humility towards God the Father was exhibited in several ways. In not exceeding the bounds of His commission; in obedience and forbearance; He did not employ His illuminating Spirit in the task of refuting error. Humble in the manifestation of His power. How has His humility been imitated by us? True we have no supernatural gifts to exert with humility; but those we have do we so use? II. Humility is exhibited in His intercourse with mankind. Look at the choice He made of disciples. He told the centurion he would go to his house. Let us not suppose that His humility was allied to weakness or timidity. It was a humility manfully arrayed against vice and pride. It did not stoop nor waver. It did not flatter. It was associated with courage. We need this humility, just estimate of self; only to respect what is true and good, not mere outward show. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *The meek and lowly One*:—I. THE FIRST QUALITY WHICH

JESUS CLAIMS. 1. Meek as opposed to ferocity of spirit manifested by the zealots and bigots. 2. There is a sternness which cannot be condemned. 3. It is meek in heart. II. LOWLINESS OF HEART. 1. He is willing to receive the poorest sinner. 2. This lowliness leads Him to receive the most ignorant. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. It is something for the Christian to ENJOY—"Rest." 1. Rest from legal servitude. 2. From wrathful apprehensions. 3. From carnal pursuits. 4. From earthly anxiety. 5. From terrific forebodings. II. Something to BEAR—"Yoke." 1. Subjection to the mind of Christ (Phil. ii. 5). 2. Resignation to the will of Christ. Why called a *yoke*? 1. Because it opposes our corrupt nature. 2. Because it opposes the maxims of the world. 3. Because it is repugnant to the schemes of men. III. Something which the Christian is to be TAUGHT—"Learn of Me." 1. Meekness. 2. Humility. Christ teaches: 1. By His Spirit. 2. By His Word. 3. By His example. (*The Pulpit.*) *The three exchanges*:—I. The exchange of YOKES. II. The exchange of BURDENS. III. The exchange of TEACHING. (*H. Bonar.*) *The yoke of Christ*:—Our Lord speaks of His service as a yoke or burden, because it is so esteemed by all who know Him not. I. What is meant by the yoke of Christ? It includes—(1) the yoke of His profession; (2) The yoke of His precepts; (3) The yoke of His dispensations. II. The appointed means by which sinners are enabled to bear this threefold yoke—"Learn of Me." 1. Are you terrified with the difficulties attending your profession? Learn of Jesus (Heb. xii. 3). 2. Do you find it hard to walk stedfastly in His precepts? Learn of Jesus (Rom. xv. 3). 3. Are you tempted to repine at the dispensations of Divine Providence? Take Jesus for your pattern (John xviii. 11). III. The happy effect of bearing this yoke. Rest to the soul. This affords the best and most unshaken evidence that He has begun a good work of grace in our hearts. (*John Newton.*) *The double yoke*:—If the yoke for oxen is meant, it was a yoke for two: it passed across the shoulders of two animals, and they bore the yoke together, and so the yoke was easier and lighter for each. Jesus is bearing a yoke. His is a yoke for two. He would have us take the vacant place beside Him, and share with Him. I. CHRIST'S YOKE. 1. His Father's will. 2. The work given Him to do. 3. All involved in His Sonship. 4. Seeking and saving the lost. 5. Redemption of the world from sin. 6. Winning the world's heart for God. II. CHRIST'S YOKE SHARED BY US. Illustrate how Paul shared it. We may share in (1) the active work; (2) the spirit of the work; (3) the joy and reward of the work. Conclusion:—There is no *forced* bearing of yokes with Christ, we must *choose* to come under it with Christ. (*R. Tuck.*) *Rest in submission*:—The text suggests a figure. Two oxen are yoked together at the plough. But they toil unwillingly. They fret and chafe themselves. They strive to force themselves free of the galling yoke. They are weary, oppressed with their slavery. Would it not be rest for those oxen if they would cheerfully submit; simply accept the toil before them; encourage their spirit quietly and bravely to suffer, and bear, and do; fret no more at the yoke, but take it, bear it, and in bearing it discover how light and easy and restful the very yoke can become? (*R. Tuck.*) *Humility*:—The great business of man is the regulation of his spirit. Rest is only found in ourselves in a meek and lowly disposition of heart. I. Much of trouble comes from dispositions OPPOSITE to humility. II. Humility is the best security against heart-aches. III. Christian humility is opposed to that spiritual pride which is the worst of all prides. (*Sterne.*) *Man's unrest*:—There are three causes in men producing unrest: I. Suspicion of God. II. Inward discord. III. Dissatisfaction with outward circumstances. For all these meekness is the cure. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *The yoke lined*:—The yoke of Christ will be more easy than we think of, especially when it is lined with grace. (*T. Manton.*) We well remember an old man who carried pails with a yoke, and as he was infirm, and tender about the shoulders, his yoke was padded, and covered with white flannel where it touched him. But what a lining is "love"! A cross of iron, lined with love, would never gall the neck, much less will Christ's wooden cross. Lined with Christ's love to us! Covered with our love to Him! Truly the yoke is easy, and the burden is light. Whenever the shoulder becomes sore let us look to the lining. Keep the lining right, and the yoke will be no more a burden to us than wings are to a bird, or her wedding-ring is to a bride. O love divine, line my whole life, my cares, my griefs, my pains; and what more can I ask? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Hard beginnings*:—Some beginners are discouraged in their first attempts at a godly life, and so give over through despondency. They should remember

that the bullock is most unruly at the first yoking, and that the fire at first kindling casts forth most smoke. (*T. Manton.*) *Imitating Christ the highest art*:—In the great galleries of art that are the glory of London, Paris, Munich, Dresden, and Rome you may see the artists of the future. Young men toil there day after day, patiently copying the masterpieces of the painters who are world-renowned, learning thus to become painters themselves. Every line, every colour, every gradation of light and shade they put forth their utmost skill to imitate. They are not content that their picture should be something like the original; their ambition is to make their copy so exact that none but an experienced eye shall be able to tell which is the original and which is the copy. To-day, my friend, place yourself before the Lord Jesus; look on His character, so majestic in its righteousness, so tender and attractive in its love, and resolve to become like Him. Let not your ambition be lower than that with which the young artist sits down before some masterpiece of Raphael or Rubens, nor the patience with which you strive to accomplish it less. (*R. A. Bertram.*)

Ver. 30. **For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**—*Christ's yoke and burden*:—SOME OF THE PARTICULARS IN WHICH CHRIST IS REPUTED TO IMPOSE A HEAVY YOKE AND BURDEN. I know of no obligation that rests upon me as a Christian which does not equally rest upon me as a man. 1. The burden of duty. Purity, justice, love, industry, are enjoined upon me as a man. This burden Christ makes light and easy. (1) By giving us clear knowledge of the right in His plain precepts. (2) By the irresistible motives to duty which He supplies in the love of the Father. 2. The yoke of penitence, the burden of self-reproach. This burden we bring with us into the school of Christ; nor can we get rid of it by remaining from Christ. It has rested far more heavily under Pagan than Christian auspices. But through Christ penitence is the way to peace. Its tears are the dew-drops of the soul's resurrection morning. Forgiveness is its counterpart. 3. The burden of self-denial. This not merely a Christian duty, but a universal necessity. Through Christ it is made such as we can carry with joy and gratitude. 4. The unavoidable burden of earthly suffering least of all to be ascribed to Christ. (*A. P. Peabody, D.D.*) *Christ's yoke easy*:—Important that those to whom the ministry of the gospel is entrusted should state with clearness the real nature of religion, neither too easy or too difficult. I. CHRISTIANS ARE UNDER THE YOKE. Not their own masters; please not themselves. What is the yoke? Obedience to His commandments. II. It is an EASY yoke. 1. In comparison with the yoke of Satan. 2. In comparison with the yoke which self-righteousness imposes on mankind. 3. As it is made easy in itself to those who wear it, Christ renders obedience pleasant to His followers. (*E. Cooper.*) *Christ's burden a light burden*:—I. IN WHAT IT CONSISTS. 1. In the daily conflict which the Christian maintains with the sin that dwelleth in him. 2. In the hostile treatment which the Christian experiences from the world. 3. In the chastening which the Christian receives from his heavenly Master. II. IT IS LIGHT. 1. It is light compared with the burden of the unpardoned sin in another world. 2. It is light compared with the burden of unpardoned sin in this world. 3. It is made light in itself to those who bear it; strength is given to bear it. (*Ibid.*) *Hard to nature, easy to grace*:—Is Christ's yoke not easy then? Is there not force and meaning in His own words? Yes, most assuredly; but it is easy only to them who, having heard His voice, have come unto Him at His call, and who have thus received the will, the grace, the strength to take it upon them, and to bear it. A thing is easy to be done just in proportion to the power of doing it. It is easy for a man to lift a weight which a child could not move from the ground. It is easy for the bird to soar into the atmosphere, and for the fish to make its way through the waters; their natures are suited to their respective elements; but it were impossible for man to do either. So, in the spiritual world, what becomes easy to a believing and renewed soul is impossible to a sinner in his carnal state. What is impossible to nature, is easy to grace. (*J. Macfarlane.*) *The nature and excellence of the Saviour's discipline*:—I. THAT CHRIST HAS HIS YOKE, HIS DISCIPLINE, AND THAT WE ARE NEVER TO FORGET THAT IT IS SO SUBSTANTIALLY AND REALLY. These are, in the first place, *conditions* of discipleship. 1. One condition is the entire submission of the judgment of the disciples to the Great Teacher. 2. If any man will be My disciple, so says our Lord, let him deny himself. 3. Taking up the cross. But the discipline of Christ has its *restraints* as well as its conditions. 1. Christ lays restraint upon our society. 2. Upon the affections and tempers of the soul. 3. Upon the words. 4.

Upon the whole conduct. Then there is *service*, too, in the discipline of Jesus Christ. 1. Service of devotion. 2. Charity and zeal. II. THAT HIS YOKE IS EASY AND THAT EVEN HIS BURDEN IS LIGHT. Rest can be found in no other way of life. Easy (1) Because the discipline of Christ is confined to the truth and reality of things; (2) Because it brings with it a sense of the approbation of the great God Himself; (3) Because it is part of the religion of Jesus Christ to plant in the soul principles corresponding with everything which God requires of us, it is a regenerating system; (4) Because it is a discipline which has always a respect to the heavenly state, and whilst it is the only road to heaven, it is the infallible preparation for it. (*R. Watson.*) *Christ's yoke easy to the subjects of His kingdom*:—1. Because having come to Christ they have received the willing mind to bear it. 2. Because there is a pure satisfaction imparted to their mind even in the very exercise of self-denial and self-abasement which He enjoins. 3. Because His Presence is promised to be with His servants to make it easy and light. 4. This yoke ever becomes easier and this burden lighter as the Christian continues to bear it. 5. That it is easy in comparison with that which must otherwise be borne. (*J. Macfarlane.*) *Religion easy*:—1. Because of the means of instruction which are afforded us, to teach us how to commence it. 2. Because of the principles on which the Christian acts; not from compulsion, but from filial affection. 3. Because of the helps which a Christian derives while maintaining the discipline of that life. 4. Because of the enjoyments that stand connected with the Christian's course. 5. Because of the prospect before him in heaven. (*E. E. Jenkins.*) *Christ's service easy*:—Christ's service is easy to a spiritual mind. I. It is easy, as it is a RATIONAL service: consonant to right reason, though contradictory to depraved nature. II. EASY, as it is a SPIRITUAL service: delightful to a spiritual mind. III. Easy, as it is an ASSISTED service; considering that we work not in our own strength, but in God's. IV. Easy, when once it is an ACCUSTOMED service; though hard to beginners, it is easy to professors; the farther we walk the sweeter is our way. V. Easy, as it is the most gainful service; having the assurances of an eternal weight of glory as the reward of our obedience. (*Burkitt.*) *God knows our burden*:—A little boy was helping his father to unpack some boxes of dry goods. His father took the pieces of goods from the box and put them on the outstretched arms of the boy. "Don't you think you have load enough?" said some one passing by. "Father knows best. He knows how much I ought to carry," replied the boy. How much trust and confidence it shows us. He knew that his father, who loved him, would not give him more than he could carry. And so it is with our Heavenly Father. Sometimes we think He is putting more on us than we can carry, and we become fretful. Sometimes He adds sorrow to sorrow until we think we cannot bear the load, but He knows best, and will not give us more than we can bear, for He is a kind and loving Father.

## CHAPTER XII.

VERS. 1–6. **Behold Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.**—1. It is no new thing to see men who are otherwise learned, and are in account for their holiness in the church, to be adversaries unto Christ, and His disciples. 2. Christ's disciples readily shall be misconstrued, do what they please; their plucking ears of corn for their hunger doth not escape censure. 3. Hypocrites do urge ceremonies and external observations more than the greater things of the law. 4. When the mind of the Lawgiver and the intent of the commandment is not contravened, the precept is not broken, this is the ground of Christ's defence. 5. Not reading nor considering the Scriptures, whereby the meaning of the law may be understood, is the cause of error in duties. 6. Whatsoever bodily work is necessary for providing of the service and worship of God upon the Sabbath is not a breaking of the Sabbath; for the priests did bodily work in the temple on the Sabbath day, and were blameless. 7. As the body is above the figure, or shadow, so is Christ greater than the temple. (*David Dikson.*) *The observance of the Sabbath*:—Christ came not to abolish the Sabbath, but to explain and enforce it, as He did the rest of the law. Its observance was nowhere positively enjoined by Him, because Christianity was to be practicable to all nations, and it goes to them stripped of its precise and various circumstances. "I was in the

Spirit on the Lord's day," seems to be the soul of the Christian Sabbath. In this view of the day, a thousand frivolous questions concerning its observance would be answered. We are going to spend a Sabbath in eternity. The Christian will acquire as much of the Sabbath-spirit as he can. And, in proportion to a man's real piety in every age of the Church, he will be found to have been a diligent observer of the Sabbath day. (*Cecil's Remains.*) *The Sabbath a day for doing good:*—The performance of so many miracles on the Sabbath day seems to intimate its being the most "acceptable time" for our doing good to the souls and bodies of men, after the pattern of Christ's example, as we have opportunity. And it is this, perhaps, that may especially expose us to the unkind remarks of those who make the Lord's day a day of mere Pharisaic formalities, or one of idle and selfish indulgence, by doing their own way, by finding their own pleasure, and by speaking their own words. (*J. Ford.*) *Rabbinical Sabbath scruples:*—The Rabbi Kolonimos was innocently accused of having murdered a boy. It appears that he knew the assassin, and to prevent himself being torn to pieces, he wrote the name of the culprit on a piece of paper, and laid it upon the lips of the corpse. By this means the rabbi saved his own life, and the real murderer was exposed. But, alas! Kolonimos had written that name on the Sabbath day, and he spent the rest of his life in penance. Not content with this long atonement for his sin, the rabbi gave orders that for one hundred years after his death, every one who passed by should fling a stone at his tomb, because every one who profaned the Sabbath ought to be stoned.

Ver. 6. **That in this place is One greater than the temple.**—*Christ greater than the Church:*—I. LOOK AT THE THINGS ESSENTIAL IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH, AND SHOW WHAT CHRIST IS IN RELATION TO THESE. The things essential in the structure of the church are the plan, the foundation, and the materials. 1. Let us understand what Christ is in relation to the plan. The plan of the Christian Church is that of a temple. Everything we see suggests that God seeks manifestation. The temple was complete in Christ; the union of the Divine and human, the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, the manifestation of the Divine perfection, the operation of the Divine mercy—all were in Him. The life-plan of the Saviour developed by Christian life and fellowship. 2. The foundation. The foundation means the reason which both churches and souls give of the hope that is in them. The gospel of Christ is the foundation. 3. The materials of which it is composed. In respect of the house of God this is a great mystery; composed of divers elements. Christ fits every individual member into his appropriate place. II. THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH, WHAT CHRIST IS IN RELATION TO THESE. 1. Up-building, or culture. 2. Outbuilding, or conquest. 3. Worship, or adoration. Christ everything to the church in the process of culture. He liberates, elevates, and purifies. As to conquest the Church is Christ's messenger. As to worship it is "a holy priesthood." (*A. McLeod, D.D.*) *Christ greater than the temple.* The Church is nothing without its head. Whatever it is, He has created it. Whatever it does, He is its life! It is righteous, but it is with His righteousness. It is royal, its royalty comes from Him. It is a priesthood, He conferred the priesthood. Its love, its power, its faith, its hope, everything it is, everything it expects to do, find their explanation and root in its relation to Him. (*Ibid.*) *One greater than the temple:*—I. OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE. 1. He is so manifestly because He is God. He who dwells in the house is greater than the house in which He dwells, so that as God Jesus is greater than the temple. The Divine must be greater than any human workmanship; the self-existent must excel the noblest created thing. The temple was many years in building, and came to an end. Christ is from everlasting to everlasting. Hence our Lord's authority was greater than that of the temple. 2. He is greater than the temple, for He is a more glorious enshrinement of Deity. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The manifestation of the Godhead in Christ is approachable. 3. Our Lord is a fuller manifestation of the truth than the temple was. The temple was full of instruction; but all in type. Christ says, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." 4. Because He is a more abiding evidence of Divine favour. 5. Because He is a more sure place of consolation. 6. Because He is a more glorious centre of worship. II. JESUS OUGHT TO BE REGARDED AS GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE. 1. We ought to think of Him with greater joy than even the Jews did of the greater and beautiful house. 2. We ought to consider Him with greater wonder than that with which men surveyed the temple. 3. He ought to be visited with greater frequency. 4. He ought

to be reverenced with greater solemnity. 5. He ought to be honoured with higher service. 6. He ought to be sought with more vehement desire. III. PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS. 1. How carefully should the laws of Jesus Christ be observed. 2. How much more ought we to value Christ than any outward ordinance. 3. How much more important that you should go to Christ than that you should go to any place which you suppose to be the house of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST TO THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM. His superiority in those respects which distinguish that temple above all others. 1. It was built under the immediate and special direction of God. 2. It was furnished with everything that was requisite to the purpose of its erection as it regards both God and man. 3. It was adorned with a visible symbol of the Divine presence. 4. It was frequented by all the tribes of Israel as the place set apart for their religious worship. II. INFERENCES. 1. His lordship over the conscience. Every human authority must yield to His. 2. His power to bestow all spiritual blessing—peace, strength, glory. (1) How signal are our privileges! (2) How solemn is our responsibility! (*Various.*)

Ver. 7. **I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.**—*Mercy, not sacrifice:*—When St. Spyridion was about eighty years old, it happened that a traveller came to visit him at one of those periods of the year when it was his custom to fast on alternate days. Seeing that the stranger was very tired, Spyridion told his daughter to wash his feet, and set meat before him. She replied, that as it was fast-time, there was neither bread nor meat ready. On which Spyridion, having prayed and asked forgiveness, desired her to cook some salt pork there chanced to be in the house. When it was prepared, he sat down at table with the stranger, partook of the meat, and told him to follow his example. But the stranger declined, saying he was a Christian, and ought not to eat meat during the great fast. Spyridion answered, "It is for that very reason you ought not to refuse to partake of the food; unto the pure all things are pure." *The earthly subservient to the heavenly:*—Rabbi Tanchum was once asked if it were lawful to extinguish a candle on the Sabbath, when it inconvenienced a sick man. Said he, "A candle is an earthly light, man's soul a heavenly light." Is it not better to extinguish an earthly than a heavenly light? (*Talmud.*) *Obedience has not merely to do with the easy part of religion:*—They pick and choose out the easiest part in religion, and lay out all their zeal there, but let other things go: in some duties that are of easy digestion, and nourish their disease rather than cure their soul, none so zealous as they, none so partial as they. Now, a partial zeal for small things, with a plain neglect of the rest, is direct pharisaism; all for sacrifice, nothing for mercy. Therefore every one of us should take heed of halving and dividing with God: if we make conscience of piety, let us also make conscience of justice; if of justice, let us also make conscience of mercy. It is harder to renounce one sin wherein we delight, than a greater which we do not equally affect. A man is wedded to some special lusts, and is loth to hear of a divorce from them. We have our tender and sore places in the conscience, which we are loth should be touched. But if we be sincere with God we will keep ourselves from all, even from our own iniquity (Psa. xviii. 23). (*T. Manton.*) Morals before rituals. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 10. **And behold there was a man which had his hand withered.**—*The withered hand:*—I. THE PERSON TO WHOM THE COMMAND IN OUR TEXT IS ADDRESSED. 1. To a man who was hopelessly incapable of obeying. The hand had lost the moisture of life. Christ's power is displayed on our inability. 2. To one who was perfectly willing. II. THE PERSON WHO GAVE THE COMMAND. "*He* said." III. THE COMMAND ITSELF. The stretching forth of the hand was—1. An act of faith. 2. An act of decision. The Pharisees around him. IV. THIS MAN'S OBEDIENCE. 1. He did not do something else in preference to what Jesus commanded. 2. He did not raise any questions. 3. He was told to stretch out his hand, and he did so. V. THE RESULT OF THIS STRETCHING OUT OF THE MAN'S HAND IN OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMAND. 1. The healing was manifest. 2. It was immediate. 3. It was permanent. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The withered hand:*—I. A COMMON CALAMITY. II. THE MAN COULD DO NOTHING. III. HE KNEW HE COULD DO NOTHING. IV. HE IS A TYPE OF THOSE WHOSE USEFULNESS IS SPOILED BY SOME DEFECT—the crotchety, ill-tempered, hasty, niggardly man. V. THE CAUSES OF THIS WITHERED HAND. 1. Disuse. 2. Multiplied anxieties and cares. 3. Contact with poisonous matters—questionable company or pleasures. VI. THE CURE. The services of the synagogue not enough. The solemn ritual, the round of confession and sacrifice, of singing

and the word, each of these was a help to the healing power, but nothing more—hands that pointed and lifted the sufferer nearer to the great Restorer. At last, before the man there stands the living Christ, as He stands before all who seek Him. Then swiftly comes the being made whole. That living Presence sought; that great Love appealed to; that mighty Power trusted; His word waited for, believed, obeyed. Thus may every withered hand be stretched forth perfectly whole. (*Mark Guy Pearse.*) *The use of means:*—It is one of the sophisms of every age to urge the Spirit's efficacy, as a plea for the neglect of means. It is folly and presumption to think that, because power is with God and from God, efforts should not be in ourselves. (*Dr. Manton.*)

Ver. 12. **How much then is a man better than a sheep!**—*The dignity inherent in man's nature:*—This is not a question, but an exclamation, and it is so punctuated in the Revised Version. Exclamation rare with our Lord; He can say great things without becoming perturbed. "How much, then, is a man better than a sheep!" 1. Our reading of this exclamation is not appreciative till we realize that in it the Son of Man was not propounding a theory, but uncovering an experience. He is hinting here at what He knew. "He knew what was in man"—was conscious of Himself; we are not. I do not know what we should say if we could understand all that it means to be a man. Almost every one has times when he stands in awe of himself. Christ utters no word that cheapens man. He exhorts to humility, but humility is a symptom of dignity. Conceit one thing; sense of worth another. 2. Even sin, too, has about it something that in this matter is pleasantly suggestive. It is better to be a man that sins than a sheep that cannot. A man's moral corruption is index of the native moral grandeur. It is important that men should be saved, because there is so much for them to be saved to as well as from. 3. There is in man, also, a certain power to transcend limitations that gives him just a flavour of infinitude. The spirit chafes under restraints; has a sense continually of something outside that it has not yet gotten to; makes for itself a larger and larger world; stretches itself back in memory, and forward in surmise. 4. It is rather in the line of this to say that we are persuaded how great a thing it is to be a man, by observing the ease with which man can receive a Divine revelation. Man and God will have to be understood as standing to one another within intelligent reach. It is not the fact that there can be a Divine revelation so much as what it contains that convinces us of the dignity inherent in our nature. The cross proves God's esteem for the sinner. Man's worth explains redemption; not redemption man's worth. (*C. H. Parkhurst.*) *A sense of self-worth not conceit:*—The two take cognizance of different matters. My conceit occupies itself with what I *have* that is *different* from others; my sense of worth occupies itself with what I *am* in *common* with others. Conceit therefore separates men, while just sense of worth only draws them more closely together. Hence where there is the largest self-respect there will be always the largest and gentlest respect for other people. Once in a while we are a surprise to ourselves; are stirred at times by what we seem to get upon the track of when we take deep, quiet counsel with our own hearts. We appear to be upon the edge of something. Every soul has what it calls its grand moments. A sort of refraction appears for an instant to throw above our horizon lights that are not yet risen. (*Ibid.*) *Self-worth aids our realization of God:*—Men's estimate of God will maintain a certain proportion with their estimate of themselves. Even shadows keep a certain ratio with the objects that cast them. Christianity gives us a deepening sense of human worth, and through that deepened sense of human worth we reach a higher sense of God's worth, and theology is bound to expand along the brightening lines of the human self-consciousness; and the gospel and humanity play backward and forward upon one another, like the sun which brightens the eye so that it can see the sun; like the stars which wake up the eye so that it can find more of the stars. (*Ibid.*) *Capacity for evil indicative of worth:*—A man's moral corruption is index of the native moral grandeur of the man; just as the wealth of weeds in a field, equally with the wealth of wheat in the same field, measures the potency and richness of the soil. The strength of the spring can be calculated as well by the distance which the pendulum swings to the left of the perpendicular, as by the distance of its swing to the right. There is the same degree of sinfulness in a sin as there is of personal worth in the man that commits it. Here, too, the shadow keeps a ratio with the object that casts it; and the blackness of the shadow will vary with the brightness of the sunshine that gets excluded. (*Ibid.*) *Man greater than*

*matter*:—We are like the bird in the cage that is kept inside the bars, but lives in continuous communication with the air and light without, as though animated still with a sense of freedom that has been forgotten. The Shiuarites built into the air. The giants piled Ossa on Pelion. Everything is to us small because there is a larger; everything partial because there is a whole. Assurance continually runs ahead of verification. Everything that gets in our way is felt by us almost as an impropriety and an indignity. In one way the earth is larger than we, in others it is a great deal smaller. It is compelled to loan itself to our service. Mind masters matter. We tame and harness the forces of nature and put them to our work. The sea that separates the continents is made over into a highway to connect them. We play off the energies of nature upon each other, and set the mountain torrent to boring a roadway through the very mountain it flows off from. We rub out distance and talk through the air to Chicago, and tie our letters to the lightning and post them under the sea to London, Constantinople, and Calcutta. Pent in the body we are, and yet domiciled in all the earth; a sort of adumbration of omnipresence. In the same way thought gets into the sky, slips around upon the ocean of space from star to star as easily as a birch canoe among the islands of any mundane archipelago; finds out what has been transpiring in the heavens for a million years; fixes latitudes and longitudes of suns a thousand years away as the light flies; learns their secrets, weighs them, measures them, exacts from them their biography and their kinships; reads in the star-beams the story of stellar composition; finds the unity that pervades the whole; translates the phenomena of the heavens into terms of terrestrial event; gets at the language in which all the worlds unconsciously think, the lines along which they instinctively act. It is grander to *think* a world than to *be* a world. To be able to conceive of a universe is fraught with richer sublimity than to *be* a universe. We rejoice in the great created world. It pleased God when He had made it, and it pleases us because our tastes are like His. We can discover the laws which work in it. A natural law is a Divine thought. In detecting and threading those laws then we are following where God's mind has gone on before. Mind can construe only what mind constructs, and only when the mind that construes *matches* the mind that constructs. In this way nature is a mirror that shows both God's face and our own; and scientific truth is only religious truth secularly conceived. (*Ibid.*) *The dignity of man as compared with the animal*:—I. MAN IS BETTER THAN THE ANIMAL. 1. In origin. 2. In endowments. 3. In destiny. II. PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. He ought to live better than an animal. 2. He is better worth saving. (*American Homiletic Review.*) *Better than a sheep*:—I. THAT A SHEEP IS WORTH SOMETHING, AND IS VERY USEFUL. II. HOW MUCH ARE YOU BETTER THAN A SHEEP? 1. You can use God's Word. Every child can read the Bible. 2. You are better than a sheep, because you are to be praised or blamed for what you do. 3. Because you can grow better than you are now. III. BECAUSE WE ARE SO MUCH BETTER THAN SHEEP JESUS CHRIST CAME TO SEEK AND SAVE US. IV. BECAUSE WE ARE BETTER THAN SHEEP GOD AND HIS ANGELS ARE GLAD OVER EVERY ONE THAT REPENTS OF SIN. (*W. Harris.*)

Vers. 14–21. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet.** —*Isaiah's description of Christ*:—I. When our Lord knew that the Pharisees were plotting His destruction, it is SAID THAT "HE WITHDREW HIMSELF" FROM THAT PLACE. He did not avenge their malice. He allowed it space to dissipate. Give no place to anger. *He continued His works of mercy when He withdrew from the Pharisees.*—"Great multitudes followed Him," &c. By His practical benevolence He would refute their falsehood, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. Our Lord *did not wish His fame spread abroad.* An absence of ambition. We should be satisfied with approval of God. II. THE CONDUCT OF OUR LORD ON THIS OCCASION WAS A FULFILMENT OF A PREDICTION BY ISAIAH. 1. He is termed the "servant" of Jehovah. 2. He was chosen for His work. 3. Beloved by the Father. 4. He will put His Spirit upon Him. 5. He shall not strive. 6. In His name shall the Gentiles trust. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) I. The PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS of this "Servant of God." II. HIS MISSION. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH HE WOULD ACCOMPLISH IT. IV. THE GUARANTEE THAT IN THIS MISSION HE WOULD SUCCEED. (*M. N.*) I. THE PERSON HERE REFERRED TO. II. THE DESCRIPTION HERE GIVEN OF HIM. III. THE COMMISSION HERE GIVEN HIM. LESSONS: I. If Christ needed the Spirit of the Lord upon Him, how much more do we? 2. If Christ does not manifest ostentation, why should we? 3. If Christ, who is all purity, could be gentle with the erring, why should not we? (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) I. His Divine

appointment. II. His special endowment. III. His expansive work. (*J. Rawlinson.*) I. THE LOVE OF THE FATHER. The mission of the Son had its origin in the Father's pitying love for us (1 John iv. 9, 10; John iii. 16). II. THE CONDESCENSION OF THE SON. Became a servant. III. THE CO-OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. 1. It was by the Holy Spirit that the Son was qualified for the accomplishment of the work He had undertaken (John i. 16; iii. 34). 2. It is by the Holy Spirit that the work of Christ is now carried on in the hearts of men (John xvi. 7, 8). (*C. Kemble.*) I. The progress of Christianity shall continue until the principles of Christ's kingdom pervade the entire globe. II. There is a modern tendency to speak of the failure of Christianity. III. In what direction do indications around us point? It is thought that Christianity attempts too much. It is thought that the agency is wholly inadequate to accomplish the work proposed. IV. The sure future of Christianity. (*Bishop Simpson.*) *Physical forces gentle:*—The forces of physical nature around us might serve to teach us that those things are not always the most precious that make the most noise. The common air and dew, the rain of heaven, the light that falls upon us day by day—influences like these work silently and without any ostentation, and yet no one will doubt that they are far more precious to us than the noisy forces of nature, the earthquake, or the hurricane, or the wild tornado. What comparison, for instance, can you draw between the lightning and the light? The lightning may attract our attention more, demanding as it does that attention in imperious thunder tones, and yet who will venture to say that there is any comparison between the daily sunlight so beautiful to the eye, so essential to vegetation, so necessary to all the beautiful variety of colour in the world, and that noisy and occasional flash, which may indeed purify the atmosphere for a moment, but which can do but little more, unless it is sent on some errand of destruction. And even in respect to power, what comparison can be drawn between the earthquake, the most powerful perhaps of the ostentatious forces of nature—the earthquake which can rend a continent, or swallow up a whole city—what comparison can be drawn between that and the great silent law of gravitation, that law which guides the flight of every bird, and the fall of every pebble, that law which leads the sea in its ebb and flow, which holds this world and all the mighty orbs of the firmament in the hollow of its silent but mighty hand? (*F. Greeves.*) *Social forces gentle:*—And so it is in social life: we think a great deal of the matters that astonish and dazzle us; of the outbreak of passionate feeling in a noble cause, of the hearts that inflame the multitude, of the deed of superhuman daring that makes a man the hero of an hour, of some noble work in rescuing life from flood or fire—these things occupy our thoughts, and we think very little of the thousand names, and deeds, and looks of kindness, by which God is honoured, and humanity is blessed, and the world is made liker heaven. And yet who will venture to say that the aggregate of the world's happiness is as much promoted by that public deed, however noble and illustrious, as by the silent stay-at-home virtues of multitudes of persons whose names will never be known until the great day shall declare them? (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 20. **A bruised reed shall He not break.**—*The tenderness of Christ:*—1. The originality of Christ. It is easy to smile on the strong and prosperous; Christ's smiles were for the weak. 2. The love of Christ is the root of His tenderness. This brought Him from the land of glory; He came to save man. 3. How practical Christ's teaching. 4. But in dealing with bruised reed and dim wick, tenderness must be wise not to break the reed and quench the wick. No unwise precipitancy. 5. His work is not merely negative. He will do more than not break; He will strengthen. His work is perfect. (*C. T. Coster.*) *Compassion of Christ to weak believers:*—I. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF WEAK BELIEVERS. 1. The metaphor of a "bruised reed" conveys the idea of (1) a state of weakness. He is weak in knowledge, love, faith, joy, zeal, prayer. He laments his weakness. (2) A state of oppression. He feels himself crushed under a sense of guilt. 2. The metaphor of "smoking flax" conveys the idea of grace, true and sincere, but languishing and just expiring. Describe the reality of religion in a low degree. 1. The Christian feels an uneasiness, emptiness, anxiety within. 2. He is very jealous of the sincerity of his religion. 3. He retains direction and tendency toward Christ. Even the smoking flax sends up some exhalations of love towards heaven. II. THE CARE AND COMPASSION OF JESUS CHRIST FOR WEAK BELIEVERS. 1. The declarations and assurances of Jesus. 2. His people in every age have found these promises good. Hear David, "This poor man cried," &c. 3. Go to the cross and there learn

this love and compassion. (*President Davies.*) *The Redeemer's gentleness*:—Consider this narrative:—I. As an exhibition of the personal character and disposition of Jesus. 1. He did not abandon His work in disgust. 2. He did not flag in it, but still healed all that came to Him. 3. He did not rail at His enemies, defy or denounce them to the people. 4. He quietly retired before the storm. 5. He avoided giving further offence. II. View it in relation to His work and kingdom (Isa. xlii. 1). III. See the disposition of Jesus towards us individually. 1. Are we persecutors, He lets His meekness conquer hostility. 2. Are we weak in faith, He helps to victory. 3. Are we in affliction, He acts a kind part. Learn: 1. To love and trust Him. 2. To imitate His spirit and conduct in times of persecution. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *Bruised reed and smoking flax*:—Christ has nothing in common with demagogues, or world conquerors. The characteristics of His operations:—I. Quietness. Rivulets noisy; deep, full rivers, still. Stillness the condition of growth. II. Tenderness. Tenderness does not imply lack of force. Delicacy of touch in strong-natured men. Tenderness is not to be associated with moral indifference. In Him, associated with intense antagonism to moral evil. III. Victorious on-going. No pause in the progress. IV. So Christ is the great Creator of hope in the hearts of sin-cursed men—"In His name shall the Gentiles trust," &c. (*Preacher's Monthly.*) *Sweet comfort for feeble saints*:—I. A view of mortal frailty. 1. The encouragement in our text applies to weak ones. 2. To worthless things. A student cannot read by a smoking flax. 3. To offensive things. 4. These may yet be of some service. II. The Divine compassion. III. There is certain victory—"Till He send forth judgment unto victory." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The tenderness of God*:—I. The tenderness of God as shown at certain periods and seasons of our lives. II. If the bruised reed may represent our broken hopes, it may also represent our broken resolutions. III. That Christ does not and will not apply the least force or violence to propagate His law or religion. God understands the structure of our minds and never offers violence to their free exercise. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *Weakness prevalent*:—Have you ever thought how many weak things there are in the world? Look at the natural kingdom. How few are the oaks, and how many are the rushes! There is a rose, with a stem so fragile as to almost break under the burden of its own blushing and fragrant bloom. Yet God is God of the reed and the rose. (*Ibid.*) *Tenderness better than terror*:—Why, you might as well try to frighten a flower into lifting its face toward the sun as to frighten a soul into lifting itself toward God! The attraction of light and love from above, and not the propulsion of fear from beneath, is what accomplishes the beautiful result. There is no need of any such rude and tyrannous force, such violent benevolence. (*Ibid.*) *Tenderness toward the irresolute*:—Because you have broken one resolution, never imagine that He will not assist you to keep another, made with greater wisdom, and a more determined purpose. The temples of God, so far as we represent them, are all constructed out of ruins. He builds from the fragments of an ancient overthrow. Be persuaded of this, that nothing good in you ever escapes the notice of God. He is not, as some seem to picture Him, a heartless overseer, standing over you whip in hand, and watching for a chance to get in a blow. His observation is like a gardener's. There is not a bud of promise that can open in your soul, there is not an odour that can be added to the fragrance of your lives, that He does not detect it and rejoice in it. Whatever beautifies you glorifies Him. He delights in your development, and smiles on your every effort in that direction. (*Ibid.*) *Tenderness toward the outcast*:—I met a man the other day who had lived like the prodigal; wasted the substance of body and brain in riotous living. A magnificent wreck he was. A man who stood as I have seen a tree stand after a fire had swept through the forest—blasted and charred to the very core, all the life and vigour burnt out of it; yet keeping its magnificent girth and symmetry of proportion, even to the topmost bough. So that man stood. I took him kindly by the hand, and said, "Friend, there is hope in your future yet." He drew himself slowly up until he stood at his straightest, looked me steadily in the eye, and said, "Do you mean to say, Mr. Murray, that if I went to-night to God, He would pardon such a wretch as I?" See how he misunderstood God! See how we all misunderstand Him! Pardon! Is there any one He will not pardon? Is there a noisome marsh or stagnant pool on the face of the whole earth so dark, so reeking with rottenness and mire, that the sun scorns to shine on it? And is there a man so low, so heavy with corruption, so coarse and brutal, that God's love does not seek him out? How is the world to be redeemed if you put a limit to God's love? How is the great mass

of humanity to be washed and lifted, if the thoughts of God are like our thoughts, and His ways like our ways? It is because He does not love as we do, because He does not feel as we do, because He does not act as we do, that I have any hope for my race—that I have any hope for myself. (*Ibid.*) *Encouragement for new converts:*—I. THE NEW CONVERT TYPIFIED BY THE BRUISED REED. A reed one of the frailest things in nature, a fit image of a person whose mind is newly turned to a knowledge of Divine truth; a *bruised* reed, they go in sorrow. God gentle to such. II. THE SMOKING FLAX SHALL HE NOT QUENCH. Before, it was portrayed by brokenness of heart; here, by weakness of faith. Of all things in the world flax is the most combustible. The smallest spark will kindle it into a blaze. The faith little, but real. The flax was *smoking*. A painted fire would have occasioned no smoke; however small therefore the fire, it was certainly a *real* fire. (*H. Blunt.*) *The gentleness of Christ:*—I. EXAMPLES of Christ's gentleness recorded in Scripture. 1. In His dealing with His disciples (Luke ix. 55; John xiv. 9; Mark ix. 33, 34; John xx. 27; xxi. 15–17). 2. And so in like manner to all the people (Matt. xi. 28–30; Luke vii. 36–48; John viii. 3–11). II. SOME GREAT TRUTHS TAUGHT US BY CHRIST'S GENTLENESS. 1. It implies that when there is so much as a spark of life in the conscience, there is possibility of entire conversion to God. 2. The only sure way of fostering the beginnings of repentance is to receive them with gentleness and compassion. How great a consolation there is in this Divine tenderness of Christ. (*H. E. Manning.*) *God's care specific:*—I. Our entire dependence upon God. We are not trees able to resist, but reeds. II. The text seems to imply that God sometimes bruises us. Life is a discipline. (*G. H. Hepworth, D.D.*) *God's method with the weak and weary:*—I. THE SPECIAL TREATMENT, NEGATIVELY STATED. 1. Considerate, not arbitrary. 2. Sparing. 3. Merciful. 4. Conciliating—He does not reject and despise. II. THE WORKS IN THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST THAT FULFILS THE PROMISE. 1. The redemptive works. (1) The incarnation. (2) Atonement. 2. Co-operative works. (1) Means of grace. (2) Discipline. (3) Example. (4) Guidance. (5) Support. (*W. E. M. Linfield, D.D.*) *An improving discipline:*—As the flax is broken in the hackle spun by hard, patient labour into thread, woven with care and skill into the woof, and by exposure to light and darkness, dew and sunshine, heat and cold, is bleached and fulled into shining linen, so shall the glorious appearance of the redeemed come out of the great tribulation of life, and from the fulling in the blood of the Lamb. (*Ibid.*) *An emblem of the useless:*—A reed is, at the best, but a very ignoble growth in the vegetable world; it has no flowers for the hand of taste; it has no fruits for the lap of toil; it has no timber for architecture; it can form no weapon for war; it may render a very poor and uncertain support if you cut it into a slender staff, or it may perhaps solace a weary hour with very questionable music if you shape it into a shepherd's pipe; but at the best a reed is one of the least precious things in the vegetable kingdom. (*F. Greeves.*) *Weak grace may be victorious:*—I. THE OBJECT. 1. A bruised reed—such as are convinced of their own weakness, vanity, and emptiness. 2. The smoking flax of the wick of a candle, wherein there is not only no profit, but some trouble and noisomeness. II. THE ACT—"He shall not break . . . not quench." III. THE CONTINUANCE OF IT—"Till He send forth judgment unto victory." *Doctrine:* True; though weak, grace shall be preserved, and in the end prove victorious. 1. The love of God is engaged in its preservation. 2. The power of God. 3. The holiness of God. 4. The wisdom of God. 5. The glory of God. Further, Christ is engaged in this work, as (1) A purchaser of His people; (2) An actual proprietor and possessor by way of (*a*) donation from His Father; (*b*) conquest of every gracious person; (*c*) mutual consent and agreement; (*d*) appointment to take care of every believer. Christ's charge was (*a*) to redeem them; (*b*) to be their governor; (*c*) to receive them; (*d*) to perfect them. (*S. Charnock.*) *Bruised reed:*—Jerome takes it for a musical instrument made of a reed which shepherds used to have, which, when bruised, is flung away by the musician, as disdaining to spend his breath upon such a vile instrument that emits no pleasant sound. (*Ibid.*) *Smoking flax:*—Though He walk in the way where bruised reeds lie, He will step over them, and not break them more; He will not tread upon a little smoking flax that lies languishing upon the ground, and so put it out with His foot, though it hurts the eyes with its smoke, and offends the nostrils with its stench. (*Maldonatus.*) *Security in abundant grace:*—The sun is not able to dry up a drop of sea-water that lies in the midst of the sand, which the sea every minute rolls upon and preserves; neither can the flesh the least grace, while the fulness of Christ flows out upon it to supply it. (*S. Charnock.*) *Special care of the weak ones:*—As the

sickly, faint child, hardly able to go, and not the strong one, is the object of the father's pity, the weaker thy faith, which lies mixed with a world of strong corruptions, the more will Christ be affected with thy case, and pity that grace of His own which suffers under them. (*Ibid.*) *Safety in being like Christ*:—Well, then, will Christ suffer one to perish who hath the same nature, spirit, and mind which He Himself hath? Will He endure that His own picture, limned by the art of His Spirit, with the colours of His own blood, in so near a resemblance to Him, that He hath not His image again in anything in the world besides it; and this drawn for His own glory, that He might be a head among many brethren; will He suffer so excellent a piece as this to be torn in pieces, in contempt of Him, either by flesh or devils? (*Ibid.*) *Grace never blown quite out*:—Grace can never be so blown out, but there will be some smoke, some spark, whereby it may be rekindled. The smoking snuff of Peter's grace was lighted again by a sudden look of his Master. (*Ibid.*) *Surprise at safety of Divine life in souls*:—To see a rich jewel in a child's hand, with a troop of thieves about him snatching at it, and yet not able to plunder, would raise an astonishment both in the actors and spectators, and make them conclude an invisible strength that protects the child, and defeats the invaders. (*Ibid.*) *Weak grace, weak glory*:—Though weak grace will carry a man to heaven, it will be just as a small and weak vessel surprised by a shattering storm, which, though it may get to the shore, yet with excessive hardships and fears; such will sail through a stormy sea, and have a daily contest with stormy doubts, ready to overset their hopes; whereas a stout ship, well rigged, will play with the waves in the midst of a tempest, and at last pass through all difficulties, without many fears, into its haven. (*Ibid.*) *Weak Christians*:—Weak Christians are like glasses which are hurt with the least violent usage, otherwise, if gently handled, will continue a long time. (*Sibbes.*) *Good in seeming evils*:—Some things, though bad in themselves, yet discover some good, as smoke discovers some fire. Breaking out in the body shows strength of nature. Some infirmities discover more good than some seeming beautiful actions. Better it is that the water should run something muddily than not at all. Job had more grace in his distempers than his friends in their seeming wise carriage. (*Ibid.*)

**Vers. 22, 29. One possessed with a devil, blind and dumb.**—I. WHAT KIND OF POWER SATAN STILL EXERCISES GENERALLY OVER MANKIND. II. ALL WHO APPLY TO JESUS SHALL SURELY OBTAIN DELIVERANCE. III. ON THIS DELIVERANCE AN EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST'S MERCY WILL EXCITE OUR ADMIRATION AND CONFIRM OUR FAITH. (*W. P. Wait, M.A.*) I. A MIRACLE OF SINGULAR POWER AND MERCY. II. THE EFFECT PRODUCED BY THIS MIRACLE ON THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE—"They were amazed," &c. III. THE IMPIOUS CALUMNIES OF THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST. This charge displayed their malignity. There are two principles involved in our Lord's reply. 1. That the power of Christ is greater than that of all the powers of darkness. 2. That the manifestation of His superior power establishes His claims as the Author of the new dispensation—"Then the kingdom of God is come unto you." IV. TO AWAKE SALUTARY SELF-INSPECTION THE REDEEMER UTTERED THE SOLEMN ADMONITION RESPECTING THE DANGER OF NEUTRALITY AND INDECISION IN REFERENCE TO HIS CLAIMS. 1. The danger of an undecided state. 2. Adore the gracious power of Christ. 3. Rejoice in the service and cause of Christ. 4. Dread the thought of being found amongst the enemies of Christ. (*J. Fletcher.*) *Christ and the Pharisees*:—I. THE GOOD MAN'S RELATION TO THE WORLD OF WANT. 1. The good man is approachable. 2. He is sympathetic. 3. He is unostentatious. II. THE DEVIL'S RELATION TO GOOD MEN. How did these Devil's men use Christ? 1. They resorted to personal abuse —"This fellow." 2. They ignored the value of the greatest blessings. 3. They insulted the plainest common-sense. 4. They attempted to trace good results to a bad cause. 5. They falsified the deepest and truest instincts of human nature. (*J. Parker.*)

Ver. 30. **He that is not with Me is against Me.**—*Neutrality in religion impossible*:—I. THE CHARACTER DESCRIBED. 1. Let us direct our attention to the openly profane. 2. There are others not habitually profane. 3. The honest and well-disposed. 4. The outwardly religious. II. THE LIGHT IN WHICH THEY ARE REGARDED BY CHRIST. All who are not with Christ are against Him, and will be chargeable—(1) With rejecting His salvation; (2) With inducing others to reject it; (3) With preventing as far as they can the display of the Saviour's glory. Learn: 1. How inevitable is the destruction of the Saviour's enemies. 2. How

awfully severe will be their destruction. (*S. Steer.*) *The necessity of gathering with Christ:*—I. DESCRIBE THE MAN WHO IS WITH CHRIST. Union and companionship. II. THE PROOF OF AN INTEREST IN CHRIST, AS AFFORDED BY OUR GATHERING WITH HIM. (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *With Christ, or against? Gathering, or Scattering?*—The principle illustrated is the impossibility of a state of neutrality in the service of Christ: illustrations are fetched first from the battlefield—"He that is not with Me," &c. And, secondly, from the harvest-field—"He that gathereth not," &c. The immediate occasion of the text was the blasphemous imputation of the Pharisees, that Jesus cast out devils by Beelzebub. In reply our Lord appeals to *reason*—"Every kingdom divided against itself," &c. He also appeals to *the acknowledged fact.* Thus He must be the stronger. I. MAKE A PERSONAL APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT. In the battlefield of life, whose side have you chosen? In the great harvest-field of the world, whose interests are you serving? 1. The battlefield is the world. We are soldiers. Are we fighting? Are we clad in armour? 2. The harvest-field. Are you gathering or wasting? II. MAKE A NATIONAL APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT. Has England gathered with Christ, or scattered? (*C. R. Alford, M.A.*) I. THAT THOSE WHO ARE NOT WITH CHRIST IN DISCIPLESHIP AND IN THE PROFESSION OF FAITH ARE AGAINST CHRIST, AS THE DISCIPLES OF ANOTHER MASTER, AND IN THE DISOBEDIENCE OF UNBELIEF. II. THOSE WHO ARE NOT WITH CHRIST IN THE PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF HIS DEATH, ARE AGAINST CHRIST IN DEFEATING THE PURPOSE OF HIS DEATH. (1) The first purpose was to make an atonement for our sins; (2) To give repentance and pardon to guilty men; (3) To make meet for the glory of heaven. We can be with Christ by enjoyment and participation. We are against Christ by defeating the purpose of His death. (1) By rejecting it altogether in a spirit of infidelity; (2) By embracing a system which does not contain any of its grand principles; (3) By careless unconcern. III. THOSE WHO ARE NOT WITH CHRIST IN THE AFFECTIONS OF THE HEART, ARE AGAINST HIM IN ITS ENMITIES AND IN ITS INDIFFERENCE. To love Christ is an essential of Christianity; we may be against Christ by enmity or indifference. IV. THOSE WHO ARE NOT WITH CHRIST IN GATHERING, ARE AGAINST HIM IN SCATTERING ABROAD. Neutrality here is opposition. (*J. Dixon.*) *No neutrality in religion:*—In those days when there was war in heaven, and Satan and his angels rebelled against the Almighty, one circle of angels alone, it is said, remained neutral. They would not join the arch-rebel, neither would they range themselves among the hosts of their Almighty Sovereign. At the final discomfiture of the rebellious angels, that circle which had not joined in their rebellion could not justly be associated with them in their punishment; nor, on the other hand, did it deserve the blessedness of heaven. Those angels, therefore, were consigned to the earth, and bound irrevocably to its fortunes. These are the fairies. They enjoy all the pleasures and all the happiness which their new habitation can afford; but it is on a lease, as it were, and every seven years their lease expires. It is renewable as long as the earth lasts, and they are always reinstated in their privileges on paying to Satan a quit-rent of one of their number. Now this is an allegory. Whenever we have been neglectful of our duty, whenever we have refused to fight the battles of Him whose soldiers we have vowed ourselves, we may be forgiven, indeed, and reinstated in our former privileges; but it is always at the expense of some sacrifice to the principle of evil, whose power we should have resisted from the first, but did not. (*Newland.*) *No neutrality in religion:*—I. WHO ARE ALLIED WITH CHRIST? 1. They who are delivered from the power of Satan. 2. They who are in co-operation with Christ. II. ALL NOT THUS WITH CHRIST ARE OF NECESSITY AGAINST HIM. 1. That man's natural state is one of antagonism to God. 2. That it is a necessity of man's nature to influence for good or evil all with whom He may associate. 3. That our allegiance is Christ's righteous and inalienable due. (*H. C. H.*) I. The human heart cannot be in a state in which neither Christ nor the world has the supremacy. Man must have a master and a God, &c. II. Neither Christ nor His enemy will accept of, or allow of, neutrality—serving both in turn, and hence warring against both in turn. III. Neutrality is impossible, inasmuch as Christ holds it to be war against Himself. Christ requires the whole heart, life, &c. IV. Neutrality is seen to be practical hostility to the kingdom of Christ—enemies of Christ. (*J. Stewart.*) *No "via media" in morals or religion:*—Christ's words contain a principle and an appeal. We cannot occupy a neutral position in relation to either morals or religion now when life is before us, or by and by when the issues of life are manifested. I. THIS TRUTH. Border-countries are proverbially bad to live in. The two clauses of the text may be read thus: 1. He that is not *in heart* with Me is against Me. No externality of observ-

ence will suffice: no mere association will suffice. There must be personal heart-union with Christ. 2. He that is not in life-service with Me is against Me. Unpractical sentimentality will not suffice. Loudest professions will not suffice. Christ's words appeal searchingly to two classes. (*a*) Those who excuse wrong life by right creed. (*b*) Those who excuse wrong creed by good life. II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THIS TRUTH. Temporary uncertainty may be good, or at least may be excused. Such as comes in (*a*) Mental states of indecision; (*b*) Beginnings of religious life; (*c*) Occasions of religious doubt. There is no excuse for uncertainty or indecision in relation to Christ. We ought to follow Him *wholly*. (*R. Tuck.*)

Ver. 31. **All manner of sin and blasphemy.**—*Sin against the Holy Ghost:*—1. This is not a sin which one can commit by accident, and without knowing it. This is an alleviation to many who are in great distress. They fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin. It is the closing of a long series of wickednesses. 2. No man need fear that he has committed the unpardonable sin who is deeply alarmed and anxious about it; for the very nature of that sin is moral insensibility. 3. Ordinary procrastination, the putting aside of things right on account of the superior attraction of some worldly good—these things though dangerous, are not the sins which our Saviour marked. Many persons are grieving the Divine Spirit, who are not properly to be called blasphemers against the Holy Ghost. 4. Is this perversion frequent? Men are not likely to fall into it suddenly. This moral perversion may be the result of physical dissipation. Constant resistance of good impulses may lead to it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Tampering with the moral sense destructive of it:*—By this minute, constant, and continued tampering with his moral sense, he at last comes to that state in which the light of the glory of God, when it shines upon him, produces no more effect than the morning sun, shining upon the face of a corpse that lies in the east window. When men lie dead in the house, the morning bell calls them not. They do not hear the children on the stairs. Their ears are deaf to the sweet sounds of birds out of doors. The beauty dispersed all abroad, their eyes do not behold. And I see men whose moral sense is so dead that it is never touched by all the mercies of God above, nor by all the mercies of God distributed among men below. (*Ibid.*) *Dissipated men not always destitute of moral sensibility:*—There are sometimes very bad men in whom, if you could only steal into the chapel of their souls, and strike the bell there, you could rouse up a sensibility which would surprise their friends and them. But it is shut. It is kept locked up. Then there are other men whose dissipation seems to make a clean sweep, so that there is nothing left in them. It destroys the imagination; it destroys the affections; it destroys the whole moral sense. You may sound on every nerve, and along every chord, and there is no place left in them that has not been destroyed by dissipation. (*Ibid.*) *Moral sensibility man's best gift:*—I hear men thank God that He gave them such reason. Reason is a stately and noble gift, surely; but conscience is better than reason. I hear men congratulating their fellows that God gave them genius. They are poets. They are orators. They are artists. They carve the stone. They depict in colours the various forms of life. And this, surely, is a munificent gift from the hand of God. But no genius is comparable to the sense of that which is right and wrong. Genius of conscience is the best genius that a man can have. (*Ibid.*) *Conscience most needed:*—A man may cut away every mast on his ship, and yet pursue his voyage. A man may have everything on deck carried overboard, and yet make some headway. A man in the middle of the ocean can afford to lose everything else better than he can afford to lose the compass in the binnacle. When that is gone he has nothing to steer by. That little instrument is his best friend. It is his guide. And that conscience which God has given you is your compass and guide. You can afford to lose genius, and taste, and reason, and judgment better than that. Keep that as the apple of your eye. Keep it clear, and strong, and discerning. Be in love with your conscience; and let your conscience be in love with God. A conscience held in love, is the very foundation not only of a spiritual manhood, but of happiness in an earthly manhood. (*Ibid.*) *The sin against the Holy Ghost:*—I. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPEAKING AGAINST THE SON OF MAN AND SPEAKING AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST? By speaking against the Son of Man is meant here all those reproaches which they cast upon our Saviour's person, the meanness of His birth, without reflecting upon that Divine power which He testified by His miracles. By speaking against the Holy Ghost is meant their blaspheming the Divine power whereby He wrought His miracles. II. WHEREIN THE NATURE OF THIS SIN OR BLAS-

PHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST DOTH CONSIST. Some have supposed it to be final impenitency, because that is unpardonable; but why that, it is hard to say. Others place the sin in obstinate opposition to the truth; but it is hardly imaginable that a man will oppose the truth when he is actually convinced that it is truth. The Pharisees are the persons guilty of this sin. The ground of complaint is clear (Mark iii. 28, 29): they charged Christ with being a magician. They would rather deny the reality of Christ's miracles than own Him to be Messiah. III. IN WHAT SENSE IS IT SAID TO BE PECULIARLY UNPARDONABLE? IV. HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT THIS SIN ABOVE OTHERS IS INCAPABLE OF PARDON? 1. Because by this sin men resist their last remedy, and oppose the best and utmost means of their conviction. Can God do more for a man's conviction than work miracles before his eyes. 2. Because this sin is of such a high nature, that God is therefore justly provoked to withdraw His grace from such persons; and it is probable, resolved so to do: without which grace they will continue impenitent. V. MAKE THIS DISCOURSE USEFUL TO OURSELVES. 1. To comfort some very good and pious persons who are liable to despair, upon an apprehension that they have committed this great sin. I cannot see how any person now is likely to be in those circumstances as to be capable of committing it. Total apostasy from Christianity comes nearest to it (Heb. vi. 4–6). 2. To caution men against the degrees and approaches of this sin—profane scoffing at religion. Be ready to entertain the truth of God whenever it is fairly propounded. (*J. Tillotson.*)

*Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost:*—I. THE SIN SPOKEN OF IN THE TEXT IS DESCRIBED AS BLASPHEMY. It is common to speak of the sin against the Holy Ghost; Jesus does not call it sin, but blasphemy. Nor are they the same. All blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is sin; but all sin against the Holy Ghost is not blasphemy. This narrows it to a particular sin. What are we to understand by it? When abusive words are uttered against God wilfully, knowingly, and malignantly, it is blasphemy. II. THAT THIS BLASPHEMY IS DESCRIBED AS A SIN SPECIALLY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST. Why this, and not a sin against the Father or the Son? Not because He is more sacred than the Father or the Son. The Persons of the Trinity are all equal in glory. But because that in revilingly opposing the gospel the work of the Holy Spirit is specially opposed. It is the Divine Spirit who takes of the things of Christ, and through the Word presents them to the mind. It is a defiance of His peculiar prerogative. III. THE CROWNING FACT CONNECTED WITH THIS SIN IS ITS UNPARDONABLENESS. Why, when there is forgiveness for all sin, is there none for this? What sin could be more heinous? It cannot be because of any inadequacy in Christ's atonement—"His blood cleanseth us from all sin." Nor that the mercy of God cannot reach to such a sin; it is infinite. Nor that the gospel is unable to overcome such obduracy. The truth is there is no sin in itself unpardonable. This would contradict ver. 31. The reason is found not in its turpitude, but in its nature, as it discovers a heart resolutely opposed to the Spirit and the truth. If the Spirit be scorned, it follows, pardon is impossible. An earthly parent cannot forgive a child till it has exhibited sorrow for its offence; and as sorrow for sin is unknown to those guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, their salvation is impossible. IV. MAY THIS SIN BE STILL COMMITTED? I think it may. It is common with those who hold that these Pharisees had committed the unpardonable sin, and that its commission was limited to their time, to argue as if Jesus had performed this miracle by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that the sin consisted in ascribing the power by which it was performed to Satan. Our Lord does not say "If I cast out devils by the Holy Spirit," but "by the Spirit of God," and St. Luke has it "finger of God"—a figure significant of power. Christ uniformly speaks of His miracles as if the power that performed them was His own, or that of His Father—"The works which I do in My Father's name," &c. The power of working miracles was not conferred on Christ; by virtue of His Divinity He required no such endowment. It is important to keep this in view, in order to see that there is no ground for the allegation that He wrought the miracle before us by the Holy Spirit, and that, therefore, these Pharisees were guilty of blaspheming Him. The fact that three of the evangelists quote this narrative is significant. Observe, that our Lord specifies two sins—speaking against the Son of Man, and speaking against the Holy Ghost. Now, on looking at the narrative, it appears that the sin, committed in the present instance, was that of speaking against the Son of Man. He it was who wrought the miracle; and He wrought it, as we have seen, by His own power; and He it was against whom the malice of the Pharisees was aimed. Now, had they been actually guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, Jesus would doubtless have said so. Does He not, however, rather intimate—by the antithesis which He presents

between blasphemy against the Son of Man and that against the Holy Ghost, and by the pardonableness of the one and the unpardonableness of the other—that it was blasphemy against Himself of which they had been guilty? Why speak of blasphemy against the Son of Man if the sin which they had committed was actually blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? And why speak of the pardonableness of blasphemy against Himself, if they had committed another sin which was unpardonable? Would that not be to tantalize? But such a supposition is utterly at variance with what we know of the tenderness of the Saviour's character. We regard Jesus as, in effect, saying—"Dreadful as it is to speak disparagingly of the Son of Man in this the day of His humiliation, when His true character is veiled, there is a day coming, when the evidence of My Divine commission will be complete, not only through the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit, but by the conversion of thousands to the gospel; and, when that day comes, they who treat the work of the Spirit as they now treat Me, shall, even in this life, pass from the sphere of mercy to that of inevitable doom." One fact identifies this saying of Christ with the outpouring of the Spirit, beyond all dispute. If you turn to Luke xii. 10–12, you will read—"And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." These words seem to have been spoken on a different occasion from the present. From the first verse, we learn they were addressed to disciples; and from this fact we infer that the sin in question may be committed, not only by Christ's avowed enemies, but by those who confess His name. Observe then, that while, in the 10th verse, He repeats in substance the words of our text, in the 11th and 12th verses He predicts what actually took place immediately after the dispensation of the Spirit had begun on the day of Pentecost. For, when Peter and John were brought before the council, it is stated that, on Peter rising to speak, he was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts iv. 1–8). And what was that but a literal fulfilment of what Christ predicted in immediate connection with the text as given by Luke? "For the Holy Ghost," he said, "shall teach you, in the same hour, what ye ought to say,"—conclusively showing that it was the dispensation of the Spirit which Christ had more particularly in view when He uttered the awful words of our text. So far, then, from thinking, as some have done, that this sin consisted in ascribing the miracles of Christ to Satanic agency, and that it could only be committed during the period of Christ's earthly ministry, I rather conclude, on these grounds, that the Saviour specially pointed to that future which is our present, as the season of its commission. V. Before concluding, IT MAY BE PROPER TO ASK IF WE CAN FIND, IN OUR CONDUCT OR IN THAT OF OTHERS, THE IMAGE OF ANYTHING LIKE THIS SIN? 1. There are the Jews. No people so privileged; none have so sinned. 2. Another form in which this sin against the Holy Ghost now presents itself is that of scornfully resisting conscientious convictions. 3. Perhaps it is in the annals of infidelity we must seek in our day for the grossest forms of this sin. How different all this from the spirit of those who dread the very possibility of having committed this offence! (*W. Reid, D.D.*) *The sin against the Holy Ghost, and the danger of rashly applying it to ourselves or others*:—I. WHAT THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST, MENTIONED BY OUR SAVIOUR, IS. II. WHAT IS THE TRUE SENSE OF OUR SAVIOUR'S DECLARATION THAT THIS ONE SIN SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN? III. WHY HE PASSED SUCH A SEVERE SENTENCE UPON THIS ONE SIN. IV. WHAT SINS DO, OR DO NOT, APPROACH TOWARDS THAT WHICH IS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT? 1. The case of unbelievers. (1) Unbelievers ignorant of the gospel, or its proper evidence, are not blameable for their unbelief: nor surely inexcusable, though they should add reproachful words to it, speaking evil of things they know not. (2) But such unbelievers who through contemptuous negligence refuse to consider the doctrine of Christ, or from a vain opinion of the sufficiency of their own reason, reject it, put themselves in the high road towards the sin here condemned. (3) If they have, since they came to a full use of reason, deliberately confessed Christianity, and then forsaken it and become scoffers at it, this case is worse than if they had never believed. 2. The case of believers. Some have maintained that any deliberate sin amounted to it. This against Scripture. Sometimes good men have entertained irreverent thoughts; but this when under disturbance of mind, and had not command of their thoughts. (*T. Secker, LL.D.*) *Disease fatal because the remedy is rejected*:—Suppose the providence of God had so ordered it, that all diseases should be curable

by some one particular course of medicine; still, whoever despised and ridiculed that course, instead of taking it, must perish. And in like manner, though all sins would else be pardonable through the grace of the gospel: whoever scorns the utmost efforts of that grace, must fail of it. And our Saviour foreseeing that these persons would, pronounces their doom. Every advantage, that any others ever were to enjoy, they had enjoyed to the full, without effect: and it was not suitable to the honour of God's government, or the holiness of His nature, to strive with such by still more extraordinary methods; and do for the worst of men what he had not done for the rest. Their condition, therefore, was not that they should be denied pardon though they did repent; but it was foreknown that they would not repent. (*Ibid.*) *Things we never get over:*—There are sins which though they may be pardoned, are in some respects irrevocable: 1. The folly of a misspent youth. 2. In the category of irrevocable mistakes I put all parental neglect. 3. The unkindness done to the departed. 4. The lost opportunities of getting good. 5. The lost opportunities of usefulness. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *The unpardonable sin:*—I. LET US ENDEAVOUR TO REMOVE SOME MISTAKES RESPECTING THIS SUBJECT. Many sins supposed to be of the nature of the one here denounced have been remitted, therefore cannot be irremissible. 1. Sins against great light, conviction and knowledge. 2. Sins after real and high experience of the Divine favour are also improperly supposed to be of this character. 3. The sin of opposing the truth daringly has also been mistaken for the dreaded sin under consideration. II. DESCRIBE THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF THE BLASPHEMY WHICH OUR LORD HERE PRONOUNCES IRREMISSIBLE. 1. It appears that some among the Pharisees had committed the sin; they applied to the Holy Spirit the diabolical name. 2. The Pharisees heard their conduct described without being the least affected. 3. Men may approach near to this sin now, but cannot complete it. III. EXHORTATION AND CAUTION. 1. The reverence due from all of us to the Divine Spirit. 2. We should do all in our power to promote that religion which is the offspring of the Holy Spirit. (*J. Leifchild.*) 1. The nature of the sin itself is such as to preclude the possibility of forgiveness. 2. When there is any desire for salvation you have not committed this sin. I. ALL MEN HAVE SIN AND BLASPHEMY TO BE FORGIVEN. II. THAT IT IS TO MAN ONLY THAT ALL MANNER OF SIN SHALL BE FORGIVEN. III. THAT IT SHALL BE FORGIVEN TO ALL MEN WHO SEEK FORGIVENESS BY THE METHOD WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS ANNOUNCED. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*) *The unpardonable sin:*—We might expect that the best gift of the Holy Ghost would have some corresponding awfulness attaching to it. We have in the Bible four separate sins against the Holy Ghost laid out in a certain order and progression—grieving, resisting, quenching—these have been forgiven. But there is a fourth stage when the mind, through a long course of sin, proceeds to such a violent dislike of the Spirit of God, that infidel thoughts and horrid imaginations come into the mind. They become habitual. This sin against the Holy Ghost does not lie in any particular act or word; it is a general state of mind. It is unpardonable, because the mind of such a man cannot make one move towards God. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The unpardonable sin:*—1. How a man may shut against himself all the avenues of reconciliation. 2. There is something mysterious in the process. They choose not to repent; and this choice has been made so often and so perseveringly that the Spirit has let them alone. 3. There is nothing in it to impair the freeness of the gospel, or the universality of its calls. *The amplitude of Divine forgiveness:*—A king publishes a wide and unexpected amnesty to the people of a rebellious district in his empire, upon the bare act of each presenting himself, within a limited period, before an authorized agent, and professing his purposes of future loyalty. Does it at all detract from the clemency of this deed of grace, that many of the rebels feel a strong reluctance to this personal exhibition of themselves, and that the reluctance strengthens and accumulates upon them by every day of their postponement; and that, even before the season of mercy has expired, it has risen to such a degree of aversion on their parts as to form a moral barrier in the way of their prescribed return that is altogether impassable? Will you say, because there is no forgiveness to them, there is any want of amplitude in that charter of forgiveness which is proclaimed in the hearing of all; or that pardon has not been provided for every offence, because some offenders are to be found with such a degree of perverseness and of obstinacy in their bosom, as constrains them to a determined refusal of all pardon? The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; and there is not a human creature who, let him repent and believe, will ever find the crimson inveteracy of his manifold offences to be beyond the reach of its purifying and its peace-speaking power. (*Dr. Chalmers.*) *The unpardonable sin:*—I. What is this sin or blas-

phemy against the Holy Ghost? This assertion of the Pharisees discloses three odious sentiments. 1. A deceitful contradiction. 2. An unutterable perversity of heart. 3. A terrible blasphemy. II. Why is this sin, and this sin only, unpardonable either in this world or in the next? 1. Would it be too great, too odious, to find grace before God? 2. Could the reason of this exception be found in a special decree of God, who, from motives unknown to us, would have blotted this particular sin from the list of those He is disposed to pardon? III. Was this sin peculiar to the times of Jesus Christ, or are we still liable to become guilty of it? Materially, no; virtually, yes. (*The Late Grandpierre, D.D.*)

Ver. 33. **Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt.**—*Trees of righteousness:*—There are two kinds of religion in the world: one teaches that men are not so holy as they should be, but that by a little attention they may be improved; the other that men are only evil, and must be made new creatures. The one mends, the other makes. Christ says, Make the tree good. I. Although the tree has been made good by engrafting, and has consequently begun to bear good fruit, the young trees that spring from the seed of that good fruit, when it is sown again, take after the origiual bitter root of the parent tree, and not after the sweetness subsequently imparted to it. The child of a Christian man is not by birth a Christian. II. As the first lesson is one of warning to those who presume upon their privileges, the second is one of encouragement to those who have had in youth no privileges to presume upon. Although a young tree has sprung from the seed of an evil tree, it may be made good by engrafting as effectually as if its parent had been the best in the garden. The unprivileged need not despond. III. Although an evil tree ought to be made good by engrafting while it is yonng, it may be made good by engrafting after it has grown old. Some are converted in youth; some have mark and date of conversion more distinct than others. IV. A tree that has been made good does not again become evil; but latent evil in its roots may, if it be not watched, spring up and bear bad fruit, and mingle with the good, and to a great extent outgrow and choke the good. V. Although the natural head of the tree, either in youth or age, is cut off, and the new, good branch brought near to touch it, unless the new branch take to the old tree, and the old tree at its wound take to the new branch, so that they become one, no change will be affected in the old tree. The wounds of conviction prepare the way for Christ; but if the wounded do not in the end close with Christ, his wounds will not make him safe or holy. (*W. Arnot.*) *The grafting mark:*—In fruit-trees fully grown you may sometimes observe a ring round the stem, midway between the ground and the branches, resembling somewhat the mark of a healed wound on a living man. This indicates the place where the natural stem was cut off and a new branch inserted. You perceive at a glance that this tree has been engrafted, and that it was well grown ere it was made good. In the same garden another tree may grow which exhibits no such mark; yet the owner does not value it less on that account. These two trees are equally good and equally prolific. They differ not in their present character, but in the period of life at which they were severally renewed. This latter tree must have been engrafted when it was very young: the cut was made close to the ground when the stem was very slender; and thus the mark has been obliterated by the subsequent growth of the tree. The cicatrice is concealed under the grass, or perhaps under the ground. The renewing has certainly taken place, but when or where no man can tell. The date of its new birth is no longer legible. Such similarities and such differences obtain also among converted men. Some who were born when they were old bear the mark of their regeneration all their days. When the old nature was matured and developed before the change, the memory of the fact is more distinctly retained, and the contrast more vividly displayed. It was thus in the experience of the Apostle Paul. The spiritual man did not in his case obtain the sway while the natural was yet young and tender and easily moulded. Paul was a man, every inch of him, before he was a Christian. "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." (*Ibid.*) *Two kinds of fruit:*—One clear example of this tendency I knew well in my youth. I think it remains to this day, and I could point to the spot. A grove given over, by the time I knew it, for the purpose of affording shady pleasure-walks, had originally been a fruit-garden. Some of the old fruit-trees had been left standing as ornaments, when the owner no longer looked for a profitable return. These trees were left growing

for the sake of their beauty merely, not for the sake of their fruit. They were allowed, accordingly, to run wild, that their appearance might be more picturesque. An aged pear-tree stood there, with a tall, bare, straight stem and round bushy head like an Eastern palm. But while not a single branch grew on the naked trunk, from where it emerged out of the moss to where its head began to spread at three times the height of a man, a number of lively vigorous shoots sprang from its roots, or rather from its stem where it touched the ground. Thus the long bare stem had a bushy head of branches on either extremity. These lower branches had been permitted to grow freely till they reached maturity on their own account, and bore fruit of their own kind. I have seen fruit growing on these suckers, and fruit hanging at the same time high over them on the tree's towering head, with a large portion of the bare stem between. I have compared them, and found that which grew from the old root hard and bitter, while that which grew on the head that had been made new, although somewhat deteriorated, retained still the sweet flavour of its best days. Here were two kinds of fruit growing at the same time on one tree—evil fruit growing on the original root, and good fruit growing on that which had been made new. If the tree had been rightly cultivated for the sake of its fruit, those suckers would have been without pity torn off in the bud as soon as they showed themselves, and never have been permitted to open their blossoms or bring forth their fruit. You do not ordinarily see these out-growths from the old stock growing to the size of bearing, on fruit-trees. This, however, is not because they do not manifest a tendency to throw out these shoots, but because the shoots are, in ordinary cases, wrenched off by the husbandman as soon as they appear. (*Ibid.*) *Grafting an old tree* :—You may see this glory of grace reflected from the field of nature. Perhaps you have looked over the hedge and seen, in a garden by the wayside, a sight that attracted your eye and excited your curiosity. A tree, old, thick, and rusty, has been cut off, not by the ground, but about the height of a man, and the bare stump left standing. On a closer inspection you see one or more small fresh twigs fastened to the bark on the top of the desolate trunk. They are budding and putting out green leaves. It is a tree that had grown old, either barren or bearing bad fruit. Its owner would not longer permit it to occupy uselessly the precious ground. But it is not necessary that he should cut it down and cast it away, in order to make room for another tree. Even this tree, grown old in evil, may be made good. It is not cut down, but cut off, and a new nature engrafted on its stem. Even in old age it will yet be fresh, and flourishing, and fruitful. The owner of the garden counts that he will sooner get a large return by engrafting the old tree than by rooting it out and planting another. The tree was full grown and in vigorous health. The owner will utilize all these powers by sending the sap through a new and better head. It is thus that our Father, the husbandman, takes full-grown vigorous natures, charged with gifts of understanding, and eloquence, and zeal, that have been hitherto occupied with evil, and makes them new creatures by His power. Forthwith they are fit for able-bodied service in the work of the Lord. (*Ibid.*) *The danger of delayed grafting* :—Let the warning be distinctly, fully given on the other side. If the tree is permitted to grow up and grow old in evil, there is danger lest, by storm or fire, it should be destroyed, and so never be made good. But even although it were insured against all accidents, there is no reason why another, and yet another year an evil tree should cumber the ground, merely to put off the time of its change. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 34, 35. **A good man out of the good treasure of the heart.**—*The treasures of a good and evil heart* :—I. Describe the GOOD TREASURE of the heart. 1. A good heart contains good affections. 2. Good desires. 3. Good intentions. 4. Good volitions. 5. Good passions. II. Describe the EVIL TREASURES of the evil heart. The opposite to the good treasure. III. THAT MEN ARE GOOD OR EVIL ACCORDING TO THE GOOD OR EVIL TREASURE OF THE HEART. 1. Every man forms his opinion of himself by the exercises of his heart. 2. It is a dictate of common sense that nothing can properly dominate men either morally good or evil, but that in which they are really active. 3. Scripture confirms this consideration—"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." (1) This gives us a great idea of the heart. (2) Religion chiefly consists in good affections. (3) The propriety of God's requiring sinners to change their hearts. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) I. THE GOOD MAN. Not the natural man; the regenerate man. 1. He has the life of God in his soul. 2. The spirit of God in his heart. 3. The peace of God in his conscience. 4. The power

of God in his life. II. THE GOOD TREASURE. Good because—1. Given by a good God. 2. With a good design. The good things of which He speaks are (1) the Person of Christ; (2) the work of Christ; (3) the fulness of Christ; (4) the operation of His Spirit. All these subjects are good, pleasing, and profitable. III. THE EVIL MAN. He is without the life, spirit, love, peace, and power of God. He is evil because he possesses an evil heart, mixes with an evil world, is under the influence of an evil devil. IV. THE EVIL TREASURE. 1. Its evil nature. 2. Its evil tendency. 3. Its evil effects. Evil thoughts, words, and actions. (*S. Barnard.*) *The heart a reservoir*:—You have seen the great reservoirs provided by our water companies, in which the water that is to supply hundreds of streets and thousands of houses is kept. Now, the heart is just the reservoir of man; and our life is allowed to flow in its proper season. That life may flow through different pipes—the mouth, the hand, the eye; but still all the issues of hand, of eye, of lip, derive their source from the great fountain and central reservoir, the heart; and hence there is no difficulty in showing the great necessity that exists for keeping this reservoir—the heart—in a proper state and condition; since otherwise that which flows through the pipes must be tainted and corrupt. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The good treasure of the heart*:—The heart of many a poor, neglected Christian is as if we opened some rude sea-chest, brought by a foreign ship from distant lands, which though it have so rude an outside, is full of pearls, and gems, and diamonds. *A sanctified heart*:—The devil knows that if there be any good treasure, it is in our hearts; and he would gladly have the key of these cabinets, that he might rob us of our jewels. A heart which is sanctified is better than a tongue that is silvered. He that gives only the skin of worship to God, receives only the shell of comfort from God. It is not the bare touching of the strings that makes an harmonious tune. A spiritual man may pray carnally, but a carnal man cannot pray spiritually. If God's mercies do not eat out the heart of our sins, our sins will soon eat out the heart of our duties. A work that is heartless is a work that is fruitless. God cares not for the crazy cabinet, but for the precious jewel. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *Of the necessity of settling good principles in the heart*:—I. Of the high importance of fixing good principles in the heart, if ever we would hope for a good course of life and action. II. That the course of life and action will discover what is the prevailing principle of the heart, and will make it known to the world. III. That the train of thought in which we delight will betray itself in speech, as well as in our general course of action; so that it will be known by the tendency of our conversation in this respect, whether we are good or evil. IV. That it is of high importance that we set a watch upon our tongues, because we must give account, in the day of judgment, of everything we say, as well as everything we do. (*J. Burroughs.*)

Ver. 36. **That every idle word.**—*Idle words*:—The Pharisees had said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Christ meets this objection in two ways. I. He shows its UNREASONABLENESS. It is against experience that any power, good or bad, consciously seeks its own destruction. The powers of evil and of good are distinct, and each power is ready to defend itself. II. He condemns THE SPIRIT IN WHICH IT WAS MADE, and brings out the serious nature of the sin it involved. Why did Christ warn them against this dangerous sin? Not because of any act unmistakably wicked and cruel, but because they called evil good, and good evil, confounding the two, and this from dislike to the truth when it reflected on themselves. There lay the danger; and there it lies still. The essence of sin is being out of sympathy with goodness. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *Evil will not conspire against itself*:—Just as it can be shown in nature that the law of gravitation in a drop of water is the same law which binds the planets in their courses in the distant heavens, and the same law which reigns through the whole universe of matter; so the law which binds goodness to goodness, or which draws evil to evil, in the instinctive feeling that they are in themselves one, is a law which holds good in the visible and invisible worlds. The powers of evil—so far as they know one another—are all under one great power, and they will not conspire consciously against themselves. (*Ibid.*) *Idle words*:—They are words that issue out of a condition of idleness. 1. Tattling. Tattling dims the charity of the charitable mind as a spider dims the light of a window, spinning his web over it. 2. Tale-bearing. 3. "Slang" conversation. Slang is to language what profanity is to reverence. 4. Boasting. 5. Swearing. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Words that dispel gloom*:—A child that is in trouble in the nurse's arms is sung to; some little song, the whole of which does not give a single solitary particle of meaning;

but the movement of it, and the various associations that are connected with it, charm the child away from tears, and make him happier. (*Ibid.*) *Conversation pleasurable though not profound:*—I think no musical instrument in the world is like the utterance of speech in one whose voice is well trained, whose mind is rich with emotion, and who is accustomed to describe in graceful and appropriate language one's own experience in life. The conversation that flows in the quietude of a family, like the tinkling of a brook under the shadow of green trees; the conversation that flows like a river whose banks are efflorescent, and which holds its way deep and tranquil—such conversation may become a habit, not only in the sense of not being hurtful but in the sense of having a beauty which is pleasurable. (*Ibid.*) I. IDLE WORDS.—1. By idle words we may understand such words as proceed from vanity or deceit, which comprehend the pretences and plausible speeches of the cunning, and the empty boastings of the vain-glorious man. 2. Idle words may comprehend the reports of envy and malice, by which our neighbour suffers in credit or reputation. 3. Idle words may imply such as are the product of a loose and idle mind, such as represent the impure conceptions of a mind polluted with lust. 4. By idle words we may understand useless and insignificant words which are spent to no great end or purpose, either good or bad. II. THE SCOPE OF OUR SAVIOUR'S ARGUMENT in this place. 1. He descends from the greater to the less evils of speech; from blasphemy to the other evils which are generated in the heart, and from thence derived to the tongue—"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders," &c. Not only these but idle words will be punished. Jesting does not become the gospel. III. THE END AND DESIGN OF SPEECH, which is the gift of God to mankind. If we use our speech to serve any purpose contrary to the end designed by God, we abuse His gift and must answer for it. 1. Speech was given for the communication of our thoughts to each other, yet all our thoughts are not to be brought into conversation. 2. The wants and necessities of nature call for our help, and as these subjects must employ great part of our thoughts, so likewise of our speech, for we cannot live without mutual aid. 3. Further, God has made us to delight in each other's company, hence it is lawful to employ speech for improving mutual love and friendship. Men may talk of many subjects which have no present instruction, yet they may serve this end. 4. Consider the different degrees of sense and understanding that men are endowed with. The tongue cannot speak better than the understanding can conceive. Must not despise the conversation of weaker men. (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*) *Idle Words:*—Many imagine that this sin is too insignificant to be remembered at a moment when the vast things of eternity shall be waiting the allotment of the Judge. It cannot be a small thing to disobey God, though it may be a small thing in which I disobey Him. We maintain that sins of the tongue, if compared with other sins, should be regarded as aggravated, rather than trivial. David speaks of the tongue as of the best member which he had. And never should it be forgotten that language is not a human invention; men left to themselves could not have arranged such a system for communicating their thoughts one to the other. There was silence in creation till man was made with the faculty of expressing what he felt, and creation thrilled at the melody of speech. 1. We ought to consider the faculty of speech, how eminent its power, before we marvel at the criminality attached to its abuse. Every one condemns the prostitution of reason, because it is a high attribute; but what is language but reason walking abroad? Can it be a light thing to use the tongue against God, and dishonouring Him through that whence He looked for His chief glory? 2. If these remarks prove the "idle word" so criminal that of itself it might justly procure the condemnation of the speaker, they will also prove that our conversation may evidence whether or no we have justifying faith. St. James makes the power of the tongue equivalent to power over the whole man. He who is master of his chief faculty is little likely to be the slave of an inferior. It is true that no sin is more easily committed than one of the tongue; hence the non-commission of it is a high attainment. It is just because the thing may be so easily done, that the not doing it marks singular power and vigilance. But this is evidence from their being no idle words; there may be positive as well as negative witness, the witness of what is uttered as well as of what is repressed. If it be true that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," we may confidently reckon that where there is genuine piety it will give tone to the conversation. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Hence there is a high duty to be performed by the tongue. Therefore, whilst we admit that faith is the instrument of justification, we can understand why words, which are the confession of Christ before

men, should be given as securing salvation. They are but faith embodied. It was to a particular description of idle words that our Lord had respect—scoffing words. What helps our laughter will soon lose our reverence. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Language too good to be abused:*—Language is so curious, so costly a gift, so impregnate with Deity, so vast in empire, that to misuse it, though in the least particular, may be likened to sacrilege, the profanation of an august and infinite mystery. (*Ibid.*) *Language too sacred to be profaned:*—It is grievous, for example, to think of God irreverently: the soul should be His sanctuary: and to profane Him there, is to aggravate the contempt by offering it at the shrine which He reared for Himself. But it is yet more grievous to speak of Him irreverently. This is worse than dishonouring Him at the secret shrine: this is taking the material of His costliest temple—for is it not said, that He "inhabiteth the praises of Israel?" as though words were the columns, the walls, the domes, which combine for the noblest dwelling-place of Deity—I say, then, that to speak irreverently of God, is to take the material of His costliest temple, and fashion it into a structure where He may be openly contemned. The richness of the material enhances the dishonour. Give me the stars with which to build, give me the treasures of immensity with which to adorn, and the temple which I rear to an idol shall be so much the more an insult to the one living God. And it is thus with speech. Words are as the stars of heaven, fitted to illumine the yet dark places of creation. Burning with truth, they may guide the wanderings, and be as messengers for the depths of eternity. (*Ibid.*) *Language a heart reflector:*—Their words are more than exhibitions of the workings and movements of the intellect, more than the displayed rushings and soarings of the imagination. They are the discoverings of a heaven-born principle, a principle which apprehends truths that are above the human intellect, and glories that defy the human imagination. They are the signs, the evidences, of a second creation—the order, the symmetry, the beauty, the stateliness, of a new and spiritual world, demonstrated, unveiled, laid open, incorporated. If they be words of prayer, they are the ascendings towards heaven of renovated affections: if of praise, they are the vibrations of chords which a Divine hand has retuned: if of reproof, counsel, exhortation, they are but the soul, once "dead in trespasses and sins," appearing as an armed man to fight the battle of the Lord. Then words may justify, as incontrovertible proofs of a justifying faith, and a renewed nature. Actions furnish no better criterion: and when the great white throne shall be set, and the earth and the sea shall have given up their dead, the righteous and the wicked may alike have their portions determined by their use of the tongue: speech, forgotten speech, may be heard again, piercing as the trumpet-peal, by which the graves have been rent; and there will be no fear of erroneous decision, should there be no rule of judgment but this, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (*Ibid.*) *Our words to justify, or condemn:*—Consider some of the ways by which words minister to our condemnation. I. At the head of the list we must put PROFANE SWEARING. II. Another way in which we expose ourselves to God's displeasure is by FOOLISH TALKING (Ephes. v. 4). III. Another example of the improper use of the gift of speech is an indulgence in the PETULANT AND COMPLAINING LANGUAGE which so often destroys the harmony of private life. IV. A fourth illustration of our text is found in the case of MISREPRESENTATION AND SLANDER. V. ANGRY WORDS may endanger our salvation. (*J. H. Norton.*) *Innocent talk:*—Happy are the friends of those whose conversation "ministers grace to the hearers." It may not always be grave and serious; it may even dance and sparkle like a mountain stream in the cheerful sunlight; but it is always innocent and pure. (*Ibid.*) *Speech without words:*—You could not fasten upon any word or sentence, and say that it was calumny; for in order to constitute slander it is not necessary that the word spoken should be false—half truths are often more calumnious than whole falsehoods. It is not even necessary that a word should be distinctly uttered: a dropped lip, an arched eyebrow, a shrugged shoulder, a significant look, an incredulous expression of countenance;—nay, even an emphatic silence, may do the work; and when the light and trifling thing which has done the mischief has fluttered off, the venom is left behind, to work and rankle, to inflame hearts, and to poison human society at the fountain springs of life. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Slanderous words:*—There is a machine in the museum at Venice, by which some forgotten Italian tyrant used to shoot poisoned needles at the objects of his hatred. How much worse was he than the unscrupulous agent of slander to whom the great Judge of all is heard to say: "By thy words thou shalt be condemned"? (*J. H. Norton.*) *Cheerful words not idle:*—I do not call words idle simply because they cannot be

registered and measured by a matter-of-fact standard. How often has an airy word of pleasantry fallen on the ear and pierced the shield of prejudice or passion! How often has the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, but which would soon have overspread the whole sky, been dispersed by a momentary gleam of bright sunshine, and by a word which in itself was only fugitive, and hardly to be remembered. You cannot call that an idle word which is the outflow of simple cheerfulness, if it dissipates an angry thought. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *The reflex influence of idle words*:—The man who indulges in frivolous and idle talk damages his own mental faculties and moral sense. In such speech there is no demand for the reflective powers, and they become impotent; no development of the sentiments of truth, benevolence, and religion, the very stamina of our moral nature, and they become more and more inoperative and dead. In idle talk the soul in every way is injured; its rich soil, capable of producing trees of knowledge and life, is wasted in flowery, it may be, but still noxious weeds. (*Dr. Thomas.*) *The eternal influence of idle words*:—Science affirms that every movement in the material creation propagates an influence to the remotest planet in the universe. Be this as it may, it seems morally certain that every word spoken on the ear will have an influence lasting as eternity. The words we address to men are written, not on parchment, marble, or brass, which time may efface, but on the indestructible pages of the soul. Everything written on the imperishable soul is imperishable. All the words that have ever been addressed to you by men long since departed, are written on the book of your memory, and will be unsealed at the "Day of Judgment," and spread out in the full beams of eternal knowledge. (*Ibid.*) *Words without interest*:—The meaning may best be gathered from the metaphor whence it appears to be taken—that of money, not employed, but lying dead in the hands of the possessor. Our words are as precious in their proper use as gold and silver; but they become "idle" words when they yield no interest, when they bear no good fruit to the glory of God, the edification or comfort of our neighbour, the salvation of ourselves and of those who hear us. (*J. Ford.*) *Little agencies destructive*:—Idle words are deemed of little consequence. There are more deaths occasioned by unperceived irregularities of diet, than by open and apparent surfeits. If venial sins be less in quality, they are more in quantity; and their multitude makes them equal to the other's magnitude. The aggregation of atoms made at first the world's huge mass; and the aggregation of drops did drown it, when it was made. (*O. Feltham.*) *Accounts for eternity*:—An infidel once remarked jestingly to a clergyman, "I always spend the Sunday in settling my accounts." "You may find, sir," was the solemn reply, "that the Day of Judgment is to be spent in exactly the same manner!" *Conversation with grace*:—Our conversation need not always be *of* grace, but it should be *with* grace. (*Matthew Henry.*) *Faith and works*:—I. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS WHICH CAUSES THE JUSTIFICATION DERIVED FROM THE FORMER, OFTEN TO BE SPOKEN OF AS DERIVED FROM THE LATTER. Turn away the mean and despicable notion of a faith, which doth not cordially embrace Christ, and concentrate all the affections of the soul in Him as in one centre, like as a thousand rivers pour forth their mighty waters into the bosom of the ocean, or as the scattered rays of the midday sun, gathered by the optic glass, meet in one bright focus. Whenever there is true faith in Christ, works of righteousness and peace are the inevitable consequences of her dominion. Whenever justification is in Scripture ascribed to works, it is not for their own sake, but for the sake of that faith whence they spring. II. HOW THE PARTICULAR FRUIT TO WHICH OUR TEXT ALLUDES IS A JUST CRITERION OF OUR FAITH, AND A FITTING STANDARD FOR THE AWARDS OF FINAL TRIUMPH. "For by thy words," &c. Such is the law, and its justice will be evinced by our referring to *the fruit of the lip* as an indication of the faith of the heart. God may be denied by words and thoughts, hence both may fairly decide the great assize. From the tenor of a man's conversation we may estimate his conversion. Various methods by which this law might be vindicated—words of prayer and praise. Absence of these leads to condemnation. Faith speaks through these—"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." (*H. Melvill, M.A.*) *Talking of religion without possessing it*:—I believe a man may speak of heaven who shall never behold its mansions, just as he may speak of India who will never sail towards its distant shores. It is one thing to decide that a man has justifying faith merely because his tongue may give utterance to matters connected with religion; and it is another to declare that where there is faith, it will call forth religious conversation, and excite a Divine aspiration. (*Ibid.*)

*Unconscious influence*:—I. For good or ill, the life of every one of us is an incessant influence. II. Deduce from this fact some important lessons. 1. Our unconscious influence is spontaneous, and has no premeditation or calculation about it. 2. Our unconscious influence is a perpetual emanation from ourselves. 3. This unconscious influence is necessarily simple. 4. Our unconscious influence is the more powerful because it excites no suspicion. III. In what sense and on what grounds are we accountable for this kind of influence? 1. It is conditioned by our character. 2. It is by this we act most on those who are nearest to us. 3. Our indirect influence is our truest. It best represents us. 4. By these unconscious exhibitions of character the world is constantly judging us. Learn (1) The importance of each act in our life; (2) The necessity of conversion. (*Clement Bailhache.*) *Idle words*:—I. What does our Lord call an idle word? Some understand unprofitable words; others false, reproachful, hurtful words; and this latter meaning may be preferred. II. How can men be justified by their words, if they are good; and condemned by them, if evil? III. The reasonableness of justifying or condemning men by their words. One reason is, that a great deal is in the power of the tongue. Another is, that as men's words are so are their hearts. IV. Application: 1. No one may hence infer that he may be saved by a fair profession of religion without good works. 2. Here is a mark which may be of good use for determining our sincerity or insincerity. 3. The doctrine of the text teaches us to be careful of our words. 4. We may hence discern that the Lord Jesus was a most excellent person—"Never man *spake* like Him." (*N. Lardner.*) *Christianity judged by its words*:—Think of the streams of holy speech which have been flowing through the world for ages, and of the life which they have conveyed to thirsty souls. Think of these streams as they are flowing to-day in tens of thousands of Christian congregations, and in innumerable Sabbath-schools. Compare their influence with that of the dark utterances of heathenism, and the disturbing teachings of unbelief. Think of the countless rills of Christian speech which are flowing to-day from the lips of those who love the Saviour, and who are endeavouring to make Him known in the home, in the sick-chamber, in the prison-house, and in their various intercourse with those around them. Compare their influence with that of the idle, thoughtless, impious, profane talk of the millions who are living without God; and then say whether Christianity may or may not be judged by its words! (*Clement Bailhache.*)

Ver. 38. **Master, we would see a sign from Thee.**—*Religious sign-seekers*:—I. THAT THE DEMAND FOR ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES GENERALLY COMES FROM THOSE ALREADY POSSESSED OF VERY MANY. It was the scribes and Pharisees that made this request, not the publicans. II. GOD NEVER GIVES ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGES WHEN THOSE POSSESSED ARE NOT USED. Christ refused this demand (1) because it was merely an excuse for their rejection of Him; (2) because it was a reflection on Him; (3) because it bore no proof of earnestness; (4) because God's past dealings afforded all the proof requisite. III. FAILURE TO USE ALL THE ADVANTAGES WE POSSESS CAN ONLY ISSUE IN CONDEMNATION. The Ninevites would condemn the Jews. The ministry of Jonah was brief, wrathful, that of a sinful man. Christ's ministry was longer, and that of the Holy Son of God. The Queen of Sheba would condemn them. 1. She came to see and hear out of curiosity. 2. She came from afar. 3. She came uninvited. 4. She came on a mere report. (*C. Lankester, B.A.*) *The doctrines of religion reasonable to be believed*:—I. That the doctrine of religion IS IN ITSELF REASONABLE to be believed, and sufficiently evidenced by the standing and universal signs or marks of truth. The sign of the prophet Jonas was sufficient to render that generation of the Jews inexcusable in their unbelief. Religion is in its nature a trial of men's hearts, and, therefore, inconsistent with all compulsive motives. All religion consists in the love of truth, and in the free choice and practice of right, and in being influenced by rational and moral motives. II. Here is A DESCRIPTION GIVEN OF WICKED MEN, in one part of their character that they are apt continually to require more and more signs, and to tempt God without reason and without end. Wicked men do not like to fight against God openly; and therefore take pains to impose upon themselves some slight objection against Him. III. There are just and GOOD REASONS WHY GOD SHOULD NOT GRATIFY THE UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS of prejudiced and corrupt minds—"There shall no sign be given," &c. Men must obey in order to know. (*S. Clarke, D.D.*)

Ver. 41. **The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment.**—*The greater than Jonas*:—

I. TO SHOW THAT SUFFICIENT CAUSE IN THE DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TWO, WHY THE REPENTANT NINEVITES SHOULD BE WITNESSES AGAINST THE IMPENITENT JEWS. Now what account are we to give of this repentance of the Ninevites? At first sight it seems strange that so vast a result should have been wrought by the preaching of a solitary and unknown individual. Jonah had no miraculous credentials to give; but he had himself been the subject of miracle. God might be said to have raised him from the dead. The evidence was that of a resurrection; this is sufficient to produce conviction. 1. We may declare that far more evidence was afforded to the Jews of the resurrection of Christ, than to the Ninevites of the resurrection of Jonah. They had the same sign with greater clearness. The preaching of the resurrection by the apostles exceeded immeasurably any evidence granted to the Ninevites of the entombment of Jonah. 2. Then think of what a contrast there was between Jonah, void of all power of proving his commission by miracles, and our Redeemer displaying in the streets of Jerusalem and on the coasts of Judea, authority over diseases and death. If a mere report of the miracle concerning Jonah overcame the Ninevites, what can be urged in defence of the Jews, who gave no heed to their Teacher though they beheld Him with their own eyes exercising miraculous powers? 3. How different were the messages which the two prophets delivered. Jonah brought nothing but tribulation; Christ merciful promises. 4. Jonah could not have shown any sympathy with those whose destruction he was commissioned to predict, for he was displeased that his prediction was not accomplished. But how different the deportment of Christ. He had to predict the desolation of a mighty capital; but He did it with burning tears. If the Ninevites gave heed to the prophet of wrath, how much more should the Jews to a messenger who would rejoice if repentance should turn away their woe. II. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS WHICH THE REFERENCE TO THE LAST JUDGMENT MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO FURNISH. One man is, or one set of men are, summoned to give evidence against another at the judgment seat. The young man who died in his prime, the victim of his passions, will be tried as the sensualist. Who will give evidence? A father's voice will testify, "I warned him." The child will witness against the negligent parent. The faithful pastor will witness against the nominal Christian. The man of toil and poverty, who did good, will witness against the wealthy worldling. The heathen may witness against us. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The sign of the prophet Jonah*:—1. Man shunning God's presence. 2. God's awful wrath in consequence of man's departure from Him. 3. The vain attempts made by man to propitiate an offended God. 4. The Divine method of propitiation by the death of Jesus Christ. 5. The triumph of Christ over death and hell. (*E. M. Goulburn, B.C.L.*) *Jerusalem condemned by Nineveh*:—Three particulars in which the Jews were favoured above the Ninevites. I. THEIR FORMER ADVANTAGES WERE GREATER. The Ninevites were idolaters; had no sacred history to rouse them to reflection; no law-giver like Moses; no judges like Samuel; no kings like David; no teachers like the prophets; no precious promises to inspire them with hope. II. THE MESSENGER SENT TO THEM WAS MORE ENCOURAGING. Nineveh was only threatened with destruction. The Jews were urged to reform. III. THE PREACHER WHO NOW ADDRESSED THEM WAS MORE WORTHY OF REGARD. Jonah was a man; had no compassion on Nineveh; wrought no miracle; had no power to forgive; suffered slightly; his example unworthy of imitation. Our privileges are greater than the Jews. "To whom much is given, of him much will be required." (*F. J. A.*) *Nineveh and her testimony*:—I. NINEVEH AND ITS SIN. II. NINEVEH AND ITS REPENTANCE. III. NINEVEH AND ITS TESTIMONY. 1. A past testimony. It speaks to us, and says, Repent. 2. A future testimony. Its inhabitants shall rise against us in the day of judgment. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Privilege and responsibility*:—I. There are different degrees of advantage, involving different amounts of responsibility. II. Reluctant witness-bearing will be heard in the judgment of those the less advantaged in condemnation of the greater. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *Jonah a type of Christ*:—I. The striking signification of his name. Jonah signifies dove—a striking emblem of the meek and gentle Jesus. II. As a proclaimer of God's will to men. III. In his sufferings and deliverance. Jonah, after all, very imperfectly typified Christ. (*Dr. Burns.*)

Ver. 42. **The Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment.**—*The Queen of the South, or the earnest inquirer*:—I. LET US COMMEND HER FOR HER INQUIRING SPIRIT. I. She was a queen. 2. Her royal court was doubtless already stored with wisdom. 3. She came from a very great distance. 4. She was a foreigner to

Solomon and had a religion already. 5. She made a journey which cost her very much expense. 6. She received no invitation. 7. The object she journeyed after was vastly inferior to that which is proposed to our inquiry. II. How SHE CONDUCTED THE INQUIRY. 1. In person. 2. She went first of all to Solomon. 3. "She told him all that was in her heart." 4. She proposed to Solomon her hard questions. 5. She listened carefully to what Solomon told her. 6. She saw the house that he had built. 7. She observed the meat on his table. 8. She looked to the sitting of the servants. III. THE RESULT OF HER INQUIRY. 1. A confession of faith. 2. A confession of her unbelief—"Howbeit I believed not the words until I came," &c. 3. Her anticipations were exceeded. 4. She blessed Solomon's God. 5. She gave to Solomon of her treasures. 6. Solomon made her a present of his royal bounty. 7. She went home to her nation. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christians put to shame by the heathen.*—Wilt thou not be sore confounded, Christian, when—born, as thou art, in the bosom of the Church, in the midst of so many oracles of Scriptures, so many examples of saints—thou shalt yet see many heathens outstripping thee in goodness; so that, excepting only thy faith, which being "without works" shall only serve to increase thy shame, instead of adding to thy glory, thou shalt find thyself placed below an Aristides in justice, below a Zeleucus in rectitude, below a Palemon in chastity, below an Antigonus in meekness, below a Socrates in patience, below an Epaminondas in disinterestedness; men who were all of them born in the deep gloom of heathenism, never favoured (as thou hast been) with any knowledge of life eternal, with any gospel, with any sacraments—men who had never seen a God dying for them, as thou hast seen. (*Segneri.*) I. She went, notwithstanding the distance of her residence. The gospel is brought to our door. II. She went, notwithstanding all the anxieties of her public station. The claims of business must not be allowed to clash with the claims of religion. III. She went, though uninvited. We have been invited—how often! IV. She went to hear the wisdom of a mortal, at best fallible, and who, after all, was guilty of sad and criminal defection. We are invited to hear One greater than Solomon. Let us beware lest the Queen of the South, by her treatment of the less, become a swift witness against us on account of our treatment of the greater. (*Brooks.*) *Christ and Solomon:*—I. THE COMPARISON. Solomon a type of Christ. As the Son of David; as an eminent favourite of God; as to the extent, prosperity, peacefulness, and wisdom of His government; as the builder of the temple; and as a teacher of wisdom. II. THE SUPERIORITY. 1. Christ was a Divine as well as a human character, &c. 2. Christ was the antitype, and so greater than the type. (*Anon.*) *Christ greater than Solomon:*—I. Solomon was a great querist, but Christ, the great Evangelist, answers the queries of the great Ecclesiastes. II. Solomon's teaching is mainly negative, Jesus was as mainly positive. III. Solomon's speech was regal, but the Saviour's was Divine. So great is this Prince of prophets that the least in His kingdom is greater than Solomon. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*)

Vers. 43, 45. **When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man.**—*Furnished, but vacant:*—The central lesson of this text is this: THAT REFORMATION IS NOT NECESSARILY SALVATION—that, indeed, reformation without godliness may bring a curse rather than a blessing. And it is not the history of the Jewish nation only which illustrates this principle. Look at the reaction which, in our own country, followed the Puritan Reformation. Again, there are not a few in our day who have lost all faith in the gospel of Christ, BUT WHO ARE FIRM BELIEVERS IN THE POWER OF SCIENCE AND MATERIAL CIVILIZATION TO ELEVATE AND BLESS MANKIND. Science may expel the devils of ignorance and superstition; it may "sweep" the house, and "garnish" it with information on a thousand subjects. But can it supply the house with a tenant strong enough to keep out the "seven worse devils" when *they* come? I do not know that ignorance is more dangerous than intellectual pride. I do not know that a superstitious idolatry is worse than an atheistic materialism. Nay, it may perhaps be more healthful for a man to worship the stars than to worship his own telescope. It is surely better to "feel after God" in the darkness, than to cease caring for Him in the light. Coming nearer home, MY TEXT ALSO TEACHES US A PRACTICAL LESSON AS TO OUR DEALINGS WITH INDIVIDUALS WHOM WE ARE SEEKING TO SAVE AND BLESS. As a parent you endeavour by earnest discipline to expel from your child the demons of disobedience, untruthfulness, self-will. You do well in thus sweeping the house; but this is not salvation. One deed done by your boy through the love of God or Christ or goodness, is worth all the sweeping and garnishing in the world; for it

indicates that the house is *tenanted*. Take another case. Here, let us suppose, is a drunkard whom you are anxious to reform. He is ruining his body, breaking his wife's heart, injuring his family. You succeed in reforming him. This a matter for rejoicing. You have done well in sweeping the house from one vice; but that vice had its root in ungodliness, and if after his reformation the man continues ungodly, there is danger of that ungodliness breaking out in worse sins than ever. Finally, THE TEXT HAS A SOLEMN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF OUR OWN SOULS. The grand question is: Are our souls inhabited by the principles of godliness? Is the spirit of God dwelling within us? Let us choose and cherish all things good. (*T. C. Finlayson.*) "*To let, furnished*":—You may perhaps have seen some large mansion filled with substantial and elegant furniture, and surrounded with a beautiful and well-kept garden, and having in its windows a placard bearing the words—"To LET, FURNISHED." I fear there is many a man in modern Christendom of whom such a house is only too fitting an emblem! He may have been well instructed in the truths of Christianity; his mind may be richly stored with the fruits of modern culture; he may be brilliant and accomplished; his acquirements may be substantial, his manners gentlemanly, his tastes refined, his conduct decorous: but the well-furnished rooms are all vacant; they are not tenanted by the spiritual life; they are sadly too open to the incursions of evil; and one day, perhaps, the "seven devils" may come and abuse to their own purposes all those intellectual and æsthetic treasures. (*Ibid.*) *Reaction*:—I suppose there never was a time in the history of England which equalled in licentiousness and profanity the period ushered in by the Restoration. And doubtless the chief cause of this is to be found in the endeavour of the Puritans, when they were in power, to force upon the nation both their own theology and their own code of morals. The Puritans, in their intense eagerness to reform the nation, fell into the great mistake of supposing that they could make the people orthodox and virtuous by Acts of Parliament. At least, their deeds were in accordance with some such theory. The Book of Common Prayer was forbidden, under penalty, to be used either in churches or in private houses. Punishments were threatened against such as should find fault with the Calvinistic mode of worship. Public amusements were attacked. Theatrical representations were proscribed. One statute ordered that all the maypoles in England should be cut down. The Long Parliament gave orders that Christmas Day should be strictly observed as a fast—a day of national humiliation. No person was to be "admitted into the public service until the House of Legislature should be satisfied as to his real godliness." Thus the Puritans set themselves most vigorously to "sweep" England and to "garnish" it. And it cannot be denied that to some extent they succeeded. The country did present an aspect of greater devoutness and morality. But all such Acts of Parliament could not communicate one spark of religious life; they could "sweep" away much visible dust, they could "garnish" the house with external observances, but they could not send *the indwelling tenant*. And so, in due time, to the untenanted house came the "seven devils;"—first, hypocrisy and all manner of cant, and secret debauchery, even during the Protectorate; and then, at the Restoration, an unblushing profanity and licentiousness, the like of which England had never seen before. The king and his courtiers set the example of profligacy. The statesmen of the land became mere selfish tricksters. Literature draggled itself in the mire of pollution. The stage became utterly corrupt. Conventicles were proscribed. John Bunyan was only one of many who were sent to prison for preaching the gospel. (*Ibid.*) *The return of the dispossessed spirit*:—And if we look to England at the period of the Reformation, we find that men, raised up by God, and endowed of Him with singular boldness, and wisdom, and piety, exorcised the unclean spirit of Romish superstition, and ejected from amongst us the corruptions of Popery. It was a sublime moral revolution, and never did the human mind struggle free from a more oppressive shackle, never was there thrown off from a people a mightier weight, than when Reformers had won the hard-fought battle, and Protestantism was enthroned as the religion of these realms. But we should like to have it carefully considered, whether there has been no receiving back the unclean spirit. The human mind, long enslaved, was intoxicated with its freedom, and, in place of stopping at liberty, went on to lawlessness. Hence the overspreading of the land with a thousand sects and a thousand systems; as though, in casting out the one spirit of ecclesiastical tyranny, we had taken in the seven of ecclesiastical disunion. And over and above

this melancholy disruption of the visible Church, Popery itself has too often found a home in our Protestantism: for whenever formality has insiuuated itself into religion, or self-righteousness, or the substitution of means for an end, then has there been introduced the very essence of Romanism: the ejected spirit has come back, the same in nature, though less repulsive in appearance. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The genius of moral evil:*—I. AMAZING AUDACITY—"*My* house." II. UNSCRUPULOUS DISHONESTY. 1. Not a particle of its materials belong to him. 2. Not an effort in its workmanship was his. III. INTENSE SELFISHNESS. Why does he return to the house, for injury. IV. EGREGIOUS FOLLY. Possession precarious. (*Dr. Thomas.*) *Transient religious impressions:*—I. THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE EVIL SPIRIT. II. HIS RESTLESS ANXIETY TO RETURN. III. THE RE-ENTRANCE HE AT LENGTH EFFECTS. 1. Of the state in which he found it. Empty. Garnished but not furnished. 2. The possession he again takes. IV. THE AFFECTING CONSEQUENCE OF HIS REPOSSESSION. 1. He will now run greater lengths in impiety than before. 2. He is less likely than ever to be recovered from Satanic dominion. 3. It must prove the occasion of more severe and aggravated suffering. (*H. Bromley.*) *The house swept and garnished:*—I. A MISERABLE CONDITION INDICATED. It is that of a man under the influence of an evil spirit. 1. This influence is powerful. It is inward, controlling, directing. 2. It is defiling. II. AN AGREEABLE DELIVERANCE EXPERIENCED. Men may undergo considerable change for the better, without being really converted. 1. In the Word of God this truth is frequently set forth. 2. It is confirmed by innumerable instances. 3. This subject demands serious thought, and vigorous self-examination. III. A FEARFUL RELAPSE DESCRIBED. 1. When the evil spirit returned he found the house unoccupied. 2. His return under these circumstances was easily effected. 3. The consequences attending this re-possession were truly awful. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The dangers of relapse:*—Evil, in every form or stage, is dangerous. But if one comes out of these evils, and lapses back into them, the dangers are increased. This is well understood in disease. When the fever has subsided, and pulse and temperature have become normal, if then, through some indiscretion or exposure, the disease returns, the physician looks for a wider variation of pulse and temperature, and greater danger. The forces of nature are weakened; the house of the body was swept clean of all those gracious energies that filled it full of life and health, and now the disease runs riot through all its undefended chambers and passages. So one may dwell in a marsh at the foot of a mountain—a miserable existence, it may be, in malarious damps and under fatal shades; but it is better to stay there than to climb the mountain and heedlessly slip over a precipice. Life may be maintained below, though under wretched conditions; but the fall may cripple or end it. So one may live a contented life in rude poverty; the single room of the hut, water from the spring, the wild forest around, the homespun suit, the plain diet, the unhelped toil, the dull and narrow routine—a picture for pity, perhaps, and not representing the best forms of life; but if one escapes it, and comes into finer and larger ways of living, and then is driven back to the old place and ways, the lapse breeds a discontent and misery before unknown. To venture forth and then return; to rise and fall back; to promise and not fulfil; to undertake and not do—this is the tragedy of character. I. ONE WHO LAPSES FROM RELIGIOUS EARNESTNESS DOES NOT EASILY REGAIN IT; and if the lapses are frequent there is danger of losing it altogether. The Divine flame cannot often go out and be re-kindled. Once out, it is apt to stay out. The religious nature cannot be tampered with, and retain its integrity. It is largely made up of emotions and passions that lose their quality, and turn into scourges, if treated fitfully. You may bend a bar of iron, and straighten it again; but after repeating this process a few times it suddenly parts in your hands, and only fusing fire can weld it. Take a finer passion—love. You cannot give and take back love without ceasing to love; it is, by its nature, a continuous thing. Violate its nature as such, and it becomes a name and a disgust. One cannot "fall in love" many times, and have a heart left . . . Fire always burns; water seeks its level; the crystal keeps its angle; light extinguishes darkness. So in spiritual matters; we cannot trifle with these great passions of love and reverence, devotion, fidelity and enthusiasm without destroying them . . . It is dangerous, because self-destructive to say, "I will do a thing," and then not do it; to take a place of responsibility, and shirk its duties when they begin to press hard and grow monotonous. If we trifle with truth and duty, we do not merely lose them; we change them into avenging spirits that return to us with consuming power. II. One who takes up and lays off a duty, and is fitful in religious habits and feelings, GROWS SCEPTICAL OF

THE REALITY OF THESE THINGS. A religious life gets its vindication and comes to a full proof of its reality, only as it is continuous and lived out to the full. One cannot in a year test the full power of a single Christian quality. A personal vindication of the faith is a life-work, and requires all its years. Thus only does one come to know in whom and what one believes. But if the test is a short or vacillating one; if you try prayer, worship, self-denial, meekness, charity, forgiveness, self-control, devotion for a while, and lapse out of them, you doubt their reality. Why should you not? They bore you no fruit, gave you no proof. But alas for him who reaches such a conclusion by such a process. It is something to believe in goodness, though we may not be good; to believe that honest men walk the streets, though we may not be honest; that the light which shines from the downcast eyes of modesty is not a false light, though it may have died out in our own; that when men speak of prayer and faith, they speak of realities and powers, though we may be strangers to them. But to doubt them, to disbelieve their existence—that is perdition. Then the soul begins to depart from all things, the glory of humanity fades out; inspiration ceases to play within us; nobility is gone out of all our life. III. THE REASONS FOR STEDFASTNESS. Only one true goal of human effort—character. To know its conditions and obey them is the sum of all knowledge and duty. Regularity, bending the powers to one end, doing always the right thing under the right motive—it is thus that character takes shape and becomes a reality. A habit of religious thought may be formed as truly as a trade can be learned, and under the same law of repetition, guided by will and sympathetic purpose. Lapse, alternations, fluctuations, now earnest, now slothful, now up and doing, and now doing nothing, now alive with religious enthusiasm, now sunk down in apathy—such a history is the defeat and the denial of character. There is still hope no doubt, for one who has had such a history; but he must take care not to repeat it. Character is justly adjudged by its faults and vices, rather than from its virtues; just as it is the weakest spot in the iron that measures the strength of the bar, and just as the rope will hold only the weight that the frayed and chafed strands can endure. In character, the vice blackens the virtue; the virtue cannot whiten the vice . . . And so, when we turn to the Bible, we find all the promises and all the rewards poured out on those who are faithful unto the end. The patience of the saints is the burden of its exhortation. Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt win the crown of life. And in keeping with this, the picture of heavenly perfection, is that of constancy—serving God day and night in His temple; and so they reign for ever and ever. (*T. T. Munger.*) *The empty life:*—As wealth increases, as we multiply men-servants and maid-servants in our houses, as life becomes less primitive and more artificial, there come to be found a large number of persons, both men and women, who have little or nothing to do, unless they seek or make an occupation for themselves. It is out of such a condition of things that there is sure to arise, sooner or later, every imaginable evil that can afflict society or ruin the individual soul. Given the growth of wealth, luxury and indolence, and straightway you have prepared a nest in which a whole brood of vices will soon and swiftly be hatched. When one home is clouded or shattered by the shame of some wretched intrigue, and another stung and wounded by the cruelty of some causeless calumny, and a third dishonoured and disbanded perhaps by some foolish and criminal extravagance have we ever paused to consider amid what idleness, what aimlessness, amid what vapid seeking for a fresh excitement in the dead dull level of an unemployed and uninterested life, these manifold forms of evil were conceived and initiated? Ah! if we could trace back some crime or baseness to its incipient beginning, how often should we find it true that, into the life, "empty, swept and garnished," there had entered, just because it was so empty, its hands so idle and unemployed, its heart so uninterested and indifferent, a whole legion of devils to drag it down to hell. (*Bishop H. C. Potter.*) *The entrance of evil:*—It is not here said that the evil spirit breaks open the door, or that he does so much as draw the latch; but that he finds it empty and open already, and all things ready for his entertainment; so that, if we reach not out our hands to welcome him when he comes, and set not our doors open to let him in when he knocks, his temptations can never do us hurt; he can but entreat us, as he did Christ; and, if we fall, the fault is our own; we cast ourselves down headlong into misery and sin. (*Bishop Cosin.*) *The heart a house:*—So the malicious heart is a house for the spirit of envy: the drunken for the spirit of ebriety: the proud for the spirit of pride: the unchaste for the spirit of uncleanness: usurer for the spirit of covetousness. (*T. Adams.*) *Satanic disquietude when cast out of man:*—The discontented devil cast out of man seeks about

for a new lodging; and finds all places dry: he esteems every place, but in man's heart, irksome and unpleasant, as a dry, barren, and heathy wilderness. Now, as when a man hath long lived in a fertile valley, abounding with delightful fruits, and necessary comforts, the grounds standing thick with corn, and a pleasant river running along, to glad his heart with a welcome moisture; it cannot be other than a displeasing change to be banished into a mountainous desert, where the scorching sun burns up the grass, and withers the fruit; or the unhindered force of the wind finds a bleak object to work upon; where the veins of blood, the springs of water, rise not, run not, to modify the earth, and cherish her plants. Such is Satan's case and cause of perplexity. The wicked heart was his delighted orchard, where the fruits of disobedience, oaths, lies, blasphemies, oppressions, cozenages, contentions, drunken, proud, covetous actions and habits made him fat. *The concealed occupant*:—The devil may be within the grate, though he thrust not out his apparent horns, or say, he be walked abroad, yet he returns home at night: and in the mean time, like a mistrustful churl, locks the door after him; spares up the heart with security, that his treasure be not stolen. Thus as a snail, he gathers up himself into his shell and house of the heart, when he fears discovery, and puts not forth his horns. Sometimes he plays not in the sun actually, but burrows deep in the affections. The fox keeps his den close, when he knows that God's huntsmen be abroad to seek him. (*T. Adams.*) *Satanic relaxation not expulsion*:—Nero is still in Rome, though he remits taxations, and forbears massacres for a season. (*T. Adams.*) *The apostate, or black saint*:—Man compared to a fort, and the devil to its captain. I. The unclean spirit's EGRESS, forsaking the hold. 1. His unroosting: (*a*) the person going out; (*b*) the manner; (*c*) the measure, of his going out. 2. His unresting: which is seen in (*a*) his travel; (*b*) his trial; (*c*) his trouble; (*d*) the event—"finding none." II. His REGRESS, striving for a re-entry into that which he lost. 1. Intentively: (*a*) his resolution; (*b*) his revolution; (*c*) the description of the seat; (*d*) his affection to the same place. 2. Inventively: for he findeth in it, (*a*) Clearness; (*b*) Cleanness: (*c*) Trimness. III. His INGRESS: manifest by—1. His associates; (*a*) their number; (*b*) their nature; (*c*) the measure of their malice. 2. His assault: (*a*) the invasion; (*b*) the inhabitation; (*c*) the cohabitation. (*T. Adams.*) *Partial Sweeping*:—For like as a lazy and slothful housewife uses to sweep a little of the loose dust and filth in the open and middle of the room, and lets many secret corners lie foul as before, and maybe leaves the dirt behind the door out of the public view of people: so the false and counterfeit Christian reforms his life in the sight of men; or, like the Pharisees, makes clean the outside of the cup and platter, but their hearts are still polluted, and as vile as ever. (*B. Keach.*) *A natural improvement, not a saving operation*:—And remarkable is the phrase of our Saviour, "garnished," which we know is commonly a curious piece of art, men by their ingenuity strive to imitate nature; they will draw the face of a man, &c., with curious painting, very exact, so that it much resembles the person's natural face, yet it is not the same, it is but a piece of paint, an artificial invention. Even so in like manner by the improvement of man's natural parts, common grace, light and knowledge, he may appear in the view and sight of men, as a true child of God, and may talk and discourse like a saint, read and hear God's Word—nay, and pray also with much seeming devotion and piety, and may likewise bridle many unruly lusts, and gross enormities of life, and give alms to the poor, insomuch that he may very exactly resemble a true and sincere Christian, and be taken by all godly people to be indeed such an one; but notwithstanding all, it is but an artificial piece, it is but like a curious paint, or vainglorious garnish; it is not the image of God, it is not the new creature; though it looks like it, much resembles it, yet is not the same; for the man is a mere hypocrite, a counterfeit Christian, the work upon him being only the product of natural improvements, and not the effects of the saving operations of the Holy Spirit. (*B. Keach.*)

Vers. 46–50. **The same is My brother, and sister, and mother.**—*Christians are Christ's Relations*:—I. That Jesus here implies THAT THE SUPREME RELATIONSHIPS OF LIFE ARE MORAL. 1. It is similar to that of the family. 2. It is superior to that of the family. (1) It is non-artificial. (2) It is intimate. (3) It is dear. (4) It is completer (5) It is vaster. (6) It is more lasting. II. That Jesus here proclaims that the bond by which men sustain this supreme relationship to Himself, IS BY THEIR OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WILL. When we do His will. 1. There is the kinship of sympathy. 2. Kinship of resemblance. III. That Jesus here suggests that the

Christian relationship to Christ IS INDIVIDUAL, VARIED AND SATISFYING. 1. Brotherhood. Active men. 2. Sisterhood. The intercourse of heart. 3. Motherhood. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *Moral affinity the true ground of unity* :—Christ saw things in their superior relationships. All true relationship springs from moral states, not from the mechanical arrangements of society. 1. It is the real and proper tendency of all moral affections to seek each other, and to coalesce. The lower feelings are to a certain extent centrifugal. Policy, self interest, gifts, are perpetually separating men. All attempts to compromise union, to reason men into external union have failed. It is not found in contiguity. It is found in divergence of thought and feeling. All harmonies are in the direction of diversity. Love will do what reason never could do. 2. Human affections are never carried to their full power, and sweetness and beauty, till they are lifted up into the higher sphere, by their affinities and associations, religious. It is not enough to love the human that is in man; but that which is to live after the body. An unsanctified affection is an imperfect one. 3. It is a matter of great rejoicing to those who ponder the spirit of this passage, that this world, after all, is as rich as it is. Although hearts are distributed and unrecognized, yet you can feel what a wealth of relationship there is after all. 4. The true man of God, in our day, is he who feels most sensitively his relationship to the Divine element which is in his fellow man. The largest man is the man of the largest heart. 5. It is piteous to see how men have spent their lives in resisting their relationships, and in putting trust and charity upon hard conditions. We must change away from the hating and fighting to the loving principle. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *A wealth of relationship* :—I never read a book of a fine nature that I do not instantly feel, "Well, he is mine, too." The Guerins—brother and sister—are as much mine as though I had been brought up on their mother's knee. Fenelon is mine. Bossuet is mine. All those noble men who carried down the light of a true Christian example through stormy times, and held steadfastly to the faith, and suffered nobly—they are mine. Pascal is mine. Newton is mine. All the great natures of the earth that have lifted themselves up under the genial Sun of Righteousness, and have begun to show heavenly colours and heavenly blossoms—they are mine. The same Father is mine. The same Saviour is mine. And I hear my Saviour saying, "All those that do the will of God are mothers to each other, brothers to each other, sisters to each other. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Relationship revealed in heaven* :—You do not know how many relations you have till you are in heaven. Oh! when those that are around you, and that you meet from day to day with little pleasure, meet you again, and they have thrown off the cerements of the body; when you see that in them which is good, and in conditions in which counterpoising evil is taken away, and the whole evolutions of their glorious nature are disclosed, you will never know them! It will be as when one looks upon the banks in January, and says, "How dreary are these banks!" and then in June looks upon the same landscape, and says, "It is not the thing that I looked at before." It is winter here, and we are frost-bitten, or ice-clad. It will be summer there; and we shall be in fragrant leaf and glorious blossom. And when you reach heaven, you will never be lonesome, or restrained. Here the necessities of earth, and the proprieties of life, and the laws and conditions of our lower nature, partition and divide us; and we belong to each other more than we do to all the world. But in heaven all that will be gone. Every soul there will belong to every soul; every heart to every heart; every love to every love. We shall be God's, and He shall be ours. (*Ibid.*) *The family of our Lord* :—I. THEIR CHARACTER. "They do the will of His Father." 1. Some do the will of the devil. 2. Some do the will of men. 3. Some do their own will. 4. The Christian makes the will of God the rule of his life. 5. God has revealed His will. Their obedience is (1) Affectionate; (2) Impartial. II. THEIR PRIVILEGE. His disciples are Christ's kindred. 1. We look for family likeness, and we have it—"Conformed to the image of His Son." "We shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The resemblance not complete in this world: but it is real. 2. He confers honour upon them as His kindred. It is glorious to belong to persons of illustrious endowments. 3. If they are relations, Christ will love them. 4. Since He declares them to be His relations, He will provide for them. 5. He will keep up an intercourse with them. 6. He will defend them. 7. Admire the grace and condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8. The advantages of religion. 9. The holiness of the gospel. 10. The duty derived from this alliance. (*W. Jay.*) *Description and dignity of true Christians* :—I. A DESCRIPTION OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES—"They do the will," &c. What is the will

of God? 1. God would have us to believe in Jesus Christ. 2. God requires of us to repent of our sins and to walk in newness of life. Naturally men cannot do these things; only the children of God. II. THE DIGNITY CONFERRED ON THEM. 1. Christ here declares how dear and precious to Him are His true disciples. A true brother will watch over the interests of His brethren. III. THE PRIVILEGES DERIVED from this dignity. 1. Confidence in prayer. 2. Comfort in death. (*E. Cooper.*) *Spiritual relationship with Christ*:—Brother and sister, because of either sex. The faithful soul is also the mother of Christ, because by teaching, exhorting, and counselling, she brings forth Christ in herself and in others. Thus St. Gregory says: "We must know that he who is the brother or sister of Christ through believing is made His mother by preaching. For he, as it were, brings forth the Lord, whom he infuses into the hearts of his hearers." He subjoins the example of Felicitas, who, by the Spirit, bore to God the seven sons to whom she had given birth in the flesh, because she strengthened them in persecution, and animated them for martyrdom. These words of Christ were also exemplified in Victoria, a virgin-martyr under Diocletian. She replied to the pro-consul, on his asking her whether she would join her brother Fortunatianus, who was a heathen: "No, for I am a Christian; and those are my brethren who keep the commandments of God." Wherefore she was shut up in prison, and perishing by hunger, obtained the martyr's crown. I. CHRISTIANS ARE THE RELATIVES OF CHRIST. The ground of the relationship not natural, ecclesiastical, but spiritual—faith and obedience. II. Spiritual relationship to Christ is SUPERIOR TO NATURAL. It is more intimate, happy, honourable, comprehensive, permanent. III. The love of Christ to Christians as His relatives COMPRISES WITHIN ITSELF ALL THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF NATURAL AFFECTIONS. 1. Let us honour the relatives of Christ. 2. Seek to be of their number. 3. Choose them for our companions. 4. Do them all the good in our power. (*Various.*) I. The character of the disciple of Christ. Relates to—What we are to believe, experience, be, do, suffer, enjoy. II. How near and dear they are to Christ. III. How near and dear they ought to be to each other. (*J. Benson.*) I. The spiritual relatives of Jesus. Close and intimate. All the saints have one Father, one nature, one mind, one name with Christ. II. The great principle of this relationship. Obedience. God's will is revealed to us. Obedience must be evangelical, affectionate, full, constant. III. The advantages of this relationship. Exalted honour, greatest blessings, everlasting security. Rejoice, walk worthy, &c. (*Dr. Burns.*) *Christ's kindred*:—This reply of our Lord shows—I. THE PERVADING SPIRITUALITY OF CHRIST'S MIND. He turned every circumstance to spiritual account. Christ spiritualized because He was spiritual. II. THE PURE PHILANTHROPY OF CHRIST'S HEART. His love for man as man. The world is made one in relationship as it enters into Christ's love. III. IT SHOWS THE TRUE BOND OF MAN'S CONNECTION WITH CHRIST. 1. Connection with Christ is not determined by social position. 2. It is not determined by material relationships. 3. It is determined by obedience to the Divine will. (1) That there is but one infallible will; (2) That this infallible will may be disregarded; (3) That this infallible will appeals for universal obedience. IV. IT SHOWS THE HIGH PRIVILEGES RESULTING FROM MORAL UNION WITH CHRIST. 1. Here is the idea of infinite relationship. 2. Here is the idea of social communion. Inferences: 1. If we are to obey the Divine will, a great change must pass over our moral nature. 2. If our union with Christ is moral, it will also be eternal. 3. If all the good are Christ's kindred, their meeting-place must be heaven. 4. If we are all Christ's, joy should be the pervading emotion of our hearts. (*J. Parker.*)

## CHAPTER XIII.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE SEVEN PARABLES.—*The kingdom's similitude*:—Not the kingdom of heaven *is*, but the kingdom of heaven is *like*, so and so. Truth is a separate matter from the forms of phrase along which it is conveyed, or the forms of thought under which it is apprehended. In this respect it resembles the light. No painter can paint light. He can give you colours, the greens, the blues, the crimsons, but he cannot give you light; and yet if he is a genius he will succeed in filling his picture with those tinted suggestions that will somehow quicken in you a deep, thrilling sense of light. So Christ, in a similar manner, did

not point out to His disciples this particular thing and that particular thing, but loaded His sentences with suggestions, and started in men's minds presentiments that went leaping along ahead of the spoken word. . . . He cut no grooves for men's opinions to slip in, fashioned no moulds for those opinions to be cast in; did not care to have them think precisely this, or precisely that; tied them to no nice forms of declaration; did not accentuate with periods. And so their minds moved as vessels move at sea; at the direction of the compass, to be sure, but without the sea ever being worn down into ruts and roadways. He drew for them pictures of the truth, and then let them make what they could of those pictures. A truth never can be quite told. It is best seen when we are not trying too hard to see it, not straining our eyes to see it—as faint stars become visible when we look a little off from them. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *The seven parables of the kingdom*:—History of the Church in all ages, from the first preaching of the gospel to the last general judgment, tracing the different steps of its advancement, both externally and internally, from its commencement to its consummation. 1. Sower—the preaching of the gospel, when the apostles and their successors went through the world, sowing everywhere the good seed. 2. Tares—the development of those evils of doctrine, the germs of which existed even in an earlier day. 3. Mustard seed—the extension and progress of the Church. It needs no support for itself, but affords a shelter to others who resort to it. 4. Leaven—the manner in which its vital spirit silently makes its progress, gradually changing the character of the whole mass into which it has been infused. 5. Hid treasure—action of Christianity upon some. In such a case as this, some unlooked-for occurrence brings the man into contact with this treasure, for which he was not seeking. He finds it accidentally, and at once gives up all to possess it. 6. Pearl of great price—action of Christianity upon others. Here the man is engaged in the business of his life. He gains that for which he has all along been seeking. 7. Net—the solemn winding-up of the mighty drama—the separation—the consummation. (*Bishop Wm. Ingraham Kip.*) *The general teaching of these seven parables*:—No one should miss gathering from these parables some notion of the all-embracing character of the kingdom which Christ came to set up among men. We need not wonder that Christ exhibits the truth He wanted to impress upon them in a great variety of lights. It would have been surprising if He had not supplemented the parable of the hid treasure with that of the pearl, for the four parables which precede these are arranged in pairs. First, we have the action of Christ upon the Church, in the parable of the sower, supplemented by the field and the tares; then the expansive and permeating power of the Christian society, in the mustard and leaven; and, in the third pair, we are shown the attitude of the individual in relation to the saving grace of God. The king, the kingdom, the subjects—under each of these aspects two illustrations are given to enforce important varieties, and to exhibit, in more than one light, the manifold wisdom of God. (*J. Henry Burn, B.D.*) *The diversity of Christ's parables*:—His parables were divers, when yet by those sundry shadows He did aim directly at one light. The intention of which course in our great Physician is to give several medicines for the same malady in several men, fitting his receipts to the disposition of his patients. The soldier doth not so well understand similitudes taken from husbandry, nor the husbandman from the war. The lawyer conceives not an allusion from physic, nor the physician from the law. Home-dwellers are ignorant of foreign matters; neither doth the quiet, rural labourer trouble his head with matters of state. Therefore Christ derives a parable from an army, to teach soldiers; from legal principles, to instruct lawyers; from the field and sowing, to speak familiarly to the husbandman's capacity. (*T. Adams.*) *Parables*:—The word used (*masdal*) means a "likeness" or "comparison." Parables differ from fables in being pictures of possible occurrences—frequently of actual daily occurrences—and in teaching religious truths rather than moral truths. (*A. Carr.*)

Ver. 3. **And He spake many things unto them in parables.**—*Christ a moral painter*:—Jesus did not confine Himself to the mere announcement or proof of a doctrine. But by means of words, He often presented to His hearers a moral picture—flashed upon the mind's eye a whole scene of truth with such vividness and power that it could not be well perverted or forgotten. We should imitate His pointed, emotional preaching. I. SOME REASONS FOR THE USE OF MORAL PAINTING IN SERMONS. 1. It imitates the style of Christ's painting, and is part of His gospel. 2. It meets a want in our nature. It appeals to man's perceptive faculties. God has met this want in the natural world. 3. It adds point and force to the argu-

ment. Reasoning and illustration are both essential. 4. Men who have deeply moved the human heart have used it. Poets, advocates, orators, &c. And shall the children of this world be wiser, &c.? Inspiration is full of it. II. THE KIND OF MORAL PAINTING TO BE USED. Great condensation is essential to a good picture of truth. Deep emotion. The vastness of our work is enough to make an angel weep. (*W. W. Newell.*) *The design of speaking in parables*:—1. To convey truth in a more interesting manner to the mind, adding to the truth conveyed the beauty of a lively image or narrative. 2. To teach spiritual truth so as to arrest the attention of ignorant people, making an appeal to them through the senses. 3. To convey some offensive truth, some pointed personal rebuke, in such a way as to bring it home to the conscience (2 Sam. xii. 1–7, and many of our Saviour's parables addressed to the Jews). 4. To conceal from one part of His audience truths which He intended others should understand (Mark iv. 33; Matt. xiii. 13–16.) (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Similitude mentally stimulating*:—Christ's habit, therefore, was not so much to tell what things were, as to draw pictures of them and mention some familiar thing they were like; as a boy really knows more about the earth when told that it is shaped like a big cricket-ball, than when taught to say that it is an oblate spheroid with a polar diameter of 8,000 miles. Thus Christ was continually telling, in an easy way, what this and that was like (drawing pictures), which is to say that He taught by parables, "and without a parable spake He not unto them." . . . A truth felt is more than a truth stated. Christ was continually dropping hints that led His disciples forward into a new surmise; kept treading down their horizon; did not let their opinions go to seed. He knew how to talk with them in such a way as to make them feel that what He did not tell them was considerably more than what He did tell them. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *Why our Lord used parables*:—1. As a means of attracting attention. 2. To prevent His auditors from being repelled by a too sudden revelation, either of His purpose or of His message. 3. To stimulate inquiry. 4. To test the character of His hearers. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) **Behold, a sower went forth to sow.**—*The parable of the sower*:—Four kinds of soil: 1. The impenetrable. 2. The superficial. 3. The preoccupied. 4. The prepared. Observation: 1. The seed is the same in every case; the difference is in the kinds of soils. 2. The parable is Christ's answer to the objection, If the gospel be from God, why is it not more effective? The answer is, that, like any other remedy, much will depend on the way in which it is used. (*The Clergyman's Magazine.*) *Parable of the sower*:—Where is the fault of failure? 1. It does not lie in God, the sower. God does not predestinate men to fail. He willeth not the death of a sinner. 2. The cause of failure is not in any impotency of truth. The old thinkers accounted for it by the depravity of matter. Once acknowledge free-will in man, and the origin of evil does not lie in God. 3. The fault might be solely in the soil of the heart. I. THE CAUSES OF FAILURE. 1. The first of these is want of spiritual perception. There are persons whose religion is all outside, never penetrates beyond the intellect. Conceptions of religious life, which are only conceptions outward, having no lodgment in the heart, disappear. Fowls of the air devoured the seed. This is a picture of thought dissipated, and no man can tell when or how it went. 2. A second cause of failure is want of depth of character. This stony ground is the thin layer of earth upon a bed of rock. Shallow soil is like superficial character. There is easily-moved susceptibility. A pleasant, sunny religion would be the life to suit them. The superficial character is connected with the hard heart; beneath the thin surface lies the bed of rock. It is among those of light enjoyment we must look for stony heartlessness. 3. Once more impressions come to nothing when the mind is subjected to dissipating influences, and yields to them—"Some fell among thorns." Two classes of dissipating influences distract such minds. The cares of this world. Martha was "cumbered with much serving." The deceitfulness of riches dissipate. Weeding work painful. II. FOR THE PERMANENCE OF RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS THIS PARABLE SUGGESTS THREE REQUIREMENTS. 1. An honest and good heart. Earnest sincerity. 2. Meditation is a second requisite for perseverance. They keep the Word which they have heard. Must not confuse reverie with meditation. Truth is dwelt on till it receives innumerable applications; it is done in silence. 3. The third requisite is endurance—"They bring forth fruit with patience." There is an active and passive endurance, bearing pain without complaining; and under persecution. It is also the opposite of that impatience which cannot wait. We are disappointed if the harvest does not come at once. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The parable of the sower*:—1. The careless hearer. 2. The

temporary hearer. 3. The worldly-minded hearer. 4. The sincere hearers of the Word. (1) They understand it; (2) They receive it; (3) They retain it; (4) They practise it. (*G. Burder.*) *The Christian's unfaithful hearing of the Word not natural, but self-induced*:—1. The unlimited method of the sower's work; the indiscriminate manner in which the seed is cast upon the ground. His care not limited to a single spot. The overflowing bounty, the merciful providence of God towards all classes. 2. The impediments to growth are to be found not in natural defects or incapacities, but in self-induced hindrances and wilful indisposition to listen to the truth. In the gospel history these hearers are to be discovered: 1. The Sadducees, who denied the resurrection. Infidelity is a sad hardener of the heart. 2. Those of our Lord's disciples of whom mention is made that they went back, and walked no more with Him. The varieties of soil does not describe varieties of heart as formed by nature, but the condition which the heart and mind assume, as men either neglect or employ the means of grace. They represent, not the physical but the moral condition of the human mind. Human and Christian society is divided into various classes of every variety of feeling and conduct; but the motive of good or ill is in the heart. (*St. Paul's Cathedral Sermons.*) *The parable of the sower*:—I. THE SOWER. Jesus Christ Himself; through all the dispensations of dreams, angels, prophets: at last He came Himself with the seed of the kingdom. II. THE SEED. 1. Ordinary seed is covered with an outward coat. The life principle is hidden away from observation. So we find Christ in appearance like a man. The words you hear are but the outward covering; there is an inward life. There are those who split hairs about Christianity; they know the outward form, but not the vital principle. Others ignore the outward form, and say Christianity is wholly spiritual. Both necessary. 2. The life-giving property is not in the soil, but in the seed. You may enrich the soil as you will, but without seed you can have no life. Scientists have given up the idea of spontaneous generation. There is no salvation apart from the indwelling Christ. 3. Where life is there is power. Sow pebbles, but they have no power to reach a harvest. The Word powerful because living. 4. Every seed brings forth after its kind. You cannot sow wickedness and reap religion. III. THE SOIL. 1. The wayside hearer. 2. The stony-ground hearer. The emotional hearer. 3. Among the thorns—the double-minded hearer. 4. Good soil—the man who hears aright. (*G. F. Pentecost.*) *The parable of the sower*:—I. THE SOWER. 1. Our Lord first of all means Himself. His work chiefly was sowing the seeds of Divine truth in the minds of men. The reaping began on the day of Pentecost. 2. Then by the sower is meant our Lord's apostles and the seventy disciples whom He sent out to preach the gospel, and all ministers of His Word. 3. All Christian people are sowers. By our words and actions we are sowing some kind of principle in the minds of others; we cannot help it. II. THE SEED. God's Word. 1. It is sometimes rather more the word of man than the Word of God—the Word of God mingled with the Word of man. 2. It may be one part of the Word of God to the exclusion of another, grace to the exclusion of works. 3. Christ is in an emphatic sense the Word of God; so we are to sow the Word concerning Christ. III. THE GROUND. What does the ground mean?—the heart rather than the head, the affections rather than the intellect. A cold, feelingless man cannot effect much as regards religious truth. IV. THE RESULT OF THE SOWING. (*H. S. Brown.*) *Bad soul-conditions not unalterable*:—Why, there was a time, I suppose, when the very fruitfullest fields of England were something like either the stony places or the thorny places in this parable. I have recently seen in the distant parts of these islands, and in one of the most rugged parts of the West of Scotland, ground which I saw four or five years ago, when the present proprietor came into possession of it; and that ground—well, I cannot say there was anything on it like a wayside, for there was not a wayside within miles of it—but still, it was chiefly stones, and gorse, and heather, and all sorts of stuff; but the application of culture, skill, some capital, and so on, has made it very decent land indeed, and it is yielding something now for the support of man and beast. There is nothing fatalistic in this parable, nothing to drive to despair the man who feels he is bad, and wishes to be a true Christian, and nothing to encourage in sin the man who has no desire after good things. God's grace can do for the heart, be what it may, what man's skill has done a thousand times for the land that he cultivates. (*Ibid.*) *The parable of the sower opened*:—I. THE AGENT. The hearts of men and women are Christ's spiritual husbandry. 1. Christ is the principal sower, the master sower; ministers are His servants (2 Cor. vi. 1). 2. Christ sows His own by creation. Ministers have no seed of their own; their doctrine and word belong to Christ. 3. Christ

is a most wise and skilful sower; He hath a perfect knowledge of all sorts of ground. 4. Christ is a universal sower. 5. Jesus Christ is an efficacious sower. He can cause the seed to take root; but so cannot a minister. II. HIS ACTION. Jesus Christ may be said to go forth in three ways: 1. In His own person. 2. In the ministry of His servants. 3. To sow His seed by the Spirit. III. HIS DESIGN. (*B. Keach.*) *Ministers are Christ's seedsmen*:—1. They, like seedsmen, must sow the seed in its proper season (2 Cor. vi. 2), 2. They must sow their seed, let it be what weather it will, a time of peace, or a time of persecution. 3. They must sow no seed of their own, but Christ's doctrine (Deut. xxii. 9). 4. They must sow all Christ's seed. 5. Constantly, as long as seed-time lasteth (Eccl. xi. 6). 6. They sow, but the whole success is of God. *Why the Word is compared to seed*:—1. Seed springs not out of the ground naturally; it must first be sown. The heart must first have the seed of grace infused. 2. Seed, let it be of wheat or barley, is the choicest of each sort respectively. True grace is of an excellent nature. 3. Until seed is sown there will be no increase. So the heart must take in the Word by faith. 4. Seed sometimes which is sown lies a considerable time in the ground before it springs up, or visibly appears; it must have time to take root. 5. Clods of earth, being not broken, oftentimes obstruct the springing up of the seed, or it is from thence it appears not to have taken root so soon as in some other ground; so likewise, through the power of Satan's temptations and corruption of the heart, the Word is for a time hindered. 6. A husbandman observes the proper time and season of sowing his seed. 7. Men are not sparing in sowing their seed, but scatter it plentifully, though they expect not all to take root. 8. A husbandman soweth his seed on what ground he pleaseth; some he lets lie barren. There are nations to whom the gospel is not sent. 9. That the earlier seed is sown the better it is rooted; so with the Word sown in the hearts of young people. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 4 and 19. **Some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.**—*Way seed devoured by birds*:—The birds devour the truth we neglect to cover. Let us study these birds:—1. The first belongs to the heron species, having long legs, a long bill, broad strong wings, and an eye keen as an eagle's, yet filmy at times, which causes serious mistakes. This is the bird of intellectual scepticism. It delays your acceptance of the truth with all kinds of questions. 2. There is another bird, of dirty and ruffled feathers, a nondescript, but a hearty eater of the seed dropped by the wayside. It is evil associations. They neutralize the influences of the Spirit of God. 3. There is the muscular bird with curved beak that holds like a vice. It is a moth eater of the falcon order, and ravenous, evil habits, and belongs to a large family. 4. There is a bird of bad odour. Carrion drops from feather and from bill. It is of the buzzard tribe. Let us call it the inconsistencies of Christian professors. 5. There is a dull and heavy bird, not easily scared away, of the booby order. It is religious indecision. All these hinder our salvation. (*T. E. Brown, D.D.*) *The seed by the wayside*:—The truth described as a "seed." There are manifold facilities about the emblem on which we may dwell. The seed has a germinating power in itself that leads to endless reproduction. So has every true word. Then man is but the soil. If you are to get Divine desires in the human heart, they must be sown there: they are not products of the soil. Again, man's part is accurately described as a simple reception, not passive, but a co-operation. Then these different kinds of soil are not unalterably different: it is an acquired disposition, not a natural characteristic that is spoken of. I. The beaten path. II. The lost seed. I. Let us think about THAT TYPE OF CHARACTER WHICH IS HERE SET FORTH UNDER THE IMAGE OF "THE WAYSIDE." It is a heart trodden down by the feet that have gone across it; and because trodden down, incapable of receiving the seed sown. The seed falls upon, not *in* it. Point out ways in which the heart is trodden down. 1. By custom and habit. The process of getting from childhood to manhood is a process of getting less impressible. 2. The heart is trodden down by sin. It is an effect of sin that it uniformly works in the direction of unfitting men to receive God's love. Every transgression deprives us, in some degree, of power to receive God's truth, and make it our own. 3. The heart is trodden down, so far as receiving the gospel is concerned, by the very feet of the sower. Every sermon an ungodly man hears, which leaves him ungodly, leaves him harder by the passage of the Word once more across his heart. II. THE LOST SEED. Satan's chosen instruments are those light, swift-winged, apparently innocent flocks of flying thoughts, that come swooping across your souls, even whilst the message of God's love is sounding in your ears. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Hardened by sin*:—

Every transgression deprives us, in some degree, of power to receive the Divine word of God's truth, and making it our own. And these demons of worldliness, of selfishness, of carelessness, of pride, of sensuality, that go careering through your soul, my brother, are like the goblin horseman in the old legend; wherever that hoof-fall strikes, the ground is blasted, and no grass will grow upon it any more for ever! (*Ibid.*) *Hardened by habit*:—The best way of presenting before you what I mean will be to take a plain illustration. Suppose a little child, just beginning to open its eyes and unfold its faculties upon this wonderful world of ours. There you get the extreme of capacity for receiving impressions from without, the extreme of susceptibility to the influences that come upon it. Tell the little thing some trifle that passes out of *your* mind; you forget all about it; but it comes out again in the child weeks and weeks afterwards, showing how deep a mark it has made. It is the law of the human nature that, when it is beginning to grow, it shall be soft as wax to receive all kinds of impressions, and then that it shall gradually stiffen and become hard as adamant to retain them. The rock was once all fluid, and plastic, and gradually it cools down into hardness. If a finger-dint had been put upon it in the early time, it would have left a mark that all the forces of the world could not make nor can obliterate now. In our great museums you see stone slabs with the marks of rain that fell hundreds of years before Adam lived; and the footprint of some wild bird that passed across the beach in those old, old times. The passing shower and the light foot left their prints on the soft sediment; then ages went on, and it has hardened into stone; and there they remain and will remain for evermore. That is like a man's spirit; in the childish days so soft, so susceptible to all impressions, so joyous to receive new ideas, treasuring them all up, gathering them all into itself, retaining them all for ever. And then, as years go on, habit, the growth of the soul into steadiness and power, and many other reasons beside, gradually make us less and less capable of being profoundly and permanently influenced by anything outside us; so that the process from childhood to manhood is a process of getting less impressible. (*Ibid.*) *The seed sown on the wayside*:—I. WHAT IS THE WAYSIDE? 1. The wayside hearers are such as are unploughed, unbroken up by the cutting energy of the law. 2. It is trampled upon by every passer by. The want of "understanding" lies in this: that they do not see their own connection with the Word. II. WHAT IS THE SEED? No matter where the seed fell, in itself it was always good; that which fell on the wayside was the same as that which fell on good ground. Thus the blame of man's condemnation is in himself. The seed is the Word of God. III. WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES WHICH PROVE FATAL TO ITS BEING RECEIVED AT ALL? 1. The hardness of the ground. 2. The active agents of evil which were near at hand snatched it away. You give no advantage to the devil which is not immediately seized by him. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *The seed and the husk*:—Christ is the living seed, and the Bible is the husk that holds it. The husk that holds the seed is the most precious thing in the world, next after the seed that it holds. (*W. Arnot.*) *The Word falling on the external senses*:—Falling only upon the external senses, they are swept off by the next current; as the solid grain thrown from the sower's hand rattles on the smooth hard roadside, and lies on the surface till the fowls carry it away. (*Ibid.*) *Unskilful sowing fruitful*:—If the seed is good, and the ground well prepared, a very poor and awkward kind of sowing will suffice. Seed flung in any fashion into the soft ground will grow; whereas, if it fall on the wayside, it will bear no fruit, however artfully it may have been spread. My father was a practical and skilful agriculturist. I was wont, when very young, to follow his footsteps into the field, further and oftener than was convenient for him or comfortable for myself. Knowing well how much a child is gratified by being permitted to imitate a man's work, he sometimes hung the seed-bag, with a few handfuls in it, upon my shoulder, and sent me into the field to sow. I contrived in some way to throw the grain away, and it fell among the clods. But the seed that fell from an infant's hands, when it fell in the right place, grew as well and ripened as fully as that which had been scattered by a strong and skilful man. In like manner, in the spiritual department, the skill of the sower, although important in its own place, is, in view of the final result, a subordinate thing. The cardinal points are the seed and the soil. In point of fact, throughout the history of the Church, while the Lord has abundantly honoured His own ordinance of a standing ministry, He has never ceased to show, by granting signal success to feeble instruments, that results in His work are not necessarily proportionate to the number of talents employed. (*Ibid.*) *The wayside hearer*:—The proposals made to the wayside hearer suggest nothing at all to him. His mind throws off Christ's offers as a slated roof throws off hail.

You might as well expect seed to grow on a tightly-braced drum-head as the Word to profit such a hearer; it dances on the hard surface, and the slightest motion shakes it off. (*Marcus Dods.*) *What can we do with the trodden path?* May it not be possible to do as the farmer would do, if he had some piece of field across which men and animals were constantly passing? May we not pray for ability to put some sort of hurdles across, to prevent the mere animal portion of our life, whether of pleasure or business, or of our own animal passions, from crushing the spiritual life, and prevent us from giving earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (*Robert Barclay.*) *No time for understanding:*—"How is it, my dear," inquired a schoolmistress of a little girl, "that you do not understand this simple thing?" "I do not know, indeed," she answered, with a perplexed look; "but I sometimes think I have so many things to learn that I have not the time to understand." Alas! there may be much hearing, much reading, much attendance at public services, and very small result; and all because the Word was not the subject of thought, and was never embraced by the understanding. What is not understood is like meat undigested, more likely to be injurious than nourishing. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 5, 20, 21.—**Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth.**—*Stony places:*—I. THE NATURE OF THE GROUND. 1. Stony ground wants breaking up. These persons enter into a profession of religion before their hearts are thoroughly broken in the sense of sin. 2. Stony ground is cold; what colder than a stone? These persons are without spiritual warmth. 3. Their hearts may be compared to stony ground from the heaviness or lumpishness of their spirits. These hearts are heavy and not soon removed out of their evil course. 4. Stony ground doth not drink in the rain that falls from heaven. 5. All the hearts of men are naturally hard. 6. Stony ground seems to be the fruit of the curse for man's sin. So these persons seem still to be under the curse. 7. Stony ground by reason of the little earth that is found there, never brings forth fruit to perfection. So these persons only bring forth the externals of religion. 8. Stony ground, when the sun rises high and begins to shine hot upon it, the scorching beams thereof soon causes the blade to wither away. II. THE SUCCESS OF THE SEED. Stony or hard hearted hearers may go a great way in the profession of religion. 1. They may hear the Word of God with diligence. 2. They may be zealous hearers. 3. They may receive the Word into their hearts. 4. They receive it with joy. 5. They believe for a while. 6. They may yield obedience to all external duties. 6. They may become members of a visible church. 6. They may leave all gross acts of sin. 7. They may have some inward joy as to the hopes they have of heaven. Why they go so far? 1. From the common illuminations of God's Word and Spirit. 2. Because a temporary faith is not wholly without product. 3. It may arise from regard for some ministers. 4. Self-respect and honour may cause them to go so far. 5. It may be self-profit. 6. It may arise from that seeming sweetness and satisfaction they meet with from within themselves whilst they continue in the profession of religion. 7. It may be from a natural desire of being saved. 8. It may be from the shame and reproach which are attached to open wickedness. From whence it arises that these hearers go no further: 1. It may arise from the great ignorance that is in them. 2. It ariseth from the unsoundness of their hearts, the ground is not good. 3. It ariseth from the deceitfulness of their hearts. 4. They go no further because of their pride. 5. Because they had no vital but artificial principle in them. 6. Because there is some secret sin hid in their hearts. (*B. Keach.*) *Withering is the fearful fate of all stony-ground hearers:*—I. AS TO THE EVIL OF THE CAUSE THAT PRODUCES SUCH EVIL EFFECTS. 1. The principal cause is the stoniness of their hearts. 2. Privative cause. (1.) Want of moisture. (2.) Want of earth. (3.) Want of taking root. II. THE BADNESS OF THOSE EFFECTS THAT PROCEED FROM SUCH EVIL CAUSES. 1. Barrenness. 2. Another effect that attends these professors is earthliness. 3. Lukewarmness in religious duties. 4. Pride. 5. Uncharitableness. 6. Contention. 7. Inconstancy. 8. Apostacy. (1) In judgment. (2) In affection. (3) In practice. (4) In respect of means. III. THE DANGER AND FEARFUL CONDITION OF SUCH THAT WITHER. 1. They disappoint God of His expectation. 2. These persons are hateful to God, as they seem to declare to all the world that there is not that good to be found in God which the Word and ministers do affirm. 3. They bring scandal upon the Church. 4. In respect of the world these men's sin and danger is also aggravated. 5. In respect to the sin itself, none is more odious and dangerous. Relapse more dangerous than the disease. 6. This sin of withering is

generally punished with other sins, (1) with blindness of mind; (2) with judicial hardness of heart; (3) with a seared conscience; (4) with final impenitence. 7. How may it be known that a man is withering? 1. Self-confidence. 2. When he cannot bear a searching doctrine. 3. When his conscience is not so tender as it was. 4. When a man's prayers are short. 5. When he cannot stand in the hour of temptation. 6. Deadness of spirit. (*Ibid.*) *The temporary Christian:*—This man's faith has five stages: 1. He knows the Word. 2. He assents to it. 3. He professes it. 4. He rejoices inwardly in it. 5. He brings forth some kind of fruit; and yet, for all this, hath no more fruit in him than a faith that will fail in the end; because he wants the effectual application of the promise of the gospel, and is without all manner of sound conversation. This faith is like corn on the housetop, which grows for a while; but, when the heat of summer comes, it withers. (*W. Perkins*). *An easily-moved susceptibility:*—There is deep knowledge of human nature and exquisite fidelity to truth in the single touch by which the impression of religion on them is described. The seed sprang up quickly; and then withered away as quickly, because it had no depth of root. There is a quick, easily-moved susceptibility, that rapidly exhibits the slightest breath of those emotions which play upon the surface of the soul, and then as rapidly passes off. In such persons words are ever at command—voluble and impassioned words. Tears flow readily. The expressive features exhibit every passing shade of thought. Every thought and every feeling plays upon the surface—everything that is sown springs up at once with vehement vegetation. But slightness and inconstancy go together with violence. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." True; but also out of the emptiness of the heart the mouth can speak even more volubly. He who can always find the word which is appropriate and adequate to his emotions, is not the man whose emotions are deepest: warmth of feeling is one thing—permanence is another. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Shallow soil like superficial character:*—You meet with such persons in life. There is nothing deep about them—all they do and all they have is on the surface. The superficial servant's work is done: but lazily, partially—not thoroughly. The superficial workman's labour will not bear looking into—but it bears a showy outside. The very dress of such persons betrays the slatternly, incomplete character of their minds. When religion comes in contact with persons of this stamp, it shares the fate of everything else. (*Ibid.*) *The superficial character connected with the hard heart:*—Beneath the light thin surface of easily stirred dust lies the bed of rock. The shallow ground was stony ground. And it is among the children of light enjoyment and unsettled life that we must look for stony heartlessness—not in the world of business—not among the poor, crushed to the earth by privation and suffering. These harden the character, but often leave the heart soft. If you wish to know what hollowness and heartlessness are, you must seek for them in the world of light, elegant, superficial Fashion—where frivolity has turned the heart into a rockbed of selfishness. Say what men will of the heartlessness of Trade, it is nothing compared with the heartlessness of Fashion. Say what they will of the atheism of Science, it is nothing to the atheism of that round of pleasure in which many a heart lives: dead while it lives. (*Ibid.*) *Warm affections easily moved:*—Among the affections, when they are warm and newly stirred, the seed speedily springs. (*W. Arnot.*) *Christ not to be on the surface:*—Do not keep Christ on the surface; let Him possess the centre, and thence direct all the circumference of your life. (*Ibid.*) *Hasty, but not lasting:*—The marked antithesis between the *immediate* reception and the *immediate* rejection is to be carefully observed. That which is hasty is not lasting. Grace, in almost every case, is slow and progressive; for, in the human heart, it has much to contend against; and God treats us as free agents, putting no force on any man's will. (*J. Ford.*)

Vers. 7, 22. **And some fell among thorns.**—1. Thorns and thistles occupying the field suck in the sap which should go to nourish the good seed. The capability of the ground is limited. 2. Thorns and thistles favoured as indigenous plants by the suitability of soil and climate outgrow the grain. The thorns are at home, the wheat is an exotic. 3. Anxieties about work, clothes, &c., become the thorn plants, harmless in appearance at first, which in the end may choke the seed of grace in your heart. 4. Worldly cares nursed by indulgence into a dangerous strength are further like thorns growing in a corn field, in that they interpose a veil between the face of Jesus and the opening, trustful look of a longing soul. The seed must be exposed to the sun. 5. As long as weeds live they grow. They must be cast out

of the field. 6. The thorn is a prickly thing; it tears the husbandman's flesh, as well as destroys the fruit of his field. (*W. Arnot.*) *The deceitfulness of riches:*—Greek mythology tells of one who, being offered a valuable reward if successful in a race, resolved to outstrip all competitors. But, alas! she did not, and why? Because enemies ever and anon flung pieces of gold just before her. The temptation was too strong; as often as she saw the glittering coins, she stopped to pick them up, and so lost the prize. A picture that of some who start on the spiritual course; they forfeit the recompense because they stop to pick up gold. "The deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." *The deceitfulness of riches:*—1. Riches are deceitful in the insidious growth which they promote of the desire for wealth, quite independent of what it is worth in its positive power. 2. In the transition from a normal desire for wealth to the fervour of avarice, there is great danger of deception among men. 3. Wealth is deceitful in taking the place of legitimate enjoyments in life. 4. The relative growth of the selfish over the generous. 5. In the gradual development of self-esteem and self-sufficiency. 6. In an entire perversion which takes place in the minds of men. 7. Wealth deceives men by promises. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Worldliness:*—In gold there is a halter: in silver there is bird-lime; in the farm there is a bond; in the love of the world there is a chain. While we search for gold we are strangled; while for silver we stick fast; while we seize upon the farm, we are taken prisoners. (*Ambrose.*) *The soul has a limited capacity for growth:*—There is nutriment enough in the ground for thorns, and enough for wheat; but not enough, in any ground, for both wheat and thorns. The agriculturist thins his nursery-ground, and the farmer weeds his field, and the gardener removes the superfluous grapes, for that very reason: in order that the dissipated sap may be concentrated in a few plants vigorously. So in the same way, the heart has a certain power of loving. But love, dissipated on many objects, concentrates itself on none. God *or* the world—not both. "No man can serve two masters." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." He that has learned many accomplishments or sciences, generally knows none thoroughly. Multifariousness of knowledge is commonly opposed to depth—variety of affections is generally not found with intensity. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *The word choked:*—A merchant of ——, engaged in a lucrative trade, was convinced by the Spirit of God that he was an heir of hell, but might, by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, become an heir of heaven. The god of this world tempted him with much earthly gain; and God, in the Person of the Holy Ghost, offered him durable riches and righteousness. He was fully convinced, as he said, that the riches of earth and the riches of heaven were set before him, and that he could not obtain both, but might take his choice. He glanced at heaven's durable riches, and then settled his covetous gaze on earth's glittering tinsel. He paused, feeling his choice was for eternity! but, at length, strangely, madly cried, "Give me my portion *here*." His prayer was answered—his riches were multiplied; "but," said he, "I know that to gain the world, I have lost my soul." *Deceitfulness of riches:*—Some years ago, when preaching at Bristol, amongst other notes I received to pray for individuals, one was this: "A person earnestly desires the prayers of the congregation, who is prospering in trade." "Ah," said I to myself, "here is a man who knows something of his own heart, and who has read the Scriptures to some purpose." (*W. Jay.*) *Riches like thorns:*—Riches are like thorns; they may be touched, but not rested upon. Can'st thou set thy heart upon a thorn without piercing thyself through with many sorrows? (*Venning.*)

Vers. 8, 23. **But other fell on good ground and brought forth fruit.** The fruit *thirty-fold* seems to represent the case of those who fear; *sixty-fold* the case of those who hope; the *hundredfold* those who love. (*Hermann.*) As in the bad ground, the diversity was threefold—the wayside, the stony, and the thorny;—so in the good ground there is a like diversity—the fruit yielding some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (*Jerome.*) *Qualifications for the reception of God's truth:*—1. Sensibility to religious impressions. 2. Thoughtfulness. 3. Unworldliness. 4. An honest and good heart. *Growth precious because perilous:*—In the soil of the heart is found all the nutriment of spiritual life, and all the nutriment of the weeds and poisons which destroy spiritual life. And it is this which makes Christian character, when complete, a thing so inestimably precious. There are things precious, not from the materials of which they are made, but from the risk and difficulty of bringing them to perfection. The speculum of the largest telescope

foils the optician's skill in casting. Too much or too little heat—the interposition of a grain of sand, a slight alteration in the temperature of the weather, and all goes to pieces—it must be recast. Therefore, when successfully finished, it is a matter for almost the congratulation of a country. Rarer, and more difficult still than the costliest part of the most delicate of instruments, is the completion of Christian character. Only let there come the heat of persecution—or the cold of human desertion—a little of the world's dust—and the rare and costly thing is cracked, and becomes a failure. (*F. W. Robertson.*) *Good ground*:—1. A good and honest heart is a perfect and sincere heart. 2. It is an obedient heart. 3. It is a faithful heart. 4. It is a jealous heart. 5. It is a fruitful heart. (*B. Keach.*)

Vers. 11, 12. **Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.**—*The preparation necessary for understanding the mysteries of the gospel*:—I. TO EXPLAIN WHAT IT IS THAT WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN ORDER TO ATTAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MYSTERIES OF THE GOSPEL. 1. We ought to have an honest desire after light, and if we have this desire it will not remain unproductive. There is a connection announced in Scripture between desire and its accomplishment. The hungry are filled. Thousands are content that the Bible shall remain a sealed book—unto them it will not be given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. 2. We ought to have a habit of prayer conjoined with a habit of inquiry; and to this more will be given. It is in the Bible and not out of the Bible, where this light is to be met with. It is by the Spirit of God shining upon the Word, that His truth is reflected with clearness upon the soul. 3. We ought to do all that we know to be God's will, and to this habit of humble, earnest, desirous reformation, more will be given. Doing stands in the same relation to prayer that reading does. Without the one or the other it is the prayer either of presumption or hypocrisy. Christ is given to those who obey Him. Reading, prayer, and reformation are obvious things; and it is the neglect of these obvious things which involves guilt. It is for want of seeking if you do not find. II. EXPLAIN HOW IT IS THAT THE MYSTERIES OF THE GOSPEL ARE, IN MANY CASES, EVOLVED UPON THE MIND IN A CLEAR AND CONVINCING MANIFESTATION. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and Divine truth must be brought to man from above. (*Dr. Chalmers.*) **For whosoever hath, to him shall be given.**—*Increase of gifts*:—God heaps upon His faithful and elect people (such as the apostles were) new graces and benefits day by day, so that they abound in virtue and holiness: but from the unbelieving, the ungrateful, and the unworthy, He gradually takes away His gifts, both of nature and of grace. I. He who hath FAITH, to him shall be given the knowledge of the mysteries of God's kingdom; for these cannot be known without faith. II. They who have EARS OF HEARING, who come to God with a pure desire to learn and to obey, to them shall be revealed celestial verities; but from those who have not this pure desire, and who indulge in their own lusts and errors, shall be taken away, by degrees, that little knowledge of Divine things which they possess. III. He who HATH DOCTRINE—in the sense of *using* it—he who diligently preaches and communicates to others that which he has received, shall never be at a loss for doctrine and words which he may speak and preach, for God will supply them to him. But if any one does not make use of doctrine, he will gradually forget it and lose it. (*Lapide.*) *More and more, or less and less*:—I. THIS PRINCIPLE AS IT IS ILLUSTRATED IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER. II. IN REFERENCE TO THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL GRACIOUS SOULS. Let us give instances: 1. When a man believes the gospel in its most elementary form, that man will soon be taught the higher truths. Use starlight and you shall have sunlight soon. 2. And as it is with faith so is it with the possession of any genuine grace. Faith, love, zeal, increase by use. 3. The way in which this promise is carried out by our gracious God is worthy of observation. God gives more by a process of growth, as in parable of the sower. The main point is, have we the living principle? III. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRUTH as exemplified in the experience of the insincere. They who have heard the gospel from childhood, now give up hearing. No taste for it. Lost power to appreciate it. Others receive the grace of God, but not acting upon it, lose its power. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The law of increase*:—In the world among men it is commonly observed that it never rains but it pours. Where you see a sheep there is generally a flock. Money makes money. Poverty remains poor. Want of capital brings bankruptcy. A company starts on imaginary or borrowed capital: it makes a fuss and a noise, but it never prospers. By-and-by it breaks up, and all is lost, and yet it never had anything of its own to lose: thus it verifies

to the letter the truth—"whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Ordinarily, prosperity is a hen which likes to lay where there is a nest egg, and when one swallow of success comes others will follow it. Certainly we have found it so in the things of grace; where grace has been given more grace comes; spiritual capital well worked multiplies the stock, and spiritual wealth is realized where there is a solid basis to begin upon. (*Ibid.*) *Increase gradual through effort*:—Why did not the Lord give us the largest measure of grace to begin with—why promise more abundance as an after result? I think it is because we value grace all the more when it comes to us by little and little. Again, it is to our good to be exercised to get more grace. A poor woman is allowed to go and glean in a field; your generosity might say, "Come, my good woman, I will give you the corn, and you shall not have the trouble of gleaning;" but this might not be so good a thing for her as to allow her to gather the wheat by her own efforts. It is often much better to enable the poor to help themselves than to help them without their own exertions. God is wise towards us; he means to give us the corn, but he decides that we shall glean it, and so exercise ourselves unto godliness. We are to become rich in grace, but it is to be by heavenly trading. Growth is gift, remember that. (*Ibid.*) *Life before increase*:—A dead post which we saw in the ground twenty years ago is the same post still, no bigger, no smaller, and only altered by becoming rotten underground; but the tree which you saw twenty years ago, what a difference there is in it. It was then a sapling which you could bend, but now it has become as an iron pillar, and there is no moving it. So ought it to be with us, and we must aspire to have it so. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 13. **Because seeing they see not; and hearing they hear not.**—*Insensibility to the truth*:—Christ here touches upon a common fact of our human nature—spiritual insensibility—that state in which spiritual things pass before a man; and instead of being beautiful and blessed realities, they are meaningless to him. There is nothing strange or fanciful in this representation. We understand how a man may be face to face with anything, and yet not perceive it, through the appropriate faculty in him being beclouded or dormant. Men are coming into contact with nature, art, charity, and yet are insensible to them. Not that God decrees arbitrarily that a certain few shall be blessed with the power of vision and receptivity, and others deprived of it. It is not imposed upon men, but is the result of certain lines of conduct. I. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE STEPS BY WHICH THIS GROSS, INSENSITIVE STATE IS REACHED. 1. It is induced by all kinds of depravity. It is one of the penalties of wrong-doing that the moral nature is made unresponsive to spiritual things. 2. It grows on a man through the mastery of worldly pursuits—of business, home, social, and political life. 3. The habit of cherishing doubt is another circumstance which tends to weaken spiritual vision and understanding. Caution must not degenerate into procrastination. II. FORMAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN VERITIES IS ONE THING, LIVING REALIZATION OF THEM IS ANOTHER. III. HE WHO OPENED THE UNDERSTANDING OF HIS DISCIPLES IS WITH US NOW TO DO THE SAME FOR US. "Lord, that I might receive my sight." (*T. Hammond.*) *Scientific insensibility*:—There is a huge boulder stone close by a man's cottage on the moor. He has been familiar with that stone from the early days of childhood. He has passed it a thousand times. He has climbed over it when a boy, and rested in the shadow of it when hot and tired with the toil of manhood. It was there in his father's time before him. And yet he has never seen that stone. Ask him the composition of it. Ask him the geological history of it and he cannot tell. But a geologist passes that way, and at a glance he sees what the cottager has never caught a glimpse of. To him the stone tells stories of ages long anterior to Adam; he hears in imagination the wash of primæval waters and the mighty crash of volcanic upheavals; to the one man the rock reveals no secrets; to the other it is a scroll written within and without. There is a man, cold, guileful as a serpent, who is full of an insatiable hoarding propensity. The one object of his life is to amass wealth. He will allow himself no luxury, no recreation, but toils and saves with hungry, greedy avarice unremittingly. His eye glitters like lightning, and his busy brain is for ever concocting plans for lucrative investment. The money-fever burns like a fire in his heart. The one ruling motto of his sordid life is get—get gold. Now such a man hears of a philanthropist, who has parcelled out his fortune for certain needy classes of the community. And the whole thing is an enigma, a puzzle to him. He cannot understand how any one can have any pleasure in giving away anything. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is a saying

which he simply cannot and will not believe. And he calls the philanthropist a fool, an idiot, a madman. He has no vision for the duty and blessedness of generosity. His whole nature rises up in antagonism to it, and he thrusts the idea of benevolence mockingly away from him. (*Ibid.*) *Worldliness causes insensibility* :—Their sympathy and force gradually get concentrated around one object in life: around trade, or art, or science, or legislation; and what lies outside of that they do not see, or hear, or understand. In this way the higher or heavenward side of men's natures is often stifled and dimmed. It is hindered from coming into play, until, by-and by, it becomes crystallized, fixed in its state of inaction and torpor. We are exceeding delicate and critical beings to keep in order. On the one hand, religiousness is apt to overshadow our lawful worldly activity—and that leads to asceticism, a morbid love of seclusion. On the other hand, our worldly activity is apt to overshadow and blight the religious side of our nature—and that leads to moral insensibility. It is exceedingly difficult to preserve a true balance. (*Ibid.*) *Sin causes moral insensibility* :—The evil thing in which you have indulged is not like a wave which lifts a ship for a moment, and then passes on, leaving everything as it was before. Far from that! It has entered as a poison into your spiritual nature—it has become an actual blighting force in your character. You are essentially a different man: the measure of your religious capacity is so much less than it was. Let any one yield to selfishness, to falsehood, to cynical ill-humour, to lust, and darker and darker every day the chambers of the inner man become; feebler and feebler the energies for all heavenly belief and obedience; more and more earthly the tastes and inclinations; narrower and more circumscribed the horizon of life; deeper and more profound the loss of the soul. This is one of the most solemn aspects of sin. (*Ibid.*) *Intellectual conception not spiritual realization* :—There are many whose creed is accurate enough, who subscribe intellectually to all the essentials of the Christian faith, but to whom, after all, they are no more than words—mere words. As a person may sit down before a piano, possessing a capital knowledge of the technicalities of music, and able to touch skilfully, and yet never enter into the spirit of the piece he is playing, so you may sit down before the Word of God, sweep your fingers over its glorious keys, and yet never bring forth one strain of its sweet Divine harmony. Ignorance and familiarity are two things, seemingly very unlike each other, and yet they are often yoked together. It is not uncommon to find a man who has filled up stores of information in his memory. History, science, biography, have been laboriously studied through long toilsome years. But his knowledge is not digested; it lies in his mind, like pieces of rock in water, undissolved. Ask him the date of a battle, and he will tell you. But ask him to expound, unfold in a living manner, any event of history, and he cannot. He is not a learned man—simply a stuffed one. What he carries with him is nothing better than a collection of fossilized lore. And the gospel may be known in such a way that it does not vitalize and inspire you. It may lie outside of you, be no more to you than light to a blind man, or sweet sounds to a deaf man, or poetry to an unpoetic man. (*Ibid.*) "*Hearing, they hear not*" :—I. WHY THIS IGNORANCE AND LACK OF APPREHENSION? 1. Bias, prejudice. So the Jews, because our Lord did not come in the character they anticipated, rejected Him. Our faith, to be strong and healthy, must rest on conviction. 2. Inattention. 3. Love of the world. Man's mind is often preoccupied, and so, like the seed which fell amongst thorns, the word sown is choked. 4. Pride of heart. It is right for every man to sift Christian evidence, but he must do so with humility—there must be a teachable disposition. II. DANGER OF CONTINUING THUS IGNORANT. 1. The longer we continue in sin, the more inveterate will become our habits of sin. 2. To resist light adds to our guilt. The privileges of a Christian land, a Christian home, and a Christian training, bring with them corresponding obligations (Luke xii. 47, 48). 3. Sometimes brings as its punishment judicial blindness and hardness of heart. 4. Neglected opportunities will aggravate future woe—"Son, remember." III. HOW MAY THIS IGNORANCE BE OVERCOME? 1. By the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. 'Tis He who knows "the deep things of God," and He alone who can teach them. 2. Labour to know the mind of God—"Search the Scriptures." 3. Sanctify the Sabbath—not simply a day of physical rest, but of spiritual labour. 4. Do not stifle the voice of conscience. 5. Look up to Christ as your "all in all." (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *Moral impotence no excuse for irreligion* :—THAT MORAL IMPOTENCE IS NO EXCUSE FOR IRRELIGION. Examine the true character of their inability, and hence discover the equity of their condemnation. They were incompetent for the holy service of religion; they were in effect *blind, deaf, insensible*. 1.

Their spiritual incompetency did not arise from the absence of sufficient information as to the nature and extent of their sacred obligations. The obligations of man are in proportion to the means he might possess for acquiring a knowledge of duty. The responsibilities of the Jews were great. In the gospel no plea is left for ignorance. 2. It could not be ascribed to any natural incapacity. They had eyes, though they saw not; not by the want, but abuse of these capacities. The Jews rejected Christ in spite of clear evidence. 3. The inability was moral. It was their own, in contempt of entreaty, from the bias of their own will. 4. The effective restoration is effected by moral influence. The true cause of man's inability to believe in Christ, is love of sin. How can the spirit wedded to the earth soar as on an eagle's wing to heaven? This view of moral impotence does not do away with responsibility; is no excuse for irreligion; not a misfortune, but rebellion; a depraved nature no excuse. The day will come when all excuses for moral impotence will fail. (*A. Tidman.*) *The guilt and doom of impenitent hearers*:—The presages and symptoms of the approach of the tremendous judgment—the judgment of having the ministry of the gospel continued, not as the means of salvation, but as the occasion of more aggravated sin and punishment. 1. The abuse or neglect of the ministry of the gospel in time past. 2. Incorrigible obstinacy under chastisements. 3. Growing insensibility or hardness of heart. 4. Repeated violences to the motions of the Holy Spirit, and convictions of conscience, or obstinate sinning against knowledge. 5. The withdrawing of Divine influences. 6. And, as the consequence of all, a general decay of religion. (*President Davies.*) *The effects of God's communications*:—Correspond to the willingness or wilfulness of men. I. DIVINE TRUTH ELICITS HUMAN DISPOSITIONS. II. DIVINE TRUTHS REPELLED BECAUSE OF DISLIKE. III. DIVINE TRUTH CANNOT BE REJECTED WITHOUT INJURY. (*M. Braithwaite.*) I. CHRIST'S PARABLES—Roused inquiry; Rendered subjects familiar; Removed prejudice; Convinced of wickedness; Impressed subjects on the mind. II. THEIR SUPERIORITY over all others. Others were cold and dry—His were interesting. Others were trifling—His were important. Others founded on improbable and impossible subjects—Christ's were founded on common scenes and familiar things. (*Bishop Porteus.*)

Vers. 16, 17. **But blessed are your eyes, for they see.**—I. THE TWO CLASSES OF PERSONS HERE MENTIONED. Prophets—inspired men. Righteous men—saints. Every prophet was not a righteous man. To be a righteous man is more desirable than to be a prophet. Grace is a higher endowment than inspiration or genius. II. THESE TWO CLASSES OF PERSONS EAGERLY ANTICIPATED THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION. Various dispensations—one religion, as one ocean. Every degree of experimental knowledge of the true religion awakens a desire for additional information. It satisfies, yet it stimulates. Moses, &c. The Divine revelation of the true religion has been progressive. The desires of the great and good are not always gratified according to their intensity. They must submit to the will of God. III. OUR PRIVILEGES ARE FAR SUPERIOR TO THOSE OF THESE TWO CLASSES OF PERSONS. 1. We should be grateful. 2. We should cherish a sense of responsibility. 3. We should strive to outstrip in attainment those whom we surpass in privilege. (*Various.*) *Divine illumination*:—I. TO WHOM THESE WORDS WERE ADDRESSED. 1. They were not addressed indiscriminately to the people. 2. They were addressed to His chosen disciples. 3. The same distinction must be observed when these words are applied to ourselves. II. THE SPIRITUAL IMPORT OF THESE WORDS WHEN THUS APPLIED. 1. What the faithful disciples saw—"the Lord's Christ." 2. How it was the disciples saw those things in Him. 3. Unspeakably blessed are they who thus see. Are you in possession of these privileges? what do you know of them? (1) Do you know that you are destitute of them? (2) Do you humbly hope that light has visited your soul, but lament how dim it is? (*F. Close. M.A.*)

Vers. 34–30; 34–41. **But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares.**—*The tares and the wheat*:—This parable relates chiefly to the condition of the Church. I. The MIXED CONDITION of His Church in our world. II. THE CAUSE of this mixed condition of the Church. The existence of His people Christ traces to Himself. The tares traced to a spiritual author—stealthily. Satan does not show himself while doing his work. III. THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN SERVANTS with respect to this mixture in the Church. 1. They notice it. 2. They wish to alter this state of things—to put an end to this mixture. IV. THE END WHICH SHALL AT LAST BE PUT TO THIS MIXTURE IN THE CHURCH. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The wheat and*

*the tares*:—I. WHO ARE THE TARES? 1. Those who outwardly profess religion, but inwardly reject it. 2. It is likeness to wheat which makes tares specially mischievous. II. WHY ARE THERE TARES? 1. The servants of Christ, loving their Master, make His interests their own. They look anxiously to the crop. 2. The same question still disturbs us—"Why does God permit His crop to be marred?" (1) It has always been so. David complains of this (Psa. lv. 12). The apostles grieved by it (2 Cor. xi. 26; Gal. ii. 4). (2) The reason is brief—"An enemy hath done this." It is Satan's chief triumph to hinder Christ's work by false brethren (2 Cor. xi. 13-14). (3) Beyond this we must not inquire; sufficient that God permits this present trial of faith and patience. III. WHAT TO DO WITH TARES. 1. Zealous servants who grieve at spoilt crops would fain pull up. 2. Their zeal natural and creditable. Natural: (1) Because these cause enemies to blaspheme; (2) Because foes within more dangerous than foes without; (3) Because trust is shaken and love quenched. Creditable: because love for Christ is the source of the wish. 3. Yet mistaken. 4. The reason given. 5. It is sad to retain in Church impostors, more sad to cast out faithful. Better trust men too much than too little. (*E. Gray, M.A.*) *Fifth Sunday after Epiphany*:—I. THE TWO PLANTERS—"He that soweth good seed is the Son of Man." "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." 1. The One is good and beneficent. He cultivates His own rightful possession. He acts as a gracious Benefactor. The other is only malignant, the common foe of all good. 2. The Planter of good is first; the planter of evil comes after. As Satan followed the planting in Eden, so he follows every holy planting. 3. The Planter of all good does His work openly, in the eyes of all. It is the nature of good and truth to be open; falsehood and sin are cowardly. II. THE TWO GROWTHS. 1. They are intermingled in the same field. 2. They are hard to distinguish. 3. They both grow. III. THE TWO POLICIES. 1. That of the servants is natural, and seemingly founded on just zeal for what is good, but is unwise and hurtful. We are not able to judge rightly. 2. The policy of the Master, though more perplexing, is far better. It leaves things less satisfactory for the time, but accomplishes the greatest good in the end. 3. The policy of the Master will prevail, despite all efforts to the contrary, even to the end of the age. IV. THE ULTIMATE CONSUMMATION. 1. Note the reapers—not the "servants." Mightier strength and higher wisdom than theirs is needed. 2. Note the commands which they execute—"Gather ye together," &c. 3. Note the final result. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The tares and the wheat*:—I. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO CLASSES. 1. The first have solid spiritual excellence. 2. They are useful. The false disciples have neither—they are useless and noxious. II. HOW THEY COME TO BE THUS ASSOCIATED. The good seed Divinely planted. Satan has a hand in the life of the wicked in this world. The tares are known. III. HIS INTENTION THAT BELIEVERS AND FALSE PROFESSORS SHOULD ABIDE TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST. 1. There is nothing so likely to convert false professors as seeing real Christians amongst them. 2. That the faith and patience of believers may be tested and manifested to the world. IV. THIS ASSOCIATION CANNOT LAST FOR EVER. 1. The return to judgment—"Gather ye the tares." 2. "The bundles." Let the companions in sin be grouped in doom. 3. "To be burned"—punishment and pain. 4. We are also animated by hope—"Gather the wheat into My barn." (*B. W. Noel.*) *Tares and wheat*:—We are to understand mixture of good and bad in the Church. There are persons whose blind, intemperate zeal would bid fair to be injurious to the Church. Our Lord reserves the judgment to the end of the world. From this mixture of good and bad *advantages result to both*. 1. The persecutions which the righteous experience from the wicked are inconvenient, but become proper trials of virtue. 2. They give the good an opportunity of testifying their sincerity. 3. The good in their intercourse with the bad may reclaim them. 4. The good by dwelling amongst the wicked see the pernicious consequences of vice. 5. The good are a restraint upon the wickedness of the evil doers. 6. For the good of both God mercifully permits this mixture of the pious and the wicked. (*The Pulpit.*) *The two sowers*:—Why did this enemy thus go his way? I. HE DID NOT WISH TO BE SEEN. He did not care for the fame of doing the thing; all he cared for was that it should be done. How different from us! Satan does his work unknown, &c. II. HE HAD DONE HIS WORK. He needed but one sowing time. III. HE HAD CONFIDENCE IN THE SEED. It would not fail. It was the true seed of hell. What confidence does this exhibit in the vigour and vitality of error. Have we like confidence in the life and power of truth? IV. HE HAD CONFIDENCE IN THE SOIL. The soil was evil—would not fail him—it would do its work. V. HE HAD CONFIDENCE IN THE ATMOSPHERE. It is on the air as much as on

the soil that the harvest depends. He trusts to the evil air and the evil seed suiting each other. VI. HE HAD OTHER WORK TO DO. He does not abide in one place, he goes about to do work elsewhere. He is an incessant worker. What an enemy have we to fight with. "Resist," &c. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The conditions and limitations of moral growth*:—The good and the worthless. I. THESE ARE EXTERNALLY ALIKE, BUT VITALLY DIFFERENT. II. AS THEY GROW THEIR VITAL DIFFERENCES BECOME MORE MANIFEST. III. THE WORLD-FIELD IN WHICH THEY GROW IS THE PROPERTY OF CHRIST. It is one of the mysteries of the Divine government that God should allow an enemy in the field at all. IV. THOUGH THEY ARE PERMITTED TO GROW TOGETHER FOR A TIME THERE IS A DESTINED PERIOD OF SEPARATION. Many a sinner might have been worse than he is, but for restraining contact with Christians. We must not think that forbearance is equal to complacency of evil. A strong government can afford to tolerate its foes. (*E. D. Green.*) *Why God delays to punish the sins of men in this world, reserving them to the judgment which shall be hereafter*:—I. AS THEY REGARD THE PARTICULAR CASE IN VIEW, AND ACCOUNT FOR THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN SUSPENDING HIS JUDGMENTS. 1. The sinners in the text are spared on account of the righteous that they may not be involved in the punishment due to the sins of others. But some sinners are spared out of mercy to themselves, in hope of their amendment. The interests of good and bad men are so united in this world that no signal calamity can befall the wicked but the righteous share it; hence, out of mercy to the righteous God spares the incorrigible sinners. This was Abraham's plea for Sodom. But are there not many ways of punishing men without including others in the calamity? Could not these single out desperate sinners? 1. How do you know but that the wicked are often thus punished? God does exercise judgment on the wicked in silent manner. 2. But allow the objection that a great number of wicked men ripe for destruction are spared and allowed to flourish in the world, this is for the sake of the good. The wicked man has friends whose welfare depends upon his prosperity. All men are related to others. Are all these relatives as great sinners as the man himself, would you not turn innocent children into the streets! We cannot arraign the wisdom and goodness of God. The day is coming which will dissolve all these present relations between men, when every one shall stand singly. I. BUT WHY DOES GOD PERMIT SIN? "The enemy sowed his tares." Such is the condition of human nature that no care can prevent the growth of vice. Those who demand that God should prevent evil by irresistible power demand nothing less than that He should destroy all law and religion, and divest men of reason and understanding, their chief characteristic. Since offences must needs come, why are not men as certainly distinguished by rewards and punishments as by virtue or vice? 1. Reason fails for a due administration of rewards and punishments, as it does not know men's hearts in this world. 2. This is inconsistent with the present condition of men, and the goodness of God. They are in a state of trial, and should have time to show themselves; and as to the goodness of God, it would ill become Him to destroy men as long as there were hopes of amendment. 3. Who has reason to complain? II. AS FURNISHING US WITH A PRINCIPLE OF REASON AND EQUITY APPLICABLE TO MANY CASES. Because God spares the wicked who deserve punishment for the sake of the righteous, is it reasonable that men and magistrates should act in like manner? Temporal judgments are executed immediately, the law does not consider those related to the offender. Magistrates are not at liberty to suspend the execution of justice. The reason of the two cases is very different. The punishments of this world are not final, but the means to secure virtue; but this end can never be secured by allowing criminals to go unpunished. In a word, offences in this world must be discouraged by present punishment or else the world will be a scene of misery to the best men. Offences against God, though of a deeper dye, have not in them the same call for immediate vengeance. The ends of justice are best served by delay. (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*) *The parable of the tares*:—I. THE SOWING. II. THE GROWING. III. THE REAPING. (*J. C. Jones.*) *Points in the parable*:—I. INABILITY TO FORM PERFECT JUDGMENT OF INDIVIDUALS NOW. Men are to be known by their fruits, but the fruits of a man's life cannot be fairly judged until they are ripened and complete. II. THE DUTY OF ACCEPTING PROFESSION NOW AND LEAVING FINAL JUDGMENT FOR GOD'S FUTURE. III. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IS VITAL, and there can be no real confusion between them. IV. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD PERSONS WILL ONE DAY BE CLEARLY SHOWN. V. THE TEMPTATION TO USE OUTWARD AND PHYSICAL FORCES TO ACCOMPLISH THE AIMS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH MUST BE RESISTED. (*Anon.*) *The tares and wheat*:—We have—I. A BENEFICENT OPERATION—"Sowed

good seed." 1. The man that sowed was Jesus. This was His special work during His public life on earth. 2. The good seed are the righteous. In the former parable the good seed is the Word of God. 3. The field is the world. Whether this is to be understood in its general and most comprehensive sense, or whether it signifies the Church in the world, it is not easy to determine. II. A MALICIOUS DEED—"While men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." Notice: 1. The agent. 2. The season—"while men slept." It is said of the ungodly that "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." There is nothing they hate so much as the light, for there is nothing so contrary to their nature and so unfavourable to their designs. As John Bunyan says: "My Lord Understanding's house was too light for the Prince of Darkness, and therefore he built a high wall to darken all the windows." 3. The result. III. A NATURAL REQUEST. From attempting such a work we are debarred on account of—1. Its difficulty. It seems that the apostles and early Christians were endowed with a peculiar gift called the "discerning of spirits," so that for them to separate the precious from the vile might have been an easy matter. We do not know what degree of imitation is compatible with a total absence of true piety. 2. Its danger—"Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." IV. AN IMPORTANT DECISION—"Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." But concerning this separation, notice—1. The period when it will take place. It will be at "the time of harvest;" which harvest, we are told, is the end of the world. 2. The instruments to whom the work will be committed—"The reapers are the angels:" who are free from the manifold infirmities by which we are now encompassed—ignorance, selfishness, prejudice, impatience, partiality, animosity. 3. The manner in which it will be accomplished. 4. The final results which will follow—"to burn them:" "My barn." (*Expository Outlines.*) *The parable of the wheat and the tares:*—This parable shows that persecution upon the account of religion is utterly unlawful, though men may hold grand errors: 1. Because the best men on earth are not infallible. They do not know but that what they call heresy may be a truth of Christ. 2. Because Jesus Christ is only the King and Sovereign of the conscience. None ought to impose upon the consciences of men in matters of religion. 3. Because it is directly contrary to that golden rule, or true moral precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye the same unto them." 4. Because such severities have no tendency to convince the conscience. *Believers are a choice people—choice grain:*—They appear to be a choice and precious people, and are so—1. Because of the seed from whence they sprang; they are the seed of God, the seed of Christ (Isa. liii. 11). 2. In respect of that holy image which is stamped on them. 3. In respect to their union with Christ. 4. If we consider what an excellent spirit they are of, and how they walk with God every day, and have communion with the Father and the Son, it shows they are a precious people in God's esteem. *Why are the saints compared to wheat?*—1. Wheat is the product of a rare and choice seed; they are the product of the Holy Ghost. 2. The seed of wheat must first be sown in the earth before it can produce increase, so must the seed of grace be first sown in men's hearts before they can bear God's image or bring forth fruits of holiness. 3. Wheat is a profitable sort of grain. So the saints and people of God are a profitable people to the world (Prov. x. 21; 2 Cor. vi. 19). 4. Wheat will abide and live in the sharpest winter, when some other grain will not. So true believers do abide, endeavour, and live in the times of sharpest trials, persecutions, tribulations, and temptations. 5. Wheat seems sometimes as if it were quite dead, you can in winter hardly see one green blade, so the saints seem sometimes to themselves as if they were almost dead (Psa. lxxxviii. 15). 6. Wheat is sometimes, by reason of unseasonable weather in the spring, very sickly, the colour being changed. So in like manner, by reason of Satan's temptations, and the corruptions of their hearts, and evils of the times, poor believers are very sickly and weak. 7. Yet when the sun shines sweetly upon wheat and God sends dry and seasonable weather, it wonderfully on a sudden revives (Hos. xiv. 7). 8. Wheat needs weeding, and if it be not it will soon be grown over with weeds (Matt. xiii. 22). 9. Full ears of wheat hang down their heads, being full of corn. So sincere believers are humble and lowly-minded. 10. Wheat is not ripe presently, but must have time to grow to maturity, and receive the former and latter rain before it is fit for the sickle. 11. Tares oft-times are found to grow amongst wheat, which tends greatly to

mar its beauty. 12. Wheat, when it is fully ripe, is gathered into the barn. So when Christ sees a believer is ripe for heaven, He gathers it as a shock of corn fully ripe. 13. Sometimes a harvest seems much in bulk, but there is but little corn. So the spiritual harvest may seem much in bulk—a mighty appearance of a great harvest, but there may be but few sincere believers amongst them. 14. Wheat dies first, before it rises. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." *While men slept the devil sowed his evil seed:*—This may caution all ministers of Christ to take heed and watch, lest evil seed be sown amongst them, the seed of error and heresy. 1. Many may, under fair pretence of exalting Christ, sow pernicious and poisonous seed. 2. By way of council, beware of such men who are lifted up with pride, who to magnify themselves seem to despise others, perhaps more worthy than themselves. 3. Beware of such that effect novelty and strive to promote new notions in matters of religion. 4. Likewise have a watchful eye of such that cry up this and that man, and cry down others. 5. Moreover, watch such who are subject to wander from their own fold and pasturage, and such also that are ready on every small occasion to take offence. *I will show you how the wheat, or sincere Christians, ripen for the harvest:*—1. As the wheat after it is sown hath the ripening time, so have the saints and people of God. 2. Wheat ripens gradually, that it is hardly discerned; so the godly ripen gradually also, it is hardly discerned by themselves or others. 3. Wheat must have showers to ripen it. So must the saints have the showers of Divine and heavenly doctrine, or spiritual dew to ripen them (1 Cor. iii. 6). 4. Moreover, believers grow and ripen for the harvest by means of the shining and sweet fructifying influences of the "Sun of Righteousness." 5. Some Christians are like wheat smitten or blasted in respect of their hope, peace, and joy, and so seem to languish (Amos iv. 9). *What should a believer do to ripen for the harvest?*—1. Improve all opportunities, all seasons of grace. 2. Observe well and cherish all those convictions of your consciences, and of the Holy Spirit, either in respect of sin or duty, lest ye sin them away. 3. Improve all the dispensations and providences of God, or those various trials, afflictions, and temptations you meet with. 4. Live much in the sense and thoughts of death and of the judgment day (Deut. xxxii. 29). 5. See that you gather day by day, get more strength against sin. 6. Labour to add to your faith virtue (2 Peter i. 5. 6, 7). 7. The way to ripen for heaven is to strive against all those things that hinder or obstruct your growth, as thorns and briars (Matt. xiii. 22). *I shall show you how the tares, or the wicked, ripen for the harvest of sorrow:*—1. Mercies not improved, but slighted and neglected, ripen the wicked apace for harvest. 2. When conscience is disregarded, men turning a deaf ear to those checks and sharp rebukes they find in their own breasts, this tends to ripen them for ruin. 3. When the judgments of God, instead of softening, harden the sinner. 4. When the motions of the Spirit in His common operations (Gen. vi. 3) are quenched (Rom. ix. 22). 5. The tares, or wicked men, ripen for the harvest by letting lusts conceive in them. 6. Another gradation or progressive motion to ripening sinners is when lusts conceived break forth into acts, or the abominable commission thereof (James i. 15). 7. A third step is when sins, yea, great sins, are extenuated and rendered small. 8. When sin is delighted in; some men take pleasure in wickedness. 9. When they are told of their sins and hellish polution, and they plead excuses as if the fault was not theirs. 10. Such men are certainly ripe for harvest who are found glorying in their sin and shame (Phil. iii. 19). Lastly, a hardened heart, a seared conscience, final unbelief and impenitence follows, and so they come to be fully ripe for the harvest. *I shall show you how fitly the end of the world may be compared to harvest:*—1. The harvest is the time that the husbandman longs for, and hath much patience until it cometh. So this spiritual harvest is the day which all the godly long for, and are exercised with patience under all their trials until it comes. 2. When the harvest is fully ripe then both the wheat and tares are severed one from another by the servants of the husbandman. So all sincere Christians and hypocrites shall, by the angels, be separated one from another. 3. When the harvest is fully ended there is no more wheat or tares growing, or to be found in the field. So when this world is ended there will be no people, either godly or wicked, to be found to live as they do together now in this world, any more. 4. Harvest is a time of great joy to an industrious husbandman, but the sluggard meets then with great disappointment, and is perplexed with grief and sorrow (Gal. vi. 8). *How shall the tares be known from the wheat, or hypocrites be discerned from sincere believers at the end of the world?*—1. The tares shall be known by their contemptible bodies—their bodies shall not be glorious as the

bodies of the saints, (Phil. iii. 21). 2. The ungodly will be known by their company—the saints shall be attended by all the glorious angels. 3. The wicked will be known by their cries and lamentations (Isa. lxv. 14.) 4. The ungodly will that day be known by that signal act of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xxv. 22). 5. Moreover, it will be known by the different placing of the one and the other—"and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, the goats on His left." (*B. Keach.*) *The tares:*—This parable does not forbid Church discipline: 1. Because Church discipline is enjoined by many plain passages of the New Testament, and that no interpretation of any parable may be put against that. 2. Discipline rightly understood is for the saving of a man to the Church, and not for the casting of him out of it. 3. What the parable here recommends is not so much the following of a certain course as the cultivation of a certain spirit. I. DO AS WE WILL, WE SHALL NEVER GET EVIL ENTIRELY OUT OF THE CHURCH—the ideal Church is in heaven (Rev. xxi. 27). This truth has a two-fold lesson. 1. It is well fitted to comfort those who are labouring in the ministry of the gospel, and to all who are tenderly solicitous for the honour of the Church. 2. It is calculated to correct the error of those who decline to enter into the membership of the Church because it is not absolutely pure. II. The great lesson taught us is that THE RASH ATTEMPT TO SEPARATE THE GOOD FROM THE BAD IN THE CHURCH MAY RESULT IN A STATE OF THINGS THAT IS WORSE THAN THAT WHICH IS SOUGHT TO BE AMENDED. III. AT THE LAST JUDGMENT THERE WILL BE AN ABSOLUTE SEPARATION BETWEEN THE GOOD AND THE BAD. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *A rash zeal for amendment injurious:*—The best all round is often lost by attempting to have the absolute best in any one department. In the organ, if every note be separately tuned up to the scale, discord will be the effect when one attempts to play upon it; for it is an imperfect instrument, and most of the fifths must be left somewhat flat, and the few others made somewhat sharp, the octaves alone being put in perfect unison. So, if we attempt to bring up the music to the point of perfection, we shall most likely put the whole church out of tune. We must make the best of things as a whole, and be content sometimes with a little less in some departments, and a little more in others, in order that we may have harmony in all. Peace in a church is essential to progress. (*Ibid.*) *The mixed state of society:*—1. It is apt to make the darnel think itself as good as the wheat. 2. The urgency of the call to Christ is deadened by the fact that we are not treated differently at present. 3. The wheat is apt to think itself no better than the darnel. (*Dr. M. Dods.*) *Likeness of wheat and tares:*—If by tares is meant the *bearded darnel* of our English fields, then the tares and the wheat bear a strong resemblance to each other. They both belong to the tribe of grasses, and to the special group Triticinœ, or wheat-like grasses. Their structure, mode, and conditions of growth are almost the same; when in the blade they present an appearance so very similar, that the Jewish farmer, who is careful in weeding his field, cannot distinguish between them, and it is only when the fruit is formed that the impostor is detected by its smaller and darker ear. (*Hugh Macmillan.*) *Mixture of tares and wheat:*—Adam's family was the one, and the only one visible Church for a time. Therein there was a Cain, as well as an Abel; both sacrificed, though both were not sanctified. In Abraham's family (a visible Church) there was an Ishmael, as well as an Isaac: in Isaac's house an Esau as well as a Jacob. Among the patriarchs, Simeon and Levi, with Joseph and Benjamin. In Noah's ark (a type of the Church), there was a Ham; among the apostles, a Judas; among the deacons, a Nicholas. (*Bishop Thomas.*) *The end of the world:*—The *end* is not a mere running down of the machinery that keeps the world going, it is not a mere exhaustion of the life that keeps us all alive, it is not a hap-hazard cutting of the thread; it is a conclusion, coming as truly in its own fit day and order, as much in the fulness of time and because things are ripe for it, as the birth of Christ came. It is the time of the gathering up of all things to completion, when the few last finishing strokes are given to the works that suddenly show the connection of things which seem widely separate, and reveal at once the purpose and meaning of the whole. Men will then understand, what now scarcely one can constantly believe, that it is God's purpose that is silently being accomplished, and that it is usefulness to Him that is the final standard of value. (*Marcus Dods.*) *Blending of wicked with godly:*—Six reasons why in the kingdom of grace wicked men should be inseparably mingled with godly. 1. Because hypocrites can never be severed but by Him that can search the heart. 2. Because if men should make the separation weak Christians would be counted no Christians, and those who have a grain of grace under a load of imperfections would be accounted reprobates. 3. Because God's vessels of honour for all eternity,

not as yet appearing, but wallowing in sin, would be made castaways. 4. Because God, by the mixture of the wicked with the godly, will try the watchfulness and patience of His servants. 5. Because thereby He will bestow many favours on the wicked, to clear His justice and render them the more inexcusable. 6. Because the mixture of the wicked, grieving the godly, will make them the more heartily pray for the day of judgment. (*A. Fuller.*) *Separate bundles of tares:*—Sinners of the same sort will be bundled together in the great day: a bundle of atheists, a bundle of epicures, a bundle of persecutors, and a great bundle of hypocrites. Those who have been associated in sin will be so in shame and sorrow, and it will be an aggravation of their misery, as the society of glorified saints will add to their bliss. (*Matthew Henry.*) *Difficulty of right judgment in society:*—As we grow up in society together, one man is in the main very like another. Of two of your friends, it may be the one who makes least profession of religion that you would go to in a difficulty in which much generous help and toil are needed. Take a regiment of soldiers, or a ship's crew, and you may find the ungodly as brave and self-sacrificing in action, as observant of discipline as the others. There may be little to show that there is a radical difference in character. (*Marcus Dods.*) *Separating tares from wheat:*—The most troublesome of the foreign seeds in wheat are the tares (the weed commonly called *darnel*, and in botany *Lolium temertulum*). Its kernels are somewhat smaller than those of wheat, and the usual way to separate them is that adopted by the women, who sit at home with the children around a pile of wheat and patiently pick out the tares one by one. (*Van Lennep.*) *Sowing tares in malice:*—Illustrating from Hindoo life, Roberts says, "This is still literally done in the East. See that lurking villain, watching for the time when his neighbour shall plough his field; he carefully marks the period when the work has been finished, and casts in what the natives call *pandinellu*, that is pig-paddy; this, being of rapid growth, springs up before the good seed, and scatters itself before the other can be reaped, so that the poor owner of the field will be years before he can get rid of this troublesome weed. But there is another noisome plant, called *perum-pirandi*, which is more destructive of vegetation than any other plant. Has a man purchased a field out of the hands of another? The offended says, 'I will plant *perum-pirandi* in his grounds.'"

Vers. 31, 32. **The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed.**—*The mustard seed:*—I. The kingdom of heaven IN THE WORLD is like a mustard seed sown in the ground, both in the smallness of its beginning and the greatness of its increase. The first promise given at the gate of Eden contained the gospel as a seed contains the tree. Never to human eye did the seed seem smaller than at the coming of Christ; the infant in a manger. II. The kingdom of heaven IN A HUMAN HEART is like a mustard seed, both in the smallness of its beginning and the greatness of its increase. In the design of God moral qualities hold the first place, physical magnitude is subordinate and instrumental. Origin imperceptible, result great, small on earth, it will be great in heaven. From the diminutive life of grace, the life of glory will grow. The kingdom of darkness also grows gradually from small to great; the first sin a small seed. (*W. Arnot.*) *A great growth from a small seed:*—The operation of the same law may be observed in later ages. In the Popish convent at Erfurt a studious young monk sits alone in his cell, earnestly examining an ancient record. The student is Luther, and the book the Bible. He has read many books before, but his reading has never made him wretched till now. In other books he saw other people; but in this book for the first time he saw himself. His own sin, when conscience was quickened and enlightened to discern it, became a burden heavier than he could bear. For a time he was in a horror of great darkness; but when at last he found "the righteousness which is of God by faith," he grew hopeful, happy, and strong. Here is a living seed, but it is very small: an awakened, exercised, conscientious, believing monk, is an imperceptible atom which superstitious multitudes, and despotic princes, and a persecuting priesthood will overlay and smother, as the heavy furrow covers the microscopic mustard-seed. But the living seed burst, and sprang, and pierced through all these coverings. How great it grew and how far it spread history tells to-day. We have cause to thank God for the greatness of the Reformation, and to rebuke ourselves for its smallness. (*Ibid.*) *The grain of mustard seed:*—I. We are taught by nature that small beginnings are, under God, productive of great ends. II. We are taught it in the kingdom of providence. III. We are taught it in the kingdom of grace. In the change produced upon the human heart. In the progress of the gospel

(Psa. lxxii. 16). (*J. Campbell.*) *The mustard seed:*—The kingdom of heaven. I. ITS PRESENT APPARENT INSIGNIFICANCE. II. ITS VITALITY. III. ITS FUTURE GRANDEUR. It might seem less likely to prevail and to become a universal benefit, than some other contemporary systems or influences. Christ, as a Jew, belonged to the exclusive people. He was rejected by His own people. The few who were attached to Him misunderstood His teaching. After the resurrection His kingdom became slightly more visible. But our Lord was confident even under adverse conditions; His truth was of the nature of a seed. What is the vital element in Christianity but the wisdom and beauty of His teaching. Not the holiness of His life, or the love He showed, but the revelation of God in Him which draws men to Him; in His death our Lord points to the eventual greatness of His kingdom. It has indeed become a tree. To all disheartened in work; we must not measure work by size but by vitality. Have we joined the Church because it is large or because it is living. (*M. Dods, D.D.*)

Ver. 33. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven.**—*The parable of the leaven:* I. THE POWER WHICH IS TO RAISE MAN MUST COME FROM WITHOUT.—"Took leaven." It is assumed that man needs raising, and this is possible only through the introduction from without of an energy distinctly Divine. Humanity has no self-leavening power. I would ask those who imagine that we need no celestial leaven to raise us how long our moral elevation as a people would continue if the influences which come from the Bible could be shut off? II. THAT THE LEAVEN MUST BE LODGED AND WORK WITHIN. The leaven was *hidden* in the meal. This denotes that the mysterious element which possesses such penetrative powers is for a time concealed from sight. The chief mischief connected with man lies within. Many systems of reformation proceed on the supposition that the unhappy condition of man is external, not in himself, but in his circumstances. But vice is not confined to slums. The chief elements of man's degradation are ignorance, selfishness, and misery; these are within a man, and can be counteracted only by that which shall work within. III. THE PENETRATIVE AND DIFFUSIVE POWER OF THIS LEAVEN. It spread till the whole was leavened. This it does because it is leaven, and works according to the law of its own essence. It was not leavened in an instant, but by gradual infection; an emblem of the spread of the gospel in the soul. Professors do not become perfect all at once. Religion operates from individual to individual. Where leaven is at work it will be felt. It works amidst seeming improbabilities. (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *Leaven a hidden force:*—It was hidden; so hidden that those who will believe in nothing but what they see might doubt whether it was there at all. It was hidden but not lost; hidden that it might not be lost; hidden that its searching and diffusive energy might be tested and revealed. From this feature of the parable we not only do not shrink, but we give to it the utmost possible prominence. It holds strict analogy with the great fact that the mightiest forces in the world are all lodged, if I may so speak, out of sight, and work outwards, and upwards, and downwards from their deep home of mystery. The chief Worker—He without whom no one and nothing could work at all—"hideth Himself," so that no eye hath seen Him, or can see Him. From His secret pavilion He sustains all the forces of the universe, whether they be mechanical or vital, and yet His Hand is never seen. The leaven of man himself—that leaven without which there would be no man—his soul, is hidden. How hidden, we know not; where hidden, we know not; but it is hidden, and, amid all the marvels of its working, is never seen. No eye hath seen man at any time, any more than it has seen God. (*Ibid.*) *Leaven a living force:*—The yeast used in making bread is by no means the dead, inoperative thing it seems. It is a plant as much alive as the snowdrop that has just burst its way through the soil, and foretold by its graceful bell the coming of the spring. It is a vegetable growth, of enormous energy for its size, multiplying itself at a rate incredible to any but the scientific mind; feeding its active life, as it grows from spot to spot, upon the material into which it has been introduced, until there is nothing left for it to feed upon and assimilate to itself. The change it effects in its progress is described by the chemist as a decomposition of the sugar contained in the dough, and a liberation of carbonic acid; but the principal fact revealed by the microscope is that you have a congregation of living cells, gathered about a living central nucleus, all charged to the full with that subtle and supreme force, which we, in our ignorance, call LIFE. Like that, says Christ, is the kingdom of heaven—the rule of a living presence, of a living God. The gospel is the power of God at work for the salvation of souls. Christianity is itself a living, breathing

presence, not a mere dull, dead thing; a life. It is characteristic of leaven to show an almost insatiable greed of activity. It is a type of stupendous increase. With a rapidity that is marvellous, it passes on from particle to particle of the meal in which it is placed, until the last stroke of work is done. Give it an appropriate temperature, and favourable materials, and an express engine will stop sooner than it. In no point is the teacher's simile better sustained by facts than in the unspeakable and irrepressible activity of the gospel. It is a living force: and action is essential to its life, as air is to the life of man. Only with tremendous difficulty can it be checked. (*J. Clifford, M.A.*) *Christianity, like leaven, works in a congenial and much assisting sphere:*—It is hid, according to Christ's parable, in MEAL, not amongst stones on which it could have no effect, not amongst iron-filings where a magnet would be better placed, not in the earth where seeds would get better nourishment; but in meal; in that material which has an affinity for it, and upon which it is specially fitted to act. The leaven is placed where it is *wanted*, where it can *work*, and where it can work with *success*. Leaven is not better suited to work in meal than Christ in men's hearts for their salvation. (*Ibid.*) *Leaven an assimilating force:*—The portion of dough taken as a ferment, and inserted within the three measures of meal, makes that meal like itself, subjugates it, and impresses its own character upon it, penetrating it totally, and assimilates its nature to its own. It is not simply that it touches particle after particle of the flour, as water might do—that would only make a paste; or comes into contact with the whole meal, as a hand might do—that would simply move it without altering it; but it really puts its own life into the meal and penetrates it with its living nature from centre to circumference. It is in the nature of leaven to make all the meal like itself; so it is in the nature of the gospel to Christianize those who receive it; *i.e.*, Christ subjugates, penetrates, and assimilates the believer to Himself. He puts His life into each part of him; (1) the life of His thoughts into his thinking, so that every thought is brought into captivity to Christ; (2) the life of His love into his heart, so that he is unselfish and beneficent; (3) the life of His righteousness into his conscience, so that the law of right is his rule; (4) the life of His obedience into his will, so that it is his meat to do the will of the Father. (*Ibid.*) *The parable of the leaven:*—We learn—I. GOD EMPLOYS HUMAN AGENCY FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE SOUL. II. TO OUTWARD APPEARANCE, THE MEANS ARE VERY UNLIKELY AND INSIGNIFICANT. III. THE CHANGE PRODUCED IS RADICAL, GRADUAL, FINAL, AND MANIFEST. IV. FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NECESSARY FOR THE LEAVEN TO WORK SUCCESSFULLY. (*A. Griffin.*) *The law of "leaven" has signally characterized the entire history of the "kingdom of heaven" in the world:*—The leaven illustrates—I. The history of God's REVELATION TO MAN. II. The history of the CHRISTIAN CHURCH. III. The history of OPINIONS OR DOCTRINES. IV. The history of INDIVIDUAL CONVERSIONS. 1. Do not despise the day of small things. 2. Infer hope for the world. (*J. M. Sherwood.*) *A symbol of Christianity:*—I. CHRISTIANITY IS REALLY ALIVE. II. CHRISTIANITY IS AT WORK AS WELL AS ALIVE. III. CHRISTIANITY, LIKE LEAVEN, WORKS IN A CONGENIAL AND MUCH ASSISTING SPHERE. IV. THE MOST DISTINGUISHED FEATURE IS THAT IT LEAVENS THE MEAL IN THE MIDST OF WHICH IT IS PLACED. So the most characteristic effect of Christianity is that it Christianizes men; it assimilates them to Christ by filling them with the life of Christ. V. THE LEAVEN IS HIDDEN IN THE MEAL, AND ALL THE WORK IT DOES, IT DOES SECRETLY. Christ's best, most real, and most powerful work, is always unseen. VI. BUT IT ADVANCES VICTORIOUSLY AND TOTALLY. (*J. Clifford, M.A., LL.B., B.Sc.*). This parable represents—I. The PENETRATING power of Divine grace. The grace of God is a vital and holy force. II. The MYSTERIOUS power of Divine grace. The grace of God is imparted to the soul. But is imperceptible in the soul. III. The TRANSFORMING power of Divine grace. The grace of God works slowly, successfully. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Children to be educated, not only in the truth, but for its diffusion:*—This parable describes the progressive influence of the truth of God *within* the heart, and also *without* in the world. Leaven works *strongly*, so does the Word on the thoughts and feelings. It works *silently*; so does the gospel secretly diffuse its influence through the soul. Leaven works *permanently*, imparting qualities which remain fixed in the substance which it penetrates. I. THE BIBLE STATES THAT THE WHOLE WORLD IS TO BE LEAVENED BY THE TRUTH OF GOD (Psa. xxii. 27, 28). II. THE BIBLE WHICH CONTAINS THIS HEAVENLY TRUTH IS ADMIRABLY FITTED FOR UNIVERSAL DIFFUSION. 1. It is a Divine authority. 2. It speaks to the heart of man. 3. It prescribes to man his duty in every possible station and relation in which he can be placed. 4. It is a

bond of union. 5. It inspires and fills the heart with hope. III. LITTLE HAS YET BEEN DONE FOR LEAVENING THE WORLD WITH TRUTH. IV. WHY HAS NOT MORE BEEN DONE FOR THE LEAVENING OF THE WORLD WITH TRUTH. V. HOW SHALL WE PREPARE TO DO MORE THAN HAS YET BEEN DONE FOR LEAVENING THE WORLD WITH TRUTH. VI. NEVER WILL THE CHURCH MAKE SUCCESSFUL EFFORT FOR THE LEAVENING OF THE WORLD WITH TRUTH UNTIL EVERY CHILD UNDER HER CARE BE EDUCATED WITH A VIEW TO THIS NOBLE OBJECT. (*W. B. Kirkpatrick.*) I. THE ELEMENTS WHICH ARE HERE BROUGHT TOGETHER. 1. The first of these may be considered as representing human nature. The parable represents the possibility of man's restoration. 2. The second element used in this parable may be regarded as an emblem of the gospel. The gospel, when compared to the world, exhibits an amazing disproportion (1) as to quantity. The leaven is small in proportion to the meal. The small origin of the gospel in contrast with the mighty change effected by it; (2) the contrast as to quality. There is a natural adaptation in the one element to the other, the one is moist, the other dry; this is favourable to the process. So in the gospel there is moral adaptation. (3) A contrast as to their influence. We might despise the hiding of the leaven as trivial; but the result is seen. The progress of the gospel irresistible. II. THE MODE OF OPERATION BY WHICH THIS RESULT ENSUES. 1. These elements must be brought into actual contact. 2. The operation is gradual. 3. It is invisible. 4. It is irresistible. III. THE FINAL PROGRESS AND TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL. 1. That all analogy leads us to expect its universal progress. 2. This is the purpose of God. 3. This is the burden of prophecy. 4. The musings of holy men on the future glory of the Church point in this direction. 5. The prayers of the pious refer to this event. 6. This result is highly desirable. 7. The Spirit of God is fettered by no analogy, His influence may be signally exerted. (*T. Smith.*) *Christianity an impartation, not an evolution:*—The kingdom, then, is not an off-shoot from the world, but some sort of an importation into it: not an outgo, but an income. It is a new ingredient put into society. The woman put the yeast into the dough; the dough did not develop the yeast. Scripture is everywhere consistent with this representation. History did not produce Christ: He came into the world from beyond and above. The Law, too, came into the world; it was not a Mosaic transplant from Egypt, but entered the world at the point where Sinai and the sky meet. The whole series of communications from Eden to Patmos is consistently exhibited as so much importation. Our own experience, too, has something to say in the same line. We are succumbing every day to influences that are not set down in the books. A world of unseen facts and forces lies against us as the sea lies against the shore. What we call conscience is no barren discernment between what is bad and what is good; it is the organ through which the unseen comes near to us and becomes within us both as a consciousness and a power. We are not left alone, or let alone. O God, Thy Kingdom comes! It does come, keep coming. An eye peeps in at the skylight. Impalpable fingers tap at the window and knock at the door. The sky mixes itself with the ground, the sea shimmers under the light of the stars, and the meal stirs and is made quick at the touch of the entering leaven. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *The work of Christianity will be complete:*—I do not know that anything exact is denoted by the *three* measures. It may refer to the totality of the race as represented by the three sons of Noah by whom the earth was peopled; or perhaps to the totality of the individual man as composed of body, mind, and spirit. At any rate, this threefoldness points, as usual, to entireness and completeness. The kingdom of heaven has come on earth to stay and to work a whole work. This irresistibleness is a ground of vast encouragement. To be sure this force is one that works stealthily. We do not see the processes. God constructs the machinery of event as we make clocks, with all the pinions and axles packed in behind the dial-plate. We see the pendulum swing, but we do not think of it as result, because we do not see the weight that, with cunning indirection, is all the time pulling at the pendulum. . . . We must be careful not to underrate the influences that work without show or noise. The unseen and the unheard really make out a good deal more than half the universe. . . . Christianity is not a matter of places and days, rites and observances; it is a matter of having the leaven of God to work in us that we shall be gentle and pure, unselfish and sympathetic as God is. And men have made at least a commencement towards becoming so. It is not natural for men to devote their time to others' interests. But more and more time is being devoted in this way, and money too, which means that the kingdom of heaven is gaining a closer and closer grip upon us: the kingdom of heaven is coming. Men are

sorry for the distressed, and try to relieve them. Why, *that* is Christianity. We know that we love God, because we love the brethren. . . . Not as though we were already perfect. There is knavery, selfishness, uncleanness of all sorts and degrees. Yet the leaven is certainly working, and such a review of the centuries as has been suggested makes it clear, to the point of demonstration, that the will of God is being increasingly done, and especially that the ideals of gentleness, mutual interest, reciprocal sympathy, with which the gospel is so thickly strewn, are being growingly realized. (*Ibid.*) The religion which will save a man's soul is a religion that goes into his whole being, and changes him into something quite different from what he was before, when in the service of the world. A great deal less than this will enable a man to live respected by his neighbours; a great deal less will, after a time, satisfy even his own conscience, and enable him to live contentedly in his present measure of strictness. For conscience soon lowers its demands when they have been made and rejected; and an evil heart of unbelief rests content at last, on a conscience seared as with a hot iron. (*W. J. Irons, D.D.*) *The Leaven*:—We may reduce the parable to three general heads. I. WHAT IS COMPARED? The matter compared is the kingdom of heaven. II. TO WHAT IS IT COMPARED? Leaven. III. IN WHAT IS IT COMPARED. Now the concurrence of these lies in the sequel—"which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Wherein are remarkable (1) the agent—a woman; (2) the action—which is double, taking and hiding, or putting in the leaven; (3) the subject—is meal, or flour; (4) the continuance—until the whole mass be leavened. (*T. Adams.*) *Need of leavening*:—No flesh that is putrefied, except it be first purified, shall be glorified. No man goes to heaven as by a leap, but by climbing. Now this sanctity is called the kingdom of heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Leaven sour but sweetening*:—Leaven hath a quality somewhat contrary to the meal, yet serves to make it fit for bread. The gospel is sour and harsh to the natural soul, yet works it to newness of life. It runs against the grain of our affections, and we think it troubles the peace of our Israel within us. It is leaven to Herod to part with his Herodias; to Naaman to be bound from bowing before Rimmon. Christ gives the young man a sour morsel when he bids him give his goods to the poor. You choke the usurer with leaven when you tell him that his sins shall not be forgiven till his unjust gains be restored. You may as well prescribe the epicure leaven instead of bread, as set him the voider of abstinence instead of his table of surfeits. This is leaven indeed, to tell the encloser that he enters commons with the devil, while he hinders the poor to enter common with him; or to tell the sacrilegious that Satan hath just possession of his soul, while he keeps unjust possession of the Church's goods. When his leaven is held to carnal lips it will not go down, no, the very smell of it offends. The combat of faith, the task of repentance, the mercifulness of charity, this same rule of three is very hard to learn. To deny a man's self, to cashier his family lusts, to lay down whole bags of crosses, and to take up one, the cross of Christ. Oh sour, sour leaven! (*Ibid.*) *Signs of leavening*:—He hath an unleavened hand, that is not charitable; an unleavened knee, that is not humble; an unleavened tongue, that blasphemes; an unleavened eye, that maliceth; an unleavened heart, that securely offendeth. The outward working shows the inward leavening, and the diffusion is an argument of the being. (*Ibid.*) *What leaven can do*:—The world begins with great promises; but could it give as much as ever the prince of it proffered to Christ, it cannot keep thy bones from the ague, thy flesh from worms, nor thy soul from hell. Behold, a little leaven shall sanctify thee throughout, the folly of preaching shall save thy soul, and raise thy body to eternal glory. (*Ibid.*) *The nature of leaven*:—It consists of myriads of the cells of the common green mould in an undeveloped state. If a fragment of the dough with the leaven in it be put aside in a shady place, the cells of the fungus in the leaven will vegetate, and cover the dough with a slight downy substance, which is just the plant in its complete form. The swelling of the dough, and the commotion which goes on in the leavened mass, are owing to the multiplication of the plant-cells, which takes place with astonishing rapidity. By this process of vegetation, the starch and sugar of the dough are converted into other chemical products. But it is only allowed to go a certain length, and then the principle of growth is checked by placing the dough in the oven, and baking it into bread. Leaven is thus a principle of destruction and construction—of decay and of growth—of death and of life. (*Hugh Macmillan.*) *The parable of the leaven hid in three measures of meal*:—The Word of God may be compared to leaven. **1. Leaven is of a diffusive quality.** So the Word of God, through the Spirit, is of a

diffusive nature, but in respect to every soul that receiveth it, and also in respect of people to whom it comes; for though at first but a few at Jerusalem and thereabouts received the gospel, yet how did it spread. 2. Leaven diffuses itself gradually. So the gospel spread and operated by degrees; as it diffuseth itself into every faculty of the soul at first, so it never ceaseth until the life and whole man is leavened therewith. 3. Leaven is of assimilating nature; makes all the meal that is leavened to be of one and the same lump. So the Word of God and the grace of God makes the whole soul like itself, or a whole family or nation where it is once in truth received, the very same people, both in doctrine and conversation. 4. Leaven is of a quickening and powerful nature; so the Word of God (Heb. iv. 12). 5. Leaven is hid in the meal which leaveneth; so the Word of God must be hid in the heart, both in the understanding, will, and affection, if the person be spiritually leavened with it (Psa. cxix. 11). It is not enough to receive it into our mouths, or to have it in our Bibles, but we must receive it (in the love thereof) into our hearts, or else Satan will steal it away, or it will not, it cannot, work either upon our hearts or lives. 6. Leaven, it is observed, is of a softening nature; though the meal be crushed down hard, yet if the leaven be hid in it, it will make it soft and mellow. So the Word of God makes the hard heart soft and tender. 7. Leaven secretly and invisibly worketh and altereth the meal, and maketh a change of it, turning it into dough. So the workings and operations of the Word of God are secret and invisible. 8. A little leaven will leaven the whole lump; so a small quantity, or but a dram of grace, or one word set home upon the heart of three thousand souls, it will leaven them all (Acts ii. 4). 9. Leaven answers a great design. It is to prepare the meal to be moulded into a loaf and so become the bread for the family. So this spiritual leaven, the Word, is by Jesus Christ appointed for a great design, viz., even to mould and fashion poor sinners for Himself, and so fit them for His own use, and that they may be meet and fit matter for His Church on earth, and for the Church triumphant in Heaven (1 Cor. x. 17). (*W. Keach.*) *The leaven:*—I. Our Lord teaches that the change He meant to effect in the world was a change, not so much of the outward form, as of the spirit and character of all things. II. The method by which the kingdom of heaven is to grow, or by which the world is to be Christianized. Religion spreads by contagion. There must be a mixing; contact between those that are Christians and those who are not. This mixing is provided for in various ways. (1) By nature, which sets us in families; (2) By commerce; (3) Casual acquaintance. There is a culpable refusal to mix, as well as an inconsiderate eagerness to do so. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *Leavened by character rather than by speech:*—It is rather the all-pervading and subtle extension of Christian principles than their declared and aggressive advocacy that is brought before the mind by the figure of leaven. It reminds us that men are most susceptible to the influence that flows from character. This influence sheds itself off in a thousand ways too subtle to be resisted, and in forms so fine as to insinuate themselves where words would find no entrance. A man is in many circumstances more likely to do good by acting in a Christian manner, than by drawing attention to the faults of others and exposing their iniquity. The less ostentatious, the less conscious the influence exercised upon us is, the more likely are we to admit it. (*Ibid.*)

**Ver. 38. The field is the world.**—*The moral dignity of the missionary enterprise:*—1. THE GRANDEUR OF THE OBJECT. Survey the field geographically. Estimate the miseries of the world. Consider these human beings as immortal, and candidates for an eternity of happiness or misery. II. THE MISSIONARY UNDERTAKING IS ARDUOUS ENOUGH TO CALL INTO ACTION THE NOBLEST ENERGIES OF MAN. This enterprise requires consummate wisdom, unwavering perseverance, undaunted courage, sublime faith. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS MORAL REVOLUTION IS TO BE EFFECTED. By the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Contemplate the simplicity, benevolence, and efficacy of this means. (*F. Wayland, D.D.*) *The gospel sphere:*—I. ITS GEOGRAPHICAL AND STATISTICAL EXTENT. II. ITS MORAL CONDITION. III. ITS REDEEMED CONDITION. IV. ITS GLORIOUS DESTINATION. A destiny of universal knowledge, righteousness, peace, felicity. V. ITS COMMANDING CLAIMS UPON US. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) I. The field is the world, because the commission of Christ does not restrict the publication of the gospel to any one class or nation. II. The world is the field in which the Church is to sow the seed of the Word, because the world has been given to Christ her Head. III. Because, however wide it may be, ample means exist for its cultivation. IV. That the field to

be cultivated by the Church is the world, is shown by the example of the inspired apostles. V. Follows from the fact that the gospel is suited alike to all the nations of the world. VI. The very nature of moral principle in the heart of man requires that the Church regard the world as the field. VII. The composition of the congregation assembled in heaven proves that the field is the world. 1. Send the gospel to all. 2. Value souls. 3. Cultivate a lively sympathy with the glory of Christ. 4. Lay the foundation of all usefulness in personal godliness. (*J. Stewart.*)

Ver. 43. **Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.**—*The glory of the righteous*:—I. ITS PRESENT CONCEALMENT. The whole structure of the parable implies that the beauty of the righteous man is hidden in the present; tares and wheat scarcely distinguished. The glory has begun in men here, though veiled. The wheat had in it the germ of the golden grain. The sun shines forth from the clouds which had obscured his radiance. Reasons of this concealment:—1. The first reason is the nature of the only true righteousness in man. Man becomes righteous by denying his own righteousness and accepting that of another; this why it is hidden now. Our faith is cradled in tears and made stroug by storms. 2. We find a second reason for concealment in the discipline by which the righteous are perfected. Faith grows by trials, which conceal glory. The world's eye sees little beauty in the crown of thorns. II. ITS FUTURE MANIFESTATION. The present concealment will pass away; the germ of faith will ripen unto eternal glory. By the silent growth of faith the image of the heavenly is being secretly formed within. Who can tell how the souls of the righteous will ripen in the sun-light of Christ's smile. III. ITS MIGHTY LESSONS. "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." Hear it, slothful Christian. Hear it, earnest, struggling soul. Hear it, downcast spirit. Hear it, unbeliever. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Moral beauty manifested after death*:—Just as the flower bursts forth in beauty from its concealment in the seed, so shall it be with the righteous when the last temptation has been vanquished, and the body, so frail and weary, has been laid aside. We see it not in our dying friends. We see only the expiring animal nature. We see not how the Christlike grew within them during the hushed endurance of pain, and while their faith held on during that long horror of darkness. We see not this rising inner life. We see only their failing humanity. (*Ibid.*) *The Divine tracery not seen at present*:—But we cannot see the glory which is behind. We cannot fully understand how the discipline of life is fitting the soul for the fruition of the future. At present we cannot read the Divine tracery inscribed by the hand of sorrow; it has all a heavenly compensation, infinitely greater than its present misery. . . . The veil is over us; we do not see what royal souls are being formed by it here. But in the end it shall be seen that all the feelings of pain and weakness, solitude and weariness, have a corresponding weight of joy. (*Ibid.*) *These words describe the happiness of the righteous*:—I. IN ITS ELEMENTS. "Like the sun"—visible, pure, active, glorious. II. ITS PLATFORM. It is "in the kingdom of their Father." This imports—1. All the privileges and security of an organized society of the highest order. 2. For ever to dwell at home. III. ITS JUNCTURE. "Then"—day of judgment, when the righteous shall be publicly recognized as such. IV. ITS TRUTH. On what do we ground these expectations? On the express declarations of God; the nature of the gospel, and the work of grace on the heart; and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Suggests—self-scrutiny and submission. (*J. Hirst.*) I. THE PRESENT CONCEALMENT OF THE RIGHTEOUS. On account of—The nature of their excellence—not discerned or appreciated by the world; the sphere within which it is displayed—in the common walks of life; the imperfections, &c., with which it is often accompanied; the reserve by which it is sometimes hidden—unobtrusive, silent. II. THE FUTURE MANIFESTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS. The time, place, splendour, duration. (*Brooks.*) *We have here a description of the glorious state of believers, called the righteous*:—Believers have a twofold righteousness. 1. The righteousness of justification. 2. The righteousness of sanctification. What need shall the saints have to shine in Christ's righteousness, when they shall be perfectly holy in themselves? 1. Because it was not their own inherent righteousness which was their title to heaven, but the righteousness of Christ alone; therefore they shall boast of and shine in the righteousness of Christ for ever. 2. Because their own inherent righteousness was imperfect and full of spots whilst they lived upon the earth, and it was made perfect only as an act of Christ's purchase, or the fruits of His merits and obedience, to make them meet for that inheritance. The glory of believers is reserved to that time; now their life is a hidden life, and their glory is veiled (1 John iii. 1-3). When the end

of the world comes, or at the day of the resurrection, the saints shall shine forth gloriously. 1. Because being God's jewels, they are then all made up, or completed every way, and shall shine before wicked men and devils, to the shame and confusion for ever of these wretches. 2. Moreover, as heirs, they then come to a perfect age, and to possess the purchased inheritance, to the praise of God's glory and grace. 3. Then the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated, and the bride be adorned in all her marriage robes and rich attire (Rev. xix. 7). 4. Because then the bodies and souls of all believers shall be reunited, both being made perfect; a curious piece of work, whether a jewel or clockwork, never appears so glorious until it is all joined together, and every way perfected. So the glory of the saints will then be every way full and perfect, both in respect of soul and body too. 5. Because Christ will then appear; "and when He appears, we shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4; John iii. 4). 6. Because then will be the time of the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19). Then they shall be crowned with glory. That will be the saints' coronation day. 7. Then will be the time of the saints reaping, as now is their time for sowing, and "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psa. cxxvi. 5). "Shine as the sun," &c. This denotes the greatness of the glory of the saints. The glory, excellence, and splendour of believers in that day will be amazing. Consider: 1. The sun is the greatest glory of this world, or far excels in glory all other things. So the saints shall shine forth in the greatest glory, beyond the glory of Solomon, or all earthly potentates whatsoever. 2. When the sun shines forth in his full strength, all dark clouds and mists are vanquished and driven away. So when the saints shall shine in their greatest glory, all dark mists of ignorance, and clouds of sin and corruption, shall be expelled from them for ever. No more dark days or unbelief for ever. 3. The sun is a singular light, and shines with a singular glory. There are many stars, but one sun. So the glory of the saints shall be a singular glory. No glory like that glory, or to be compared to it. 4. The sun is a pure, bright, and spotless creature, far brighter than the moon or stars, so the glory of the saints will be a pure, bright, and spotless glory, not like the glory of this world, nor like the glory which attends the saints while they are here in this mortal body. 5. The glory of the sun is an unchangeable glory; he alters not, changes not in his glory as the moon doth. So the glory of the saints in that day will ever abide the same, and never change or be less, because they then shall arrive to a full perfection of glory; nay, it shall exceed that of the sun. 1. Because the sun sets, or goes out of our sight, but the saints' sun shall never go down, their glory never sets (Isa. lx. 20). 2. The sun is sometimes clouded, its glory appears not, but the glory of the saints shall never be clouded any more as it was in this world. 3. The sun shall then be ashamed (Isa. xxiv. 23). That is, the glory of the saints shall so far excel the glory of the sun, that the sun shall, as it were, be ashamed (as such are said to be, when they are outshined), or outdone by others. 4. The sun is sometimes eclipsed by the gross body of the moon interposing betwixt us and it; but the glory of the saints shall by no dark body of sin, corruption, or of this world, be eclipsed any more for ever. 5. The sun is so glorious, that mortals cannot behold it, but their eyes will dazzle. So the glory of the saints will be too great for sinners to behold, it would even put out their eyes, or confound them. O happy believers! (*B. Keach*).

Ver. 44. **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.**—*Treasure*:—1. The Holy Scriptures contain an inestimable treasure—wisdom, grace, comfort, joy. 2. Many not aware of this. They are like some landowners, who can watch with delight the growth of grass, corn, and flowers in their fields, but who lose sight of the precious ore beneath the surface. Can cull a bouquet of flowers—the poetry, history, and imagery—but lack the tools (repentance, faith, hope) for delving to the rich mineral beneath. 3. This treasure can only be discovered by careful search. 4. The greater our desire for the blessings of Divine grace, the greater will be our fear lest we should fall short of them. 5. The discovery of this hid treasure should fill the believer with gladness—the Ethiopian Eunuch "went on his way rejoicing." 6. Having discovered the excellency of Divine things, we should be ready to renounce such pleasures and habits as hinder their attainment. Moses gave up the attractions of the Egyptian court, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." So now the true convert will give up worldly vanities, unfair dealing, uncharitableness, insincerity, and will learn to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *The parables of the hid treasure and the pearl, or how men find Christ*:—I. There are

certain estimates of the kingdom of God, and certain things that are done in relation to it, WHICH BOTH PARABLES AGREE IN REPRESENTING. 1. The first and most prominent is that both parables represent the gospel as a very precious thing, and as commending itself to men as a very precious thing. A forgiven soul the highest good of man. 2. The parables further agree in representing the secret character of the spiritual blessings of the new kingdom. It is a secret life as well as a visible society. Its truths require the spiritual faculty to discern them. 3. The parables agree further in their representation of the earnestness and determination with which the precious treasure of the gospel is secured. II. But now they broadly diverge and teach important LESSONS CONCERNING THE DIVERSITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. The first point of difference is the way in which the riches of the kingdom are discovered. The treasure-finder stumbles upon his prize unexpectedly; the pearl-merchant finds his in earnest search. This is not the representation of a careless, unspiritual man, who does not so much find the gospel as he is found by it; but of a man whose desires and efforts are right, but who does not all at once find the thing that he wishes. The pearl-seeker seeks with determination. He has many pearls. It is *one* pearl amongst many that can satisfy him. Touching the law he was blameless, but what was gain he now counts loss for Christ. 2. But the different ways in which men meet God are also indicated in the contrasted emotions and conduct of the two finders of treasure; and these are in exquisite harmony with the character described. The man who unexpectedly finds treasure is impulsive in his joy; the other is joyous, but calm. The treasure-finder buys the entire field; this indicates the feverish, unintelligent way in which such characters realize their salvation. We must not think more of the field than of the treasure. The pearl-seeker buys only the pearl. He distinguishes the essential from the accidental. (*H. Allon.*) *The kingdom of heaven*:—Subject religion to the ordinary tests of value: there are four great tests of value. I. The first is RARITY. An old master who painted pictures many a hundred years ago, and sent down a worthy name and fame to posterity, is represented in these days by only two or three. One canvas is hung here, we will say in the National Gallery, and another in Vienna, and another somewhere else: all the rest are burned by fire or rusted and moulded away by the influence of time. The bare fact that there are only three specimens extant of that man's master-pieces gives them a value that cannot be covered even though you cover that canvas with gold. According to their rarity is their value. For what is true religion? If there is anything in it at all, if it is not a gross deception, I will tell you what it is. It is holiness and happiness—rare things in the world, my masters, look for them where you will. II. Let us take another test of value, one that you are all acquainted with more or less—I MEAN THE VERDICT OF A COMPETENT AUTHORITY. If a child is playing at the mother's door with what appears to be a piece of beautifully-coloured or transparent glass, it may flash so brightly that even the mother is curious enough to take it from the little palm of her child and hold it up to see how the sun rays dance around it; but she is content then to pass it back again as a thing of no more moment. But lo, a lapidary comes that way who, with keen and practised eye, catches the peculiar scintillations that rise from it, and he takes it in his hand, holds it between him and the sun, weighs it, judges of the comparative weight and measure, and then passes it into the mother's hand, saying, "Madam, are you aware that that is a diamond, and not glass?" In a moment the verdict of a competent authority has increased its value fifty thousand fold. So with a picture which has hung on a cottage wall for years, an unvalued heirloom, that hangs there simply because it is its accustomed place. There comes in one who knows, and he uses means to take away the canker and the rust of time, and unburies a patch of subtle colour that lies beneath, and he says in a moment, "Why that is a Rembrandt," and in a moment the verdict of a competent authority gives it a value that it never possessed before. I want to rest religion on the same ground, the verdict of a competent authority. "Ah," but I hear somebody there saying, "where will you find an authority that is sufficient for us? Where will you find one that we are bound to believe?" Brothers, on the principle that experience is the grandest teacher. III. Not only rarity, not only the verdict of a competent authority, BUT DURABILITY IS AN IMPORTANT TEST OF VALUE. Why, you will scarcely give your child a sixpence to go and buy a toy without giving it a little wise motherly counsel at the same time not to buy something that will break almost before it gets home. That is true right along the whole of your business transactions. How long will it last? as old Humphreys says, is one of the wisest questions that a buyer can inquire after.

Well, let us put that test to religion. You know beauty has a value, a wondrous value, as we have seen in the diamond already; but if you ask for the value of beauty alone, then I protest to you that I know nothing in this world that is more beautiful than a full-blown bubble rising from the lips of a schoolboy on a summer's afternoon, floating out in a stately silence of its own, a beautiful crystal globe, dancing in the sunlight as though it loved its congeners. As it passes over field and tree and house and passer-by, is photographed in many colours upon its brilliant walls, and as it rises higher and higher in the sunlight, you are ready to say, "How beautiful!" And yet you say, "As worthless as a bubble." Why? Because it will not last. IV. Now, there is only one more that I know anything about myself, but I declare to you I THINK IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE FOUR, AND THAT IS THE TEST OF ADAPTATION. What is the use of a telescope that does not bring a thing nearer and magnify it to the eye? What say you of yonder sailor who is out on the seas shipwrecked; all his chance of life is his gripping power to a slippery, craggy rock that rises just above the surging seas; he can see nothing; no hope of life, blood starts from his fingers' ends as he grips, lest he plunges in the deep. What is the most precious thing in the world to him? You won't offer him a fortune, will you? Millions are of no use: the most precious thing to that man is a boat; it is adapted to his special necessity. (*J. J. Wray.*) *The parable of the treasure:*—I. THE EXCELLENCY OF THE GOSPEL IS NOT GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD BY MEN. It is a *hid* treasure. Illustrate the fact: 1. In its nature. The reference under this metaphor is not designed to apply so much to the case of men to whom the gospel is not exhibited, as with the heathen. It applies to men who have the gospel; yet they will not estimate it. 2. In its source. The cause is the universal depravity of the heart. II. THE GOSPEL DOES INTRINSICALLY POSSESS VAST AND INESTIMABLE VALUE. It is a treasure. The value of the gospel will appear if you consider (1) The source in which it originates; (2) The blessings which it communicates; (3) The mediation upon which it rests; (4) The diffusiveness of which it is susceptible; (5) The permanence with which it is invested. III. THE DISCOVERY OF THE ACTUAL VALUE OF THE GOSPEL MUST EXERT A MASTER INFLUENCE UPON THE PRINCIPLES AND HABITS OF THOSE BY WHOM IT IS ACQUIRED. 1. The discovery of the value of the gospel must arise from the influence of the Divine Spirit. 2. Then men practically abandon all that may interfere with their enjoyment of the blessings which the gospel exhibits. 3. This abandonment will never fail of procuring the desired result. 4. The treasure is offered to all freely and fully. (*J. Parsons.*) *Hid treasure:*—Says old Thomas Fuller, "Lord, this morning I read a chapter in the Bible, and therein observed a memorable passage whereof I never took notice before. Why now, and no sooner, did I see it? Formerly my eyes were as open, and the letters as legible. Is there not a thin veil laid over Thy Word, which is more rarified by reading, and at last wholly worn away?" The Word of God "is like unto treasure hid in a field." Its best things are ever below the surface. Then shall ye seek them and find them, when ye shall search for them with all your heart. *Points in parable of hid treasures:*—I. Vital religion is an individual matter. 2. To the individual it must come in direct, personal relations. 3. A man must be prepared for effort and sacrifice to gain a personal interest in religion. (*Anon.*) *Hiding treasures:*—Owing to the insecurity of property in the East, from war and oppression, joined to the necessity of keeping valuable property in hand, for want of secure banks of deposit, the practice of hiding precious utensils and ornaments, money and jewels, has always been common. Often these are built up into the walls of the owner's house, often buried in fields and gardens. (*Kitto.*) *Jewish law of things found:*—According to Jewish law, if man found treasure in loose coins among the corn, it would certainly be his, if he bought the corn. If he had found it on the ground, or in the soil, it would equally certainly belong to him, if he could claim ownership of the soil. (*Edersheim.*) *The parable of treasure hid in a field:*—There is a twofold hiding of this treasure. I. AN EVIL HIDING WHICH IS NOT INTENDED HERE. When a man hath received light and knowledge of Christ and Divine truth, and he (through Satan's temptations, and the evil of his own heart) strives to smother it in his own breast, or conceals what he knows, this is an evil hiding. Now the reason why some do this I shall show. 1. Because truth is only discovered to his understanding. They may be much enlightened, but his will consents not, subjects not to the power of it. Nor is he in love with it, his affections being not changed, or as the apostle says, "Such do not receive the truth in the love of it." 2. It may be occasioned through shame. He is ashamed of Christ and His word; the visible profession of religion exposeth

much to reproach and contempt. 3. It may be through idleness he is not willing to be at further pains, nor at the charge to sell all that he hath to buy this field, or publicly to receive Christ. 4. Moreover, fear may be one cause of the sinful hiding of this treasure. He knows not what the losses may be he may meet withal, or what he may suffer for Christ's sake, if he visibly confesseth Him. 5. An evil hiding imports a non-improving of their light and knowledge (Matt. xxv. 18). II. THERE MAY BE A GOOD HIDING OF THIS TREASURE, which may denote—1. Such endeavour to the uttermost, whatsoever it may cost them, to make it their own, and will not wickedly conceal what Christ hath done for them (Psa. lxvi. 16). 2. They make use of all means to secure it, and in prayer crying to God continually to help them to persevere and keep this treasure against all attempts of enemies whatsoever. *Why Christ is called treasure*:—1. Rich treasure is counted an excellent thing, and therefore it is much desired; the hearts of mankind naturally run after riches and earthly treasure; Christ may upon this account be compared to treasure. 2. This spiritual treasure makes all that find it very rich (Rev. iii. 18). 3. Much earthly treasure makes men to be envied and hated by many persons, and are in danger to be robbed by thieves. So a believer is hated and envied by the devil and wicked men. Satan, like a cunning thief, strives to rob them of their treasure. 4. Such who have much riches, or store of earthly treasure, live high; they feed or fare not as the poor do; also they are more richly clothed, and delivered from the care and fears which the poor are vexed with continually. 5. A man that hath much earthly treasure can do more good to his neighbour than multitudes of others are able to do. So believers, rich in faith, rich in promise, rich in experience, can do more good to others—they can give better counsel, more and better comfort (Prov. x. 21). 6. He that hath much earthly treasure values himself accordingly, rich and honourable are his companions, and with them he communes every day. So he that hath much spiritual treasure values himself upon the best grounds; he is a child of God; he hath God for his portion; he is allowed communion with God; he is assured he shall never want any good thing (Psa. cxix. 63). 7. Hid treasure is not found without much pains and diligent searching, no more is this spiritual treasure (Prov. ii. 2, 5). 8. He that hath much earthly treasure, commonly sets his heart upon it, and it is his chiefest delight; so he that hath found this treasure, sets his heart upon it. God and Christ are his chiefest delight (Matt. vi. 21). 9. Such who find great treasure rejoice; so he that finds Christ, this spiritual treasure, rejoiceth; he selleth for joy all he hath to buy that field. A believer has cause of joy, he is happy for ever. *I shall now show you the nature of this treasure*:—1. It is heavenly, not earthly, treasure; as far as heaven excels the earth, so far heavenly treasure excels all the riches and treasures of this world. 2. It being heavenly and spiritual treasure, it followeth that it must be incorruptible treasure. 3. It is soul-satisfying treasure, the treasures of this world can never satisfy the immortal soul of man. 4. It is durable and everlasting treasure, not uncertain riches, which are compared to vapour (Prov. xxiii. 5). *I shall show you how this treasure is hid*:—Christ is like hidden treasure. 1. He was long hid in God, or covered and out of sight of men. The salvation by Jesus Christ was hid from the Jews who believed not under the law, under dark shadows and beggarly elements, so that they could not find this treasure. 2. Christ and His benefits are hid in the dispensation of the gospel, so that very few can find this rich treasure. They have the field, viz., word and administration of the gospel, but carnal men see not the mysteries of the gospel. 3. This treasure was hid (and is still); dark, parabolical, symbolical, or tropical expressions uttered by our blessed Lord. Many had the field; the parables and similitudes were spoken to multitudes, but the treasure in them few saw. It is evident that the treasure is still hid from most in our days. 4. This treasure is hid by the Lord from multitudes, as an act of His Sovereign will and pleasure (Rom. ix. 18; Matt. xxi. 25, 26). 5. That may be said to be hid which mankind cannot find without God reveals it to them in a supernatural way. Now the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the mysteries of the gospel mankind naturally cannot know. 6. That which needeth many gradations to unfold it is a hidden thing, but the knowledge of Christ the Redeemer, and mysteries of salvation, needed many gradations to unfold it. To our first parents it was made known by the promise, "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head." Then to Abraham God gave a further discovery thereof (Gen. xxii. 18). Afterwards it was revealed by types, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the law, and then we come to the gospel dispensation. 7. That which requires our uttermost skill, wisdom, and diligence to search and find out is a hidden thing, but the true knowledge of

Jesus Christ requires our uttermost skill, wisdom, and diligence in searching to find out, and therefore it is a hidden thing (Prov. ii. 1–5). As men know not the price thereof, so many know not the place thereof where it is hid. It is hid from many by the devil (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). *I shall now show why he rejoices that finds this treasure.* He that finds this treasure, finds the Lord Jesus Christ, the Pearl of great price, which far exceeds all hid treasure and mountains of prey. Therefore it is from the worth of this treasure that a believer that finds it doth rejoice. It may be from the great use of this treasure to him. He was poor before, this treasure enricheth him; he was naked, he is gloriously clothed; he was forced to feed on husks, now he is fed with rare food, the Bread of Life. This treasure mainly consisteth in the saving knowledge of God and Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 7). It is an experimental, not a mere speculative knowledge. It is a practical knowledge (Job. xxii. 21, 22; 1 John ii. 4). It is an enlivening knowledge (Col. iii. 10). It is a translating and transforming knowledge (Rom. vi. 3, 4, 6). It is a progressive knowledge (2 Cor. iii. 18). He that finds this treasure makes the field his own, he secures the field. (*B. Keach.*) *The hidden treaures, and the pearl of great price:*—1. THESE PARABLES DO NOT TEACH THAT THE BLESSING OF SALVATION IS CONFINED TO ANY ONE PARTICULAR ENCLOSURE. 1. It is not confined to the Church. 2. The field is not confined to the Bible. Many are saved who do not know the Bible. In whatsoever connection it is that a man first discovers Christ, *that* to him is the field. II. THESE PARABLES ARE NOT TO BE CONSTRUED AS TEACHING THAT SALVATION IS A THING WHICH A MAN CAN BUY. It is not a commodity outside of the man which he can transfer by purchase; it is a nature within him that can be imparted only by God. III. THESE PARABLES DO NOT COUNSEL CONCEALMENT IN THE MATTER OF OUR SALVATION. Men hide that of which they are ashamed; none need be ashamed of Jesus and His salvation. Men hide that which they are afraid of losing, or of having stolen from them; but who can deprive of that which is within us. No man has any exclusive property in salvation. The new life will make itself felt. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

Vers. 45, 46. **Seeking goodly pearls.**—*Parable of the pearl:*—I. The soul seeking good. II. The soul seeking good will always want a better. III. The soul, seeking good, wants a better until it finds Christ the best. (*Anon.*) *The priceless pearl:*—Salvation is the pearl. I. This pearl cost a vast amount to procure it for the children of men. II. It is of great price in that it is of inestimable value. III. It is of great price because it loses none of its brightness and beauty by length of time or constancy of use. IV. Its great price is proved by the efforts the merchant made to secure it. V. This pearl costs heavily the one who procures it. VI. This pearl costs the surrender of all sin. (*T. T. Eaton, D.D.*) *Goodly pearls:*—I. Christ may be compared to a pearl because He is hidden, and to be sought after. II. Christ may be compared to a pearl because of its durability and its unchangeableness. Time does not rust a pearl. III. Christ may be compared to a pearl because He is such an adornment to the soul that seeks him. IV. Christ may be compared to a pearl because of its value. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Sham pearls:*—The fact is they would rather have a sham pearl than a genuine pearl. The factories of Bohemia and Nuremburg are full of activity making artificial pearls. With alabaster, and scales, and glue, and wax, they manufacture something which is a sham pearl, and substitute it for the real pearl. And so the whole world now is full of attempts to manufacture a new salvation, a new pearl of great price. They take a few grains of good works and a few grains of fine poetic sentiment, and they put them together, and they call it a pearl. But it will not wear; it will crumble to pieces at the last in the fires which shall be kindled around about our world. In Brazil, when a slave finds a diamond beyond a certain value, he gets his deliverance. He may have searched for days and months and years for a diamond, but finding it of a certain size, he hastens home to his master, shouting, "Free! free!" And if to-night you would only find this pearl of great price, it would insure you eternal emancipation. Oh! plunge this hour into the deep ocean of God's mercy, and though you may be submerged for a while in darkness and doubt and convictions, your soul will come up after a while enriched and sparkling with an immortal brilliant. (*Ibid.*) *Pearls durable:*—Time does not rust a pearl. It passes down from one royal family to another, from one generation to another, the same beautiful, exquisite thing—worth as much now as it was ever worth—always to be valuable, and a type of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Other gems may be split or ground, but this pearl of great

price is unbroken of the wheel, and it is uninjured of fire. Paul wore it through imprisonment, and darkness, and shipwreck, and martyrdom. Howard wore it through the plague in festering lazarettos. It heaved on the dying heart of Robert South and of Jeremy Taylor. Shadrach carried that gem through the furnace seven times heated. It is always bright. It is always beautiful. Rutherford, in his dying moments, caught a glimpse of it, and was filled with infinite exultation, and there are multitudes of the suffering who, after all other staffs were broken, and all other lights were extinguished, and all other strength was exhausted, cried out, "Pearl of great price, comfort me!" The sapphire, and the topaz, and the emerald, and the diamond shall perish; but this pearl of great price shall go uninjured long after the globe has been tossed, a miserable hulk, charred, dismasted, and shipwrecked, amid the howling blasts of the judgment gale. (*Ibid.*) *Pearls an adornment*:—Again, I remark that Christ may be compared to a pearl, because He is such an adornment and decoration to the soul that seeks Him. I have no sympathy with the Puritanic notion that God despises jewellery. I think if God despised jewellery He would not make so much of it. Instead of the variegated seasons, the earth would have had the same colour all the year round; the tree would have yielded its fruit without leaf or blossom; Niagara would let down its water without thunder or winged spray; the clouds would have drawn their black bodies through the skies where now they resemble silvery skiffs with angelic crew, sailing through the archipelago of stars. If God had despised beauty and adornment, He would not have made the caverns of the ocean great gardens of coral, and sponge, and seaweed, and pearls. No. God loves adornment from the fact that He has made it, and allows Jesus Christ to be compared to a pearl. I know there are some people who suppose that religion distorts one; that religion damages a man's nature; that religion cows him down; that religion takes all the spirit out of him; that it turns a man into a snuffling bigot; that it puts handcuffs on the wrists and hopples on the ankles, and that, like a retreating army, it poisons all the wells along where it goes. No, no. It is a decoration; it is an embellishment; it is a pearl. Why, my friends, as an adornment religion was more than philosophy to Bacon, more than prowess to Havelock, more than geology to Silliman, more than science to Agassiz, more than music to Mozart. Religion! It has sung the sweetest songs, and it has built the highest monuments, and it has lifted the noblest arches, and it has painted the finest pictures, and it has worked the richest embroideries, and it has composed the sublimest tragedy. (*Ibid.*) *Pearls valuable*:—Again, I remark: Christ may be compared to a pearl because of its value. It does not take a very large pearl to be worth thousands of dollars. The King of Persia paid six hundred thousand livres for one pearl; Cleopatra had a pearl worth three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, and she dissolved it at a feast, and then drank it to the health of Marc Antony; the King of Portugal had a pearl of almost indescribable value—so that the pearl most appropriately becomes a symbol of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is of infinite value. I come to a soul that has just awakened out of sin and been pardoned, and I say: "O! soul, what is Christ worth to you?" and the soul responds, "All in all to me is Christ." *The parable of the pearl of great price*:—I. I shall show you why Christ is compared to a pearl—to the richest pearl. Pearls, naturalists tell us, have a strange birth and original. II. Some pearls are of great worth. Our Lord Jesus Christ no doubt is compared to a pearl of great price upon this account chiefly—He is of inestimable value (Isa. xliii. 4). III. Pearls have a hidden virtue in them, though but small in bigness, yet great in efficacy. Jesus Christ had a hidden virtue in Him—though little in the eyes of carnal persons, yet such as receive Him in faith, find wonderful virtue in Him (Luke viii. 46). Such is the hidden virtue of Jesus Christ, of this Pearl, that when a man finds it, and partakes thereof inwardly—it fills him with joy and earthly comfort. IV. Pearls are of a splendid and oriental brightness—both without and within. Jesus Christ may be compared to a pearl on this account (Heb. i. 3). V. Pearls—nay, *one* pearl of great price, enriches him that finds it. So they that find the pearl of great price, Jesus Christ, and lay hold on Him, are greatly enriched, they are spiritually rich, eternally rich (Eph. iii. 8). VI. Some men, when they have found a pearl of great price, they know not the worth of it. They perhaps think some other pearls are of equal value, or as rich as that which they have found. So some, when they have found Christ, know not the worth, the riches of Him, but are ready to esteem other pearls equally with Christ. VII. This being so, it followeth hence, that it behoveth him that finds a pearl of great price to know it well what it is, and also its just value, lest he be

cheated and part with it for pearls of little value in comparison of that. VIII. Pearls, rich pearls of great price, are commonly kept in the possession of noble persons, who are adorned with them, and are known to be noble persons. So the saints, born of God, are the most excellent in all the earth, and these only are adorned with goodly pearls (Ezek. xvi. 11). (*B. Keach.*) *The parable of the pearl:*—As to the place where you should seek Jesus Christ, the Pearl of great price. Pearls must be sought where they are to be found. I. You must seek Him in the depths of God's eternal councils, there you may find Him—for He lay there from everlasting. II. You must seek Him in the depths of eternal wisdom. III. You must seek Him in the covenant of grace, and of redemption, as the head and great representative of God's elect. IV. You must seek Him in the depths of God's eternal love. V. You must seek this pearl in the revelation of God's council, in the types and sacrifices under the Law. You must seek Him in the revelation God made of Him in the prophecies of the prophets. And more especially you must seek Him in the glorious gospel. VI. You must seek this pearl by faith. VII. You must seek this pearl in the promises of God, in the promises of the New Covenant, or of the Gospels. VIII. You must seek Christ in the way of your duty, in reading, meditation, and prayer, as well as hearing the Word. Now I shall show when you should seek Him. I. Early (Prov. viii. 17). II. To seek Him early is to seek the Lord while He may be found (Isa. lv. 6). III. When we have a full gale of the Spirit, when we have a strong operation of the Word and Spirit upon our hearts. IV. Seek Him to-day (Heb. iii. 7). V. Seek Him before it is too late. *How must the pearl of great price be sought?* I. Diligently. II. With skill and divine wisdom. III. With full purpose and resolution of heart and soul. IV. As one that knows the great want, need, and necessity of Christ. V. As one who is convinced of the great worth and excellence of Christ. VI. Believingly, not doubting. VII. With longings after Him. VIII. With a heart touched with the loadstone of His love (Prov. ii. 1–4). IX. Constantly, unweariedly; never cease till thou hast found Him. X. Sincerely, not for the loaves, nor for applause, not simply to be saved, but for His own sake (John. vi. 26). (*Ibid.*) *The parable of the pearl of great price:*—Why He must be sought, Why sinners should seek Him. I. Sinners should seek Christ, the Pearl of great price, because He came to seek them. II. Sinners should seek Christ because seeking and finding Him are coupled together (Jer. xxix. 13). III. Because the promise runs to them that seek (Matt. vii. 7). IV. Sinners should seek Him, because they are commanded to do so (Isa. lv. 6). V. Because salvation is only in Jesus Christ. All that seek justification and eternal life, and do not seek Him, shall certainly perish (Acts iv. 12). VI. Sinners should seek Christ because by nature they are without Him (Eph. ii. 12). How will sinners lament their folly in seeking other things more than Christ; nay, have utterly neglected Him. Those who have got Christ, who have found this pearl, are the most happy people in the world. *I shall now show you what may be meant by selling all he had.* Selling all, signifies no more than parting with whatsoever his heart was inordinately set upon before he found this pearl. I. With all his sins and horrid lusts; all that find Christ, part willingly with every evil habit, and with every evil act of sin; and by the spirit and grace of Christ, he is enabled to do this. II. All his old company with whom he took delight, and among whom he dishonoured God. III. All his former hopes of heaven, and the foundations he built those hopes upon IV. All his own external privileges. V. All His own good works—and inherent righteousness—in point of justification he sold all. *He bought it:* I. He that buys a pearl, must know where it is to be had, and seek it. A sinner must know where to find Christ. II. They that buy must know the market-day, and repair thither to buy. So must a sinner attend on the word and ministry that would have Jesus Christ. III. Buyers commonly ask the price of what they buy. So sinners must learn the terms on which they can have Christ, that is without money, and without price. IV. Some come only to cheapen—to ask the price, that is all. So do some here—they think there is time to buy hereafter. V. Some who come, like not the terms—they are full of money and scorn to receive freely. They are proud. VI. Some come too late, the market day is over. VII. In buying, some things are parted with. Such as would have Christ—must part with all that is gain to them. VIII. Some refuse to buy at the proper season and afterwards cry out against their own folly. (*B. Keach.*) *The parable of the pearl of great price:*—I shall show, in what respects a man, in seeking after heavenly things, may be compared to an earthly merchant. I. A merchant is one that trades or deals for the good things of this

world, and he makes it his chief business. So a man that seeks after heavenly things, he trades or deals in spiritual commodities, and he makes religion his chief business. Hence saith Paul to Timothy, "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all men." (1 Timothy iv. 15). II. A merchant sometimes trades and deals in things of great worth, as here in this parable is expressed, viz., goodly pearl. What is more valued than gold, silver, precious stones, and goodly pearl? III. A merchant sets his heart, his mind, and chiefest thoughts upon his merchandize; I mean he prefers these things, and in good earnest pursues after them above all things upon the earth. So a spiritual merchant or Christian sets his heart and chiefest thoughts upon heavenly things; he sets his affection on things above, and not on things that are upon the earth. IV. A merchant sometimes ventures to sea, and runs many dangers (in seeking goodly pearls, and after rich merchandize) both by storms, rocks, sands, and pirates also. So a true Christian is exposed to great difficulties, and runs many dangers, who ventures out into a visible profession of religion; on the sea of this world, what storms of reproaches, temptations and persecutions, is he oft exposed unto? V. A merchant at first hath not that skill in trading as he attains or gets afterwards. Old dealers have more judgment and greater experience than such who have newly begun to trade. So a man when he first begins to seek after God, or to mind heavenly things, he hath not that understanding, that knowledge and judgment in religion, as an old Christian. VI. A merchant ought to know the nature and value of those commodities he deals in, and the whole mystery of merchandizing. So a true Christian or spiritual merchant labours to know the transcendent worth, nature and value of all spiritual things, and the whole mystery of godliness; indeed, this knowledge is not easy to attain unto. VII. A merchant is very careful of his business, when he hath met with loss, lest he run out and waste his substance, and so at last be undone. So a spiritual merchant is very thoughtful, and full of trouble, and takes the more care, when he sees he goes backward rather than forward, or decays in zeal, love, faith, etc. VIII. A merchant, if he know not what pearls be, may soon be easily cheated by false and counterfeit pearls. So many a spiritual merchant, if he know not what the person of Christ is, may easily be cheated of the true Christ, and believe in a false Christ. IX. A merchant trades to foreign parts, they fetch their treasure from afar. So a spiritual merchant trades to heaven, a far country. X. A merchant has his correspondent in those far countries to which he trades, who receives his merchandize, and makes returns. So all true Christians have their Blessed Correspondent in heaven, who manageth all their concerns; viz., the Lord Jesus. XI. A merchant is very careful to attend the exchange, or place where merchants meet together, and where they hear, and learn how their affairs go abroad, and these have opportunities to sell or buy more goods. Moreover, if they neglect or are remiss in their attendance, it gives cause of suspicion that they may soon break, and cease to be merchants. So spiritual merchants are very careful to attend solemn meetings of the saints, where they hear of and from Jesus Christ, and as they there receive from Him, so they make returns of praise to Him. XII. Merchants take great care to keep their books or accounts well, they are oft in their counting-house—that they may know whether they gain or lose; that they may see a good end of their affairs, and that they are not wronged. And thus also do the saints, they labour to cast up their accounts, viz., examine and try their hearts. Secondly: I shall show you these are the best and chiefest merchandize in the world, or no merchandize like spiritual merchandize. I. Because the nature of these things these merchants trade in, far excel all the things in the world. All other things are of little worth to the grace of God, the love of God, union and communion with God, to trade in gold tried in the fire (Rev. ii. 3-18). II. "All things of the world are vanity" (Eccl. i. 2). But there is real substance in these merchandize. III. These merchandize are best because incorruptible, neither moth nor rust can corrupt, fire consume, or thieves steal these goodly pearls. IV. The rareness or scarcity of these merchandize, show their most excellent nature. Things are not only esteemed for their worth, but for their rarity. Now these things that spiritual merchants seek, are exceeding rare; hardly one man in a thousand finds these goodly pearls, the pearl of great price. V. These merchandize were bought with a great price, by the Son of God. He first laid down the full sum that Divine justice demanded, and got them into His own hand for His elect. VI. They are soul treasures such that suit with and answer all the wants of the precious and immortal soul of man. VII. These merchandize are the best, because of their duration; all the things of this world are but momentary,

sometimes gone in a moment—the world passeth away; but spiritual things, which are not seen, are eternal. VIII. Their correspondent, with whom these merchants trade, that manages all their concernments, and is engaged to make them sure and safe, returns from afar. Now, as Jesus Christ is their correspondent, so he is such an undertaker that they need not fear anything can miscarry, which is in His hand. IX. These merchandizes are the best merchandizes, and these merchants the wisest merchants doth appear in respect of the terms on which they trade. They are the best merchandize because their commodities are freely given, "without money, without price." It cannot indeed stand consistent with the design of redemptive grace, which is to advance the glory of God in His goodness, and to cut off all boasting, and cause of boasting, to admit of anything of the creature that looks like money, to procure a right to these things. X. These are the best merchandize—this the best trade—because of the returns these merchants have from Jesus Christ. They have *quick returns* (Isa. lxv. 24). It is the best trade—they only trade for things of inestimable worth. The returns are certain—sure of growing eternally rich. Not only rich, but great and noble. These merchants are advanced to mighty honour (Proverbs xii. 26). (*Ibid.*) *What shall we buy*:—When the pilgrims were in Vanity Fair, one chanced mockingly to say to them, "What will ye buy?" But they, looking gravely on him, said, "We buy the truth." At that there was occasion taken to despite them the more; some mocking, some taunting, and some calling upon others to smite them. Nevertheless, in spite of all the abuse, these good pilgrims would only buy the truth; and when they bought it, not for any price would they sell it again. Usually, in ordinary merchandize, what we buy we are at liberty to sell; but it is not so here, for the command is express, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." And a most merciful provision it is; for, as one says, "Those who sell the truth sell their own souls with it." (*Robert Macdonald.*) *The Pearl*:—The true lessons of the parable, as I understand them, are briefly these:—I. It represents the experience, not of a careless or a profane man, who stumbles suddenly upon the gospel when he was in search of other things, but of one who is awakened, and has begun to seek the true religion, endeavouring to add attainment to attainment sincerely, according to his light. His conscience is uneasy. There is truth in the man, though not wisdom. He is honestly seeking the way, and the Lord leads him. He is seeking; he shall find. II. It represents the unparalleled, inconceivable richness of God's mercy in Christ, taking away all a sinner's sin, and bestowing on him freely the peace and privileges of a dear child. III. It represents that these riches lie, not in an accumulation of goodly attainments, such as men are wont to traffic in, but in one undivided, indivisible, hitherto unknown and unimagined treasure. IV. It represents that the inquirer, the instant he discovers that this one incomparable, all-comprehending treasure exists and is offered to him, cheerfully, eagerly, unhesitatingly gives away all that he possesses, in order to acquire it. That is, he gives all for Christ, and then enjoys all in Christ. (*W. Arnot.*) *Christ the pearl of great price*:—I. Those who would find pearls must search diligently for them, and encounter many dangers by diving, &c. II. Pearls are very valuable. III. Pearls possess a splendid brightness. Their beauty is as much within as without. IV. Pearls are so firm, strong, and compact, that fire cannot consume them, nor ordinary strength break them. V. Pearls are a rich ornament, and those who wear them are accounted the honourable of mankind. VI. Yet many are ignorant of them, and many esteem them no more than pebbles. (*Pulpit Helps.*) How visibly the providence of God appears to favour honest perseverance in our worldly callings. Man seeks for the chief good—He seeks for this pearl in the mines of learning, business, ambition, pleasure. The true pearl lies not in these. (*E. Scobell, M.A.*) *The pearl of great price*:—No gem, in the estimation of the ancients, surpassed the pearl in value. The old writers speak of it as altogether wonderful, and to be honoured above all jewels that the eyes of man have beheld. Nothing else was so pure, so rare, so exquisite. As for its origin, they thought it was at first a drop of dew from heaven, condensed within the sea-shell, and doubling there its native perfections. They thought, moreover, that though born beneath the waves, it retained some unknown connection with its home in the sky, taking its beauty from the aspect of the heavens, and drawing virtue from them, limpid and clear when they were serene, turbid and cloudy when they were overcast. Its irridescence seemed the result of sympathy with the seven colours of the sunbeam; even the shell which enclosed it partook of its silver beauty and many-hued reflections; while it was accounted the very queen of gems, as that to which no graver's tools nor implement

of man can add a charm. (*Morgan Dix, D.D.*) *The pearl seeker*:—This merchantman is no lover of the degraded and the base: no profligate, no sensualist; the pearl is not the type of the delights by which such men are attracted. Rather is he one of those who follow after things worthy of immortals; who, though in error as to what our real good is, and where it is to be found, are true, notwithstanding, to pure and honest ideals; who wish to do right, whose hearts are the home of high and worthy thoughts, who love and honour virtue and righteousness, and, like the scribe of old, are not far from the kingdom of God. . . . The quest for pearls had been the aim of this man's life: he was not prompted by sordid views of gain, but simply by the desire for the loveliest, purest, and best that can be found in this troubled world. And when at length he discovered what outshone all he had ever seen or imagined, his resolve was instant—to give up all he had for that one thing, knowing that having it he was rich indeed, though everything else was gone from his hands for ever. . . . This is no fancy sketch: it is a picture of what happens day after day; it occurs as often as any noble soul, long astray, finds at last his rest in God. He only who guides them into that rest can tell how many such there be; yet even we suspect the number to be considerable, and have seen such instances ourselves. We have seen men who have long sought for true joys, without finding them; who have had in possession many excellent gifts, yet not the highest; who, after much experience, felt sure that there must be somewhere a better thing, which fadeth not away. At length, perhaps late in life, they find it; whereupon their former thoughts are replaced by another mind—the wisdom of this world is given up, pride of soul suppressed; trust in self also goes, with the confidence which once was felt in earthly things. A man, in a spiritual and metaphorical sense, may be said to sell all he has, to become poor in spirit, and lowly of heart, because he has found the pearl of great price, after travelling many years through waste places, and because self-renunciation is the price for which that treasure is to be bought. (*Ibid.*) *Persevere in quest of pearl*:—He who seeks what is honest and good is journeying in the right direction; it does not follow that all such men will find at last what the Lord promises. He who can be content without that pearl of great price, will never find it. The danger is that we may rest content with some lower forms of good, without discerning how much is beyond them, and how poor they are in comparison. When we go about this world, buying whatsoever of rare and precious we can lay our hands on, for our own satisfaction, or for a name among men as possessors of things which many covet, or to adorn our persons, our life, or those whom we love; when self is thus at the bottom of the pursuits to which we give our years away; when the pearls which we thus collect are gathered only for our own delectation, as if to deck our garments now, and light up our houses, or perchance to be inwoven with our winding-sheets or strewed about our coffins; when this search for what is good has reference to time only, to the pride of the eyes, and to the greater glory of this fading life—then all that we gather shall be vain and without profit, nor shall we see those Divine things in which there is no spot now and no fading hereafter. But, when a man hears the voice of God speaking to him of riches that cannot be taken from him, and of something worth more than the world, which he ought to possess and may have if he will, at the price fixed for the same; and when, at such tidings, he feels that he must arise and go to his Father, taking his possessions to give in exchange for that best thing: then is the parable fulfilled. (*Ibid.*) *One pearl*:—In these days of safety, easy transport, and credit, the bulk of any object of desire makes comparatively little difference to its worth. But in the former ages of insecurity, difficult conveyance, limited commercial transactions, when there were no railways, banks, or paper money—one of the great recommendations of precious stones was the ease and safety with which they could be transported from one place to another. . . . The merchant might have to pass through districts torn with wars, or infested by robbers; if he attempted to take his gold and silver and precious wares with him, he was more than likely to be relieved of them all before he got far, and to lose his own life as well; what was he to do then? This—he might sell all he had, and invest it all in one gem of surpassing value! this he might safely hide about his person; then, clothing himself in mean attire, and taking his staff in his hand, he might set forth on foot, and travel as a pilgrim or a beggar towards his destination. Then, when the perils of the way were past, and he had reached the city to which he was bound, he had but to show his pearl, and its immense value would at once be recognized. This is a parable of ourselves. We have a journey to go, to a far city. It is useless for us to attempt to take our wealth with us: those old thieves, sin and death and hell,

beset the road; they have robbed all who have passed their way, and how can we escape? Besides, a thousand enemies lay wait to make us afraid—flood, drought, fire, the dishonesty of some, the incompetence of others—all these are ready to deprive us of our wealth. Even our loved ones we cannot take with us. Lonely we came into this world, lonely we must go out of it; no human companion can go down with us to the grave. Is there then nothing, no treasure, which we may take in safety with us, and keep securely by us? Yes, there is one; even the pearl of great price, Jesus Christ. No one can deprive us of *that* treasure; it is beyond the reach of any enemy or thief. And when we reach the end of our journey, with Him for our Saviour and Friend, then shall we find ourselves passing rich, although we have nothing at all beside, where Jesus is Lord of all, and where everything takes its value only from Him, there is He Himself the one possession which includes in itself the possession of everything worth having. (*R. Winterbotham, M.A.*) *The pearl of great price*:—I. THIS PEARL MAY BE APPROPRIATELY REGARDED AS A REPRESENTATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. 1. The rarity of a gem greatly enhances its value. 2. A gem that is entirely free from flaws is regarded as highly precious. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. 3. The value of a gem materially depends upon the size of it. To measure Him, not physically, but morally and spiritually, is far beyond our power. II. BEFORE WE CAN FEEL A REAL DESIRE TO POSSESS CHRIST, HIS INESTIMABLE VALUE MUST BE IN SOME MEASURE APPREHENDED. I. Of this truth the case of the Jews affords a convincing demonstration. 2. To reveal Jesus in His matchless worth is the special office of the Holy Spirit. III. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO SEE AND FEEL THE SAVIOUR'S WORTH WILL REGARD NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT IN ORDER TO BE MADE PARTAKERS OF HIM. 1. We must be willing to part with our own righteousness. 2. With the favour of our dearest friends, should their claims clash with His. 3. With every known sin, however agreeable or profitable. (*Expository Outlines.*) *A great bargain*:—The merchantman:—I. WATCH HIM WHILE HE IS SEEKING. 1. He has his mind aroused and engaged. His heart is in his business. 2. He has a fixed definite object. He has given himself to pearl hunting. 3. He had an object which was not at all commonplace. Other people might go for stones, he for pearls. 4. He sought them with diligence. 5. He used discrimination at the same time. 6. He went into the business with moderate expectations. II. HIS FINDING. 1. This find was a remarkable one. 2. He found all in one. 3. He was resolved that he would have it. III. HIS SELLING OUT. 1. Sell out old prejudices. 2. Self-righteousness. 3. Sinful pleasures. IV. THE BUYING. 1. An immediate purchase. 2. A joyful one. 3. An enriching one. 4. A final purchase. 5. A purchase he never regretted. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 47–50. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea.**—*The draw-net*:—1. We of this generation, a miscellaneous multitude of old and young, good and evil, move about at liberty in the wide expanse of life, as fishes move about in the deep broad sea; but certain mysterious, invisible lines, have been let down into the water, and are silently, slowly creeping near, and winding round us. 2. Good and bad alike are drawn in company towards the shore, but the good and bad are separated when they reach it. (*W. Arnot.*) *Separating good and bad*:—There is a machine in the Bank of England which receives sovereigns, as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining wholesale whether all are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery, by unerring laws, throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to another. That process is a silent but solemn parable for me. Founded as it is upon the laws of nature, it affords the most vivid similitude of the certainty which characterizes the judgment of the great day. (*Ibid.*) *The net*:—Here the mixture of good and bad is not attributed to an enemy, but is exhibited as resulting from the nature of the case. In fishing no selection is possible. We are here reminded that we are all advancing through life towards its final issue. This suggests—1. Enclosure. 2. Enlargement. But the main points of the parable are—I. The truth THAT THE NET GATHERS "OF EVERY KIND." The Church embraces every variety. This mixture arises from the manner in which the kingdom of heaven is proclaimed among men; publicly to all. But this mixture is at length to give place. On the shore a real and final distinction will be made and acted on. The test will be our value to God. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *The drag-net*:—I. THE OCCUPATION IMPLIED. Ministers of the gospel are set forth under various similitudes. II. THE RESULT DECLARED. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that . . . gathered of every kind;" so the

Christian Church is at present in a mixed condition. There are two important uses to which this truth may be applied. 1. To refute a common objection. When religious professors bring scandal on the cause with which they are identified, the enemies of Christianity should remember that in this respect things turn out just as the great Founder of our religion foretold. 2. Inasmuch as the visible Church is thus mixed, all who name the name of Christ should be jealous over themselves with a godly jealousy, and not rest without seeking to ascertain what is their true character. III. THE EXPLANATION GIVEN—"So shall it be at the end of the world." Notice: 1. The period when the separation will take place. 2. The agents by whom it will be accomplished. 3. The solemn issue in which it will terminate. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The parable of the net cast into the sea:*—The gospel preached may fully be compared to a net. 1. A net is a proper engine or instrument to catch or gather fish; so the gospel, or the Word of God preached, is a proper instrument to gather sinners out of the world into the Church, both visible and invisible (1 Cor. i. 2). 2. A net is cast into the river or sea before it can take fish, so the word of the gospel must be preached that sinners may be converted. 3. A net takes fish (when they are caught) out of their proper element, and they die immediately; so those sinners who are indeed taken, or spiritually and savingly wrought upon by preaching the Word, are taken out of that element where they lived, and loved to live before—*i.e.*, out of a course of sin and wickedness; and such die presently to sin and to all the vanities of the sea of this world. 4. A net must be cast into the sea or river with judgment by a skilful fisherman; it requires wisdom to use it to answer the end appointed. So ministers, Christ's spiritual fishermen, ought to be men of great skill, knowledge, wisdom, and experience (2 Cor. xii. 16). 5. A net is cast where a fisherman hath ground to hope he may take store of fish; so a minister should preach where multitudes of people are gathered together, when an opportunity doth present; thus did our Lord (Matt. v. 1). 6. Sometimes fishermen labour all night (as Peter and John did) and take nothing; it is God that blesses their labour when they succeed well. 7. A net takes fish of every kind, some great ones, some small ones; some good, and some bad. So the gospel net gathers of every sort, some rich, some poor, some great ones (but not many of that kind), some little ones, who are despised in the eyes of the world. 8. A fisherman's work is very hard, and he is exposed oftentimes to be tossed on the tempestuous sea; so is the work of Christ's ministers. (*B. Keach.*)

Ver. 51. **Have ye understood all these things?**—*A clear understanding:*—I fear there are hundreds of religionists in this country who never think of understanding that which they attend to under the name of religion. It can never be a sanctifying word to any except so far as they receive it into their understanding. To realize by experience a doctrine is the only way of knowing it. Those men never forget a truth who have had it burned into them as with a hot iron. I. Let us consider this searching question, "Have ye understood all these things?" as spoken to those who can humbly, but yet confidently, say, "YES, I HAVE UNDERSTOOD THESE THINGS." We can say, "One thing I know; whereas I was blind, now I see." If we have understood these things, what then? 1. Let us be thankful to God, for this understanding of Divine truth is not due to any natural intelligence we possess. 2. If you have been led to understand these things, ought not this to encourage you to seek to understand more? 3. You should not be backward to tell them to others. We are to be pupil teachers; pupils always, but teachers too. II. BUT SOME WHO THINK THEY UNDERSTAND ALL THESE THINGS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THEM. Is your life in accordance with what you know? It is a solemn thing to have an understanding of Divine truth, but not to be affected by it to repent of sin. Many professors with big heads and small hearts. III. ARE THERE NOT SOME WHO WOULD HARDLY KNOW HOW TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION? They understand, and yet they do not: theoretically but not spiritually. You know Jesus Christ; but have you accepted Him? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God will perfect the knowledge of the humble believer:*—If I find myself growing in God's garden, though I be the tiniest plant in all the bed, yet it is such a mercy to be in the garden at all—I who was a wild rank weed out in the wilderness before—that I will not doubt but what He will water me when I need it, and that He will tend and care for me till I shall come to perfection. (*Ibid.*) *Knowledge to be communicated to others:*—Let other candles be lit from thy candle, and thy candle shall burn none the less brightly; but the rather in this it may be said, that to enrich yourselves in all knowledge you must enrich others with the knowledge that you have. (*Ibid.*) *The responsibility of knowledge:*—I charge

thee, knowing professor, to remember thy solemn responsibility. I beseech thee, as thou lovest thine own soul, not to make a downy bed out of thy knowledge, for it shall be a thorn in thy dying pillow. I charge thee, man, not to make hell hotter to thyself than it need be by taking all this knowledge in, and panting after more, while you forget that to obey is better than sacrifice, to trust is better than to boast, to love is better than to rival, and to serve out of simple affection is better than to prate, and to discuss, and to criticize, and to censure. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 52. **Out of his treasure things new and old.**—*Things new and old*:—I. The preacher should bring forth out of his treasure "THINGS NEW." His teaching should be living, and therefore have the characteristics of life, newness, and freshness. II. The preacher should not forget to bring forth out of his treasure "THINGS OLD." Many have gone to as great an extreme in the direction of the old, as others in the direction of the new. It is not a trimming between the old and new that is expected. The old facts of the gospel must be brought out. The oldest truths of the gospel; God's great love. (*D. Longwill, M.A.*) *Teaching that is new*:—No tree can long survive the period when it ceases to unfold fresh shoots, and make new growth. And no teaching, with however great ability it be maintained, can long survive the period when it shall cease to give fresh stimulus or furnish information that is new. (*Ibid.*) *A ready scribe*:—I. THE SUBJECT OF HIS STUDY. II. HIS PROFICIENCY IN DIVINE KNOWLEDGE. 1. Correct. 2. Comprehending. III. THE MEANS OF HIS PROFICIENCY. 1. Diligent research. 2. Daily meditation. 3. Devout breathings. IV. THE USEFULNESS OF HIS LIFE. V. THE BENEFITS OF REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF ONE WHO WAS A SCRIBE INSTRUCTED UNTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. 1. To admire the dealings of God with His servant. 2. To exercise the spirit of patient continuance in well doing. (*S. Eldridge.*) *The parable of the scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.* Ministers are but stewards or deputy-householders. 1. They may be called householders in this sense, because as a deputy-householder chosen by his Lord to that office. So is every true and faithful minister or pastor of a Church chosen and called by the Lord to that holy office. 2. They may be called householders in respect of that great charge and trust which is committed to them. 3. A minister or pastor of a Church of Christ may be compared to a steward or deputy-householder, in respect of that faithfulness that he ought to manifest in the discharge of his great trust and office (1 Cor. iv. 2). I showed you why they ought to be well stored. 1. They ought to be well provided, because Jesus Christ hath made plenteous provision for His spiritual family, which blessed food He hath committed to them to distribute. 2. Because their Master is a great King, and all His children are nobly descended. 3. Because the preciousness of the souls which they are to feed. (*B. Keach.*) *The instructed scribe*:—We should not account him a good and generous housekeeper who should not have always something of standing provision by him, so as never to be surprised, but that he should still be found able to treat his friend, at least, though perhaps not always presently to feast him. So the scribe here spoken of should have an inward lasting fulness and sufficiency to support and bear him up, especially when present performance urges, and actual preparation can be but short. Thus it is not the oil in the wick, but in the vessel, which must feed the lamp. The former, indeed, may form a present blaze, but it is the latter which must give a lasting blaze. It is not the spending money a man has in his pocket, but his hoards in the chest or in the bank, which must make him rich. A dying man has his breath in his nostrils, but to have it in the lungs is that which must preserve life. Nor will it suffice to have raked up a few notions here and there, or to rally all one's little utmost into one discourse, which can constitute a divine, or give a man stock enough to set up with, any more than a soldier who has filled his knapsack should thereupon set up for keeping house. No, a man would then quickly be drained; his short stock would serve but for one meeting in ordinary converse, and he would be in danger of meeting the same company twice. And therefore there must be a store, plenty, and a treasure, lest he turn broker in divinity, and, having run the round of a beaten, exhausted commonplace, be forced to stand still or go the same round over again, pretending to his auditors that it is profitable for them to hear the same truths often inculcated to them, though I humbly conceive that to inculcate the same truths is not of necessity to repeat the same words. And therefore to avoid such beggarly pretences, there must be habitual preparation to the work we are now speaking of. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Things new and old*:—The new life cannot perform its functions without the

presence and aid of that which has lived, but is alive no longer. The old furnishes the mould in which the new is fashioned: the support on which the new rests while it is coming into being. Apply this law to the spiritual life. 1. On its intellectual side. A creed that is not growing steadily is a dead creed, and ought to be buried. The old is not to be banished altogether, or all at once; the new must be grafted on to it. 2. On the side of conduct. The great elements of manhood are no novelties. Faith, hope, love, obedience, patience, fidelity, are all old-fashioned virtues: but nothing better has been invented yet. We have got to give new life and meaning to them by bringing them to bear upon our altered conditions. (*Washington Gladden.*) *Old and new in the formation of character*:—That which is old in our experience is that part of our life which has become habitual. That ought to be the largest part of our moral and religious life. The formation of good habits—habits of devotion—such as church-going, Bible study, private meditation, secret prayer; habits of just and considerate and kindly speech; habits of careful and discriminating thought: habits of activity in all good work, and of fidelity in the discharge of every obligation we assume; habits of benevolence in giving and in serving; habits of courtesy and temperance, and manly dignity and womanly grace—this is a most important element in moral and religious culture. . . . Yet the character thus formed needs to be continually reformed. New light, new truths, new relations, new powers, call for new adjustments of our thoughts and new departures in our conduct. A religious life that is summed up in its habits; that is wholly formed and never renewed; into which no new motives, no new inspirations, no new endeavours enter, is a poor and barren life. . . . While therefore the Christian character needs those elements of permanence and solidity which are furnished by good habits, it needs also fresh thinking, resolution, and endeavour every day. It thrives only upon the wise combination of things new and old. It joins the steadfastness and strength of new habits with the freshness and joy of daily inspirations. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 55. **Is not this the carpenter's son?**—*The Divine rejected in the common*:—Thus the spiritual gem was dishonoured because of its earthly setting, and Christ was rejected on account of that which should have secured His acceptance. A small amount of thought would have sufficed to say, "Out of the soil of our common life has arisen a plant, of uncommon flower and fruit, without any special training." What cannot be explained by ordinary laws must be sought for in the extraordinary, and that which He could not have derived from men must have been given Him by God! There were probably many feelings expressed in the words. 1. Perhaps there was envy. They did not like to think that one of themselves should be so much above them. 2. There was a prejudice against Christ because of the worldly circumstances of His family. Poverty has always been a sore hindrance to acceptance. 3. There was certainly a feeling in the Jews against Christ from the absence of any apparent means of His attaining uncommon eminence. "*Whence* hath this man." 4. A stronger feeling against Christ arose in their minds from the commonness and familiarity of His associations. The effect of His teaching was lost through the nearness of His lower life. Had He come from far, had He been shrouded in mystery, then they might have received His claims. They had not spirituality enough to counteract the suggestions and influences of His carnal relations. Men are still backward to recognize the Divine in connection with the common; earthly genealogy disproves the heavenly descent. Illustrations of this fact: I. The first shall be taken from CHRIST HIMSELF. Christ is God manifest in the flesh: we have felt that the great God might have chosen some other and higher mode of display; have clothed Himself with light. II. The same may be said of CHRISTIANITY. None can fail to recognize the thoroughly human character of the records of the New Testament. It has been objected that they are common and insignificant, that they mention trifling matters. Men want a more stately book—but then it had lost its charm. The human is Divine. III. A third illustration we will take from THE OPERATION IN NATURE. We are prevented from recognizing the Divine power by the commonness of daily operations. IV. A fourth illustration is taken from DIVINE PROVIDENCE. Men seem only to recognize the Divine working in extraordinary events. V. The last illustration is taken from our COMMON LIFE. There is a great craving for extraordinary positions; had we more splendid conditions how we could display the energy of our faith. All life is Divine. The Divine man makes the Divine life; seek to detect the spiritual and Divine everywhere. (*A. J. Morris.*) *The carpenter's son*:—When the Emperor Julian was about to

wage war against the Persians and had threatened, when the war should be over, bitterly to persecute the Christians, insolently mocking *the carpenter's son* as one quite unable to succour them, Didymas, an ecclesiastic, pronounced this sentence upon him: "This *carpenter's son* is even now making a wooden coffin for Julian!" The Emperor went into the battle, and was suddenly struck in the breast with an arrow. He pulled it out, and, finding the wound inflicted by it to be deadly, he cursed the Lord; then, taking some of the blood from the wound, he threw it up into the air, exclaiming, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean." *The son of the carpenter:*—Christ was, indeed, the son of a workman; but of Him who made the frame of the universe, not by a hammer, but by His command; who disposed the composition of the elements, not by skill, but by His Word; who kindled the sun, not by earthly fire, but by His supreme heat; who made all things out of nothing, and made them, O man, for thee—that thou mightest reflect on the Artificer by considering His work. (*Chrysologus.*)

Ver. 58. **Because of their unbelief.**—*Unbelief:*—An empty vessel capable of holding water, if tightly corked, none can enter it, though water is poured upon it in great abundance; nay, it may be thrown into the sea, and still remain empty. So it is with our hearts; unbelief closes them, so that the water of life cannot fill them, however abundantly it may be poured upon and around us. Could not do many mighty works, &c. Unbelief hinders grace. This sin not only locks up the heart of a sinner, but also binds up the hands of a Saviour. (*Burkitt.*) The imperfection of the religion of modern society has its root in the obscure perception of Divine truth. If is only a clear-sighted faith which can grasp the truths of revealed religion, and show to us the relation in which we stand to God. If it does not bring into clear view the obligations and duties which it imposes, and the privileges and graces which it imparts, the life of holiness and devotion will not be seen. . . . . We may trace our imperfect Christian characters, our defective morality, and our almost godless civilization, to a want of faith in our Lord's doctrines and in His view of life, and our relations to Him and to eternity. It is faith primarily, which will alone bring us into union with Himself, and enable us to see and realize our relations to God as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. (*R. B. Fairbairn, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER XIV.

Vers. 1–11. **Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus.**—*A Court preacher:*—Herod is favourable to John, how could he be more unfortunate than to strike in the face the king who protects him? Is not the confidence of Herod an indication of the providence of God, not to be cast aside? This is what Court preachers of almost all epochs say to themselves. Moses was taught at the Court of Pharaoh, but said to the King, "Let the people of God go." John says to Herod, "It is not lawful." I. HIS FIDELITY. He might have taken another means of fulfilling his mission, completely saving his life. He might have aroused the people against the King, and have made himself a popular hero. That is the protestation which God demands, not noisy indignation, but that humble and firm testimony in the presence of evil. But you suffer for your frankness; but who has found the secret of loving truly without suffering. False love always seeks itself; it will not alienate a heart to save it. True love, which seeks the good of others, and not its own interest, consents to be forgotten, sacrificed. II. THE RECOMPENSE OF THIS FIDELITY. Life for us so easy and for the old saints so terrible; we are tempted to accuse God of inexplicable severity. John dead! are you sure? Ask the authors of the crime. Herod sees him haunting him everywhere. Dead!—one cannot die when one has served God. To-day John speaks to us, his example has cheered our souls. Dead! no, in the cause which he has served nothing is useless, and if the most obscure devotion does not lose its recompense, what will be the recompense of a martyrdom such as his? Dead! but is that dying, to go to rejoin those who were witnesses of God on earth. "Let me die the death of the righteous," &c. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The Church built and enlarged by humble but heroic fidelity to truth:*—It is from similar devotedness that the Church has been able to arise and enlarge. When you see glittering in the air some massive cathedral, which

remains standing as a testimony to the faith of past generations, think, then, of the blocks buried in the depths of the ground. None look to see them, but without those layers the edifice would fall at the first gust of a storm. Well, if to-day there is in the world a Christian Church, if there is a refuge accessible to all the sorrows of earth, an asylum where the soul escapes for ever from the oppressions of this world, a spiritual home where faith, hope, and love abide for ever; if we ourselves have been able to find there a place; it is certain that at its base there are acts of devotion without number, obscure deaths, unknown sufferings, silent sacrifices, which none can count. (*Ibid*). *Compromising Court preachers*:—Who knows now but that the favour of the monarch is a providential arrangement by God, for the furtherance of His Truth? Will you go, and by an early and unseasonable speech overthrow the designs of God? Yes, my brethren, this is that which Court preachers of almost all epochs say to themselves. This is that which was said at the Court of Constantine, and thus it was that that emperor was deified who murdered his own son. Alas! this is that which was said in the sixteenth century, at the Court of Henry VIII., while that monarch stained the English Reformation with his disgraceful profligacy. This is that which was said at the Court of Philip of Hesse, and it was thus that Luther, in a day of weakness, covered, with a cowardly compromise, the profligacies of that prince. This is that which was said at the Court of Louis XIV., and it was thus that Bossuet, so implacable upon this point against Luther himself, had scarcely a courageous word, in presence of scandals far more crying still. This is how Massillon reassured himself at the Regent's Court. This is how, upon the free soil of America, in the face of negro slavery and of all the infamy which accompanied it, some thousands of ministers of the gospel remained a long time silent, or only spoke so peaceably that a clap of thunder might have come to startle their sleeping consciences. Ah! deplorable allurement of the favour of the world! That is why dishonoured Religion has had some *Te Deum* for every fortunate action of power, some absolutions for all scandals, and why to-day it is miserably compromised in all the complications of human politics, when, alone, and without other support than its very truth, it would have, perhaps, brought over the world to Jesus Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Conscience and the moral law*:—Herod had a motive which shut out all reason and argument. It was his guilty conscience told him this was John the Baptist. The use I make of this passage is to set before you such considerations as naturally arise from it, and are proper for the direction and government of ourselves. I. OBSERVE THE GREAT FORCE AND EFFICACY OF CONSCIENCE. The fears which surround the guilty are so many undoubted proofs and records of the Judge's authority. II. THE MORAL LAW IS PROMULGATED TO EVERY RATIONAL CREATURE: the work of the Law is written in the heart. The rebukes of conscience will sooner or later restore the true sense to the Law, which was darkened by the shades of false reason serving the inclinations of a corrupted heart. III. WHAT CARE THE WISE AUTHOR OF OUR BEING HAS TAKEN, NOT ONLY TO MANIFEST HIMSELF AND HIS LAWS TO US, but likewise to secure our obedience, and thereby our eternal happiness and welfare. (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*) *The rewards and punishment of religion are in the present as well as in the future*:—It is thought a great disadvantage to religion that it has only such distant hopes and fears to support it; and it is true that the great objects of our hopes and fears are placed on the other side of the grave, whilst the temptations to sin meet us in every turn, and are almost constantly present with us. But then to balance this it must be considered that though the punishments and rewards of religion are at such a distance, yet the hopes and fears are always present, and influence the happiness of our lives here, as much, and often much more, than any other good or evil which can befall us. The peace of mind which flows from doing right, the fear, anxiety, the torments which attend the guilty, will inevitably determine the condition of men to happiness or misery in our life. (*Ibid.*) *The terrors of conscience*:—The state of the wicked is a very restless one. The wildness and inconsistency of Herod's imagination. I. THE REPROACHES OF CONSCIENCE UNAVOIDABLE, proved from (1) Scripture; (2) Reason; (3) Experience. Tales of ghosts and spectres accounted for upon this principle. II. TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DIFFICULTIES THAT ATTEND THE PROOF OF THIS PROPOSITION, it is to be observed—1. That our judgments often mislead us when they are formed only upon the outside and surface of men's actions. 2. That the reprehensions of conscience are not a continued, but intermitting, disease. 3. The few instances of wicked men that go out of the world without feeling the stings of conscience, to be ascribed either to ill principles early and deeply imbibed, or to

an obstinacy of temper, or to a natural and acquired stupidity. These only prove that there are monsters in the *moral*, as well as in the *natural* world, but make nothing against the settled laws of either applications. Even for pleasure's sake we ought to abstain from all criminal pleasures. It is the best way to secure peace to ourselves by having it always in our consciences. Let those chiefly listen to this reprover who are otherwise set in great measure above reproof. (*F. Atterbury.*) *Wounds of conscience*:—Whatever doth violence to the plain dictates of our reason concerning virtue and vice, duty and sin, will as certainly discompose and afflict our thoughts as a wound will raise a smart in the flesh that receives it. (*Ibid.*) *Herod, a man governed by fear*:—I. HE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW COWARDICE, SUPERSTITION, AND CRUELTY NATURALLY GO TOGETHER. 1. Fear of his bad wife leads him to imprison John. 2. Fear of the multitude stays him from killing him. 3. Fear of his oath and fear of ridicule drive him to carry out a vow which it was wicked to make, and tenfold more wicked to keep. 4. Fear of a bad conscience makes him tremble lest Jesus should prove to be John risen from the dead to trouble him. II. ONLY WHEN JESUS IS BROUGHT BOUND BEFORE HIM, AND IS SURROUNDED BY HIS MEN OF WAR, DOES THE COWARD GAIN COURAGE TO MOCK HIM. (*J. P. Norris.*) *Conscience a preacher*:—I. There can be no dispute that he is lawfully in office. II. He has been long in office. III. This preacher never lacks clearness of discrimination. IV. Boldness is another characteristic of this preacher. V. Awakening. VI. Preaches everywhere. VII. And as for effectiveness, when has this preacher been surpassed? VIII. Benevolent. IX. Will never stop preaching. 1. All other preaching can be effective only as it harmonizes with that of this preacher. 2. Shall the everlasting ministrations of this preacher be to us a blessing or a curse? (*H. B. Hooker, D.D.*) *Herod; or, the power of conscience*:—I. Conscience will not be silenced by wealth or earthly surroundings. II. A guilty conscience is troubled with not only real, but imaginary, troubles. III. A guilty conscience will torment a sinner in spite of his avowed scepticism. (*T. Kelly.*) *Conscience-fears*:—A man will give himself up to the gallows twenty years after the treacherous stroke. Nero was haunted by the ghost of his mother, whom he had put to death. Caligula suffered from want of sleep—he was haunted by the faces of his murdered victims. We can still see the corridors recently excavated on the Palatine Hill. We can walk under the vaulted passages where his assassins met him. "Often weary with lying awake," writes Suetonius, "sometimes he sat up in bed, at others walked in the longest porticos about the house, looking out for the approach of day." You may see the very spot where his assassins waited for him round the corner. Domitian had those long walls cased with clear agate. The mark of the slabs may still be seen. The agate reflected as in a glass any figure that might be concealed round an angle, so that a surprise was impossible. It is said that Theodoric, after ordering the decapitation of Lysimachus, was haunted in the middle of his feasts by the spectre of a gory head upon a charger. And how often must a nobler head than that of Lysimachus have haunted a more ignoble prince than Theodoric as he sat at meat and muttered shudderingly aside, "It is John whom I beheaded!" (*H. R. Haweis.*) *Conscience in defiance of sceptical denial*:—Herod was a Sadducee; he appears to have been the avowed patron and protector of that sect which believed neither in the existence of spirit, whether angels, men, or devils. Yet see how the conscience of Herod crushes his creed to pieces; though he believed not in the resurrection of the dead, yet he feared that John had risen from the dead; though he despised the idea of hell as a fable, and as a bugbear, he felt within him all the horrors of Gehenna, the gnawings of a "worm that dieth not," the scorchings of a "fire that is not quenched." Men may try to believe that there is no existence beyond the grave; they may write upon the sepulchre, "Death is an eternal sleep"; these flimsy pretences burst through them like a river rushing through a mound of sand, or a roaring lion through a spider's web. (*Dr. Thomas.*) *Head in a charger*:—History tells of similar instances of barbarity. Mark Antony caused the heads of those whom he had proscribed to be brought to him while he was at table, and entertained himself by looking at them. Cicero's head being one of those brought, he ordered it to be placed on the very tribune whence Cicero had spoken against him. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, sent an officer to kill Lollia Paulina, her rival for the throne. When her head was brought, she examined it with her hands, till she discovered some mark by which the lady had been distinguished. *Troubled conscience*:—Though Herod thought good to set a face on it to strangers, unto whom it was not safe to bewray his fear; yet to his domestics he freely discovered his thoughts;

"This is John Baptist." The troubled conscience will many a time open that to familiars, which it hides from the eyes of others. Shame and fear meet together in guiltiness. (*Bishop Hall.*) *Need of ministerial faithfulness*:—There was a foolish law among the Lacedæmonians, that none should tell his neighbour any ill news which had befallen him, but every one should be left to find it out for themselves. There are many who would be glad if there was a law that could tie up ministers' mouths from scaring them with their sins; most are more offended with the talk of hell than troubled for that sinful state that should bring them thither. But when shall ministers have a fitter time to tell sinners of their dangers, if not now, for the time cometh when no more offers of love can be done for them. (*H. Smith.*) *Bold in reproof*:—A minister without boldness is like a smooth file, a knife without an edge, a sentinel that is afraid to let off his gun. If men will be bold in sin, ministers must be bold to reprove. (*Gurnall.*) *Conscience a tormentor*:—A wicked man needs no other tormentor, especially for the sins of blood, than his own heart. Revel, O Herod, and feast and frolic; and please thyself with dances, and triumphs, and pastimes: thy sin shall be as some Fury, that shall invisibly follow thee, and scourge thy guilty heart with secret lashes, and upon all occasions shall begin thy hell within thee. (*Bishop Hall.*) *Herod a hypocrite*:—Is there a worldly-minded man, that lives in some known sin, yet makes much of the preacher, frequents the church, talks godly, looks demurely, carries fair? Trust him not; he will prove, after his pious fits, like some resty horse, which goes on some paces readily and eagerly, but anon either stands still, or falls to flinging and plunging, and never leaves till he have cast his rider. (*Ibid.*) *Influence of Balls*:—I was employing a very respectable woman a few days to do some work for me, and one evening she said to me, "You must please to let me off earlier to-night, ma'am; I'm going to the ball." "To the ball," I exclaimed in amazement, "to the ball!" "Yes," she said; "I am at all the balls." I could not understand her; for, never going to such places myself, I am somewhat ignorant of what goes on. So she added, "I am keeper of the china, and am tea-maker; so I am obliged to be there; and I shall not get to bed before six o'clock to-morrow morning. Oh ma'am!" she burst out, "it's a dreadful life! I have seen young ladies, when they first came to this town, looking so bright, their cheeks so rosy, their eyes so dancing with joy; and before the winter was over I have not known them, they looked so old and pale and haggard and miserable." (*S.S. Teacher's Journal.*) *Dancing*:—Dancing, in itself, as it is a set, regular, harmonious motion of the body, cannot be unlawful, more than walking or running. Circumstances may make it sinful. The wanton gesticulations of a virgin, in a wild assembly of gallants warmed with wine, could be no other than riggish and unmaidenly. (*Bishop Hall.*) *Known by our pleasures*:—There cannot be a better glass, wherein to discern the face of our hearts, than our pleasures; such as they are, such are we; whether vain or holy. (*Ibid.*) *Blundering wickedness*:—I. HEROD IN HIS FIRST ACT MOVES TOO LATE. Herod imprisoned John, intending a crushing blow against the good cause; but it was ineffectual. He was powerless to hinder John's work. That work was done, and not to be undone. His influence was already abroad in the air. His words were pricking the hearts of thousands. Herod could not arrest this, any more than he could lock up the atmosphere within prison bars. II. Even if Herod could have stopped the revolution HE HAD SEIZED THE WRONG MAN. John had passed over the leadership to his chief. The Messiah was spreading His truth in the villages, to the northward, out of reach. III. In bringing John to his castle to confront his royal authority, he only gives the fearless prophet A CHANCE TO COME TO CLOSE QUARTERS WITH HIM. The ruler furnished a great opportunity to God's prophet and he took it. IV. INCONTINENT DEPRAVITY REELS THROUGH REVELRY TO BLOOD-GUILTINESS. Poor and comfortless is evil's triumph. (*W. V. Kelley.*) *The dead prophet yet alive!*:—The prophet's voice is not silenced by the executioner's hand, but sounds on in the guilty, haunted soul. John troubles Herod more now than when he was alive. The prisoner does not stay down in the dungeon any more, but rooms with Herod, sits spectral at the Tetrarch's feasts, makes festival doleful as funeral, wakes him in the night, and keeps saying unpleasant things on the inner side of his ear-drum. (*Ibid.*) *Martyrdom of John Baptist*:—Learn from this—I. THAT IF WE FAITHFULLY DO OUR DUTY, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO SUFFER FOR IT. John would have received many marks of favour and acts of kindness from Herod, if only he would have kept silence on one subject; because he dared not be silent, he met with prison and death. So with us. If we are really in earnest in serving God, Satan will be sure to stir up some

opposition against us. These hindrances are the tests of our faithfulness. II. THAT GOD'S GRACE IS ALWAYS SUFFICIENT. The Baptist's life and death were lonely; but, though separated from Jesus in the body, he was nearer to Him in spirit than the multitude which thronged Him. It is blessed to be constantly in God's house, to live in an atmosphere of Divine consolation; but it is even more blessed to be content if, through no fault of our own, we are deprived of this; nothing can take away from us the satisfaction of reposing our soul simply upon the will of God. III. THAT DEATH MAY BE VIEWED NOT WITH HORROR BUT WITH JOY. Herodias sought to wreak cruel vengeance on John; she did but release him from a weary imprisonment, and open the door to his eternal bliss. If only we are ready for death, can death come too soon? It is the door of release from storm and cloud, sorrow and sin. (*S. W. Skeffington, M.A.*) *Contrast* (1) the fearlessness of the witness to the truth, with the fickleness of the truckler to public opinion; (2) the true consistency which adheres unswervingly to the truth and does not shrink from bearing testimony at all hazards and against all transgressors, with that false consistency which holds to a sinful promise rather than own itself to be in the wrong; (3) the external fortunes in this world of the friends and the enemies of the truth; its enemies feasting in pomp, and carrying out unchecked their own wicked will, while its friends lie solitary in a dungeon or are cruelly murdered; (4) their spiritual and eternal condition—the witness-bearer passing from prison to rest and peace, the blasphemer going on from one enormity to another, and finally going down to his own place. (*Vernon W. Hutton, B.A.*) *Herod's marriage with Herodias:*—The marriage was unlawful for three reasons. 1. The former husband of Herodias, Philip, was still living. This is expressly asserted by Josephus. 2. The former wife of Antipas was still living, and had fled to her father, Aretas, on hearing of his intention to marry Herodias. 3. Antipas and Herodias were already related to one another within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity. *Dislike of faithful rebuke:*—Lais broke her looking-glass because it showed the wrinkles on her face. Many men are angry with those who tell them their faults, when they should be angry with the faults that are told them. *A charger:*—A somewhat capacious platter, often made of silver, which was charged or loaded with meat at banquets. The sight of the Baptist's head would be a feast to Herodias and her daughter. (*J. Morison.*) *Monarchs subject to law:*—How different a part did John act from that of the judges of Persia in the times of Cambyses. That madman of a monarch wished to marry his sister; and he demanded of the judges whether there were any Persian law that would sanction such a marriage. They pusillanimously answered that they could find no such law, but they found another—that the monarch of Persia was at liberty to do whatsoever he pleased. (*Ibid.*) *Reproving the rich:*—It is not uncommon for men to reprove the poor and the humble in society for their offences, but it is a rare virtue to charge crime, with unflinching fidelity, upon the higher classes. The poor are lectured on all hands, and the most contemptible clap-traps are adopted to catch their ear. But where are the Johns to lecture the rich and the royal, the Herods? (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Fidelity often provokes:*—Faithful rebukes, if they do not profit, usually provoke. (*M. Henry.*) *Faithful prelates:*—So Latimer presented for a new-year's gift to King Henry VIII., a New Testament, with a napkin, having this posy about it, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Archbishop Grindal lost Queen Elizabeth's favour, and was confined, for favouring prophecies, &c., as it was pretended; but in truth, for condemning an unlawful marriage of Julio, an Italian physician, with another man's wife. (*John Trapp.*) *Herod's birthday:*—A mere plot. A great feast must be prepared, the states invited, the damsel must dance, the king swear, the Baptist thereupon be beheaded, that the queen may be gratified. And this tragedy was new acted at Paris, A.D. 1572, when the French massacre was committed under pretence of a wedding royal. (*Ibid.*) *Like mother, like daughter:*—Neither good bird nor good egg. Such another hussy as this was dame Alice Pierce, a concubine to our Edward III. For when, as at a parliament in the fiftieth year of that king's reign, it was petitioned that the Duke of Lancaster, the Lord Latimer, chamberlain, and this dame Alice, might be removed from court, and the petition was vehemently urged by Sir Peter la Mare; this knight afterwards, at the suit of that impudent woman, was committed to perpetual imprisonment at Nottingham. And another such history we have of one Diana Valentina, mistress to Henry II., King of France, whom she had so subdued, that he gave her all the confiscations of goods made in the kingdom for cause of heresy. Whereupon many were burned in France for religion, as they said, but indeed to maintain the pride and satisfy the covetousness of that lewd woman.

(*Ibid.*) *Herod's oath*:—Were his oaths an absolute bar upon retraction? No doubt the original promise was the original sin. He should not have made such an unconditional promise. He made it in the spirit of a braggart and a despot. His oaths were hatched in wickedness. But though thus hatched, was he not bound, when they were once in existence, to adhere to them? There was something good in adhering to them—something of respect and reverence for the Divine Being, who is either explicitly or implicitly appealed to in all oaths. But there was also something appallingly bad. There was adherence to what was utterly unlawful and wicked. He had no business to peril such lives as that of John on the freak and pleasure of Salome, or on the hate of Herodias, or on any rash words of his own. It was criminal to put any lives in such peril. If his oath had merely perilled valuable goods and chattles, then, though he had sworn to his own hurt, it would have been his duty not to change. But no oath whatsoever, and no bond whatsoever within the limits of possibility, could constitute an obligation to commit a crime. Illegitimate oaths are immoral, and should be repented of, not fulfilled. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Herod's sorrow at death of the Baptist*:—As Andronicus, the Greek Emperor, that deep dissembler, would weep over those whom he had for no cause, caused to be executed, as if he had been the most sorrowful man alive; so this cunning murderer craftily hides his malice, and seeming sad in the face is glad at heart to be rid of the importunate Baptist, that he may sin uncontrolled. (*John Trapp.*) *The last struggle of conscience*:—In that moment there must have come before his mind his past reverence for the prophet, the joy which had for a time accompanied the strivings of a better life, possibly the counsels of his foster-brother, Manaen. Had there been only the personal influence of Herodias, these might have prevailed against it; but, like most weak men, Herod feared to be thought weak. It was not so much his regard for the oath which he had taken (that, had it been taken in secret, he might have got over), but his shrinking from the taunt, or whispered jest, or contemptuous gesture, of the assembled guests, if they should see him draw back from his plighted word. A false regard for public opinion, for what people will say or think of us in our own narrow circle, was in this, as in so many other instances, an incentive to guilt, instead of a restraint. (*Dean Plumptre.*) *Salome's death retributive*:—A tradition or legend relates that Salome's death was retributive in its outward form. She fell upon the ice, and in the fall her head was severed from the body. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 12. **And went and told Jesus.**—*Salve for the sore heart*:—I commend the behaviour of these disciples—1. To all who are sinful and unpardoned. Go and tell Jesus the unpardoned sins of your life. 2. To all who are tempted. 3. To all who are slandered and persecuted. 4. To all who have been bereaved. 5. Christ is always near. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *The true Friend and Interpreter*:—1. In Jesus we have the true, Divine Friend of humanity, not of our circumstances, but of ourselves, who undertakes for us just what no one else can. 2. The providence which permitted the removal of John from their head was necessary to send them forward to the great Teacher. 3. When we make great ones, heroes, of the servants, we are in danger of dishonouring and keeping at a distance from the Master. 4. By this critical turn in their history, John's disciples were not only brought forward to Christ, but actually brought closer and nearer to Him than they otherwise could or would have been. They found the grace to help in time of need. 5. They learnt and did the right thing. They brought the mystery of the Divine providence to Him who alone could throw light upon it. 6. Of what use is it to have such a Friend unless we make use of Him? No religious means can be put in place of this; we may be with Him more intimately in the spirit than His disciples in the flesh. (*W. Smith.*) *Tell Jesus—a word to the troubled*:—I. SOME OF THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH THE BELIEVER IS WARRANTED TO REPAIR TO THE LORD JESUS IN EVERY TRYING HOUR. 1. His mediatorial work—anticipates every objection, and answers every argument growing out of a deep and painful sense of unworthiness, &c. Ever accessible. 2. His earthly experience enables him to sympathize with all the forms of human suffering. 3. The mutual relations which exist between the Christ and the believer. 4. The invitations and declarations of His Word. II. SOME OF THE BLESSINGS THAT WILL FOLLOW THE CULTIVATION OF THIS HABIT. 1. Intimate communion. 2. It will nourish and strengthen all the Christian graces. 3. It will free us from anxious care. 4. It will bring continuous honour and glory to Jesus. (*O. Winslow, D.D.*) A complaining Christian once said to a cheerful, happy Christian, "Things always seem to go smoothly with you; I never

hear you make any complaints." To which he replied, "I have found out an effectual way of guarding against that fault—telling Jesus all, and telling Him before I tell any one else; then, I find, I seldom need tell any one else, for in telling Him about my troubles, I often find the burden entirely removed." (*A. Tucker.*) "*Go and tell Jesus*":—I. A lesson of encouragement for weary LABOURERS. The twelve disciples fatigued from their mission. II. A lesson for Christian MOURNERS. 1. The last act of affection—"They took up the body and buried it." 2. The best step for consolation. There is access to Jesus, sympathy with Jesus, relief from Jesus. (*C. J. P. Eyre, M.A.*) *The body, not the man, buried*:—"The disciples came and took up the body and buried it." I like that way of speaking of human burial; it is the true way; it is emphatically the Christian way of speaking of the act. You buried *it*, not Him. "By and by," said Socrates to his friends, "you will be saying, 'Socrates is dead, but Socrates will not be dead. By and by you will be saying, 'Socrates is in his coffin,' but Socrates will not be in his coffin. By and by you will be saying, 'We are going to bury Socrates,' but you will not bury Socrates, you will only bury something that belonged to him." Well spoken, thou Old World philosopher; the fuller light of Christianity comes to confirm thy conjecture, and to verify thy reasoning. No; there is no burying a man. You cannot bury a soul. (*J. B. French.*)

Vers. 13, 14. **When Jesus heard of it He departed thence by ship.**—*The sorrowing Saviour*:—Jesus hears of John's death, and thereupon seeks seclusion. I. Here we learn HOW TO BEHAVE IN TIME OF TROUBLE. 1. Christ was deeply affected by John's death—that event gave Him great sorrow. 2. There was good reason for Christ being deeply affected. John from the first had been a faithful friend; his sole object was to magnify Christ. II. HOW CHRIST ACTED WHEN THIS GREAT SORROW FILLED HIS SOUL. 1. He sought the desert; He desired to be alone. That He might pray. The multitudes come; He meets them. 2. His sorrow for the dead is changed into compassion for the living. He must now work, not weep. God finds work for every sorrowing heart that trusts in Him, in which relief is found. (*A. Scott.*) *Solitude not permanent*:—There are some occurrences that simply make us quiet. There are shocks we can only answer by eloquent dumbness. He departed and went into a wilderness: it was better to be among the barren sands than among murderers and most cruel-minded men. There are times when we are all but inclined to give up our work. Our rain is lost, our dews fall in stony places, our best endeavours are returned to us without echo or answer of joy and gratitude, and we sigh for a lodge in some vast wilderness, some boundless contiguity of shade. This will be only for awhile, however, in the case of Jesus Christ. "When He went forth and saw great multitudes He was moved with compassion towards them, and He healed their sick." He was bound to come back again: the sickness would have a greater effect upon Him than the murder. He will not relinquish His work because of instances that might have shocked Him with fatal distress. He looks upon the multitudinous man and not only upon the individual mischief-doer and murderer. He was the Son of Man; Jesus Christ always took the broad and inclusive view, and this held Him to His work when individual instances might have driven Him away from it and afflicted Him with fatal discouragement. (*Joseph Parker, D.D.*)

Vers. 15–21. **They need not depart; give ye them to eat.**—*Christ feeding the multitude*:—The miracles of Jesus were: (1) public; (2) beneficent. I. THE NATURE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE MIRACLE. 1. When was it wrought? In "the evening." The evening of a day that had been well spent. 2. Where was it performed? In "a desert place." The miracle as to time and place encourages our confidence in Christ in the most trying and destitute situations. 3. What was the order of its performance. (1) Christ's tenderness to the people—"They need not depart." (2) The all-sufficiency which He possessed in Himself. (3) The plainness of their provision, as well as the scantiness of the supply. (4) However little you have bring it to Jesus, and He will make it more. (5) His devotion—"looking up to heaven." (6) Our Lord employed the disciples as the dispensers of His bounty. (7) A lesson of frugality—"They took up the fragments." II. REFLECTIONS. 1. In this provision see an emblem of Jesus Christ. He is the true Bread. 2. In the distribution of this provision learn the office and work of Christian ministers. 3. In the apparent deficiency of this provision we are reminded of the treatment of the Saviour and His gospel by an unbelieving world. "Five loaves and two fishes"

appeared nothing to the supply of such an assembly. 4. In the real sufficiency of this provision we are instructed in the glorious ability of Christ to completo the happiness of all that believe. The multitude "did all eat and were filled." (*T. Kidd.*) *The five barley loaves in the desert:*—I. CHRIST'S RETREAT INTO THE DESERT. He sought retirement; multitude intruded, yet Christ was not disappointed or annoyed. II. THE MEN SITTING DOWN TO THE BARLEY LOAVES. 1. There is the want of bread for the congregation in the desert. 2. Jesus asks the disciples what supply they have. 3. Jesus orders the disciples to bring the loaves to Himself. Christ's way of giving us more is to begin with what we have. 4. Jesus next commands the multitude to sit down in order. The multitude needed great faith. We cannot first eat and then believe; must believe and eat. The disciples need faith and courage; sent by Christ on a trying errand—"Give ye them to eat. The foolishness of preaching becomes the power of God. III. THE BREAD BLESSED AND MULTIPLIED. 1. Jesus gave thanks to God for the bread in the face of all the multitude. 2. Jesus blesses the bread before he breaks and gives to the people; and His blessing breathed upon it fills the bread with an infinite fulness. Christ is the Bread of Life to the sinner dying for want; sweet to the soul in the desert. 3. Jesus breaks the bread and multiplies in the using; He breaks and distributes to the apostles, and they break and distribute to the people; and probably the people break and distribute to each other. Christ breathes upon and blesses the Word. IV. THE FRAGMENTS REMAINING. 1. After the feast is finished there are many fragments over. 2. Jesus and His disciples live upon these fragments. The fragments are more than the entire supply for the feast. The more we feed on Christ, the more always is there of Christ to feed on; He increases to us. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *The food of the world:*—I. Christ feeds the famishing world by means of His Church. 1. The food, though supernaturally provided, is carried to the hungry by the ordinary means. 2. The disciples were prepared for their work. They had to learn the absolute disproportion between the means at their command and the needs of the crowd. 3. We must carry our poor and inadequate resources to Christ. II. THE BREAD IS ENOUGH FOR ALL THE WORLD—"They did all eat and were filled." III. THE BREAD THAT IS GIVEN TO THE FAMISHING IS MULTIPLIED FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DISTRIBUTORS. (*American Homiletic Review.*) *The miracle of the loaves and fishes:*—I. EXPLAIN AND ILLUSTRATE THE VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE MIRACLE. II. THE SPIRITUAL LESSONS WHICH THE MIRACLE AFFORDS. In the people we see a striking representation of the moral condition of the human family. In the provision we see a true exhibition of the blessing of the gospel. In its distribution we see the nature of the office of the Christian ministry. In the abundance remaining we see the boundlessness of gospel supplies. What personal participation of gospel blessing is necessary to our happiness and satisfaction? (*Dr. J. Burns.*) *The food of the world:*—Scripture miracles are not merely wonders, but signs. This one is a symbolic revelation of Christ supplying all the wants of this hungry world. Three points—the distribution, the meal, the gathering up. I. CHRIST FEEDS THE FAMISHING WORLD BY MEANS OF HIS CHURCH. 1. Economy of power. God does not interfere supernaturally, any further than is necessary. Christ's incarnation and sacrifice are the purely supernatural work of the Divine power and mercy; but, after their introduction into the world, human agency is required for the diffusion of the new power. Christian people are henceforth Christ's instruments. 2. Preparation of the disciples for this work. Looking at their own resources, they felt utterly inadequate to the work. Humility and self-distrust are necessary if God is to work with and in us. He works with bruised reeds, and out of them makes polished shafts, pillars in His house. In His hands our feeble resources are enough. 3. The disciples seem to have partaken first. Those only can distribute and impart, who have themselves found sustenance and life in Christ. And an obligation lies on them to do so. Power to its last particle is duty. II. THE BREAD IS ENOUGH FOR ALL THE WORLD. The gospel addresses itself to universal wants, brushing aside all surface distinctions, and going right down to the depths of our common nature. The seed of the kingdom is like corn, an exotic nowhere, for wherever man lives it will grow—and yet an exotic everywhere, for it came down from heaven. Other food requires an educated palate for its appreciation; but any hungry man in any land will relish bread. For every soul on earth this living, dying love of Jesus addresses itself to and satisfies his deepest wants. It is the bread which gives life to the world. III. THE BREAD GIVEN TO THE FAMISHING IS MULTIPLIED FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DISTRIBUTORS. To impart to others is to gain for oneself. If you would learn, teach. If you would

have your own spiritual life strengthened and deepened, remember that not by solitary meditation or raptures of silent communion alone can that be accomplished, but by these and by honest, manful work for God in the world. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The work of the Church in a starving world*:—An emblem of the whole work of the Church in this starving world. The multitudes famish. Tell Christ of their wants. Count your own small resources till you have completely learned your poverty: then take them to Jesus. He will accept them, and in His hands they will become mighty, being transfigured from human thoughts and forces into Divine words, spiritual powers. On that bread which He gives, do you yourself live. Then carry it boldly to all the hungry. Rank after rank will eat. All races, all ages, from grey hairs to babbling childhood, will find there the food of their souls. As you part the blessing, it will grow beneath His eye; and the longer you give, the fuller handed you will become. Nor shall the bread fail, nor the word become weak, till all the world has tasted of its sweetness, and been refreshed by its potent life. (*Ibid.*) *The miracle of the loaves*:—I. THE URGENCY OF THE NEED. 1. What is wanted—food. 2. The urgency of the want—in the wilderness. II. THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SUPPLY—"He openeth His hand and filleth all things living with plenteousness." 1. Like the five loaves the word is, in the letter of it, contemptible and mean. 2. The miracle instructive on account of its typical character; the disciples received the food they set before the people from the hands of Jesus. We should determine: (1) To eat the food ourselves; (2) To distribute it to others. (*C. Clayton, M.A.*) *Compassion for the multitude*:—I. OUR MISSION AND OUR WEAKNESS. Hungry men around us. To feed them, superstition offers stones instead of bread. Infidelity tries to persuade that they are not hungry. You say "Who are we that we should feed this multitude, who can count them?" Do not let the magnitude of the work dispirit you. "The supply is scant" you say. There is a tendency to shift responsibility. "Let us send them away into the villages to buy meat." II. OUR LINE OF DUTY AND THE MASTER'S STRENGTH. 1. In immediate obedience to Christ's commands. 2. In consecrating what we have to Christ. 3. In prayer. 4. In active service. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Communication begets plenty*:—I. THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE EARTH AND OF THE EARTH'S INDUSTRY, OUTWARD POSSESSIONS AND BENEFITS, THE THINGS THAT ARE CONSUMED IN THE USING. Shut up your bread-corn in a granary, and though it may not rot, it cannot grow; but strow it abroad over the furrows of the ground, and it will swell into a harvest. Lock up your piece of silver or gold, and it is no better than dead; but send it out into the world's free commerce, and the rusty solitary shall become a glittering host. An avaricious policy is dull-sighted and thriftless. It saves, but to be barren. Modern science teaches us that public wealth is born of trust and free communications. II. INTELLIGENCE AND KNOWLEDGE, THE POWER OF LEARNING AND THE TREASURES OF LEARNING, ARE MULTIPLIED BY DISTRIBUTION. The human mind is not less ready than the soil to render back with interest what is sown in it. Jesus gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. That is the way in which instruction is imparted. It passes from one to the many. It finds companions. Truth begets truth; and you must have a company to show the supply. What would have seemed inconsiderable if left by itself, grows into great account as it is sent forward among those who apprehend it, and transmit it in new and manifold forms. It is manifested, it is accumulated, by travelling down among the sympathies and wants of those whose hearts love it, whose natures crave it, and whose ability and experience reproduce and recommend it to all men. III. JOY, HOPE, AND ALL CHEERING INFLUENCES ARE INCREASED BY BEING SENT ROUND FROM A SINGLE MIND AMONG THE RANKS OF THE WORLD'S POOR SOJOURNERS. Nothing is more heightened by communication than just such impulses as those we here require. Joy and hope are social; they ask for companionship; they spread by contact and mutual encouragement. He who has awakened them in his own breast, finds them greatly enhanced by expressing them; and their expression is caught up and repeated by numberless voices that had till then slept. (*L. N. Frothingham.*) *Sitting on grass*:—The tall grass which, broken down by the feet of the thousands there gathered together, would make as it were "couches" for them to recline upon. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Multiplied by giving*:—From whence God multiplies the crops of corn from a few grains, from thence He multiplied the loaves in His own hands. For the power was in the hands of Christ. For those five loaves were, as it were, seed, not indeed committed to the earth, but multiplied by Him who made the earth. (*Augustine.*) When you give a loaf or a coin to a poor man, you do not lose it, but you sow it; for, as from one grain of seed many grains grow, so it is likewise with loaves and money.

(*Lapide.*) *Increase by distribution*:—Christ could as well have multiplied the loaves *whole*; why would He rather do it in the breaking? Perhaps to teach us that in the *distribution* of our goods we should expect His blessing, and not in their entireness and reservation. There is no man but increaseth by scattering. (*Bishop Hall.*) *Strong charity, weak faith*:—"Send them away, that they may buy victuals." Here was a strong charity, but a weak faith: a strong charity, in that they would have the people relieved; a weak faith, in that they supposed they could not otherwise be so well relieved. As a man, when he sees many ways lie before him, takes that which he thinks both fairest and nearest, so do they: this way of relief lay openest to their view and promised most. (*Ibid.*) *Baskets for fragments*:—The Roman poet Juvenal describes a large provision-basket, together with a bundle of hay, as being part of the equipment of the Jewish mendicants who thronged the grove of Egeria at Rome. The motive for this custom was to avoid ceremonial impurity in eating, or in resting at night. (*A. Carr.*) *Our Lord in prayer*:—Likely he was weary in body, and also worn in spirit for lack of that finer sympathy which His disciples could not give Him, being very earthly yet. He who loves his fellows and labours among those who can ill understand him will best know what this weariness of our Lord must have been like. He had to endure the world-pressure of surrounding humanity in all its ungodlike phases. (*George Macdonald.*)

Ver. 23. **He went up into a mountain apart to pray.**—*Religious retirement*:—It hath been disputed which is a state of greater perfection, the social, or the solitary; whereas, in truth, neither of these estates is complete without the other: as the example of our blessed Lord (the unerring test and measure of perfection) informs us. I. UNDER WHAT LIMITATIONS MAY THE DUTY OF RELIGIOUS RETREAT AND RECOLLECTION BE RECOMMENDED? No man is, or ought to be, so deeply immersed in the affairs of this world as not to be able to retire from them now and then into his closet. II. THE ADVANTAGES ATTENDING THE PRACTICE OF RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT. There are such as these—that it unites and fixes our scattered thoughts; places us out of the reach of the most dangerous temptations; frees us from the insinuating contagion of ill examples, and hushes and lays asleep those troublesome passions which are the great disturbers of our repose and happiness. (*F. Atterbury.*) *Refreshment in prayer*:—The celebrated Haydn was in company with some distinguished persons. The conversation turned on the best means of restoring the mental energies, when exhausted with long and difficult studies. One said he had recourse, in such a case, to a bottle of wine; another, that he went into company. Haydn being asked what he would do, or did do, said that he retired to his closet and engaged in prayer; and that nothing exerted on his mind a more happy and efficacious influence than prayer. *Religious retirement*:—From the behaviour of our Lord, as it is here described, we may draw these observations for our own use. I. THAT WE OUGHT TO SET APART SOME PORTIONS OF OUR TIME FOR PRIVATE AND SILENT ACTS OF RELIGION, for conversation with God and our own hearts. The duties of such times consist—(1) in a recollection of our past transgressions, in resolutions of amendment and improvement, and in prayers to God to forgive and assist us. (2) In a review of the favours and mercies which we have received from Him, and in a grateful acknowledgment of them. (3) In meditations on the shortness and uncertainty of life, on the duties which more particularly belong to our station, on the abilities and opportunities we have of improving our heart and understanding, and of doing the work of Him who has sent us into the world. (4) In general, in a study of religious truths. In all times and places there are many who pass a thoughtless life in perpetual unconcern for religion, who are entirely taken up with the follies, the amusements, the hurry and business of this world. Trace out the causes of this unreasonable conduct. (1) A bad education; (2) the common practice of the world when we are grown up; (3) desire for company. By securing times of meditation, we may hope to keep ourselves free from vicious habits: to learn what the defects are to which we are prone, which usually escape our notice; to rule over our passions; to discover what abilities God has given us; to confirm in ourselves all good dispositions, and thus we shall be able to converse in safety with the world. II. THAT WE OUGHT TO EMPLOY ALL THE POWERS AND ABILITIES WHICH GOD HAS CONFERRED UPON US TO THE GLORY OF THEIR AUTHOR, and to the benefit of mankind, and lose no opportunity of doing good. The action and the behaviour by which we can be useful to others are, Liberality, Justice, Instruction, Counsel and Advice, Reproof and Correction, Commendation and Encou

ragement, Patience and Meekness, Compassion, Condescension, Courteousness, and Affability; and a life suitable to the religion which we profess. III. THAT THE ACTIVE AND SOCIAL DUTIES ARE MORE VALUABLE AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE CONTEMPLATIVE VIRTUES WHICH ARE OF A PRIVATE AND SOLITARY NATURE. 1. Man is not sufficient to his own happiness; finds himself made for society, to which his wants, his imperfections, and his desires incline him; it cannot therefore be his duty to check and overrule these innocent desires. 2. By society we are assisted not only in the conveniences of life, but in the improvement of our understanding and in the performance of our duty. 3. Of two persons who live soberly and righteously, the one in a public station, the other in retirement, the former must be allowed to be the more excellent person, and the brighter example of virtue. 4. The accounts which we have of the old solitary saints, though written by their admirers and adorers, is often little to their advantage or to the credit of Christianity. IV. THAT WE MAY HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME AND PROPER OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DUTIES AND VIRTUES, AND THAT THEREFORE NEITHER SHOULD BE OMITTED. (*Jortin.*) *Closet prayer*:—Christ often proposed His own temper and actions as the model, after which all His disciples should copy. The multitude and variety of His public services neither prevented His spending a social hour among the families to which His disciples stood related, nor His finding opportunity for secret devotion. For this, Christ was singularly eminent. An old divine used to say three things were requisite to make a good minister: "meditation, temptation, and prayer." If Jesus Christ found it needful and advantageous to engage in retired devotion, how much more so must it be for such weak and imperfect creatures as we are—not only ministers, but private Christians also. I. THE NATURE AND GROUNDS OF THIS DUTY—(*a*) Precepts of Scripture; (*b*) Example of Jesus Christ; (*c*) Practice of saints in every age; (*d*) Important and indispensable part of religion. II. THE MANNER AND SPIRIT IN WHICH IT SHOULD BE PERFORMED—(*a*) Sense of God's presence; (*b*) Solemn and devout; (*c*) Joined with reading the Scriptures, and meditation, and self-examination. III. THE PARTICULAR OBJECTS IN RELATION TO WHICH IT IS PRACTISED. Our progress in knowledge, grace, and holiness, and the obtaining guidance and assistance from God in all seasons of peculiar need. There are some particular *occasions* in regard to which this duty may be practised to advantage. There are some particular *seasons* in which Christians should be much in private prayer; such as times of affliction, public calamity, prevailing departure from the knowledge, experience, and practice of true religion; seasons of suspense and embarrassment; seasons of ease and prosperity. IV. THE DIFFICULTY OF A CONSTANT AND SUCCESSFUL ATTENTION TO CLOSET PRAYER. (*J. Townsend.*)

Ver. 24. **For the wind was contrary.**—*The wind was contrary*:—The Sea of Galilee lies low, being, in fact, six hundred feet beneath the level of the Mediterranean, and the water-courses on its banks have cut out deep ravines which act like funnels to draw down the winds from the mountains, so that the storms are often both sudden and severe. On the present occasion the wind came down with such fury that even strong rowers like the fishermen apostles could make little way against it, and after "toiling" for nine hours they had made no more than three miles. I. THE WAY OF DUTY IS NOT ALWAYS EASY. Even when constrained by love of Christ to undertake any particular work, we are often beset by difficulties and obstacles: no plain sailing, always breakers ahead. II. WE MAY TAKE COMFORT TO OURSELVES FROM THE FOLLOWING FACTS: 1. We are not responsible for the "contrary wind." This takes the sting out of the trial. If a difficulty rises before me in God's Providence, apart from any agency or culpability of my own, then I am in better mood to meet and overcome it than I should be if I knew it to be the result of my own folly. 2. The attention required for bearing up against the contrary wind may take us, for the time being, out of some subtle temptation. It would seem that our Lord sent His disciples away across the lake that night to keep them out of harm's way, and to give them something more to think about than the glittering allurements of worldly greatness. Is it not often so with us? We have not been conscious of it at the moment, but we have seen afterwards that the seeming interruption kept us out of the path of danger. Better far a strong head-wind than a fog; for in the fog an iceberg may be veiled, and collision with that would be destruction. 3. The contrary wind may prepare us for higher service in the cause of Christ. In this night upon the deep the apostles had, as it were, a rehearsal of the difficulties they would have to contend with after their

Master was taken up into heaven. Probably much of their persistence in the face of persecution had its root in the remembrance of what they had learned in this night's contest with adverse winds. It was one of their first experiments in walking alone, and it helped to steady them. The very necessity of rowing against the wind develops new strength, and brings latent resources into play. Had it not been for his deafness, John Kitto would probably never have become an author. 4. The Lord Jesus is closely watching us. The apostles knew not that He "saw them toiling in rowing," for it was dark. Had they known it, what new heart it would have put into them! To us this knowledge is given—that though Jesus is unseen, He is still looking down with interest upon us, and will at the right time come and succour us. So we may leave all care about the issue, and attend, meanwhile, to the rowing. Let us, then, toil on! It is but a little while at the longest. No contrary wind can last for ever. By and by Christ will come to us, and then there will be peace. Yes, and after a time we shall reach the other shore; and when we touch that, we shall be done with difficulties. So, as one said, just before entering the boat in which he lost his life, "Ho! for heaven!" What though the waves be rough? Ho! for heaven! What though the wind be contrary? Ho! for heaven! What though the labour be exhausting? Ho! for heaven! (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

Vers. 22, 27. **And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side.** *The midnight voyage home:*—I. THE FEAST FOLLOWED BY HUMILIATION AND TROUBLE. 1. The feast in the desert was the greatest work in which the apostles were ever engaged during the ministry of Jesus. The miracle was of a more kingly character than others, shared by a greater number, and more plainly typical of great things to come in the kingdom of heaven. In this glorious work the twelve have been active ministers. They were not to remain to receive the congratulations of the multitude; they must go away at once. Jesus constrains them to return to the ship. Ministers must not intrude themselves into the Lord's place; they must be willing servants, and then go their way and leave the rest to the Lord. The apostles had been highly exalted, and now they must be humbled. In the sight of the congregation they are sent away in charge of the empty boat, as if they were mere fishermen still. 2. But they are sent also into the midst of trouble. After we have had faith to distribute the bread of life comes the trial of obedience. It seemed as if providence were contrary to their course. II. THE STORM AGGRAVATED BY CHRIST'S ABSENCE, AND STILLED BY HIS COMING. 1. Jesus sent the twelve away alone, and all that the people saw was that "He went not in the ship with them." Jesus was to come to them by the coast. 2. Jesus, meanwhile, has not walked along the coast, whence they expected to take Him in; but has left the shore altogether, and gone up into a mountain apart. In the retired mountain He cannot be seen by the disciples; but in His prayer to the Father they will not be forgotten. 3. Jesus comes to them according to His promise; but not according to their thoughts, either in time or in manner. 4. There is yet one more element of trial mingled for these midnight wrestlers with the waves. Jesus often appears to be "going past" in our time of need. Also His manner of coming alarms the disciples. In our trials we often mistake the coming of the Lord Jesus. 5. Jesus enters the ship; and how glorious is the effect of deliverance out of danger, of seasonable help, when obeying Christ's command, against all adversity. 6. An unlooked-for blessing now awaits them on the shore. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *Jesus constrained His disciples:*—Why? 1. Lest they should take part with the rash, many-headed multitude, who would have made Him a king. 2. To inure them to the cross, and teach them to suffer hardship. 3. To give them proof of His power. *Nature and grace:*—The story of this miracle has instruction for us in connection with the material world in which we live. Nature is not, in all respects, to be separated off too sharply from grace; and this miracle reminds us that it is the Lord of this universe who is the Head of the Church and the Saviour of our souls. (*Dean Howson.*) *The government of nature:*—These miracles, dealing with nature, show themselves as interfering with what we may call the righteous laws of nature. Water should wet the foot, should engulf him who would tread its surface. Yet even in this, I think, the restoration of an original law—the supremacy of righteous man, is foreshown. While a man cannot order his own house as he would, something is wrong in him, and therefore in his house. I think a true man should be able to rule winds and waters, loaves and fishes, for he comes of the Father who made the house for him. Man is not master in his own house, because he is not master in himself, because he is not a law unto

himself—is not himself obedient to the law by which he exists. (*George Macdonald.*) *Secret of Christ's power over nature:*—A higher condition of harmony with law may one day enable us to do things which must now *appear* an interruption of law. I believe it is in virtue of the absolute harmony in Him, His perfect righteousness, that God can create at all. If man were in harmony with this, if he too were righteous, he would inherit of his Father a something in his degree correspondent to the creative power in Him; and the world he inhabits, which is but an extension of his body, would, I think, be subject to him in a way surpassing his wildest dreams of dominion, for it would be the perfect dominion of holy law—a virtue flowing to and from him through the channel of a perfect obedience. I suspect that our Lord, in all His dominion over nature, set forth only the complete man—man as God means him one day to be. I believe that some of these miracles were the natural result of a physical nature perfect from the indwelling of a perfect soul, whose unity with the Life of all things and in all things was absolute—in a word, whose sonship was perfect. (*Ibid.*) *The glorifying of Christ's body:*—The difficulty here is our Lord's withdrawing Himself personally from the control of earthly natural laws. It is common to conceive of the glorifying of Christ's body as the work of a moment, at the Resurrection, or, at least, at the Ascension. But if we suppose the Spirit's work in glorifying and perfecting Christ's body to have been spread over the Saviour's whole life, certain periods—such as this walking on the sea, and the transfiguration—being still distinguished as seasons of special activity, much that is obscure will be made clear. A body thoroughly of the earth, chained down by unseen hands to earthly matter, cannot shake itself free from its origin, but that a higher bodily frame, teeming with the powers of a loftier world, should rise above the earthly level is less surprising. This manifestation of Christ's hidden glory was designed to build up His disciples in the faith. They saw more and more clearly with whom they had to do, and perceived that He was the revelation of the invisible Father, who alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. (*Olshausen.*) *The Divine coming unrecognized:*—It often happens that the coming of Christ to His disciples for their relief is that which frightens them most, because they do not know the extent of God's wardrobe; for I think that as a king might never wear the same garment but once, in order to show his riches and magnificence, so God comes to us in all exigencies, but never twice alike. He sometimes puts on the garments of trouble; and when we are calling upon Him as though He were yet in heaven, He is walking by our side; and that from which we are praying God to deliver us is often but God Himself. Thus it is with us as with children who are terrified by their dreams in the night, and scream for their parents, until, fully waking, behold they are in their parents' arms! (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The sea on which Jesus walked:*—Shortly after passing the spot which was the scene of the terrible discomfiture of the Christian hosts by Saladin, we came to the brink of a vast hollow, and the Lake of Tiberias lay slumbering far beneath our feet. The sun was nearly at the zenith, and diffused a flood of dazzling light upon the waters, just ruffled by a passing breeze, on which we beheld a solitary bark, a mere speck, slowly making its way toward Tiberias. That city, with its huge castle and turreted walls, a pile of melancholy ruins, lay scattered along the nearer shore. The lake, about ten miles long, and five or six broad, was embosomed in mountains, or, to describe it more correctly, was like a great caldron sunk in the lofty table-land, which broke down to its edge in steep cliffs and abrupt ravines. At one end we could see where the Jordan flowed into it, and, beyond, the lofty peak of Mount Hermon covered with eternal snow. There was no wood on the hills, there were no villages on the shore, no boats upon the water; there was no sound in any direction. If there was beauty, it was that of the intense blue sky of Palestine, reflected in the blue expanse of waters, and over-canopying a landscape of serene, but corpse-like, placidity, like a countenance fixed in death, but upon which there yet lingers something of a parting smile. (*W. H. Bartlett.*)

Ver. 26. **And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled.**—*Christ walking on the sea:*—Here are presented two points. I. Human need. II. Divine help. These two facts are involved in the two aspects of humanity. 1. I ASK YOU TO CONSIDER THE ATTITUDE OF MAN TOWARDS THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE UNKNOWN. "They cried out for fear." This was the cry of men tossed and toiling on the wild deep, in the gloom of night. Very startling must have been to them the appearance of that form, advancing through the shadow and over the sea. **But**

that was a cry of our common nature; it was a spontaneous human utterance from a mysterious depth, which under all forms of civilization, and all kinds of religion, abides in the soul of man. Every man awakens to the conviction that there is something beyond this world. It may not be a very practical conviction; thousands may live without any steady appreciation of that to which such a conviction points. But there are occasions when it is suddenly realized. There are three conditions of nature which are especially adapted to stir these feelings of mystery and awe, and all three are involved in the circumstances of the text. These are night, the night sky, and the sea. 1. Witness the common terror of the dead night-time and the dark, not a mere childish superstition, but a solemn awe creeping over the innermost fibres of the heart, "In thought from the visions of the night," said Eliphaz, "when deep sleep falleth on men," &c. Even the sceptical mind has acted upon the conviction that something must people that undefined space into which the visible world melts away. 2. Or, again, who has ever looked up through the darkness and gazed upon those orbs of light and glory that shame all splendours of the earth, without the spontaneous conviction of powers and intelligences dwelling outside these beaten ways of our traffic and our thought? What influences rain upon us from those starry depths? What unseen messengers glide down these awful solitudes? 3. Or, once more, consider that element in which the greatness and the mystery of nature and of life are represented. What suggestions of the supernatural and the unknown rise upon us from the bosom of the sea. What intimations beyond our sight; what a conviction of our impotence. Regarding thus this attitude of human need, WHAT HELP HAS BEEN FOUND FOR IT? Two answers have come—one from the side of human sentiment, the other from human reason. 1. One answer elicited in this attitude of human need appears in various forms of superstition. Rock-temples and bloody altars, and human sacrifices proclaim the fact that human nature does not all gravitate to sense and the darkness of annihilation. The superstitious sentiments need some explanation. 2. The answer that comes from the side of reason. Law, force, order, are sublime facts, but not enough for human nature. You cannot by scientific explanation of the seen repress man's earnest inquiry about the unseen. To our human need, and our attitude towards the supernatural, Christ has come. There is only one voice that can say, "Be of good cheer, be not afraid." II. CONSIDER THE ATTITUDE OF MAN RESPECTING THE NATURAL AND THE KNOWN, AND HERE YOU WILL OBSERVE THE CONDITIONS OF HUMAN NEED AND DIVINE HELP. These men who "cried out for fear" had been "toiling in rowing." We are troubled here amidst the perplexities and trials of daily life. In one way or another many of us are "toiling in rowing" —the toil of pleasure—or we are rowing through heavy waves of care. Our need calls for Divine help. In seasons of gloom, looking out upon the world around us through shadows, we discern objects at which we shudder. That which excites our fears may be a blessing; but we know it not, and need the assurance that can bid us be of good cheer. (*E. H. Chapin*). *Jesus no phantom*:—I. IT IS TOO COMMON AN ERROR TO MAKE A PHANTOM OF CHRIST. 1. How often is this done in the matter of sin and the cleansing of it. Our sin is real to us; but is Christ as real to us? 2. In the matter of our acceptance with God after pardon. Our shortcomings real; equally real the righteousness of Christ. 3. In the matter of sanctification. 4. In times of trial. 5. In time of death. 6. In Christian work. II. WE MAKE CHRIST A PHANTOM MOST WHEN HE IS MOST REALLY CHRIST. When He walked on the waves there was more of Christ visible than on land; His Godhead visible. In the pardon of great sin you see most of Christ; so in great distress and danger. III. OUR GREATEST SORROWS ARISE FROM OUR TREATING OUR LORD AS UNREAL. To some Christ is an indifferent spirit. Many a poor sinner imagines Him to be an angry spirit and cries out for fear. IV. If we could but be cured of this desperate mischief, our Lord Jesus Christ would have a higher place in our esteem, and many other beneficial results would follow: 1. Knowledge. 2. Worship. 3. Service. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Eastern belief in Spirits*:—The belief is quite general in the East that there exists a class of beings whom they call "*Jins*," both male and female, good and bad, which hold an intermediate position between angels and men, were created before the latter, are made of fire, or perhaps of gas, and are capable of assuming a variety of forms, or of becoming invisible at pleasure. They eat, drink, and marry—sometimes human beings—as well as die, though they live several centuries. Many events are accounted for in the East by the agency of the Jins; so that they do not exist in stories alone, but are recognized as active agents in human affairs. (*Van Lennep.*) *The magic of the Saviour's voice*:—It is a

wonderful organ, this human voice—wonderful in itself, and no less so in its effects. It is wonderful as an exponent of individual mind and character, being somehow very closely connected with a man, and contributing largely to constitute that aggregate of special qualities we call individuality. So much so, that one is known, is revealed and recognized, by his voice almost as much as by anything outward. And it is wonderful as an instrument for affecting others. The Saviour's voice on this occasion operated like a charm; it wrought like magic upon them. It is amazing what power the living voice, especially a long-known and much-loved voice, has to touch the heart, and to awaken confidence and peace, and emotion, of all kinds, that may have been long dormant in the soul. (*A. L. R. Foote.*)

Vers. 28, 33.—**And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.**—*Impulse and regulation*:—There are two powers working side by side under which Christ has taught us He means every true Christian life shall move forward, undervaluing neither the one nor the other. One of these is the IMPELLING POWER, impulse. This impulsive part of religious character is indispensable. St. Peter was right in his outset "Bid me come to Thee," &c. The other is the REGULATING POWER. It is this that keeps alive the life that has been awakened, and fulfils the good intentions. Impulses spring up in the region of feeling. Their continuance, regulation, and practical results, depend on the conscience and the will. It is easy to reach the transition point between impulse and principle; some reach it as soon as danger threatens. How shall I turn the ardent impulse of penitent faith into consistent piety? By leaving no good impulse to grow cold or waste in a neglected sentiment, but by embodying it immediately in its corresponding action; in other words, by Christian regulation. Steadfastness will come as you are really planted in Christ. (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) *The religion of impulse*:—The religious feeling is the soul of humanity. It may exist in these three forms: I. Acting WITHOUT intellect, under the control of the external. II. Acting UNDER intellect—controlled by the judgment. This is as it should be. III. Acting AGAINST intellect. This is the religion of impulse, and it is here exemplified by Peter in three aspects. 1. Urging an extravagant request. Men are not made to walk on water; were never known to do so; have no capacity for it. To guard against this evil, we must study general laws, cultivate self-command, and seek Divine guidance. 2. Impelling to perilous conduct. One foolish act has often plunged men into a sea of difficulties. 3. Corrected by a merciful God. Christ first allows full liberty for the play of passion and freaks of folly. Then He helps, if asked to. And, lastly, He exposes the error—"Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Peter ought not to have engaged in the act without faith—and faith implies the full action of intellect. Do not act from impulse—nor even from custom or habit. Act ever from faith. Remember that faith implies intellect, evidence, and reliance. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Peter's unwise experiment in faith*:—1. His walking on the sea was needless. There is no pressing necessity shutting him up to this sea-walking; but it is faith experimenting in high and holy things. No important end to be served. 2. He asks permission to do that which is not commanded by Christ. Peter asks help to do what Christ had not done; to walk on the sea for the walking's sake. This Christ permits to prove what is in him, but not to his honour or comfort. A salutary discipline. 3. Yet Christ does not fail Peter; it is not the power or word of Christ that gives way, but only the faith of Peter in this power or word. So long as he looks to Jesus this word supports him. It is easier to believe in the ship than on the waters. Now he fears, his faith gives way. Peter in his extremity cries aloud to Jesus. He has not faith enough to walk on the waters, but enough to cry for help. (*A. M. Stuart.*) *Walking on the waters*:—It is not difficult to discover the characteristics of St. Peter as they come out here. Whatever he felt for the moment was sure to come out in his words or actions. It is easy to blame and say that Peter should not have been so eager to meet his Lord, or he should have maintained his faith to the last. But we must not forget that the very height to which his faith had for the moment attained, exposed him, more than others, to the temptation of unbelief. They who sit securely in their boats are not liable to sink. The men of even temperament cannot understand an experience such as this. They know nothing of ups and downs. Where the hills are highest the ravines are deepest, Peter must not, therefore, be unduly blamed. We learn from the incident: 1. That when His disciples are in danger of being carried away by earthly influences, Christ sends them into trial. If we are bent on something which shall endanger our spirituality, God may send us serious affliction to keep us out of mischief.

2. That while our trial lasts the Lord prays for us. 3. That when Christ comes to us in our trials we are able to rise above them. He did not come at once. He came over the big waves which constituted their trial. He makes a pathway into our hearts over the affliction which distresses us. The disciples did not know Christ when he came. Have we never mistaken him? When Christ comes, and is recognized, He brings relief. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Failure teaching humility*:—Peter required a lesson in humility: and it is instructive to observe in what way he received the lesson from our Lord. He did not meet the erring disciple with sharp and sudden reproof. He did not refuse the man's petition; but He taught the required lesson by its very fulfilment. We have seen a father adopt the same plan in giving a lesson to his son. The boy was anxious to carry a heavy burden, believing that he was able for the task. The father let him try; and as the little arms struggled and quivered, and failed, the little mind was taught its own weakness, and the little heart was truly humbled. Just so when Peter asked to walk with Jesus upon the water. He said, "Come." The request is granted, but not approved; and Peter is left to try the work in his own strength, and fail through inglorious weakness. (*P. Thompson.*) *Failure in the midst of success*:—He failed in the midst of success. It is difficult to carry a full cup, or walk upon the high places of the earth. It is more difficult to walk erect, and firm, and far among the tossing waves of adversity. The movement of Peter at the outset was grandly courageous. How truly the other disciples would gaze upon him with admiration! He stepped over the little boat; placed his foot upon the rising billow; walked step after step with perfect safety. It was a great moment in the man's life; but it was a greatness for which the man was not equal. His nerve was too weak to carry the full cup, or bear the heavy burden, or tread the stormy water. He failed in the hour of triumph, and lost all by not looking to Jesus. The word is very touching. "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid." There was the defect. He looked to the raging winds and the surging waters. He looked to the danger, and not to the Saviour. He forgot the power of Christ, and trusting to himself, and trembling like a breaking wave beneath the boisterous wind, he began to sink. The work was done, and the lesson learned, with great rapidity. His faith, and courage, and devotion, were not so great as he imagined. He discovered his helplessness, and prayed for safety. "Lord save me;" and now the daring man was brought to regard the Lord's hand as the fountain of spiritual strength. (*Ibid.*) *Peter in the storm*:—1. The presumption of faith—"Bid me come to Thee on the water." 2. The power of faith—"Come." 3. The weakness of faith. 4. The power of prayer. (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *The earnest prayer*:—I. We must feel our NEED of salvation. II. We must know the only SOURCE of salvation. III. We must PRAY individually for salvation. (*W. D. Harwood.*) *The fear of Peter when walking on the water*:—I. THE FEAR WHICH PETER BETRAYED ON THIS OCCASION. 1. The transient nature of our best and strongest feelings when they are not kept alive by Divine grace. 2. The danger of needlessly putting to the trial our highest graces. Never make a presumptuous display of grace. II. THE CAUSE OF PETER'S FEAR. "When he saw the wind boisterous," &c. Here we are taught not to be unmindful of our dangers, but to keep our thoughts fixed on the greatness and faithfulness of Christ when we are surrounded by them. III. THE CONSEQUENCE OF PETER'S FEAR. He began to sink. Our support in dangers and trials depends on our faith. IV. THE PRAYER WHICH THE FEAR OF PETER DREW FROM HIM. 1. In all our troubles, if we are Christians, we shall be men of prayer. 2. The fears of the real believer, however strong, are still accompanied with a cleaving to Christ. V. THE CONDUCT OF CHRIST TOWARDS HIM. 1. There is no situation in which Christ cannot help us. 2. There is no state in which Christ will not save us. (*C. Bradley.*) *Doubting a hindrance to the Christian life.* I. ST. PETER'S DESIRE—"Bid me come unto Thee." The truthfulness of the Bible seen in the striking preservation of the individuality of the characters brought into view. Peter uniformly rash. Many a time does the yearning spirit of the believer say, "Bid me come," &c. 1. There is the memory of joys of which earth knows nothing, experienced in His Presence. 2. There is the consciousness of security from every harm. 3. The confidence created by so many trials of His love. No wonder that this desire of Peter should be the longing of Christ's faithful followers. II. ST. PETER'S FAILURE. The first part of the history shows us his daring zeal; now his failing faith. At first his faith laid hold on Divine power, and he was able to tread the waves without sinking. There was an element of wrong in the undertaking; self-confidence again. It was regarding the danger more than the Saviour that made him weak. III. AT THE REPROOF MINISTERED TO ST. PETER

BY OUR LORD. The rebuke was gentle. After all seen of the power of Christ could he doubt? Christ bids us "come" to Him in the gospel. His power works in those who heed the message. The need and value of true faith in our Lord. There is no happiness without it. (*R. H. Baynes, B.A.*) *Beginning to sink:*—There are three conditions of soul. 1. Some think they are sinking, and are not. 2. Some are sinking and do not know it. 3. Some are sinking and miserably do know it. 4. The consequent is evident, what was below you is now over you, your servant has become your master, cares, and anxieties. 5. Your escape is in looking again to Jesus. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The cause of sinking:*—Let me gather up the steps to the "sinking:"—an emotional state, with abrupt and strong reactions—a self-exaltation—a breaking-out, under a good and religious aspect, of an old infirmity and sin—a disproportion between the act and the frame of mind in which the act was done—neglect of ordinary means, with not sufficient calculation of difficulties—a devious eye—a want of concentration—a regard to circumstances more than to the Power which wields them—a certain inward separation from God—a human measurement—a descent to a fear, unnecessary, dishonouring fear—depression—a sense of perishing—"beginning to sink." (*Ibid.*) *No safety in mere feeling:*—In the spiritual navigation, it is well to remember that the feelings are the sails, and very quickly and very beautifully do our feelings carry us along while all is favourable. But let once difficulties and temptations come, and if we have only feelings, we shall stop. The best-spread feeling, if it be only feeling, will never make head against a contrary wind. (*Ibid.*) *Presumption of early martyrs:*—Of this nature was that extravagant desire of martyrdom in many of the Primitive Church, when even novices in Christianity, and those of the weaker sex, must needs be thrusting themselves into the hands of the persecutors, when they might easily, and without sin, have escaped them; and thereby exposed themselves to such cruel torments as they were not able to endure, and then did very ill things to be free from them again, to the great dishonour of their holy religion, the deep wounding of their consciences, and their lasting shame and reproach, which they could not wipe off but by a long and very severe repentance. And, indeed, 'tis no better than knight-errantry in religion thus to seek out hazardous adventures, and lead ourselves into temptations, and then expect that God should support us, and bring us safely off. 'Tis not faith, but presumption, that engages men so far. (*Francis Bragge.*) *Christ and men's fears:*—In this verse are considerable. 1. The Person that spake; the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Those to whom He spake, viz., the disciples in their present distress. 3. The kind nature and design of Christ's speech to them at this time. 4. The argument He used to silence their fears. 5. The time when He spake to them thus comfortably—straightway. I. WHENCE IS IT, THAT EVEN REAL BELIEVERS MAY BE READY TO SINK UNDER THEIR TROUBLES. Causes of despondence are: we have not thought of the cross as we ought, or not counted upon it at all, and so have taken little care to prepare for it. Perhaps from our being so long spared, we promised ourselves an exemption from any remarkable trials; or perhaps we mistake the nature, end, and design of afflictions when they come, and so are ready to faint under Divine rebukes. There is a peculiar anguish with which some are overtaken, when they are under apprehensions of approaching death. As to the springs of this—(*a*) We are too prone to put from us the evil day. (*b*) Death may find us in the dark as to our title to the life to come, or meetness for it. (*c*) Conscience may be awakened in our last hours to revive the sense of past sins, and so may increase our sorrows and terrors. (*d*) Satan sometimes joins in with an awakened conscience, to make the trial the more sore. (*e*) God sometimes withdraws the light of His countenance. II. WHAT CHRIST SPAKE TO HIS DISCIPLES NOW, WHEN THEY WERE IN GREAT DISTRESS, He is ready to speak to all His members, whenever they are any of them distressed. III. WHAT IS CARRIED IN THESE COMFORTABLE WORDS, AND MAY BE GATHERED FROM THEM, FOR THEIR SUPPORT. It notes His presence with them, and His wisdom, power, faithfulness, and love to be engaged for them. (*Daniel Wilcox.*)

Ver. 31. **Wherefore didst thou doubt.**—*Doubting Christians:*—1. It perverts all they do by directing them to a wrong end. 2. It withdraws the mind from Christ. 3. It sours the temper. It breeds fears. 4. It gives Satan peculiar advantage against the soul. 5. The providence of God appears dark to such a soul. 6. It occasions false comfort. 7. It tarnishes the profession of such a person. (*J. Cooke.*) *Safety of believers in seeming perils:*—A British subject may be safe although surrounded by enemies in a distant land—not that he has strength to contend alone

against armed thousands, but because he is a subject of our Queen. A despot on his throne, a horde of savages in their desert, have permitted a helpless traveller to pass unharmed, like a lamb among lions—although, like lions looking on a lamb, they thirsted for his blood—because they knew his sovereign's watchfulness, and feared his sovereign's power. The feeble stranger has a charmed life in the midst of his enemies, because a royal arm unseen encompasses him as with a shield. The power thus wielded by an earthly throne may suggest and symbolize the perfect protection of Omnipotence. A British subject's confidence in his Queen may rebuke the feeble faith of a Christian. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" What though there be fears within and fightings without? He who bought His people with His own Blood cannot lose his inheritance, and will not permit any enemy to wrest from His hand the satisfaction of His soul. The man with a deceitful heart and a darkened mind, a feeble frame and a slippery way, a fainting heart and a daring foe—such a man would stumble and fall; but the member of Christ's body cannot drop off; the portion of the Redeemer cannot be wrenched from His grasp. "Ye are His." Christ is the safety of a Christian. (*W. Arnot.*)

Ver. 36. **As many as touched were made perfectly whole.**—*Christ healing the diseased*:—I. SOME OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE HEALING. They *felt* they were diseased. They were anxious to be healed. They were in the right place to be healed. II. THE CONDITION OF HEALING. Contact with Christ. Illustrates the conditions upon which we become partakers of the life which is in Christ Jesus. This condition is simple, not only as regards its operation, but also as it springs out of a principle which all men possess. III. THE EXTENT OF THE HEALING. This is seen in the numbers healed and in the *completeness* of the cures. (*R. Henry.*)

## CHAPTER XV.

VER. 1. **Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?** *Pharisaic evasions*:—I. The worst form of hypocrisy is that which sets aside plain moral duties on the plea that they hinder spiritual worship; for, if done as in God's presence, they *are* spiritual worship. II. No moral duty is more clearly expressed, either in the Bible or in the heart, than that of obeying, honouring, and ministering to parents. 1. They are the first of our fellow-creatures towards whom we have reponsibilities. 2. They are the representatives of God to us. Through them we are to rise to know Him as our Eternal Father, and through them we are to learn how to care for and regard His human family. III. Strange perversion of what constitutes the service of God, to imagine that a man can free himself from so fundamental a duty as ministering to his parents, by professing to dedicate his property to the support of the temple-worship, and that such a freeing of himself will be acceptable to Him who prefers obedience to sacrifice, and who is Himself honoured in the honour shown to parents. Such external worship is, in God's sight, empty and worthless. (*V. W. Hutton, M.A.*) *Pharisaic formalism*:—The fatal mistake of many is that they think of nothing but the profession—the mere externalities of religion—the name, the form, the visible rite, or, at most, the æsthetic emotion. Thus, with all their religiousness, they have no religion, no spiritual vitality, no renewal of nature, and no union with Christ. It is recorded of a certain Spartan in olden times, that he tried hard to make a corpse stand; but utterly failing to do so, in spite of every effort, he said, "I see it wants something within." So it is with these—they want life, and grace, and unction. *Censorious men*:—Censorious men commonly take up magnifying glasses to look at other persons' imperfections, and diminishing glasses to look at their own enormities. (*Secker.*) *Fault-finding reproved*:—Reader, why will you search another man's wound while your own is bleeding? Take heed that your own vesture be not full of dust, when you are brushing your neighbour's. Complain not of dirty streets, when heaps lie at your own doors. Many people are no longer well than while they are holding their fingers upon other persons' sores; such are no better in their conduct than crows, which prey only upon carrion. (*Ibid.*) *Washing of hands*:—Christ, no doubt, would exceed all scribes and Pharisees in the love of real cleanliness, inner and outer. But He felt constrained to lay His ban upon the

imaginary virtue that was supposed to be inherent in the act of removing imaginary uncleanness. It was supposed that there was a demon called Shibta, which sits upon men's hands during night; and if any person touches his food with unwashed hands, then that demon sits upon his food, and makes it dangerous? (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Customs of hand washing*:—It is customary with all, but obligatory for Muslims, to wash the hands before eating. The sect of the Sunnites, which includes the Turks and Arabs, wash *both* hands, but the Sheites, or Persians, only the *right*, with which the food is taken and conveyed to the mouth. Thus did the Pharisees in the time of our Saviour. For this purpose a ewer and basin are presented to each guest in turn by a servant, who drops upon his right knee while he rests the basin upon the left; the towel is carried upon his shoulder, or is offered by another servant. (*Van Lennep.*) *Scripture better than tradition*:—As to those who would officiously substitute their traditions in the room of the clear light of the written Word; it is a similar case as if you should fall in with one travelling on the way, and he offers himself to be your companion and guide; and tells you that you have eyes to make use of in choosing your way, but that these eyes are only troublesome to you; that they represent to you diversities of objects that invite you this way and that, so that you cannot mind your path. "And pray," saith he, "let me pull out those eyes of yours, and submit yourself to my guidance;" and all this that he may draw you into a pit! (*J. Howe.*) *Tradition unreliable*:—Would persons as readily believe the correctness of a report transmitted by word of mouth in popular rumours from one end of the kingdom to another, as if it came in a letter passed from one person to another over the same space? Would they think that because they could trust most servants to deliver a letter however long or important, therefore they could trust the same man to deliver the contents of a long and important letter, in a message by word of mouth? Let us put a familiar case: a footman brings you a letter from a friend upon whose word you can perfectly rely, giving an account of something that has happened to himself, and the exact account of which it concerned you to know. While you are reading and answering the letter, the footman goes into the kitchen and there gives your cook an account of the same thing, which he says he overheard the upper servants at home talking over as related to them by the valet, who said he had it from your friend's son's own lips; the cook relates the story to your groom, and he in turn tells *you*. Would you judge of that story by the letter, or the letter by the story? (*Illustrations of Truth.*) *Scripture, versus system*:—The late William Jay, in his "Practical Illustrations of Character," says, "What a difference must a Christian and a minister feel, between the trammels of some systems of divinity and the advantage of Scripture freedom, the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The one is the horse standing in the street in harness, feeding indeed, but on the contents of a bag tossed up and down; the other, the same animal in a large, fine meadow, where he lies down in green pastures, and feeds beside the still waters.

Ver. 4. **Honour thy father and mother.**—*The duty of children to honour their parents*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO HONOUR PARENTS? To obey them in all that is right, when they require it. To do what is right whether they require it or not. To respect their feelings in reference to the choice of companions or of a profession. To act on all occasions so as not to make their parents ashamed of their conduct. II. INSIST ON THE DUTY WHICH THIS COMMANDMENT ENJOINS ON CHILDREN. By so doing they will obtain the blessing of God, secure peace of conscience, &c. God requires it—the highest and most solemn of all considerations. (*D. Dobie.*) *A parent's honour*:—I. THE COMMAND. Honour comprises filial love, reverence and esteem, obedience and submission, succour and help. II. THE OBLIGATION. Natural, social, Divine. (*Dr. Lyth.*) *Honouring parents*:—George Washington, when quite young, was about to go to sea as a midshipman. Everything was in readiness. His trunk had been taken on board the boat; but as he bade his mother farewell, he noticed that her eyes were filled with tears and that she was almost overcome by emotion. Seeing her distress, he turned to the servant, and said, "Go and tell them to fetch my trunk back. I will not go away to break my mother's heart." His mother, struck with his decision, said to him, "George, God has promised to bless the children that honour their parents; and I believe He will bless you." *Working of the law of Corban*:—The scribes held that these words, even when pronounced in spite and anger against parents who needed succour, excused the son from his natural duty; and, on the other hand, did not oblige him really to devote the sum to the service of God or of the temple. (*A. Carr.*)

Vers. 7–9. **This people draweth near to Me with their mouth.**—*Lip profession* :—I. SHOW WHO THEY ARE WHO ANSWER TO THE DESCRIPTION IN THE TEXT. All merely nominal Christians. Formal, self-righteous persons. False professors. II. EXPOSTULATE WITH THEM ON THEIR FOLLY. Is not conformity to Christ's demand of the heart practicable? Is not such consecration to Him necessary? Will not merely a feigned allegiance be disowned by Him? Shall we not wish at last that we had been sincere and upright? (*Pulpit Studies.*) I. The text DESCRIBES A GREAT PRIVILEGE. II. POINTS OUT A SERIOUS ABUSE. (*J. Rawlinson.*) *Contrasts of sentiments and conduct* :—Words and works, believing and doing, confession of the mouth and confession of the life, a sense of religion and godliness in the Church, and a sense of religion and godliness in the world, are things that ought never to be separated. I. Endeavour to convince you, that a various and manifest contrariety actually appears between the sentiments which we express in the Divine service, and particularly at the ordinance of the Sacred Supper, and our conduct in the ordinary course of life. II. Endeavour to represent to you the absurdity and the danger of such a contradictious and inconsistent behaviour. (*Zollikofer.*) *True sanctity* :—I. True sanctity consists not in THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD and religion, however extensive, however just and perspicuous it may be. Although that knowledge may be necessary to sanctity, it is not, however, competent to it; and though it constitutes the basis of it, yet it is no more sanctity itself than the foundation of an edifice is the edifice itself. II. Neither does true sanctity consist in A FURIOUS ZEAL FOR THE KNOWN TRUTH, or for the honour and glory of that religion which we profess. III. Neither does true sanctity consist in the diligent or STRICT ATTENDANCE ON THE RITES AND CEREMONIES which religion prescribes; nor in the observance, nor in the multiplication of the devotional exercises to which it advises its professors; nor in voluntary penances and mortifications, which they impose upon themselves. IV. Neither does true sanctity consist in our occasionally OMITTING SOMETHING WHICH GOD HAS FORBIDDEN US, OR DOING SOMETHING WHICH HE HAS COMMANDED US; nor in our occasionally performing single good actions, whether of justice or beneficence, or of abstinence. True sanctity is a reigning, constantly active, disposition and bent of the soul, manifesting itself in the several parts of our inward and outward conduct, and making us always willing and ready to do what, and nothing else but what, is agreeable to God, and correspondent to His will. (*Ibid.*) *The heart far from God* :—I. THE STATE DESCRIBED. 1. Marked by absence of sincerity and honesty. 2. Implies a state of alienation from God. 3. Try the meaning of the text by the common estimates we form of professed friendship. All stress is laid on motive and feeling. II. THE LESSONS OF THE STATE HERE REFERRED TO. 1. The need of repentance. 2. That in the midst of religious ordinances there may be spiritual insensibility. 3. Yet though the heart be far off, the Good Shepherd seeks it. (*W. D. Harwood.*) *The vanity of human institutions in religion*:—Show the equity and importance of this assertion of our Saviour, "that they who ground their religious practices, or any part of them, upon human authority, do so far, or in that respect, worship God in vain"—that is, they cannot reasonably expect any one good effect from such worship. I. Rest this matter on our Saviour's authority. II. God is the supreme object of religious worship; and to Him all our devotions ought to be ultimately directed. III. It is a matter of interest, as well as duty, for us so to do. IV. The peace and wellbeing of mankind in general, and of every society in particular, are interested in it. (*Wm. West.*) *Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men* :—Our Lord is here reproving the scribes and Pharisees for imposing on the people some commandments of their own, or traditions of their predecessors, as of equal obligations with the precepts of the law. I. THE OBJECTS OF THIS CENSURE, OR THE PERSONS SPECIALLY AFFECTED BY IT. The objects of the reproof were the scribes and Pharisees, the public authorized teachers of the law. There must be public teachers who shall command and instruct; but this authority is committed to them under restrictions. II. WHEN ARE TEACHERS AND RULERS OF THE CHURCH GUILTY OF THE CRIME HERE REPROVED OF TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN? For the better clearing of which it will be of use to consider—1. What is meant by commandments of men. They are three sorts: (1) Where the matter of the human command is the same action that God has enjoined by His law. For human authority ought to command what God has commanded; particularly in such a society as the Christian Church formed upon the laws of the gospel. (2) A second sort of commandments of men are such whose matter contradicts or interferes with the prescriptions of the Divine law. And such are not only those which expressly forbid what God has commanded, or invert

the prescribed order of God's commands. (3) A third sort of commandments of men are such whose matter is actions in their nature indifferent, and neither commanded nor forbidden by God; such as the washing hands before meat. 2. Then teaching these commandments of men as doctrines is proposing them as precepts of the Divine law, or of equal authority with them, and obliging the conscience as such. Rules supposed to be indifferent but convenient and orderly may obtain in a society; but this authority may be abused: 1. When such things are prescribed as binding the conscience by direct obligation. 2. The prescription of indifferent things will be liable to the censure in the text, when it is taught that obedience to them will excuse disobedience to a law of God. 3. This censure will also be incurred when indifferent things are prescribed by men as means of grace, as having power to convey remission of sins, or any other spiritual or supernatural gifts of the Holy Ghost. They may be means of grace, but God only has authority to make them so. III. WHAT OUR LORD HAS HERE PRONOUNCED, THAT THEY WORSHIP GOD IN VAIN. (*J. Rogers, D.D.*) *How may we cure distractions in holy duties*:— I. THE GREATNESS OF THE SIN. Proved by three general considerations:—1. How tender God is of His worship (Levit. x. 3; Eccles. v. 2). 2. The more sincere any one is, the more he maketh conscience of his thoughts. 3. Carelessness in duties is the highway to atheism. Particularly:—1. It is an affront to God, and a kind of mockery. 2. It grieveth the Spirit of God. 3. It is a spiritual disease. 4. It argueth the loss and non-acceptance of our prayers. There is a threefold distraction in prayer:—1. An unwilling distraction. 2. A negligent distraction. 3. A voluntary distraction. II. THE CAUSES OF THIS ROVING AND INTRUSION OF VAIN THOUGHTS. 1. Satan is one cause. 2. The natural levity of our spirits. 3. Practical atheism. 4. Strong and unmortified lusts. 5. Want of love to God and holy things. 6. Slightness and irreverence, or want of a sense of God's presence. 7. The curiosity of the senses. 8. Carking and distrustful cares. III. THE REMEDIES. 1. Go to God and wait for the power of His grace. 2. Meditate on the greatness of Him before whom we are. 3. Mortify those lusts that are apt to withdraw our minds. 4. Before the duty there must be an actual preparation or a solemn discharge of all impediments, that we may not bring the world along with us. 5. Be severe to your purpose. 6. Bring with you to every holy service strong spiritual affections. 7. Remember the weight and consequence of the duties of religion. 8. Let every experimental wandering make you more humble and careful. 9. A constant heavenliness and holiness of heart. 10. Frequent and solemn meditation. 11. By use a man gets greater command over himself. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Heart-worship*:—As the strength of sin lies in the inward frame of the heart, so the strength of worship in the inward complexion and temper of the soul. Shadows are not to be offered instead of substance. God asks for the heart in worship, and commands outward ceremonies, as subservient to inward worship, and goads and spears unto it. What value had the offering of the human nature of Christ been, if he had not had a Divine nature to qualify Him to be the Priest? And what is the oblation of our bodies, without a priestly act of the spirit in the presentation of it? To offer a body with a sapless spirit, is a sacrilege of the same nature with that of the Israelities when they offered dead beasts. One sound sacrifice is better than a thousand rotten ones. (*Charnock.*) *Mere outward worship offensive to God*:—You would all judge it to be an affront to the majesty of God if a man should send his clothes stuffed with straw, or a puppet dressed up instead of himself, into the assemblies of God's people, and think that this would do instead of his personal presence. Yet our clothes stuffed with straw would be less offensive to God than our bodies without our souls. The absence of the spirit is the absence of the more noble part. (*T. Manton.*) *Sincerity in worship*:—We may be truly said to worship God, though we want perfection; but we cannot be said to worship Him if we want sincerity: a statue upon a tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good and true a service; it wants only a voice, the gestures and postures are the same—nay, the service is better; it is not a mockery, it represents all that it can be framed to. But to worship without *our* spirits is presenting God with a picture, an echo, voice, and nothing else—a compliment, a mere lie. (*Charnock.*) *Formalism in worship*:—We have sometimes seen a tree which looked with its great spreading arms and massive trunk as strong as other trees. "The storm beat upon it and it fell," and then we wondered that it could stand so long when little but the bark and outer fibre supported it, and within was nothing but decay. And do we not often find that where zeal has grown cold and the inner spiritual life has

become dead, that habits of formal attention to religious duties are maintained for a long time before the crash comes that reveals the utter ruin and desolation of the spiritual life? (*J. G. Pilkington.*) *God only to be worshipped and loved*:—I. THE TRUE OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, which is here called drawing nigh unto God and honouring Him. II. TO DIRECT THE RIGHT MANNER OF PERFORMING RELIGIOUS WORSHIP. 1. God is to be worshipped in the way of His own appointment. 2. God is to be worshipped with the whole man, with our bodies and spirits which are His. 3. God is to be worshipped by the assistance of His spirit. 4. God is to be worshipped in the exercise of all suitable graces under the influence of His spirit. 5. God is to be worshipped with an eye to His glory, as our ultimate end. 6. God is to be worshipped in the name of Christ as our only Mediator. Reflections: 1. How must every one, more or less, stand reproved for defects in worship. 2. How becoming, glorious and delightful must it be to offer up such worship to God, as is agreeable to His will. 3. What glorious provision has God made in the gospel to assist this noble homage. (*Dr. Guyse.*) *Scriptural worship*:—All religion must be Scripture religion, all worship Scripture worship, all zeal Scripture zeal; so that let a man have never such sublime knowledge and such burning zeal, yet if it be not according to the law and the testimony, there is no light in them. It is but a vain worship of God, because God doth not require this; so that the sum of all, and that into which all religion must be resolved at last, is the Scriptures—the Word of God; for if you once lay this aside, why should not the Turkish devotion be as good as thine? Why should not the Mahommedan zeal be as acceptable as thine, but only this makes the difference. What may be proved by Scripture is approved of by GOD; so that all these arguments,—"It's my conscience; I verily think I am bound to do thus; It's upon my spirit; I find much comfort and much sweetness in religion,"—all this is nothing, for all false religions can and do say this; but hast thou the Word of God to warrant thee? doth that justify thee? all things else are but an empty shadow. (*A. Burgess.*)

**Ver. 13. Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.**—*Plants God has not planted*:—1. What is meant by plants. (*a*) Every doctrine: (*b*) Every practice: (*c*) Every person. 2. Some plants God never planted. (*a*) What is meant by planting? Planting is setting or putting things into the ground, as trees, herbs, flowers. So mystical planting denotes the transplanting (in a spiritual way) this or that person, from a course of open profaneness into a visible profession. (*b*) Who is it that plants people in the gospel Church? God, and gospel ministers. 3. Run a parallel between an external planting; and a spiritual planting. (*a*) A planter, as one instructed into the mystery of that art, has wisdom and skill in planting which others have not; so a minister of Christ is one God hath taught the mysteries of the gospel unto. (*b*) A planter must have a call by the owner of the vineyard; so every minister must be called and regularly empowered. (*c*) A planter must have fit and proper instruments for his work. (*d*) A planter doth not know infallibly the difference there is in plants. (*e*) A skilful planter knows that a wild, ungrateful tree never bears good fruit. (*f*) A planter observes the proper season for planting. (*g*) He doth not only plant, but water. (*h*) He greatly rejoices to see his plants grow, thrive, and bear much fruit. As to plants. (*a*) They must be well-rooted. (*b*) They must be pruned and purged. (*c*) Some plants, who promised well, prove barren and good for nothing. (*d*) Plants that prove utterly barren, are rooted up or cut down. 4. Why shall every plant God hath not planted be rooted up? (*a*) Because they are wild plants. (*b*) Because all plants that God hath not planted, have no right to be planted in his vineyard. (*c*) Because they do but cumber the ground. (*d*) Because they are good for nothing but the fire. The plants which God Himself has planted shall stand and never be rooted up. (*a*) Because they are ordained to bring forth fruit: (*b*) They are planted into Christ: (*c*) The love of God to them is everlasting and unchangeable. (*B. Keach.*) *On the efficacy of the Gospel in the extirpation of error*:—I. How far has this prophetic declaration been already accomplished? II. There are certain circumstances which have impeded the progress of Christianity, and suspended its moral and sanctifying influence. III. We have reason to believe that the final issue of the gospel kingdom will be very glorious indeed, and that the prediction of the text will then be fulfilled, in a sense hitherto unknown to the world. (*Habakkuk Crabbe.*) *Rooting up plants*:—I. That 'tis the heavenly Father's own hand that plants every plant that must grow and prosper. II. That every plant which is planted by any other hand or power, shall not prosper, but be

rooted up. III. That those which see not things so, and cannot leave them to God, they bring upon themselves much trouble and unquietness. (*John Webster.*) *Difficult and questionable rules of conduct*:—When we speak of principles and rules of life, which every one knows and every one believes, by which the young and the old, the learned and the ignorant, the prince and the labourer, are regulated, and these principles and rules of life are false, or only true in part, the mischief thence arising is incalculable, is immense. These are "plants which the heavenly Father hath not planted." I. Most men are of opinion, that we cannot pass a day without sinning and acting wickedly. II. We think we cannot be perfect; and with this we not unfrequently excuse all the sins and errors we commit, however various and gross. III. We argue that we should merrily enjoy life, particularly youth, which so rapidly passes by; we should not embitter it by unseasonable gravity, by unnecessary sorrow or care. This may be true, but the consequences drawn from it with reference to virtue and religion are false. IV. We say, We are after all, weak, naturally corrupt beings, of whom not much is to be expected, and whom God, in His mercy, will not judge with rigour. V. We say, We should not be particular; we should not aspire to be wiser and better than others. We should regulate ourselves by the persons and the societies, in which and with whom we live. VI. We have false conceptions concerning daily repentance. How frequent we hear it said: "If I sin every day, I however repent every day, and at any rate we must repent daily." VII. It is imagined that a certain devotion, or rather, certain acts of Divine worship can supply the defect of a virtuous life, or atone for the disorderly life we lead, and the sins which we commit. Or, VIII., we rely upon Divine grace, and by it hope to be saved, though we are not so virtuous and holy as we ought to be. (*Zollikoper.*) *The weeding of the garden*:—I. PLANTS THAT GOD has not planted. 1. Some have been planted by the minister's hand. Some conversions are of human, not Divine, origin. 2. Some were planted by their fathers and mothers. They have got a kind of family religion. 3. Many professors of religion are self-planted. II. THEIR UPROOTING. It sometimes comes in this life. III. THE WORK OF SELF-EXAMINATION. Am I a plant of God's planting? 1. If I am of the Lord's planting, there was a time when I had to be taken out of the place where I once grew. 2. If planted by God there will be sorrow that we were ever anything else. 3. We have learnt our utter helplessness. 4. We are all planted on one soil, and indeed on one rock. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's plants grow everywhere*:—Other plants which the "Heavenly Father hath not planted" have their zones of vegetation, and die out of certain degrees of latitude, but the seed of the kingdom is like corn, an exotic nowhere, for wherever man lives it will grow, and yet an exotic everywhere, for it came down from heaven. (*Dr. Maclaren.*) *Plants not planted by God are very beautiful*:—If you go into the fields, there are many plants that grow there that are quite as lovely as those in the garden. Look at the foxglove and the dog rose; look at many of the blossoms we pass by as insignificant, they are really beautiful; but they are not plants that have ever been planted. Now, how many we have in our congregations that are really beautiful; yet they are none of God's planting—men and women whose character is upright, whose manners are amiable, whose life is irreproachable. They are not immoral, they neither cheat nor lie; but they are exemplary; their disposition is kind, tender-hearted, and affectionate. Yes, but there must be something more than this, for Jesus says, "Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Though it be a lovely plant, though it seem to be a fair flower externally, yet since the root of it hath sucked its nourishment out of the wild wastes of sin, whether of infidelity or of lawlessness, it is evil in the eye of God, and it must be plucked up. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Wild plants fruitful*:—Further, how many there are of our wild wood plants that even bring forth fruit. The schoolboy in the country can tell us that the wood is an orchard, and that often he has had many a luscious meal from those wild fruits that grew there. Yet, mark you, though the birds may come and satisfy their hunger from those wild fruits, and though the seeds may be in the winter the sparrow's garner, and the linnet's storehouse, yet they are not planted, and they do not come under the description of the text—plants that have been planted. So, too, there may be some of you who really do some good in the world. Without you a mother's wants might not be provided for; from your table many of the poor are fed. Oh! this is good, this is good; I would that all of you did more of it, but I pray you remember that this is not enough; there must be God's planting in you, or else the fruits you bring forth will be selfish fruits. You will be like Israel who was denounced as being an empty vine, because, forsooth, he brought

forth fruit unto himself. Charity is good. Noble charity, be thou honoured among men! But there must be faith, and if we have no faith in Christ, though we give our bodies to be burned, and bestow our goods to feed the poor, yet where Christ is, we certainly can never come. (*Ibid.*) *Many of those wild plants have very strong roots:*—If you were to go and try to dig them up, you would have a task before you not easily accomplished. Look at the wild dock: did you seek to pull it up? Piece after piece it breaks away, and you have to send some sharp instrument deep into the soil before you can root it out, and even then, if there be but a piece left, it springs up and thrives again. Oh how many there are who have as much tenacity of life in their false confidence, as there is in the dock—in its root! Some of you cannot shake. "I never have a doubt," said one, "I never had a doubt or a misgiving." You remember Robert Hall said, "Allow me to doubt for you, sir," because he knew the man to be an ill-liver. And so we have some—they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; they speak with an air of satisfaction; their language sounds like assurance, but it is presumption; it looks like confidence in Christ, but it is confidence in themselves. And such will strike their roots very deep, and they will be very strong indeed, so that you cannot shake them; yet, alas for them! they are not plants of the Lord's right-hand planting, and therefore the sentence is passed; and ere long it shall be executed without pity—"they shall be rooted up." (*Ibid.*) *Uprooted plants:*—1. That system of philosophy which ignores Divine Truth, or contradicts the plain statements of God's Word, cannot endure. 2. In the various departments of science those views which are the offspring of glaring misconception or of uncertain hypothesis, necessarily possess the element of perishability. 3. A like course of reasoning may be applied to the different religions of the world. Consider some of the plants which the Father hath planted:—1. Every disciple of Christ. 2. The Church. 3. The Bible. 4. In the garden there are also many tender little plants which, though not conspicuous, are equally the object of the Father's solicitude. 5. God is pledged to establish the good and to eradicate the evil. The rose will not always have its thorn. (*J. T. Lamont.*)

Ver. 14. **They be blind leaders of the blind.**—*Blind guides:*—The bankrupt who asks a bankrupt to set him up in business again, is only losing time. The pauper who travels off to a neighbouring pauper, and begs him to help him out of difficulties, is only troubling himself in vain. The prisoner does not beg his fellow-prisoner to set him free. The shipwrecked sailor does not call on his shipwrecked comrade to place him safe ashore. Help in all these cases must come from some other quarter. Relief in all these cases must be sought from some other hand. It is just the same in the matter of cleansing away your sins. So long as you seek it from man, you seek it where it cannot be found. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Mutual ruin:*—The falling of both together will aggravate the fall of each; for they that have thus increased each other's mutual sin will mutually exasperate each other's ruin. (*M. Henry.*)

Vers. 17–20.—**For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.**—*Our evil thoughts:*—I. WHEN MAY OUR THOUGHTS BE COUNTED VOLUNTARY, AND WE BE TRULY AND JUSTLY ANSWERABLE FOR THEM? 1. When evil thoughts are plainly occasioned by anything that was voluntary in us, then they are to be accounted voluntary and sinful. 2. When evil thoughts proceed from gross, supine negligence and carelessness, then we are accountable for them; when we keep no guard at all over our minds and fancies, but give them free liberty wildly to rove and ramble. 3. Though evil thoughts may be involuntary at the first starting of them, being occasioned by what we could not avoid hearing and seeing, or coming upon us unawares, or proceeding from the temper and habit of our bodies, or the accidental impulses and motions of the animal spirits in our brains, which are the most immediate instruments the soul uses in her operations; though thus the first rise of evil thoughts may be involuntary, yet if we with pleasure entertain and cherish them, if our fancies are tickled by them, if they are delightful and grateful to us, this implies the consent of our wills. They then become greatly sinful to us. II. THE NATURE AND KINDS OF EVIL THOUGHTS. (*a*) Especially dwell on the representing and acting over sins in our minds and thoughts; when we erect a stage in our fancies, and on it with strange complacence, imagine those satisfactions and filthinesses which we have not opportunity to bring into outward act. 1. Consider these lewd imaginations as to the present time. There is no sin or wickedness so vile and heinous but a man

may become truly guilty of it in the sight of God only by imagining it done in his mind, and taking pleasure in such a thought. 2. As to what is past, there is reciting and repeating over those sins in our thoughts and fancies, which we had long before committed, and, perhaps, as to the external acts, quite forsaken. 3. With respect to the time to come, the speculative wickedness of men's fancies and imaginations shows itself in the wild and extravagant suppositions they make to themselves, feigning themselves to be what they would fain be, and then imagining in their minds what in such circumstances they would do. (*b*) Dwell on unworthy, atheistical, profane, desperate thoughts of God Almighty. (*c*) Thinkings that become evil because of the seasons of them. (*d*) Envious, malicious, fretting thoughts. (*e*) Troublesome, anxious thoughts of future events. (*f*) Haughty, proud, admiring thoughts of ourselves. III. PRACTICAL RULES FOR THE RIGHT GOVERNMENT OF OUR THOUGHTS. 1. If they proceed from the hearts, then we must look after *them*. 2. Consider what care and art wicked men use to prevent *good* thoughts, and let us use the same diligence and endeavours to hinder evil and wicked thoughts and motions. 3. Avoid idleness. 4. Live under the due awe of God's continual presence with us. 5. Serious devotion, especially humble and hearty prayer to God Almighty. (*B. Calamy.*) *Evil thoughts.*—I. DEFINE THE CLASSES OF THOUGHT WHICH MAY BE REGARDED AS EVIL. 1. Vain thoughts. These are not of a directly noxious quality; yet, light, empty, trifling, and insignificant, they form a most fearful waste of the noble faculty of thought. 2. Thoughts of a directly irreligious tendency. Impious and unworthy conceptions of God, sceptical thoughts in relation to various parts of revealed religion nourished as a subterfuge for sin, rebellious thoughts formed in the hardness of our hearts against the allotments of His providence, &c. 3. Intensely selfish and worldly thoughts. 4. Thoughts of deliberate wickedness. II. INDICATE THE SINFULNESS OF EVIL THOUGHTS. 1. They have the stamp of guilt affixed to them by the Divine law. 2. They lead to the expressions of evil actions. 3. They defraud us of the supreme end of thought. III. ENFORCE THE NECESSITY OF RESISTANCE OF EVIL THOUGHTS. How necessary such resistance when we consider the advantages accruing, *e.g.*, the influence—1. Upon our personal character. 2. Upon society. 3. Upon a review of life in leaving it and during eternity. (*James Foster, B.A.*) *The heart a den of evil:*—I. THE HUMILIATING TRUTH WHICH THE SAVIOUR HERE SETS FORTH. II. THE TRUTHS WHICH ARE CONNECTED WITH THIS HUMBLING FACT. 1. We are driven to believe in the doctrine of the fall. 2. It shows the need of a new nature. 3. Admire the grace of God. 4. This doctrine illustrates the doctrine of the atonement. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sin deeply seated:*—He plainly tells us that the part of human nature which yields such poisonous fruit is not a bough which may be sawn off, a limb which may be cut away, but the very core and substance of the man—his heart. He in effect tells us that lust doth not come out of the eye merely, but from the inmost nature of a depraved being. Murder comes not in the first place from the hasty hand, but from a wild ungovernable heart. (*Ibid.*) *Sin natural:*—You never need educate any man into sin. As soon as ever the young crocodile has left its shell it begins to act just like its parent, and to bite at the stick which broke the shell. The serpent is scarcely born before it rears itself and begins to hiss. The young tiger may be nurtured in your parlour, but it will develop ere long the same thirst for blood as if it were in the forest. So is it with man; he sins as naturally as the young lion seeks for blood, or the young serpent stores up venom. (*Ibid.*) *Sin inward:*—If you can drive a man from outward vice, how far have you improved him if he lives in inward sin? You have benefited him as far as the sight of man is concerned, but not before God. There was a man killed on Holborn Hill this week, and I have heard that there was little or no external appearance of injury upon his body. He had been crushed between an omnibus and a cart, and all the wounds were internal, but he died just as surely as if he had been beaten black and blue, or cut into a thousand gashes. So a man may die of internal sin; it does not appear outwardly for certain reasons, but he will die of it just the same if it be within. Many a man has died from internal bleeding, and yet there has been no wound whatever to be seen by the eye. You, my dear hearer, may go to hell as well dressed in the garnishings of morality as in the rags of immorality. (*Ibid.*) *The heart the home of sin:*—The Saviour does not stop to prove that these things come out of the heart. He asserts it, and asserts it because it is self-evident. When you see a thing coming forth, you are clear it was there first. Last summer I noticed hornets continually flying from a number of decayed logs in my garden. I

saw them constantly flying in and out, and I did not think myself at all unreasonable in concluding that there was a hornet's nest there; and so, if we see the hornets of sin flying out of a man, we suppose at once there is sin within him. (*Ibid.*) *The heart needs the remedy*:—Some malady which you do not understand troubles and alarms you. The physician is called. Thinking that the illness proceeds from a certain inflammatory process on a portion of your skin, you anxiously direct his attention to the spot. Silently, but sympathizingly, he looks at the place where you have bidden him look, and because you have bidden him look there, but soon he turns away. He is busy with an instrument on another part of your body. He presses his trumpet tube gently to your breast, and listens for the pulsations which faintly but distinctly pass through. He looks and listens there, and saddens as he looks. You again direct his attention to the cutaneous eruption which annoys you. He sighs and sits silent. When you reiterate your request that something should be done for the external eruption, he gently shakes his head, and answers not a word. From this silence you would learn the truth at last, you would not miss its meaning long. (*W. Arnot.*) *The heart the root of actual evil*:—Original sin is the womb of all actual sin. Every sinful act in us derives its descent from this. This is the spawn; actual transgressions are the offspring. This is actual sin in the egg, more than the cockatrice's. Hatched by Satan, it yields a fearful brood, whose name is legion, whose end is destruction, whose grave is hell. In Eden there was a tree of life, so will there be in the Eden above—a tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. But since man was thrust out of Paradise, a tree of death, a root of bitterness, has grown in every soul, bearing all manner of cursed fruits; and every leaf, every bud, tends to destroy life and ruin man. Its grapes are gall, its clusters are bitter, its wine is the poison of asps. Ransack the records of human crime, dig up from the grave of forgetfulness every atrocity, however unprecedented, however abominable, it lay in germ in the ordinary corruption of human nature. Ten thousand trees spread their arms over the earth in giant magnitude, yet all spring from the one same root. (*R. B. Nichol.*) *Inward derangement the cause of outward wickedness*:—The heart is the seat and source of every great wickedness. No wonder that the wickedness of man is great. If the pendulum and weights and machinery of a clock are all deranged, it is quite clear that the hands will not point with correctness to the hours. If the fountain is corrupt and impure, the streams must inevitably be so. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Inward sin*:—If a man covets, he steals. If a man has murderous hate, he murders. If a man broods dishonest thoughts, he is a knave. If a man harbours sharp and bitter jealousies, envies, hatreds, though he never express them by his tongue, or shape them by his hand, they are there. There are many good-seeming men, who, if all their day's thoughts and feelings were to be suddenly developed into acts visible to the eye, would run from themselves, as men in earthquakes run from the fiery gapings of the ground, and sulphurous cracks that open the way to the uncooled centre of perdition. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The heart-mill*:—Anselm says, "Our heart is like a mill, ever grinding, which a certain lord gave in charge to his servant, enjoining that he should only grind in it his master's grain, whether wheat, barley, or oats, and telling him that he must subsist on the produce. But that servant has an enemy, who is always playing tricks on the mill. If, any moment, he finds it unwatched, he throws in gravel to keep the stones from acting, or pitch to clog them, or dirt and chaff to mix with the meal. If the servant is careful in tending his mill, there flows forth a beautiful flour, which is at once a service to his master, and a subsistence to himself; but if he plays truant, and allows his enemy to tamper with his machinery, the bad outcome tells the tale; his lord is angry; and he himself is starved." This mill, ever grinding, is the heart: thoughts are the grain; the devil is the watchful enemy: he throws in bad thoughts, which can only be prevented by watchfulness and prayer.

Vers. 21, 28. **Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.**—*The woman of Canaan*:—I. WHAT MADE THE FAITH OF THIS WOMAN SO REMARKABLE? 1. She had much against her in her original circumstances. In the eye of a Jew she belonged to the most hated of all the Gentile races. There was a frontier line of dislike to cross, far wider than any distance between Tyre and Palestine. Yet it did not keep her from finding her way to the great Teacher of the Jewish nation. 2. She got little countenance from Christ's disciples. Annoyed at her importunity, and desiring to be freed from the trouble of her presence, they

desired Christ to send her away. She could not but feel they would gladly be rid of her, in the way some cast an alms to a persistent beggar. Weaker faith would have felt the chill, and would have desisted. But it is not from them that she seeks an answer. She will take her dismissal from none but Christ Himself. 3. The woman's faith reaches its greatest trial in the conduct of Christ. The disciples, cold as they are, seem merciful compared with their Master. As she cries, and pours her heart into her prayer, He moves away with silent neglect. That dreadful silence is harder to bear than the sorest word that can be spoken. Still she cried after Him, and at last He spoke. But His words, were they not even harder than His silence? For He did not speak to her, but only of her, and that in such a slighting manner as almost to quench all hope. Still she persists, and at length—as Christ all along intended she should—gains her heart's desire. II. WHAT HELPED HER FAITH TO HOLD ON AND TRIUMPH? We do not speak of the first cause of all, which was Christ's eye watching her steps, and His hand bearing her up; but of the mediate causes by which her faith was upheld. 1. She had a deep home and heart sorrow, spurring her on to make every exertion. All other means had failed, but something told her there was hope here, and to this she clung. The greater the feeling of the trouble, the more surely will it carry you into the presence of the only Saviour. 2. She had learned to take a very humble view of herself. As humility goes deep down, faith rises up high and strong, for humility furnishes the roots by which faith holds on. 3. Her faith was so strong, because it had hold of another Christ, greater and more merciful than her eyes saw. She looked beyond appearances, and fixed her gaze on things unseen and eternal. It is this which keeps men right, amid adverse surroundings. Thick thunderclouds of Atheism and Pessimism sometimes hang lowering over the earth, and threaten to quench all the higher hope; but God has given to the spirit a power by which it can pass up through them and sing like the lark in the sunshine and the blue sky. It is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to educate and strengthen it by drawing it, often through much tribulation, to Himself. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Victorious wrestling in prayer*:—Of all the expressions of Christian life, prayer is the foremost. It precedes and accompanies every other. It is the breathing of the soul, the palpitation of the heart of the new inward man. I. (1) Prayer is a NECESSITY. A Christian cannot live without inward intercourse with his God and Saviour. Love cannot exist without unbosoming itself. (2) It is also a spiritual power. It not only reacts upon ourselves and our temper, it also acts from us outwardly on the course of things; for it both eases our heart, and overcomes God's. II. THE SENSE OF OUR WANT URGES US TO PRAY. Knowledge of our sinfulness drives us to God. As the drowning man attaches himself to the saving hand, and does not let go his hold, so the soul attaches itself to the hand of Jesus, and refuses to be shaken off. Then the wrestling prayer for salvation begins, for it is begotten of the feeling of the soul's misery. III. WHAT HELPS US TO OVERCOME IN THE STRUGGLE IS THE PERSEVERANCE OF HUMBLE FAITH. Jesus is the conqueror; but Jesus we seize by faith, and with Him is victory. 1. We must seek Jesus. No rest till we come to Him. No other can help us, or rid us of our sin. 2. We must not let Jesus go. If He goes away, follow Him; if He seems to be stern, become more urgent; if He hides His face, cry the louder; if He will not listen, assail His heart. Every *No* of Jesus is an *Aye* in disguise. It is true we deserve none of the things we pray for; but He has enough and to spare for all; and after the children are filled, He can afford to cast the crumbs to the dogs. If we have but the crumbs from His rich table, we shall be satisfied. Even if we are the last in His kingdom, it is sufficient, so that we only have some share of His grace. If it is only one look of His eye; only one glance from Him. If we are not allowed to rest on His breast with John, we shall be satisfied if only with Thomas we are permitted to behold the print of the nails. And when we have become quite exhausted in wrestling with Him, and all our strength is broken; when, so to speak, the hollow of our thigh is out of joint; when we can only cling to Him and declare we will not let Him go except He bless us; even then we shall overcome, and He will declare Himself to be vanquished. IV. WHAT DO WE WIN IN THE VICTORY? The blessing of Jesus Christ—"Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." What a wonderful word. To whom does it apply? To him who first has sacrificed his self-will, and has learnt to say, from the bottom of his heart, "Lord, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Then God's will and man's are become one. Just before, almost powerless: now, almost almighty. He who thus wins God's heart, wins everything. A child of God is lord over all things. (*C. E. Luthardt.*) *The woman of Canaan*:—This story is the simplest of dramas,

having two persons and a chorus. I. THE FIRST PERSON IS THE HEATHEN WOMAN, AND HERE WE NOTE: (1) Her trouble; (2) Her faith, which is neither a superstitious credulity, nor a hesitating experiment; (3) Her reward. II. THE OTHER PERSON IS THE LORD JESUS. Looking on Him as the model of human duty, and the expression of the Divine nature, we find in this story things amazing and perplexing. What are we to learn from them? 1. The perplexities in the life of Christ are like the perplexities in the government of God. 2. This incident exhibits Christ gazing inexorable, for a time, on human suffering. 3. His apparent unkindness is only apparent. 4. His blessing is already given, while yet the supplicant is unaware of it. (*Leonard W. Bacon.*) I. THAT IT IS HIGHLY GRATIFYING TO MEET WITH DEVOUT PERSONS WHERE WE EXPECT NOT TO FIND THEM. She was a heathen, not a Jew. II. THAT AFFLICTIONS, BOTH PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC, ARE POWERFUL INCENTIVES TO PRAYER. III. THAT IN OUR EXERCISES OF DEVOTION WE OUGHT TO PRAY FOR OTHERS AS WELL AS FOR OURSELVES. IV. THAT SINCERE SUPPLICANTS MAY MEET WITH GREAT DISCOURAGEMENTS IN PRAYER. Delays are not denials. We are apt to value highly that which costs us effort. V. THAT SINCERE SUPPLICANTS ARE ALWAYS PERSEVERING. VI. THAT THE PRAYER OF FAITH MUST ULTIMATELY PREVAIL. (*R. Newton.*) *Significant silence*:—The Saviour's silence was not the result of intellectual poverty. Was not that of one taken with mere self-considerations. Was not caused by indifference. I. The Saviour's silence indicates thoughtfulness. II. Denotes loving estimates. III. Manifests the greatness of self-control. Effective speech is power over one's fellows, but silence is power over one's own self. IV. And yet the Saviour's silence may have been sympathetic. V. Was preparative. What power in a judicious pause. Delay may enhance the preciousness of the gift. (*W. Burrows, B.A.*) *The Woman of Canaan*:—I. WHAT WE CAN FIND IN THIS WOMAN TO COMMEND. 1. Strong and wise parental love. 2. Her earnestness. 3. Deep humility. II. WHAT OUR LORD HIMSELF ACTUALLY COMMENDED IN HER—"Great is thy faith." This virtue singled out because all others flow from it. III. THE GRACIOUS TREATMENT SHE RECEIVED FROM OUR LORD. 1. Christ delayed His answer to her petition. 2. He gave her strength to persevere in prayer for it, and made that prayer more humble and earnest. 3. He put on her signal honour. 4. He at last gave her all that she desired. 5. There is often more love towards us in the heart of Christ than we can see in His dealings with us. 6. The prayer of faith is always crowned with success. (*C. Bradley.*) I. WHO THIS WOMAN WAS. She was not an Israelite. The cause of her sorrow was not her own. Her prayer. II. HER SAVIOUR. 1. His silence when we should not have expected it. 2. He seems to plead that His commission had been exclusively to Israel. 3. He appears to add insult to cruelty. 4. He suffers Himself to be conquered by faith. II. WHAT DOES THIS SAY TO YOU? 1. You may go to Christ for yourselves. 2. You may go to Christ for your relatives. 3. Jesus can and will do helpless sinners good. (*T. Mortimer.*) *God's delays in answering prayer*:—1. To try our faith. 2. To foster humility. 3. To intensify desire after the blessings we request. 4. To enhance the joy of success when the answer is vouchsafed. 5. Blessed are they that wait for Him. (*C. M. Merry.*) *The elements of prevailing prayer*:—I. Sincerity. II. Humility. III. Importunity. IV. Faith. Conclude with a few practical remarks. (*J. B. Jeher, D.D.*) *Faith triumphing over difficulties*:—Faith overcomes—I. Obstacles in our personal circumstances. II. The concealments of Jesus. III. The silence of Jesus. IV. The refusals of Jesus. V. The reproaches of Jesus. (*Anon.*) *The woman of Canaan*:—This is an instance of a *wrestling* faith; faith wrestling with grievous temptations, but at length obtaining help from God. We ought to consider this (1) because Christ pronounced it to be great faith; (2) it instructs us that the life and exercise of faith is not easy, but will meet with great discouragements; (3) because of the success attending it. I. The quality of the woman. II. She was a believer. III. The greatness and strength of her faith; seen in her trials and temptations; and in her victory over them, by her importunity, humility, and resolved confidence. The woman's temptations are four. I. Christ's silence. Though a sore temptation, this should not yet weaken our faith; for God's delay is for His own glory and our good: to enlarge our desires, and put greater fervency into them. II. The small assistance she had from the disciples. III. Christ's seeming to exclude her from His commission. IV. Christ's answer implying a contempt of her, or at least a strong reason against her. The woman's victory over her temptations. I. By her importunity. II. Her humility. III. Her resolved confidence. All which are the fruits of great faith. (*T. Manton.*) *The woman of Canaan*:—I. THE TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES

this supplicant's faith met with. 1. Christ is wholly silent. 2. Christ intimates that He had nothing to do with her. 3. Christ seems to answer with reproach and contempt. II. How THE FAITH WAS DISCOVERED IN ITS TRIALS, AND WORKED THROUGH ALL. 1. Though Christ was silent she did not drop, but continued her suit. 2. She passes over the doubt she could not answer, and instead of disputing, adores Him, and prays to Him still. 3. She humbly let pass the (seeming) indignity, and turned that which seemed to make most against her into an argument for her obtaining the mercy she came to Him to beg for. III. THE HAPPY ISSUE OF THIS, HOW GLORIOUSLY IT WAS REWARDED. 1. Her faith was owned, commended, and admired by the Author of it. 2. The reward of her faith was ample. (*Dan. Wilcox.*) *Christ and the woman:*—In judging our Lord's treatment of this woman—1. Observe that Christ, while He was upon earth, said nothing and did nothing of Himself. 2. Our Lord, who knew the hearts of men, both saw and esteemed the good disposition of this petitioner, but for a time concealed His kind intentions, being willing to exercise her faith and submission, her patience and perseverance. The woman's faith was great—1. With relation to her religion, and to her country. 2. In comparison with the unbelieving Jews. 3. Considered in itself. 4. Because it stood so severe a trial. (*J. Jortin.*) *The Canaanite's faith:*—The position of this woman and the conduct of our Saviour to her. 1. She believed in Jesus before the scene related in this gospel; we distinguish in her conversion that strength of soul which is sure to triumph over all obstacles; all that follows is explained by such a commencement. She was a heathen, and only received God's Word indirectly, through the prejudices of the Jews. The feeble ray which reached her proved sufficient to guide her feet. 2. The conduct of our Lord corresponds with His manner of acting towards the heathen generally, and with His especial designs of mercy towards her. Our Lord did not so treat this woman merely because she was a heathen; but to make His mercy more conspicuous. While He proves He strengthens her. From the heroes of faith He draws back to exercise their courage. 3. See how this woman wrestles with our Lord. Jesus sought retirement. She anticipated His coming. She was alone in seeking Him. She had to force herself into His presence. But Christ could not escape from the faith of this woman. He allows us to conquer Him. She triumphs over the preventives which our Lord opposed to her. Once in the presence of Jesus she is satisfied. His silence. To try her patience. Only for a time. His speech seems cruel. The Word of God does seem sometimes against the child of God. In the love of Christ she finds refuge against His silence and words; His love is only hidden for a moment under harshness. She could not be defeated because she would not doubt. She triumphs. (*Adolphe Monod.*) *A word to parents:*—I. On this occasion CHRIST HAD LEFT HIS OWN COUNTRY AND PEOPLE. Perhaps to avoid the hatred of the scribes and Pharisees; or to abate His popularity. We find Him coasting to Tyre and Sidon. Her need was her plea. II. THE LEADING PRINCIPLES OF HER FAITH. 1. In this prayer she recognizes the unity of the Deity, "Lord." 2. What a beautiful trait in her character when she prays, "Have mercy on me;" but we know the chief object of her prayer was her daughter. She identifies herself with her daughter's misery. 3. She asks for mercy and help (ver. 25). 4. Regard Jesus as God able to save or destroy. (*F. F. McGlynn, M.A.*) I. THE CHARACTER OF THE INDIVIDUAL. 1. A Greek. 2. A believer in Christ. II. THE CAUSE OF HER COMING. III. THE IMPEDIMENTS SHE MET WITH. 1. A long delay. 2. A mortifying rebuke. 3. An apparent refusal. 4. A silent denial. Then her conduct: 1. An humble request. 2. A persevering prayer. 3. An humble confession. 4. An affecting reply. IV. THE BLESSINGS AT LAST RECEIVED. 1. The principle our Lord commends is her faith; from faith all other graces spring. 2. He granted her request. Improvement: 1. The use we should make of affliction. 2. The efficacy of prayer. (*The Pulpit.*) *The triumph of faith:*—I. FAITH'S APPROACH. 1. She came to the right person. 2. In a right spirit. 3. With a right plea. II. FAITH'S TRIAL. 1. Christ tried her faith by perfect silence. 2. By seeming indifference. 3. By apparent reproach. III. FAITH'S APPEAL. 1. She was a devout suppliant. 2. An earnest suppliant. 3. An ingenious suppliant. IV. FAITH'S TRIUMPH. 1. Christ commends her faith. 2. He grants her request. 3. He healed her daughter. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *The second Sunday in Lent:*—I. THE DISCOURAGEMENTS WHICH SHE OVERCAME. These were great, numerous, and increased as she proceeded. 1. The first was the seeming unwillingness of the Saviour to have his retirement disturbed by any one, in any way (Mark vii. 24). 2. Her case was itself a very unpromising one. She was a Gentile,

3. The coldness in our Lord's behaviour, which seemed to disdain the least attention to her—"He answered her not a word." 4. The conduct of the disciples introduced a still further dissuasion, well calculated to dampen her hope of success. 5. To this was added the still further disheartening answer of the Master, "I am not sent," &c. 6. Children's bread was not to be given to the dogs. This was the current spirit of the religion of the times. II. THE MEANS OF HER VICTORY. 1. She felt her need, and the true character of her affliction. 2. She credited what she had heard of Christ. 3. And believing as she did, she improved her opportunity. Jesus was in the neighbourhood. 4. She confessed her unworthiness. 5. She had a true and powerful faith. 6. And as the result of her faith, she was invincible in her prayers. III. THE LESSONS WHICH THIS CASE TEACHES. 1. It impressively reminds us of the sorrowful condition of human life. 2. This gospel assures us where our help is. 3. It indicates how to avail ourselves of our great mercies. 4. Precious encouragement does it bring to us. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *A woman of Canaan:*—The movements of mankind are best studied in the lives of individuals. I. THE WOMAN HERSELF. All we know of her origin and feeling is contained in the three terms that are applied to her—Canaanite, Syro-Phœnician, a Greek. The first two imply her race. She belonged to that race that the Hebrews called Canaanites—that is, Lowlanders, for the great Phœnician people had settled themselves in the fertile valleys, and on the maritime plains of Palestine, and there in their walled cities had developed in the highest degree an ancient civilization. To this Phœnician stock she belonged. It was divided into two parts—the African and the Syrian stock. She belonged to the Syrian, to the people who inhabited the narrow strip of land between Lebanon and the sea. The last term "*Greek*," has of course nothing to do with race, nor does it say anything of her language; but religion. St. Paul divides men into Jew and Greek; the word means heathen. She was one of those that worship Baal and Astarte. II. IN HER CASE OBSERVE THE WORKINGS OF SORROW. That from the outset there began to operate compensating results which took away some of the bitterness. 1. This sorrow worked out in a greater love—"Have mercy on me; my daughter is vexed." As if she and her daughter were one. It was a mitigation, and in some degree a compensation, that with her sorrow grew such love. 2. The love and the sorrow together co-operated to produce something higher still. They enlarged the heart, purified her feeling, lifted the thought to immortality; Astarte could no longer fill her heart. She wanted a deity that could be a God of love, not of passion; who would create purity, not crush it. This I gather from the fact that she calls Christ "Son of David." She began to think trustfully of Israel's God. Such were the workings of sorrow in her heart. III. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE GREAT DRAWINGS BETWEEN THE SAVIOUR AND THE SOUL THAT NEEDS HIM. There is something mysterious here. It is not by accident that great mercy and misery meet. What is the secret of that journey to Tyre and Sidon. I suppose the Saviour felt some magnetic need pulling upon His heart, claiming the help of His pity and power. She was fifty miles away; the road was mountainous; in all the journey there and back He cures no other affliction and preaches no sermon; His sole purpose was to minister to this single sufferer. The prophetic soul knows when its Lord is nigh. IV. THE SERENE RESULT THAT IS REACHED. She learned the power of prayer. The disciples were changed; educated for their missionary work; they see how rich a thing a human heart is. She came asking a mercy for herself, and went away carrying it to others. (*R. Glover.*) *The woman of Canaan:*—1. THE GREAT FAITH OF THIS WOMAN IS TO BE TRACED IN HER HUMBLE CONFESSION. 1. She confesses her misery when imploring the mercy of Christ. 2. She confesses her weakness when imploring the help of Christ. 3. She confesses her unworthiness by admitting the mission of Christ. II. THE GREAT FAITH OF THIS WOMAN IS TO BE TRACED IN HER FERVENT PRAYER. 1. Mark her recognition of the character of Christ. 2. Her confidence in the power of Christ. 3. Her earnestness in seeking the aid of Christ. III. THE GREAT FAITH OF THIS WOMAN IS TO BE DISCOVERED IN HER DETERMINED PERSEVERANCE. 1. Her faith overcame the difficulty of obtaining a personal interview with Christ. 2. It overcame the singularly apparent coldness of Christ. 3. It overcame the limitation of the usual ministrations of Christ. (*J. Wonnacott.*) *The disciples sending away the Canaanite woman:*—Amongst the causes which keep souls at a distance from Jesus, we must count the attitude of the disciples of Jesus as one of the most powerful. To the Master we must go; not to the disciples. Let us first dispel all misunderstandings. When I declare that we must look to the Master, not to the disciples, I do not forget that the apostles were enlightened by special revelations and were called to found the Church. I do not

oppose their teaching to that of the Master; there is no contradiction between them. But when we leave the apostolic age the situation changes. The Church is placed before Christ. But now let us descend to the sphere of the individual conscience. To lead to Jesus! What a privilege and glory. Fidelity of testimony is necessary to this mission. Some are brought to Christ by words, some by indirect influences, others by a love that nothing wearies. But it is possible to put souls away from Jesus Christ. Between them and Christ there have been our sins, pride, &c. 1. Let us remove the hypocrites; to make of their duplicity an arm against the gospel is an unworthy proceeding. You see their inconsistencies; are you sure you do not exaggerate them? Have you weighed all that Christian faith produces of excellent works? Granting that your complaints are well founded; in what way can they justify your unbelief? They could only do so if you had the fairness to seek their cause in the gospel itself. But you contrast the two. Is it not rather the fidelity that offends you, rather than the faults of Christians? 2. A word to you who believe: 1. Judge yourself as you are seeking what is lacking in others. Saved by grace, shall we not exercise mercy? 2. Let us learn to see in our brethren along with the evil that distresses us, the good that we have misunderstood until now. 3. Raise your look to the Master, there you will find peace and certainty. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The woman of Canaan*:—I. THIS POOR WOMAN'S UNREMITTING OBSTINACY, if I may so call it, IN PRAYERS. See the power of persevering prayer. They may seem for a while unanswered; they may not seem to work any alteration in our secret hearts. II. THE POWER OF INTERCESSION. It is our duty to pray for others. III. That this poor woman's reiterated prayers are by our Lord called faith. Great is the faith that prays without ceasing. The sphere of common duty is the sphere also of secret spiritual growth. IV. Regard again this poor woman thus singled out in all the heathen world to receive the only cure, as a type of the Church of God. The Church, like her, has many sons and daughters grievously vexed with the evil spirit. They are brought to Christ in prayer. (*G. Moberly, D.C.L.*) *Great faith*:—How singularly and beautifully appreciative Jesus always was of anything that was good. His words show accuracy of observation and calculation. I. There are many striking features in the character of this woman. Her motherly care, energy, humility, pleading; but Christ selected only one. Faith the root of all. Some think we make too much of faith, and place it out of its proper proportion. II. The elements which went to make the "great faith." Sorrow seems to have been, if not the cradle, yet the school of her faith. She comes and makes her petition, as faith always ought, leaving details with God. The test to which she was put was exceedingly severe. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Help from heaven*:—"Lord, help me." This prayer is suitable—I. For those who are seeking salvation. II. For a soul under spiritual darkness. III. For the believer amidst worldly perplexities. IV. For the Christian labourer. V. For the dying saint. (*A. O.*) *The faith of the Syro-Phœnician woman*:—I. THE EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER OF HER FAITH. 1. It was based on the most limited knowledge. 2. It conquered natural prejudice in herself, and the fear of its influence in others. II. WHY CHRIST SO SEVERELY TESTED IT. 1. His first object was to expose and rebuke the intense bigotry of the Jews around Him. 2. He wished to draw out and exhibit the full strength of her faith. Lessons: 1. Christ's mercy and mission extend to all, however vile and outcast they may be. 2. The true way to derive good from Him is by faith, rather than by knowledge or acts of worship. 3. An encouragement to the utmost tenacity and desperation of faith. 4. An illustration of the way in which appearances may deceive us. God may seem to repulse us, but never does so actually. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *This woman of Caanan teaches us to pray*:—(1) With great *humility*, in that she acknowledges herself to be a dog; (2) with *faith*, in that she calls Christ the Son of David, *i.e.*, the Messiah; (3) with *modesty*, because she sets before Christ the right of dogs and her own misery; yet does not draw from thence the conclusion that Christ should heal her daughter, but leaves that to Him; (4) with *prudence*, in that she takes hold of Christ by His own words, and gently turns His reasoning against Himself, into an argument for obtaining her desire; (5) with *reverence*, with religion and devotion, because she made her application on her knees; (6) with *resignation*, in that she did not say, "Heal my daughter," but "Help me," in the manner that shall seem to Thee best; (7) with *confidence*, because, although a Gentile, she had a firm hope that she would be heard by Christ; (8) with *ardour*; (9) with *charity*, in that she made intercession for her daughter, as if she were anxious for herself, saying, "Help me"; (10) with *constancy* and *perseverance*, in that she persisted when she was twice repulsed, and became yet more earnest in prayer.

(*Lapide.*) A double miracle: 1. Of Faith. 2. Of Healing. Thrice did Christ commend "great faith," and in each case outside the fold of Israel. In this case the wonder is not that the woman had *great* faith, but that she had faith at all. Her faith was *great* because—1. (1) it would stand trial. (2) It was a wrestling faith. She heard the repulse, yet is neither daunted nor disheartened. She will not take His *No*. She will even resist His arguments. (3) It was victorious. Just now Jesus seemed to deny the smallest boon; now He opens His treasures, and bids her help herself. II. Learn from this that when God *delays* a boon, He does not necessarily *deny* it. (*J. H. Burn, B.D.*) Under this story there is the touch of nature which binds us all together. Let us learn from it—1. Perseverance. Few things can be reached by a single stride. All success is the outcome of previous patience; the finest pictures result from multitudinous touches of the brush. Let us keep our faces to the light, and the persevering desire shall at length be gratified. 2. Faith. This is a far larger thing than can be clothed in any form, and the most tenacious profession does not imply that we have that vivid apprehension of the living God which makes us really trust in and rest on Him. Have you faith as well as a creed? Are you daily trusting in the living God amidst all your wants, and sorrows, and sins? 3. Toleration. We are often inclined to look with insular exclusiveness or half-disdainful curiosity on such non-Christians as we come in contact with. Let us remember that Christ took the children's bread and cast it to dogs. With such an example before us, we dare not disclaim any as too degraded to share with us the "one flock and one shepherd." (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat, &c.—The woman's remark is admirable and delightful. It is full indeed of true theology and real philosophy. She apprehended clearly (1) that it was right that our Lord's personal ministry should be devoted to the Jews; (2) that He bore a benignant relation to the Gentiles—that He was not a sectarian Saviour; (3) that it would not in the least interfere with His ministry in relation to the Jews, to put forth *by the way* His blessed energy in behalf of such suppliant Gentiles as herself. She was not asking Him to forsake Palestine, or the Jews. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *A woman's master-stroke*:—Was not this a master-stroke? She snares Christ in His own words. (*Luther.*) *An incident like this*:—Dean Plumptre gives the following story from the Talmud. "There was a famine in the land, and stores of corn were placed under the care of Rabbi Jehudah the Holy, to be distributed only to those who were skilled in the knowledge of the law. And, behold, a man came, Jonathan, the son of Amram, and clamorously asked for his portion. The Rabbi asked him whether he knew the condition, and had fulfilled it, and then the suppliant changed his tone and said, 'Nay, but feed me as a dog is fed, who eats of the crumbs of the feast,' and the Rabbi hearkened to his words, and gave him of the corn." *Asking for crumbs*:—Laurence Justinian, first Patriarch of Venice, resembled this woman in the prayer he offered when at the point of death. "I dare not ask for a seat among the happy spirits who behold the Holy Trinity. Nevertheless, Thy creature asks for some portion of the crumbs of Thy most holy table. It shall be more than enough for me, O, how much more than enough! If Thou wilt not refuse some little place to this Thy poor servant beneath the feet of the least of Thine elect." *The coasts of Tyre and Sidon*:—This narrative records a visit of Jesus to a region which lay beyond the borders of the Jewish land. It did not lie at any great distance; it was within a day's ride of Capernaum, and it could be seen from hill-tops just behind Nazareth; yet it was an alien country, and that notable strip of the Mediterranean shore on which Tyre and Sidon were situated had *never* belonged to the Jewish people. The coast of Tyre and Sidon was fringed by an almost continuous line of buildings; quays, warehouses, and private residences dotted the whole shore-line, and it was therefore no retired spot, but one which swarmed with a large and busy population, with ships sailing on the face of the waters, and the fishermen plying their trade within sight of the shore. The scene was very unlike those which were most associated with our Lord's presence. He was here surrounded by abundant tokens of vigorous maritime and naval life. Instead of shepherds, sowers, cornfields, scribes, and Pharisees, there were warehouses, docks, ship-building yards, and sailors, amongst which He moved when He departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) *Spread of truth to foreign lands*.—Captain Cook found in the South Seas some uninhabited islands, waving with the fruits and flowers peculiar to Europe. No human hand had planted the seeds in that soil. How, then, were they there? A boy in one of our valleys is amusing himself with seeds. A few of them fall from his hand into the tiny stream at his cottage door: they are carried down to the river, which floats

them out to sea. They are drifted about for thousands of miles, and at last cast upon the shore of a South Sea island. A bird picks them up, and flies to its nest; but, scared by a hawk, lets them drop. They are covered with the leaves of the forest till spring calls them forth. By and by the wind shakes out the ripe seed, and carries it abroad. Again it falls into the kindly bosom of the earth, and again spring draws it forth. Thus, we may suppose, the deserted island is soon clothed with an European harvest. And thus the seed of God's Word is often scattered, we cannot tell how. (*J. Wells.*) *Grievously vexed with a devil* (demoniacal possession):—It is agreed on by all sober interpreters of Scripture that, at this period of the world, God permitted evil spirits to take possession of, and to afflict, individuals to an extent that He did not before and has not since permitted; (1) to show to all the power and malignity of Satan; and (2) to exhibit the compassionate kindness of the Saviour, and His power to relieve those thus oppressed. . . . Often may we, in a spiritual sense, see such a thing nowadays—a believing, godly parent, having an unbelieving, ungodly child, whose heart is held and governed by a wicked spirit. Often, when there is life in the parent's soul, there is death in the child's; light in the parent's understanding, but darkness and ignorance in the child's; love in the parent's heart, but hatred and enmity in the child's. What a painful and afflicting sight to a parent's eyes. And the case may be often reversed! (*Bishop Gregg.*) *Silence:*—Silence is not refusal. The reasons for Christ's silence at this time were: 1. In order that by exercising her faith He might strengthen and deepen it. 2. That He might manifest it to others, and so give her as an example to those who stood by, as well as to future generations. 3. That He might not offer an additional stumbling-block to the Jews, to whom the calling-in of the Gentiles was an abomination. (*W. Denton.*) Not because He was unwilling to speak, but because there are occasions on which silence is more eloquent and stirring to the thought than speech. Not infrequently silence is golden, while speech is "silvern;" and this was one such occasion. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The lost sheep of the house of Israel:*—It was necessary that there should be some limits to our Lord's personal ministry; and it was wise that these limits should be fixed at the circumference of the circle of Israel. To have spread out His ministry farther, during the brief period of His terrestrial career, would simply have been to have thinned out and weakened His influence. What might have been gained *extensively* would have been lost *intensively*. It was of primary moment that He should make sure of a foothold, on which He might plant His moral machinery for moving the world. That foothold He did secure in the house of Israel, the household of Israel, the family of Israel; for the whole nation was but a developed family circle. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Moral persistence:*—To sink under the burden argueth weakness, but it is strength of faith to wrestle through it. We read of Pherecides, a Grecian, in a naval fight between his nation and Xerxes, that he held a boat in which the Persians were fighting, first with his right arm; when that was cut off, with his left; when that was cut off, with his teeth; and would not let go his holdfast but with his life. (*T. Manton.*) *The use of delay:*—Some old writer thus quaintly explains the case. "Christ's love is wise. There is an art in His strange delays, which make us love-sick. We cheapen what is easily got, and under-rate anything that is at our elbow; but delays heighten and raise the market value of Christ's blessings. He wishes to make our faith stronger, and His trials are for the triumph of our faith. He did as we do when we hold toys dangling before our children, that we may make them desire and enjoy them more. He acts as we do with musicians at the door; for when they please us, we do not give them their penny at once, that we may hear their music longer." (*J. Wells.*) *The kindness of refusals:*—Monica, the mother of Augustine, prayed that her godless boy might not go to Rome, for she feared that Rome would be his ruin. God did not grant that request, because He had something better in store for her. Augustine went to Rome, and was converted there. (*Ibid.*) *Stern truths:*—This was the most cutting of all—telling her in plain terms that she had no more right to get what she asked, than the dogs have to get the children's bread; and also intimating very plainly that she was no better than a dog. Still she was not discouraged: even this did not put her off. If she had not possessed great faith, how would she have acted? Just as many at the present day do when they hear a plain sermon (as they call it); when they hear in plain words what the Bible says of human nature; they don't like that; they can't be *so very bad as all that;* they don't approve of what that preacher says at all, and so they go to some other place where they will hear more palatable language about the kindness of man—his good nature, generosity, noble-

mindedness, and so forth; but they who are of the truth will not listen to this, for they know it to be a lie, and the children of the truth can take no pleasure in a lie. People think it is very bad to hear themselves called "great sinners;" they think very strangely of a man if he tells them they are poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked; but, I suppose, if they heard the term "dog" applied to them as Christ applied it to this woman here, they would be up in arms at once, openly scout at so unwarrantable an affront, and take good care never to go near that preacher again. So did *not* this woman; she had faith—strong faith; she acknowledges the aptness of the illustration, and humbly accepts Christ's estimate of her as the right one. (*Bishop Gregg.*) *The dogs*:—There was some reason lying at the base of the designation. The heathens around were, in the mass, exceedingly unclean and ferocious; barking too, incessantly, at the true God and true godliness. But our Lord, in this case, refers not to the wild, fierce, filthy dogs, belonging to nobody, that prowl about Oriental cities; but to little pet dogs, in which children are interested, and with which they play. Most probably there might be one or more of them, within sight, in the company of some children. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Great thoughts of Christ*:—The Syro-Phœnician woman gained comfort in her misery by thinking great thoughts of Christ. The Master had talked about the children's bread. "Now," argued she, "since Thou art the Master of the table of grace, I know that Thou art a generous housekeeper, and there is sure to be abundance of bread on Thy table. There will be such an abundance for the children that there will be crumbs to throw on the floor for the dogs, and the children will fare none the worse because the dogs are fed." She thought Him one who kept so good a table that all she needed would only be a crumb in comparison. Yet remember what she wanted was to have the devil cast out of her daughter. It was a very great thing to her, but she had such a high esteem of Christ, that she said, "It is nothing for him, it is but a crumb for Christ to give." This is the royal road to comfort. Great thoughts of your sin alone will drive you to despair; but great thoughts of Christ will pilot you into the haven of peace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Perseverance of faith*:—An unbelieving heart may have some flash of spirit and resolution, but it wants free mettle, and will be sure to jade in a long journey. Faith will throw in the net of prayer again and again, as long as God commands and the promise encourageth. The greyhound hunts by sight, and when he cannot see his game he gives over running; but the true hound by scent, he hunts over hedge and ditch; though he sees not the hare, he pursues all the day long. Thus an unbelieving heart may be drawn out upon some visible probabilities and sensible hopes of a coming mercy to pray and exercise a little faith, but when these are out of sight, his heart fails him; but faith keeps the scent of the promise, and gives not over the chase. (*Salter.*) *Faith gives prevalency to prayer.* In the several precedents of praying saints upon Scripture record you may see how the spirit of prayer ebbed and flowed, fell and rose, as their faith was up and down. . . . This made the woman of Canaan so invincibly importunate; let Christ frown and chide, deny and rebuke her, she yet makes her approaches nearer and nearer, gathering arguments from His very denials, as if a soldier should shoot his enemy's bullets back upon him again; and Christ tells us what kept up her spirit undaunted—"O woman, great is thy faith." (*Gurnall.*) *Children's bread given to dogs*:—1. When her case was come to such a point, she heard of the Lord Jesus; and what she heard she acted upon. They told her that He was a great Healer of the sick, and able to cast out devils. She was not content with that information, but she set to work at once to try its value. 2. This woman was most desperately resolved. She had made up her mind, I believe, that she would never go back to the place from whence she came till she had received the blessing. 3. I may not leave this picture without observing that this woman triumphantly endured a trial very common among seeking souls. Here is a woman who conquered Christ; let us go by her rule and we will conquer Christ too by His own grace. I. In the first place, observe that SHE ADMITS THE ACCUSATION BROUGHT AGAINST HER. Jesus called her a dog, and she meekly said, "Truth, Lord." Never play into the devil's hands by excusing sinners in their sins. The woman in this case, if it had been a sound way of getting comfort, would have argued, "No, Lord, I am not a dog; I may not be all I ought to be, but I am not a dog at any rate; I am a human being. Thou speakest too sharply; good Master, do not be unjust." Instead of that she admits the whole. This showed that she was in a right state of mind, since she admitted in its blackest, heaviest meaning whatever the Saviour might choose to say against her. By night, the glow-worm is bright like a star, and rotten touchwood glistens

like molten gold; by the light of day the glow-worm is a miserable insect, and the rotten wood is decay, and nothing more. So with us; until the light comes into us we count ourselves good, but when heaven's light shines our heart is discovered to be rottenness, corruption, and decay. Do not whisper in the mourner's ear that it is not so, and do not delude yourself into the belief that it is not so. II. But notice, in the second place, SHE ADHERES TO CHRIST NOTWITHSTANDING. Did you notice the force of what she said? "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from"—where? "From their Master's table." III. Furthermore, the woman's great master weapon, the needle gun which she used in her battle, was this, SHE HAD LEARNED THE ART OF GETTING COMFORT OUT OF HER MISERIES. Jesus called her a dog. "Yes," said she, "but then dogs get the crumbs." She could see a silver lining to the black cloud. If I deserved anything there would be the less room for mercy, for something would be due to me as a matter of justice, but as I am a sheer mass of undeservingness, there is room for the Lord to reveal the aboundings of His grace. There is no room for a man to be generous amongst yonder splendid mansions in Belgravia. Suppose a man had thousands of pounds in his pocket, and desired to give it away in charity, he would be terribly hampered amid princely palaces. If he were to knock at the doors of those great houses, and say he wanted an opportunity of being charitable, powdered footmen would slam the door in his face, and tell him to be gone with his impudence. But come along with me; let us wander down the mews, all among the dunghills, and get away into back alleys, where crowds of ragged children are playing amid filth and squalor, where all the people are miserably poor, and where cholera is festering. Now, sir, down with your money-bags; here is plenty of room for your charity; now you may put both your hands into your pocket, and not fear that anybody will refuse you. You may spend your money right and left now with ease and satisfaction. When the God of mercy comes down to distribute mercy, He cannot give it to those who do not want it; but you need forgiveness, for you are full of sin, and you are just the person likely to receive it. "Ah!" saith one, "I am so sick at heart; I cannot believe, I cannot pray." If I saw the doctor's brougham driving along at a great rate through the streets, I should be sure that he was not coming to my house, for I do not require him; but if I had to guess where he was going, I should conclude that he was hastening to some sick or dying person. The Lord Jesus is the Physician of souls. Do try now, thus to find hope in the very hopelessness of thy condition, in whatever aspect that hopelessness may come to thee. The Bible says that thou art *dead in sin*, conclude then that there is space for Jesus to come, since He is the Resurrection and the Life. Your ruin is your argument for mercy; your poverty is your plea for heavenly alms; and your need is your motive for heavenly goodness. Go as you are, and let your miseries plead for you. IV. Let me, in the fourth place, notice THE WAY IN WHICH THE WOMAN GAINED COMFORT. SHE THOUGHT GREAT THOUGHTS OF CHRIST. It was a very great thing to her—but she had a high esteem of Christ. She said, "It is nothing to Him—it is but a crumb for Christ to give." V. And so you see, in the last place, SHE WON THE VICTORY. She had, first of all, overcome herself. She had conquered in another fight before she wrestled with the Saviour—and that with her own soul. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The little dogs*:—I. THE MOUTH OF FAITH CAN NEVER BE CLOSED. 1. It cannot be closed on account of the closed ear and mouth of Christ. 2. Not by the conduct of the disciples. 3. Not by exclusive doctrine which appeared to confine the blessing to a favoured few. 4. Not by a sense of admitted unworthiness. 5. Not by the darkest and most depressing influences. II. FAITH NEVER DISPUTES WITH THE LORD. 1. Faith assents to all the Lord says—"Truth, Lord." 2. It worships. 3. She did not suggest that any alteration should be made for her. III. FAITH ARGUES. 1. She argued from her hopeful position—"I am a dog, but Thou hast come all the way to Sidon,—I am under Thy table." 2. Her next plea was her encouraging relationship—"Master's table." 3. She pleads her association with the children. 4. She pleads the abundance of the provision. 5. She looked at things from Christ's point of view. IV. FAITH WINS HER SUIT. 1. Her faith won a commendation for itself. 2. She gained her desire. This woman is a lesson to all who imagine themselves outside the pale of salvation; an example to all whose efforts after salvation have been apparently repulsed; a lesson to every intercessor. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Our Lord had a very quick eye for spying faith*:—If the jewel was lying in the mire His eye caught its glitter, if there was a choice ear of wheat among the thorns He failed not to perceive it. Faith has a strong attraction for the Lord Jesus; at the sight of it "the king is held in the

galleries" and cries "thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." The Lord Jesus was charmed with the fair jewel of this woman's faith, and watching it and delighting in it He resolved to turn it round and set it in other lights, that the various facets of this priceless diamond might each one flash its brilliance and delight His soul. Therefore He tried her faith by His silence, and by His discouraging replies that He might see its strength; but He was all the while delighting in it, and secretly sustaining it, and when He had sufficiently tried it, He brought it forth as gold, and set His own royal mark upon it in these memorable words, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." (*Ibid*). *The elements of prevailing prayer*:—I. Sincerity. 2. Humility. 3. Importunity. 4. Faith. (*J. B. Jeter, D.D.*) *The greatness of a woman's faith*:—1. It was exercised by a woman. 2. It was a mother's faith. 3. It had an aim. 4. It disregarded apparent partiality. 5. It was not discouraged by apparent delay. 6. It was devoid of selfishness. 7. It gathered strength from its exercise. 8. It won. (*B. J. Hoadley*). *The trial and triumph of faith*:—The parts of the miracle are—I. THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS WROUGHT. II. THE PARTIES ON WHOM. III. THE IMPULSIVE CAUSE. IV. The miracle itself, wrought by the woman's faith: in which we have—1. Christ's heightening of her faith. 2. The granting of her desire. 3. The measure of Christ's bounty—"As thou wilt." 4. The healing of her daughter. (*S. Rutherford.*) "*She crieth after us*":—1. Christ's love is liberal, but yet it must be sued. 2. Christ's love is wise. He holdeth us knocking till our desire be love-sick for Him. 3. His love must not only lead the heart, but also draw. Violence in love is most taking. *Christ looking beyond His temporary limits*:—Christ doth but draw aside a lap of the curtain of separation, and look through to one believing heathen: the King openeth one little window, and holdeth out His face, in one glimpse, to the woman of Canaan. (*Ibid.*) *Grace working on unpromising material*:—Christ, then, can make and frame a fair heaven out of an ugly hell, and out of the knottiest timber He can make vessels of mercy, for service in the high palace of glory. (*Ibid.*) *Prayer strengthened by adversity*:—Also, the prayers of the saints in prosperity are but summer prayers, slow, lazy, and alas! too formal. In trouble, they rain out prayers, or cast them out in co-natural violence, as a fountain doth cast out waters. (*Ibid.*) *Determination in prayer*:—Grace, grace now is the only oil to our wheels. Christ hath taken the castle, both in-works and out-works, when He hath taken the will, the proudest enemy that Christ hath out of hell. (*Ibid.*) *A right knowledge of satanic torments will lead to Christ for relief*:—It were good we knew our own misery: the man resolveth a prisoner has a sweet life, who loveth his own chains, because made of gold, and hateth them not because chains; and falleth to paint the walls of his dungeon, and to put up hangings in his prison, and will but over-gild with gold his iron fetters. Oh! are we not in love with our own dungeon of sin? And do we not bear a kind love to our father, the devil? We bring in provision for the flesh, and nourish the old man, as old as since Adam first sinned. Alas! we never saw our father in the face: we love the devil, as the devil fallen in sin; but we see him not as a devil, but only under the embroideries of golden and silken temptations; we sow to the flesh; we bring in our crop to the devil, but we know not our landlord; and because sense and flesh are nearer to us than God, we desire more the liberties of state, free commerce, and peace with the king, than Christ's liberties, the power and purity of the gospel, that we may negotiate with Heaven and have peace with God. (*Ibid.*) *Good to be near Christ*:—The other thing observable is, that it is good to be near the place where Christ is. It was an advantage, that the woman dwelt upon the borders of the land where Christ was. It is good for the poor to be a neighbour beside the rich; and for the thirsty to take up house, and dwell at the fountain; and for the sick to border with the physician. Oh! love the ground that Christ walketh on. To be born in Sion is an honour, "Because there the Lord dwelleth" (Psa. lxxxvii. 6.) It is a blessing to hear and see Christ (Matt. xiii. 16). Christ knoweth them well whom He chooseth: grace is a rare piece of the choice and the flower of the love of heaven: there be many common stones; not many pearls, not many diamonds and sapphires. (*Ibid.*) *Christ hears prayer even if He does not answer*:—It is said, He answered her not a word: but it is not said, He heard not one word: these two differ much. Christ often heareth when He doth not answer; His not answering is an answer, and speaks thus, Pray on, go on, and cry; for the Lord holdeth His door fast bolted, not to keep out, but that you may knock and knock. Prayer is to God, worship; to

us, often, it is but a servant upon mere necessity sent on a business. The father will cause his child say over again, what he once heard him say, because he delighteth to hear him speak. (*Ibid.*) *Faith strengthened by importunate prayer:*—Wrestling addeth strength to arms and body; praying, and praying again, strengtheneth faith; customary running lengtheneth the breath. (*Ibid.*) *Tears have a tongue* (Psalm vi. 8):—Tears have a tongue, and grammar, and language, that our Father knoweth. Babes have no prayers for the breast, but weeping; the mother can read hunger in weeping. (*Ibid.*) *Prayer deeper than words* (2 Peter iii. 10):—Love and longing for Christ have eagle's wings; and love flieth, when words do but creep as a snail. *Fervour in prayer:*—Though God hear prayer, only as prayer offered in Christ, not because very fervent; yet fervour is a heavenly ingredient in prayer. An arrow drawn with full strength hath a speedier issue; therefore, the prayers of the saints are expressed by crying in Scripture (Psa. xxii. 2). (*Ibid.*) *Utilizing rich spiritual influences:*—It shall be useful then for the saints, when the Spirit cometh in his stirrings and impetuous acts, to co-operate with him, and to answer his wind-blowing. It is good to hoist up sail, and make out, when a fair wind and a strong tide calleth. Sometimes grace maketh the heart as a hot iron; it is good then to smite with the hammer. When your spirit is docile, and there cometh a gale of Christ's sweet west wind, and rusheth in with a warmness of heart, in a praying disposition to retire to a corner, and pour out the soul before the Lord; as we are to take Christ at His word, so are we to take Christ's Spirit at His work. (*Ibid.*) "*My daughter:*"—Children. 1. So to hold, as we are willingly to let go; love them as creatures only: often the child is the mother's daughter, and the mother's god. 2. We are to strive to have them freed from under the power of the devil, as this woman doth; for they come into the world fuel for hell. Parents make more account, all their life, to make gold, rather than grace, their children's patrimony and legacy. 3. Look at them as May flowers; as born to come and appear for a space in the element of death: so they sport, laugh, run, eat, drink, and glisten like comets in the air, or flying meteors in the sphere of the clouds, and often go down to the grave before their parents. 4. Beware of selfishness, for children are ourself, and their sins white and innocent sins to us. Eli honoured his sons more than God, and God put a mark of wrath on his house. (*Ibid.*) *The mutual attractions between Jesus and the soul:*—These drawings, brethren, of Jesus and the souls of men so mutual, so strong, how wonderful are they! Men are drawn to Him not because preachers beguile them, not because one generation misleads another, they are drawn by laws of gravitation; and Kepler's laws hold good of souls as well as they do of planets. Christ simply attracts in the proportion to His mass, and it is His massive being, His wealth of help, His power of pity, His infinite wisdom, His store of tenderness, that has in all ages, and will in all ages, attract the hearts of men. And the hearts of men attract Him. (*R. Glover.*) *All things possible to faith:*—As we "will," so faith obtains the good. "It *can* be done!" says faith. "It *shall* be done!" says the will. And it is done! The whole history of the world, in all its divisions, may be quoted in proof of this axiom. Space can be travelled by steam, says faith. Man has a will that it should be so. Space says, "Be it unto thee as thou wilt;" and it is done. The Atlantic Ocean can be crossed in seven days, says faith. The will of man says, It shall be so; and it is so. Thought can be conveyed as quickly a thousand miles as one. It is willed to be so, and it is done. The Alps can be tunnelled for a railway, says faith. I *will* it to be done, says the engineer; and the Alps say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Thus all things apparently impossible to reason become palpable facts to faith in its persistent exercises. (*J. Bate.*) *Christ cannot be hid:*—1. In His cause and truth. 2. Believers cannot hide a good or bad condition in the soul. 3. The joy of Christ's presence cannot be hid. 4. Grace in a sincere professor, and Christ, cannot be hid. (*S. Rutherford.*) "Hearing of Him." What had she heard? I. That Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, and could and was willing to heal. 1. Hearing of Christ drew her to Him. 2. It is good to border with Christ, and to be near hand to Him. II. None can come to Christ except they hear a good report of Him. III. Many open their ears to Christ, but they hear not; they want a spiritual faculty of observing. IV. Many put Christ in an ear without a bottom, as leaking and running out vessels. (*Ibid.*) *Her prayer:*—1. The manner of it—"She cried." 2. The party to whom she prayeth—"O Lord, Thou Son of David." 3. The petition—"Have mercy upon me." 4. The reason—"For my daughter," &c. (*Ibid.*) *The woman of Canaan:*—1. The naturalness of

faith (trust). 2. The connection of faith and works. She believed (trusted) to have help from Christ, and this led her to use the means. So faith in everything must move to works to realize its end. 3. The wisdom of using an opportunity. Jesus went into the coast of Tyre and Sidon. The woman knew of it, and she used the opportunity for the good of her daughter. 4. The force of sympathy. As a mother, she felt for her daughter. Hence her action. If we feel for others—sinners, heathens, afflicted ones, &c.,—we are moved to help them, or seek help for them, according to our feelings. 5. The dignity of humiliation. How grand this woman appears as she says, "Truth, Lord," &c. 6. The power of persistence in a good cause and with a good object. The woman would have no denial. 7. The nature of fervent, powerful prayer. She came to Him and worshipped Him, and said, "Lord, help me." 8. The victory of faith—"O woman," &c. It was no grief, but a joy, to Christ to yield the victory to this woman's faith. (*J. Bate.*)

Vers. 32, 39.—**And Jesus said unto them, How many loaves have ye?**—*The miracle of the loaves and fishes; or, continuity and economy*:—Want in men moves Christ's whole nature. His help leaves no injury. Here generosity and frugality meet. Observe in this miracle two principles. I. CONTINUITY. That which is comes out of that which has been. II. FRUGALITY. There is no waste. 1. These two principles are exhibited in nature. Mere spontaneity nature disowns. The field says, "Give me seed, and I will give you back harvest." Nature disowns waste, all things are utilized. 2. These principles are found in history. God does not fling loaves from the sky; they are growths. Not one life is lost. 3. These principles are seen in the moral world. There is no dropping of truths than of great men from heaven. Hence out of the few loaves grow the feast. He who holds in sincerity a little truth has the promise of all. In applying the truth of the text we learn—1. To hope. The less will become more. 2. The effect of this law upon character. Your future must come out of your past. 3. A lesson in helping others. We help by bringing the better out of some good in men. How many loaves have you? One has a feeble resolution; that, with the blessing of God, may be sufficient. (*P. Brooks, D.D.*) *The miraculous feeding of four thousand*:—I. THE FEATURES BY WHICH THIS MIRACLE WAS DISTINGUISHED. 1. It was a miracle of mercy. 2. Its publicity is another feature worthy of notice. 3. The scale on which it was wrought was most extensive. 4. It was the result of no previous arrangement, but was done in order to meet a pressing emergency. 5. The consciousness He evinced that His resources were adequate to the occasion. II. THE LESSONS WHICH THIS MIRACLE ENFORCES. 1. Reliance. 2. Gratitude. 3 Charity. 4. Economy. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The necessities of man and the all-sufficiency of Christ*:—I. THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE CONTINUALLY REMINDING MAN OF HIS NECESSITOUS CONDITION. Man can go but a short way into life's wilderness without feeling that his is a craving nature. Life-long dependence should teach life-long humility. II. THAT MAN'S NECESSITOUS CONDITION IS FULLY MET BY CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY. Christ knows the necessities of our human constitution. In Christ dwells all fulness. Man needs pardon, purity, freedom, peace. III. THAT IF MAN WILL NOT AVAIL HIMSELF OF CHRIST'S SUFFICIENCY HE WILL BE CHARGEABLE WITH THE RUIN OF HIS OWN SOUL. These men did not refuse to eat because they could not understand the mystery by which the bread was multiplied. Refuse to eat and they die. (*J. Parker.*)

## CHAPTER XVI.

VERS. 1-5. **O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky.**—*Signs of the times*:—The proper observing of these signs. They are heavenly, and therefore must be seen in a heart which is seeking those things which are spiritual. 1. The sign of the day. Another day is gone. The day of the Lord is nearer. Am I better prepared for it? 2. The sign of the cross of his Saviour. Has he crucified every evil affection? 3. The sign of the example of his Saviour. 4. The signs of the times in which he is living, and he considers how they are the harbingers of the last day, and how he must conduct himself accordingly. 5. And the question with the man of God is, what do these signs foreshadow? Do they prove that he has advanced in the Christian course? Then the heavens are red with joyful signs for

the morrow. 6. The redness of the evening sky may deceive, as we all know; these signs never can. 7. Whatsoever the signs of the sky foreshadow, we cannot alter; but we may alter that which is threatened by the signs of the spiritual world. 8. The true Christian will observe the signs of the morning as he rises as it were from death unto life again, and he will prepare himself for the coming day. Is it red and lowering with the coming storms of trial and temptation: then he will prepare to meet it. 9. The Christian does not desire any more signs from heaven. The more watchful he is the more he finds that he has already, and the more evident and certain they are. The very last has been given, the Son of man has risen from the dead. 10. Scripture is full of exhortations to Christian watchfulness. 11. The rebuke which our Lord administered to these worldly-minded sign-seekers—"And He left them and departed." (*R. W. Evans, B.D.*) *Signs*:—The things that happen to nations and men are, in the most proper sense of the word, "signs from heaven" of the Divine government and its counsel. I. PERSONAL SIGNS for every man's instruction, teach every man, at his peril, not to despise prophesyings. We read in the diligence, the moral goodness of the boy, the nature and history of the coming man. We say, "It will be fair weather." These are signs from heaven. In familiar, when the evening glows the morning is fine; where there is affection and piety, we prognosticate "fine weather." *You* are a sign from heaven, if unforgiven, a sign of coming storm. II. POPULAR SIGNS are always of number and force sufficient to give us an understanding of the character of the future. The life, the preaching of the Baptist, was a sign of approaching change. The character of our Lord was a sign of God's care of His children. (*B. Kent.*) *Unfairness in the treatment of religion*:—It is a humiliating fact that thoughtful men deal with the great facts of religion after a fashion which, in any other department of human inquiry, would be recognized as illogical or absurd. I. Take an example from RECORDED HISTORY. Men treat Jesus Christ with a scepticism they do not Napoleon Bonaparte. II. Take SCIENCE. Christianity is a science as truly as chemistry. Its fundamental facts are determined by thousands of experiments. But how many accept the testimony of scientists and reject that of religionists. True religion has its difficulties, but has science any fewer? III. As regards THE BIBLE. In temporal matters men investigate that which relates to their safety; but when eternal safety is at stake men do not give time to its consideration. IV. As with God's Book, so with GOD'S WITNESSES. In a court of justice men accept evidence: but fight against it in religion. Men do not reject bank notes because some are forged; but they reject Christianity because of one false professor. V. In nothing but pure mathematics do men insist upon mathematical certainty. THE WHOLE CONDUCT OF LIFE IS PREDICATED UPON A PREPONDERANCE OF PROBABILITES. Upon this principle they plough and plant, buy and build, work and wait. Is it probable that all the generous and noble fruits are based on superstition. VI. WHEN OF TWO WAYS OF PROCEDURE ONE IS KNOWN TO BE ABSOLUTELY SAFE AND THE OTHER FRAUGHT WITH PERILS, ALL MEN CHOOSE THE PATH OF SAFETY. It is safe to be a Christian; yet safety is rejected. Let a man be honest, do himself justice, and give Christianity fair play. (*P. S. Henson, D.D.*) *The demand of unbelief*:—This demand of the Jews was—I. PROMPTED BY WRONG MOTIVES—"and tempting." This was a two-edged temptation. 1. Suppose He should not give the sign, either by refusal or failure. Then they hoped to destroy His influence and to impress the people that he was a false Messiah. 2. But if He worked a miracle He would have yielded to their low ideas of His Messiahship and of its evidence. The scribes and Pharisees were bitter enemies of each other, yet combined to overthrow Christ: and how large a part of modern religious investigation is due to the enmity and selfishness of human hearts. Discussion is frequently designed not to fix but to unsettle faith. There are men who talk plausibly and with seeming sincerity about these matters, who in their hearts would be pleased at the destruction of Christianity. Again, their are men who use gospel themes as the theatre upon which to display their intellectual power. They demand evidence neither possible or reasonable. This is different from the humble inquirer who, walking in darkness, asks the way of light and life. II. This demand was PRESUMPTUOUS—"From heaven." They limited Christ as to the method in which He should display His divinity. There are people who determine in their own minds the way in which God shall reveal Himself; the truth must flow through channels they have dug, or they will reject it. III. This demand WAS DUE TO THEIR BLIND UNBELIEF. They refused to recognize the force of the evidence already given them (Matt. xi. 5). Men inveigh against the Bible who never read it. They cry out for water and refuse to draw

from the abundant wells of salvation around them. IV. THIS REQUEST LED TO THEIR DESERTION BY CHRIST. The spirit manifested by these Jews showed that it was useless to remain longer with them. 1. He denied them further manifestation of His power—"There shall no sign be given." 2. Christ withdrew Himself from them. This he did (1) Sadly; (2) Promptly; (3) Finally. This incident seems to have closed His ministry in Galilee. (*W. H. Williams.*) *The signs of the times*:—1. SOME OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES. Every age has its peculiar developments—signs. We live in an age that is replete with these moral indicators, and to some of them we call attention. 1. The almost universal diffusion of knowledge is one of the signs of the times. 2. The extent of its new discoveries and inventions. 3. The increasing power and commanding position of the Anglo-Saxon race. 4. The decay and approaching dissolution of heathen governments. II. WHAT DO THESE SIGNS INDICATE? These signs clearly indicate the rapid progress of Messiah's kingdom. III. WHAT IS OUR DUTY IN VIEW OF THESE SIGNS OF THE TIMES? 1. Rightly to discern them. 2. To seek an entrance into the kingdom of Christ without delay. 3. Labour and pray for its incoming in greater power and glory. (*P. M. Brett, D.D.*) Too many signs of the times surround us on every side to make it either right, or wise, or safe, or happy to pass them by unnoticed. I. LET US SEEK TO UNDERSTAND DISTINCTLY WHAT IS INTENDED BY A SIGN. May be miraculous or moral. II. WHAT PARTICULARLY WERE THOSE SIGNS WHICH OUR LORD REBUKED THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES FOR NOT HAVING OBSERVED? III. INQUIRE WHETHER THE ORDER OF THINGS IN PROPHECY COMPARED WITH THE ASPECT OF OUR OWN TIMES MAY NOT AFFORD US SOME INSTRUCTION. It is a Christian duty to discern the signs, to watch the moral aspect of the times in which we live. We shall thus learn more of the intentions and *character* of the Divine Being. (*J. P. Dunn.*) *Human and Divine ideas of revelation*:—I. THE HUMAN. From earliest times men have demanded a "sign from heaven." II. THE DIVINE IDEA OF A REVELATION. 1. The atheist says, "If there be a God let Him manifest Himself." How silently, but majestically, on earth and in sky is God revealing Himself. 2. The Jews demanded of Jesus a sign. Yet He wrought "wonders and signs" amongst them. 3. God reveals Himself in the words of prophets and evangelists. III. THE CONTRAST IN THE TWO IDEAS OF REVELATION. 1. Man's revelation must be addressed to his senses, to his imagination, and the marvellous—some fitful, awful display; God reveals Himself alone to what is *spiritual, i.e.*, to what is deepest in man. 2. God's revelations come to men's experience. (*Dr. Chase.*) *The hindrances to the work of the Church*:—It is necessary to take into account the character of the mind to which it has to address itself as well as the nature of the truth which it has to speak. How rapid and widespread and radical the change during the last half-century! How far is this new spirit checking the progress of truth, and in what way can we deal with it? I. SOME OF THE INTELLECTUAL TENDENCIES WORKING AGAINST FAITH. The science of the day. The restless spirit which it begets. Uncertainty respecting the great truths of Christianity is regarded as a justification for neutrality. The influence of this widespread tendency is distinctly hostile to the acceptance of the gospel and the culture of vital godliness. Scepticism is in the air, and there are those who must be in the fashion of the hour. Our congregations are honeycombed with this sentiment. God forbid that we should despair or even look doubtfully to the future! But it behoves us to take care that our work be wisely and well and truly done. The gospel has still a power which will assert itself. II. SOME HINTS AS TO THE MODE IN WHICH CHRISTIANS SHOULD MEET THESE DIFFICULTIES. 1. Not for us to sit down and mourn over evils, as though they were irreparable. 2. A policy of suppression never has succeeded, least of all is it likely to succeed in an age thrilled with all the energy of life, and strong to vehemence in the assertion of its own independence and freedom. It ought not to succeed. Protestants, of all men, can have no satisfaction in the contemplation of what would be a mere make-belief for a living faith. Liberty must have its perfect work, and a true faith will have no fear as to the consequences. 3. The true mode of dealing with the sceptical mind of the time is to dwell on points of agreement rather than of difference. Science has not yet stilled the longing of the heart for God, and it has been unable to meet it. (*J. G. Rogers, B.A.*) *The signs of the times*:—The most striking peculiarities of the present age. I. THE GREAT INCREASE OF MENTAL EXERTION. Some periods have been marked by intellectual inaction and even retrogression. Such was that period in which, after the decline of the Platonic philosophy, Aristotle reigned in all the schools and was idolized as "the secretary of nature who dipt his pen in intellect."

Since that era the greatest advances have been made in every department of science, more especially during the last century, &c. II. AN INCREASED ATTENTION TO THE INSTRUCTION OF THE LOWER CLASSES. III. THE IMPROVED STATE OF PREACHING, AND THE MORE ABUNDANT SUPPLY OF THE PUBLIC MEANS OF GRACE. In our own and other countries. IV. THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE BIBLE AS THE GREAT AND ONLY STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE. V. THE INCREASING HARMONY WHICH PREVAILS AMONG THE GENUINE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST. VI. THE EXTENSION OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. (*Robert Hall, A.M.*) *The signs of the times*:—I. THE NATURE OF THESE SIGNS WHICH SHOULD BE REGARDED AS APPOINTED INDICATIONS OF THE FUTURE. II. THE SIGNS PRESENTED BY THE PRESENT TIMES, WITH THE DUTIES THEY SUGGEST. 1. A spirit of inquiry. 2. A spirit of active enterprize. 3. Let us beware lest in the excitement of passing events our attention should be diverted from our own spiritual prosperity. (*J. West.*) *The wicked's craft to ensnare God's people described*:—I. THE DEMAND OF A SIGN. 1. Observe the efficients or causes of it—Pharisees and Sadducees. 2. The end for which they did desire it, and that was to tempt Him. II. OUR SAVIOUR'S REJECTION OF THIS DEMAND. 1. The reproof He gives them and their persons. 2. The ground of His reproof of them, and that is a conviction of their readiness to believe more uncertain things upon less credible ground than they would believe Him to be the Messiah sent of God upon most certain and evident grounds. (*John Cotton.*) *Fair weather—for the sky is red*:—A Palestinian prognostication, which may or may not be applicable to other countries. The Saviour, in referring to it, does not intend to affix to it a seal of scientific approbation. It was enough for His purpose that the forecast was accepted by the weather-wise in Palestine. Doubtless it would, as a general rule at least, be a true forecast; for it indicated, we presume, that in the contiguous region of the atmosphere into which the sun on setting was descending, or had descended, there was no dense accumulation of clouds threatening a coming storm of rain. If there had been such clouds the sun's golden radiance would have been drunk up and intercepted, and thus there would have been no redness of the evening sky. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *Signs*:—The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light! To all things that concern their temporal interests how keenly are men alive! They will meditate, observe, infer, and act upon their inferences. The agriculturist notes carefully the approaching alterations in the weather; the politician watches the current of popular feeling and the moods of men; the scientific inquirer devotes all his energies to the observation of facts that will enable him to wrest from nature her secrets; the speculator is constantly on the outlook for the first symptoms of an alteration in prices. Yet how often do these very same men decline to take any interest in the highest of all subjects—the relationship of God to man—on the plea that it is too vague and too uncertain for practical consideration! They demand that this shall be put before them by some outward visible proof which it shall be impossible to dispute before they will acknowledge its claims upon them. They are blind to the signs which are ever around them and within them, and which demand at least as much interest and inquiry as do the signs in the outward world which engross their attention. (*V. W. Hutton, M.A.*) *The signs of the times*:—I. The difficulty of satisfying impracticable people. II. The dangers of a half-educated sagacity. III. The demand of Christianity to be judged by a wide induction of facts. (*Pulpit Germs.*) *Changes in theological opinion a sign of the times; not to be feared*:—Why did my multitudinous trees throw off their leaves last autumn? Was their throwing them off a sign that they were dying? They did not throw off one single leaf until they had a baby leaf wrapped up and lying along the branch. They threw off the garments of last year, and to-day they are putting on the garments of this year. So, with respect to them, change was growth, and preparation for growth. Why does the kernel of wheat die? Should a modern sceptic, after the seed had been in the ground for a few warm days, go through the field seeking for it, raking it up, and finding it rotten in his hand, he would say, "Don't you perceive that agriculture is all a myth? The thing is dead." But it must die if it would live. The reason of its decay is that its sustenance may be sucked up into the root and stem, and give new life to them; and when a single kernel seems to die, it is but a pang of birth for a hundred kernels that come into life. Thus there are changes going on in the Church. There are many things in it that must decay, in order that other things may grow. The spirit of Christianity is not changing, but its surroundings will more or less change or be thrown off, in order that it may unfold. Christianity is like a lighthouse over whose glass the keeper

has permitted spiders to spin their webs, or on which insects have gathered until the glass is so dim that the light, though it shines brightly on the inside, is scarcely seen on the outside. These obstructions must be scoured off, the rubbish must be taken out of the way, in order that the light may shine out. There are thousands of things in the interpretations of religion that are obscurations. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Signs from heaven*:—A hypocritical request. II. A withering rebuke. III. An indignant denial. (*Expository Outlines.*)

**Vers. 6, 12. Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.**—*The leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*:—I. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES. The most numerous and popular sect among the Jews. Their corruptions may, for the sake of distinction, be summed up under three heads.—1. They were rigid predestinarians, or believers in what modern language calls philosophical necessity. Take heed! 2. They rejected the written Word of God as the only and sufficient standard of religious truth, and the guide of religious practice; and they observed the tradition of the elders, which often made this written law of none effect. Take heed, and beware of the very same leaven! 3. Their righteousness, though strict in its kind, was merely external; consisting chiefly in a multitude of ceremonious practices. How many are there like them! Beware! II. THE LEAVEN OF THE SADDUCEES. Their heresy likewise may be described under three heads.—1. They denied the fallen and depraved state of mankind; disputed the doctrine of hereditary corruption; and maintained that the will of man is, by nature, and without any special grace of God, as free to good as to evil. 2 They not only rejected the traditions of the elders, but explained away much of the Old Testament, and thus rendered its teaching of none effect. 3. They denied the existence of angels and spirits, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state of rewards and punishments. Take heed, and beware! (*J. Bunting, D.D.*) *Erroneous doctrines are like leaven* in the following respects:—1. They are, at first, slight and unimportant in appearance. 2. They are insinuated into the soul unawares and silently, and are difficult of detection. 3. They act gradually. 4. They act most certainly. 5. They will pervade all the soul, and bring all the faculties under their control. (*A. Barnes.*) *The influence of evil doctrine unperceived yet injurious to our future welfare*:—Archbishop Whately has made reference to the remarkable fact that the caterpillars of moths and butterflies are often attacked by ichneumon flies, which pierce their skins and deposit their eggs in the caterpillar's body. No immediate result follows, and no injury seems to have been done until the period when the caterpillar becomes a chrysalis Instead of a beautiful moth or butterfly emerging from the latter, only the parasitic insects appear. The hidden butterfly has been silently destroyed. The Archbishop's suggestive comment is—"May not a man have a kind of secret enemy within—destroying his soul without interfering with his well-being *during the present stage of his existence*, and whose presence may never be detected till the time arrives when the *last great change* should take place." *The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*:—I In this warning, it will be observed, Pharisaic and Sadducaic tendencies are identified. Jesus speaks not of the leavens, but of one common to both sects, as if they were two species of one genus, two branches from one stem. Superficially, the two parties were diverse—the one strict, the other easy, in morals. But here extremes meet. They were all hostile to the Divine kingdom. Thus to be a Christian it is not enough to differ superficially from either Pharisees or Sadducees, but to differ radically from both. A weighty truth not yet understood. To avoid Pharisaic strictness and superstition men run into Sadducaic scepticism, both equally far from the truth. The spirit of unbelief which ruled in Jewish society Jesus described as leaven, with special reference to its diffusiveness. II. Jesus next found new matter for annoyance in the stupidity of friends. The disciples misunderstood the warning word. "It is because we have no bread." Had they possessed more faith and spirituality they would not have put the earthly meaning into the words. How vain it is to discourse concerning Divine things to men whose minds are preoccupied with earthly cares! Leaven makes them think of loaves. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*)

**Vers. 13, 17. Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?**—*Confession and cross-bearing*:—I. THE CONFESSION. 1. The substance of the confession. 2. The source of the confession (ver. 17). 3. The power of the confession (vers. 18, 19). 4. The limitations of the confession (ver. 20). II. THE COVENANT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. The dignity of cross-bearing (vers. 21, 23). 2. The necessity of cross-

bearing (vers. 24–26). 3. The rewards of cross-bearing (vers. 27, 28). (*Monday Club Sermons.*) *The Son of man—the Son of God:*—I. THE QUESTION OF JESUS CHRIST—"Whom do men," &c. 1. The first word we shall emphasize is the word "*men.*" His mind soars above all national distinctions. 2. The other word we shall emphasize is the word "Son of man." He is humanity condensed. 3. We shall next emphasize the two words together—*men* and "Son of man." The Saviour presents Himself on the level of our common humanity, and appeals to our common sense, our common nature, to say who He is. II. THE ANSWER OF THE WORLD. III. THE ANSWER OF THE CHURCH. (*J. C. Jones.*) *Christ the universal man:*—He is not an excrescence of our nature. No poet He, no philosopher He, no man of science He. He was all these in one, He was man, thorough man, growing out of the depths of our nature. The sea on the surface is divided into waves—go down and you will soon come to a region where there are no waves, where there is nothing but water. And humanity on the surface is broken into nationalities and individualities. But go down a little way, and you will soon come to a region where differences give place to resemblances: force your way down and you will soon arrive at the region of human unities, where every man is like every other man. Now Jesus Christ emerges from the profoundest depths of our nature, from the region of unities. No Jew He—no Greek He—no Roman He—but Man. He touches you and me not in our branches but in our roots. Show me an oak and show me an ash tree: it is easy to tell the difference between them in the branches, but not so easy in the roots. Show me a rose and show me a tulip: any one can tell the difference between them in the leaf, but only a very few can tell the difference between them in their seeds. And Jesus Christ is the "*Root* of Jesse," "the *Seed* of Abraham and of David;" and all nations and all men in their roots and seeds are very much alike. (*Ibid.*) *The true idea of Christ to be obtained from the New Testament rather than from creeds:*—Creeds embody the ripest and most advanced thoughts of the ages they represent. It is not against the use of creeds that I speak—we cannot very conveniently do without them—but against their abuse, against setting them up in every jot and tittle as infallible standards for all subsequent ages. If you look at a picture of the sky in our picture galleries, you will find that with rare exceptions it has been rendered too hard and too material. The sky on canvas is a ceiling beyond which the eye cannot wander. But if you go out of the gallery a very different sky will open itself before you—a sky which seems to recede for ever before your vision. The sky of painters is too often a thing to be looked at; the sky of nature is not a thing to be looked at, but a thing to be looked through. In like manner, the truth concerning Christ as rendered in creeds and systems is hard and dry—it is the sky of the picture. The truth concerning Christ as presented in the Gospels is deep, living, infinite—it is the sky of nature. And I greatly rejoice that men try to understand the Christ of the Gospels and not the Christ of the creeds, the Christ of the evangelists and not the Christ of the schools. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (*Ibid.*) *Christ the centre of theology:*—An American writer says: "We have in our congregation a little deaf and dumb boy. On Sunday he loves to have his mother find for him the words that we are all singing, though the music never thrills his quiet ear, nor touches his heart. He looks at the hymn, glides his little finger over every word to the end; if he finds 'Jesus' there, he is satisfied and absorbed to the close of the singing; but if the word 'Jesus' is not there, he closes the book, and will have nothing more to do with it." So should we test the religions of the day—if we find Jesus the central thought of any system of theology, it is good, it will do for us; if not, turn away and have nothing to do with it. *Christ mentally conceived:*—He was conceived over thirty years ago in the *nature* of man, but in the text for the first time is He conceived in the *mind* of man; and the conception in the mind was as necessary to our salvation as the conception in the nature. (*Ibid.*) *Opinion sought by a question:*—Benjamin Franklin made an experiment, one of the most daring ever made by mortal man. Seeing a cluster of thunder-clouds hanging overhead, he let fly into their midst a paper kite, to which was attached a metallic chain. As the kite was flying among the clouds, anxiety weighed heavily on his heart. At last he presumptuously applied his knuckles to the chain and called forth sparks of wild lightning; and had the stream of electricity been a little stronger at the time, the philosopher would have met with instantaneous death. He has left on record, that so surprising was the discovery to him, that in the ecstasy of the moment he expressed his willingness to die there and then. In like manner there were clouds of opinion afloat in society respecting Jesus Christ, indeed the thunder-clouds were

gathering fast. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist"—that is one cloud. "Others, Elias"—that is another cloud. "Others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets"—that is a cluster of clouds. Everything seemed mist and haze, vagueness and uncertainty. Jesus Christ prayerfully and anxiously flies a question into the midst of these dark clouds. What will the result be? His heart trembles, therefore He prays. See the question fly—"But whom say ye that I am?" What answer will be called forth? "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (*Ibid.*) *The Christ of God:*—I. THE QUESTION—"Whom say ye that I am?" It is a great mercy that Jesus calls out the faith that is in His disciples. By what various means of questioning does He speak? Sometimes by conscious afflictions: by our very falls. This is the question of questions; not what we think of Churches, disciples, but of Christ. II. THE ANSWER—"Thou art the Christ," &c. There was little comparative light in the apostles before the Day of Pentecost; the Holy Spirit must teach to saving profit. But they were still His disciples, though their faith was small. It is humbling that, having so much more light than they, we should have less love. All the glory of Christ as the Mediator hangs upon the glory of His Person. If a mere creature, His work is comparatively nothing. III. THE VAST ENCOURAGEMENT—"Blessed art thou." The infinite condescension of Jesus. He takes notice and encourages the weakest faith. 1. How blessed the condition of those who have been taught this lesson. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it." Nature, education, miracles, never taught it. What a foundation for strong confidence. He, the Son of God. 2. How great the sin of the man who rejects this Son of the living God. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *Peter's faith:*—I. PETER'S FAITH. II. THE SOURCE of Peter's faith. III. WHAT PETER'S FAITH QUALIFIED HIM TO BE. IV. THE SPECIAL REWARD of Peter's faith. Conclusion: How can we become stones in Christ's Church? Not naturally. Only by having Peter's faith. In Jesus as "the Christ." In Jesus as "the Son of God." How may we get this faith? God alone can give it—ask Him. (*E. Stock.*) *Peter's confession:*—How hearty and distinct is this utterance! This is the first "Confession of Faith." This is the true Apostles' Creed. These are the prime and essential articles of catholic verity, upon which rest all sound theology and all saving faith. In this short but illustrious statement, says a great theologian, you have the whole truth with respect to the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. 1. It is plainly implied that Jesus Christ possesses human nature, a true body and a reasonable soul. He put the question as the Son of man. He was a real man. 2. The confession of Peter asserts the divinity as well as the humanity of our Lord. He calls Him the "Son of the living God." This expression denotes Divine nature. He is set forth as a Divine Person in the Old Testament. He manifested Himself in this character in the days of His flesh, &c. Had He been less than Divine, He could not have been the Saviour. 3. The confession of Peter asserts the truth with regard to the office or work as well as the Person of the Son of God. He declares that He is the Christ, that is, the Messiah, &c. And for what end? It is to save sinners. This is the great work given Him to do. He is the only, the all-sufficient, Saviour of sinners. To Him alone belongs all the glory. Believest thou these things? Is this thy heartfelt creed and confession? (*A. Thompson.*) *Christ's appeal to our individual faith:*—This is a most pertinent question now. Reasons why we should ask it of ourselves. I. We are in danger, as the disciples were, of being affected by the crude opinions of men about our Lord, and His religion, and His Church. II. The question is vital, for it asserts the great truth that only a deep, strong faith will ever inspire confidence in others. III. It shows us how dear to Christ is the personal faith of the soul. (*Ellison Capers.*) *Right apprehensions of the character of Christ essential to salvation:*—I. THAT THERE ARE MANY OPINIONS ABOUT CHRIST. 1. As regards His Person. 2. As regards the nature of the work which He came to accomplish. 3. As regards His religion, His acquirements, and His claims. II. IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT WE FORM CORRECT AND DECIDED OPINIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. Our opportunities of doing so are very great. (*Dr. T. Raffles.*) *Whom do men say that I am?*—I. THAT WHEN CHRIST BECAME A MAN HE COULD NOT SEEM DIVINE ACCORDING TO THE PRE-CONCEPTIONS OF MEN, who looked for the exhibition of that which appeals to the sense, and who did not look for inward harmony. Christ did bring with Him the Divine nature, but not the attributes of Jehovah disclosed in their amplitude. He humbled Himself. II. EVERY PERSON CAME TO CHRIST THROUGH SOME ELEMENTS THAT WERE IN HIMSELF. Some came to Him through the door of sympathy; some from lower motives. What is Christ

to you? Is He part of your life? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The personal affirmations of Christ:*—What did Christ teach concerning Himself? 1. He affirmed the divinity of His redemptive mission. 2. His independence of, and separation from, the world. 3. His pre-existence. 4. Some of the affirmations of Christ contain most impressive representations of His character and work—"I am the Bread of Life," "I am the Light of the World," "I am the Door," "I am the True Vine." 5. Some of the affirmations of our Lord contain wondrous glimpses of His grace and glory. 6. His second coming in great glory. (*G. W. McCree.*) *Public opinion concerning Jesus Christ:*—1. Was not Christ superior to what men thought about him? He did not stoop to public opinion, but was anxious to know that men had clear and right conceptions concerning Him; that He did not live and teach in vain. What are men saying in yonder workshop of you? 2. We must try and find out what is the public opinion to-day about Christ, and instruct, correct it, gently. (*W. Cuff.*) *Christ's divinity incidentally indicated in the New Testament, not logically proved:*—It is in these incidental ways that we see Jesus Christ best. Yes, and I will venture to say that it is in these incidental ways we see all men best. We do not understand men best because we see them in their great efforts. Please do not take me to the poet, if you want me to understand him thoroughly, when he has got his pen, ink, and paper ready to write his great poem. I should see him then in a great mood, but I should not see him in an incidental way, and in all the little things that make up the man's character. I do not want to see Mr. Gladstone when he is braced up to chop down an ash-tree; nor do I want to see him as he has braced himself to make a great speech in the House of Commons. I should want to see him as his wife sees him; and I venture to say that we should understand him better in that than in any other way. Your wife knows you better than anybody else; she sees you in the little things of every-day life, and it is in these incidental ways that the great things and the great truths come up all through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. You do not value that clock yonder for its striking capacity. I do not know whether it strikes at all; however, it has a very fine musical bell in it that knocks off twelve, when it is twelve, in a quick or slow manner, but you would not value it for that. You value the clock for its capacity to tell you every minute of the time and every hour of the day. And just as you look at the little things on the face, and get the minutes as well as the hour, you value the clock for its correctness. (*Ibid.*) *Varied views of Christ:*—We find Christ so differently because we seek Him in such very different ways. We cannot have a uniform Christ any more than we can have a uniform experience. In essence, in character, in love, in pity, Jesus Christ will ever be the same to every sinner who comes to Him, but as we come to Him we shall seem to have a very different Christ, because we use our own glasses, and, therefore, see Him from different points of view, and have different convictions about Him. Here is a person who comes to Jesus Christ, who has been educated and brought up in a manner of refinement and beauty, whose home has been the centre of everything that was charming; his mother was gentle, and sweet as an angel, his education from boarding-school days until he settled himself in life was all that could be desired to train the taste, to balance the judgment, and to make the character round, unique, and beautiful. By-and-by he comes to Jesus Christ, and he comes along such a different path to that man over there, for he was born down a back street, where hardly a gleam of sunshine ever burst through his mother's window, and he hardly ever saw a beautiful flower; certainly his boyish feet never tripped along a green field; he never heard the birds sing in the wood, nor saw the light and charm of nature as others have seen it; rough, rude, uneducated, unable to read one word of the New Testament. By-and-by that man comes to Christ, and he sits in the church at the Lord's table by the side of that other educated and refined Christian. If they compare notes they will seem to have a very different Christ, because they came along such very different roads up to the cross. I believe, brethren, that that first view of Jesus in the soul's experience makes a vast deal of difference to his whole thinking and to his whole life about the Saviour whom he first saw. Oh, what passion burns in one man, and what calm, strong, intellectual, and dignified faith wrestles and grapples in the other, as he comes up first to look at Jesus Christ. John Newton saw Him like this:—

"I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood;

And never till my latest breath
Shall I forget that look,
It seemed to charge me with His death
Though not a word He spoke."

James Allen saw Him like this:—

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend,
Love and health and peace possessing,
From the sinner's dying friend.
Here it is I find my heaven
While upon His cross I gaze,
Love I much? I've more forgiven,
I am a miracle of grace."

So the poets and hymn-writers came to Him differently, and seemed to take a different view of Him. (*Ibid.*) *The revelation of Christ often misinterpreted:*—Payson, when he lay on his bed dying, said: "All my life Christ has seemed to me as a star afar off; but little by little He has been advancing and growing larger and larger, till now His beams seem to fill the whole hemisphere, and I am floating in the glory of God, wondering with unutterable wonder how such a mote as I should be glorified in His light;" but he came to that after a long life. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The revelation of Christ an inward power, rather than a scientific belief:*—But how many people there are whose God is no bigger than a confession of faith! How many persons have a God that is like a dried specimen of a flower in a herbarium, which is good for science, and for nothing else? But Christ is a power—a glory—a life; and he that has come to Christ, and accepted Him even in the smallest degree, to him it is given to become, and to know that he is becoming, a son of God. To all of you I say, stand fast in the faith, in the inward sense, of a living Saviour. Love Him and trust Him. (*Ibid.*). *The revelation of Christ perfected in heaven:*—And remember that what you see now is full of mixture—that, like ill-blown glass, it is full of crinckles—that it is full of elements that are drawn from the peculiarities of your own nature. Look upon Christ as one that, all after, much as He is to you, is to be revealed in you—that is to say, when you have grown, when you have been cleansed, when you leave this body behind, and when you rise to stand face to face with God, the little that you knew before will be as what a man has seen who has never been out of his garden here compared with what he would see if he were, by some power, translated into a tropical forest. He has seen growths in a northern clime largely developed under glass, but oh, to see the growths that have been developed by the tropical powers of nature! And when we shall see Him as He is—in magnitude—in wonderful disposition—in profound, and sweet, and life-giving influences—then, with an ecstasy of joy, we shall cast our crowns at His feet and say: "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the praise." (*Ibid.*). *Perverse views of Christ:*—Well, now I must gather up the fragments and close; and I will do so by saying that there will be, as there have been, very different answers given as to who the Son of man is. There always were different answers; there always must be; because men look at Christ as they look at other men and other things. We do not all look at the New Testament through the same mental laws; and that makes all the difference in the answer we shall give to the question, "Whom do you say I, the Son of God, am?" You know if you go to the photographer's shop and ask the artist to be kind enough to let you look through the lens covered by that little black piece of cloth, and if you look at the chair on which you have to sit for your portrait, it is reversed, and the opposite of what you expected it to be. That is how some men look at other men. They always see them reversed—very different to what they are. That is precisely the kind of lens that many bring to the New Testament to look at Christ. (*W. Cuff.*) *Religious affections produce a conviction of reality:*—Spiritual things have the influence of reality upon renewed persons. Their eyes are opened to see that the doctrines of the Bible are really true. Not all religious affections are attended with this conviction, because not produced by the spiritual illumination of the mind. Where the understanding is spiritually enlightened, the affections do not spring from so-called discoveries,

from a strong confidence of their good estate, from a strong persuasion that the Christian religion is true as the result of education, or from mere reasons and arguments. Spiritual affections spring from the beauty of Divine things; their beauty is discerned through the illumination of the mind; and this view produces the conviction of their reality. I. DIRECTLY. The judgment is directly convinced of the divinity of the gospel by the clear view of its inherent glory and excellence. Many things in the gospel are hid from the eyes of natural men which are manifest to those who have a spiritual sense and taste, and to whom the beauty and glory of the gospel are revealed. To them alone religion becomes experimental. Were it otherwise, the illiterate and the heathen could not have so thorough a conviction as to embrace the gospel and hazard every earthly thing for its possession. God gives to these some sort of evidence that His covenant is true beyond all mere probability or historical evidence, which the illiterate are capable of, and which produces the "full assurance of faith." They become witnesses to the truth through being spiritually enlightened. "Infidelity never prevailed so much in any age as in this, wherein these arguments (from ancient traditions, histories and monuments) are handled to the greatest advantage." To be a witness is to see the truth. II. INDIRECTLY. 1. This view of Divine glory removes enmities and prejudices of the heart, so that the mind is more open to the force of the reasons which are presented. 2. And, by thus removing hindrances, it positively helps reason. "It makes even the speculative notions more lively." In this way truly gracious affections are distinguished from others, "for gracious affections are evermore attended with such a conviction of the judgment." III. SOME CONCLUSIONS. 1. There is a degree of conviction which arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. This may lead to belief, but not to the spiritual conviction of truth, and the apprehension of its Divine beauty and glory. 2. There are extraordinary impressions on the imagination, which are delusive, and produce only a counterfeit faith. 3. Those beliefs of truth, which rest merely upon our supposed interest in what the gospel reveals and promises, are also vain. (*J. Edwards.*) St. Peter here confesses that our Lord is—I. (1) *The Christ*—not merely an anointed one, as priests and prophets of old might have been anointed, but that He is the One anointed of God, having received this gift in a super-eminent manner. (2) *The Son*—not one son merely out of many, but that He was so beyond all others, and in a way which singled Him out from them. Son and only-begotten, not by grace, but of the substance of the Father. (3) The Son of *the living God*—not of the gods of the heathen world, the object of Gentile idolatry, but the Son of the One *living*, and true God, who has life in Himself, who is uncreated life—the *living* life-giving principle to all mankind. (4) That He is Christ and at the same time Son of the living God—in contradistinction to the crowd, who believed Him to be the Baptist, Elias, or one of the prophets; Peter acknowledged Him to be Christ, and *the Son of the living God.* II. IN THIS CONFESSION THERE ARE INCLUDED THESE TRUTHS—(1) The nature which Christ took; the human nature, that is, which was anointed or consecrated. (2) The anointing which He received, the fulness of the Holy Spirit, imparted without measure to Christ at His conception. (3) The object of this anointing—that He might be *the Christ*, the King, the Priest, the Prophet of His people. (*W. Denton, M.A.*). This truth was not revealed to Peter—(1) By carnal men, nor indeed by men at all, since man cannot of himself make known the things of the Spirit; (2) Through mere carnal reasoning (1 Cor. ii. 11.); (3) Nor was it the revelation of Christ's flesh. It was not merely that Peter had been able to pierce beyond the veil of Christ's human nature, and through that, and by means of that, to understand the Divinity. No. It was the direct act of the Father, by which he was enlightened. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 18. **That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.** *The true Christian Church*:—I. Let us dwell on PETER'S PROFESSION OF FAITH. It is not a learned, complicated, or even detailed exposition. Full of depth. It was a rich source of happiness for Peter—"Blessed art thou." What is the Church of which the Saviour speaks? II. THE CHURCH EXERCISES ITS POWER THROUGH FAITH. The power of the Church, as regards its essential features, is expressed in the words, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." This power not conferred on Peter exclusively. Our Lord did not connect the exercise of this power with one condition, one external and human position; but with the quality of disciple of the Son of God. When any faithful voice proclaims to you the design of God in regard to your salvation, he has the authority of the voice of God Himself; a Divine sen-

tence is uttered respecting you; if you abhor your sins they will be forgiven; if not they are retained. III. BY FAITH THE CHURCH TRIUMPHS OVER ITS ENEMIES. "The gates of hell," &c. 1. What is this hell whose power shall not prevail against the Church? Its enemies—external, internal. 2. How shall it resist these enemies? Not by violence, carnal display; by faith. (*The late Pastor Verny.*) *The Church which Christ builds*:—I. A BUILDING—"My Church." Not a material building; made up of all true believers. II. THE BUILDER—"I will build," &c. The true Church is cared for by all the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Christ uses subordinate agencies in this building. 1. His wisdom. Each in right place. 2. His mercy. He despises no stone. 3. His power. In face of opposition. 4. The children of this world take little or no interest in the building of this Church. III. THE FOUNDATION. 1. It was laid at a mighty cost. 2. It is very strong. IV. IMPLIED TRIALS. 1. Marvel not at the enmity of hell. 2. Be prepared for it. 3. Be patient under it. 4. Be not cast down by it. V. THE SECURITY. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *The foundation and perpetuity of the Church*:—I. THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THE CHURCH RESTS. 1. How ancient. 2. How firm. 3. How enduring. II. THE AGENCY BY WHICH THE CHURCH IS REARED. 1. Christ appoints the means. 2. Christ provides the instruments. 3. Christ communicates the blessing. III. THE PERPETUITY WITH WHICH THE CHURCH SHALL BE HONOURED AND BLEST. 1. Notwithstanding the ravages of death. 2. Notwithstanding the power and policy of Satan. (*G. Brooks.*) *The perpetuity and safety of the Church of Christ*:—1. Presumptive evidence of the safety of the Church. It is dear to God; purchased by Christ. 2. Positive declaration of the safety of the Church. 3. Actual facts and experience. The Church in Egypt under Joseph. 1. This ministers comfort to believers. 2. If God does prepare affliction for His Church, it is for her good. (*J. G. Lorimer.*) *Christ's Church*:—I. THE EDIFICE of which the Redeemer speaks. Not any material building. It rises through successive generations. II. THE RELATION in which Jesus Christ stands to this edifice. 1. Its foundation. 2. Its Architect. (1) As Architect He selected its site. He fixed it on earth. (2) He drew the plan. (3) He prepares the materials. (4) He employs the workmen. 3. Its Proprietor. It is His Church. 4. He is the guarantee of its stability. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*) *The ultimate defeat of the enemies of the Church*:—I. GOD'S CHURCH—"My Church." 1. The foundation—"rock." 2. The superstructure. 3. The Builder—"I." II. THE CHURCH'S FOE. Paganism led the van. Fanaticism. (*T. Mortimer, B.D.*) *The promise to Peter*:—I. Peter's confession of his own faith in contrast to the report of the other disciples as to who the people said Christ was. II. Peter's confession, contrasted with the delayed speech of the other disciples. III. Peter's confession as contrasted with the less explicit confessions of others that had preceded it. IV. How the promise to this man of rock was fulfilled. What is there in your character and conduct on which the Lord can build His Church? (*John Foster*). *The permanence of Christ's Church*:—Our Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine character as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and the foundation of the Christian Church. I. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS, FOR EVERYTHING THAT DISTINGUISHES IT AS SUCH, DIRECTLY DEPENDENT UPON CHRIST AS GOD. The Church is distinguished from all other forms of organized society—1. By its peculiar origin and history. It comes up out of the past as no other form of organized society ever has or can. It takes root in the garden of man's innocency, immediately after the first sin. 2. By the character of its members. No other organization has ever been found thus constituted. 3. By its system of government and law. Governs from within. II. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, BEING THUS BUILDED UPON HIM, AS MESSIAH, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, IS ASSURED OF SECURITY AND PERPETUITY. 1. The yawning gates of death, open to receive the Church; the gates into which all human travellers pass. The disciples were dying men; enemies might say that the Church would pass away with the few fanatics who had been deceived by it. Believers have died, but the Church lives. 2. The Church's security and perpetuity beyond this earthly life. The heavenly Church. (*A. J. Kynett, D.D.*) *The visibility of the true Church*:—I. WHAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS. II. AS TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH. 1. Negatively. Not Peter. (1) He was but a man. (2) Peter was a frail mortal man. (3) Peter was a sinful man. (4) Peter determines the point himself, and expounds the prophecy in Isaiah of Christ (1 Peter ii. 4). (5) Peter, as mere Peter, could never victoriously grapple with the assaults of Satan. Some assert that Peter was the foundation in a secondary sense. (1) This secondary foundation is an absurd distinction, and contrary to the very nature of a foundation. (2) It would have to be extended to all the apostles. 2. Positively—

that Christ is the only true foundation of the Church. (1) God the Father selected no other. (2) Christ asserts no other. (3) The Holy Spirit fits no other. (4) Only Christ can withstand the gates of hell. III. THE DURATION OF THE CHURCH, IN SOME STATE OF VISIBILITY THROUGHOUT ALL AGES. 1. The Church's opposites—"the gates of hell." 2. Their great undertakings. IV. COMFORT FOR ALL TRUE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. 1. Let holy souls be comforted in this—that no weapon formed against Mount Zion shall finally prosper. 2. The Church, after all assaults and conflicts, shall be completely victorious, she shall joyfully survive her enemies, and behold their funerals. (*S. Lee, M.A.*) *The Church improved by trial:*—"Satan hath emptied his quiver, but hath not hurt the Church." By how much the more the enemies rage against her, by so much the more the true professors of piety and faith increase: not unlike the vine, that grows the more fertile by pruning; or as the palm, that rises the more erect after weights and pressures; and although in time of trouble like some plants that shut up their flowers upon a storm, yet afterward display their lively and lovely colours more orientlyto the face of the shining sun. (*Ibid.*) *The Church upon the Rock:*—I. TO WHAT the Saviour refers as to the foundation of His Church. II. THAT THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH IS A TRUTH—"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." 1. A truth in itself indestructible. 2. A truth never to be invalidated. 3. A living truth. 4. A uniting truth—"My Church." (*G. S. Green, D.D.*) *The Church's security:*—Christ assures us here of the constancy of the assaults which Satan will make upon the Church and its members. He does not promise the removal of trial and tribulation, assault and temptation, but Divine strength by which to overcome evil. 1. That the truth which Peter has here confessed shall never be lost to the great body of His faithful ones; that the Church shall never, as a whole, fall from the faith, or lose its hold of the truth. 2. That however corrupt many of the members of the Church shall be, it shall never be wholly depraved, or fall utterly from that sanctity which it has through union with Him. 3. That human councils, and man's devices, and Satan's assaults upon the Church, shall never prevail; for, since it is of God, it cannot come to naught. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *My Church:*—Christ's Church is (1) A community of free men. There are no slaves in it, and no criminals; no strangers and foreigners. (2) A community gathered together for a public purpose. (3) Gathered together by a call. It is divinely called out from among the mass of those who are determined to be slaves or criminals, or who are wilfully willing to remain foreigners and strangers to Christ and Christianity. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) "*I will build my Church*":—Here Christ represents the Church as an edifice, of which He is the Architect and the Builder. The kind of edifice is not specified. And indeed it could not well be, at least exhaustively. It is a house. It is a temple. But it is a city too, gathered around the central temple, and into which, indeed, the temple has expanded. It is Zion. It is Jerusalem. It is the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem. It is a place of perfect security. It is a fortress, standing high upon a rock. It is a safe city of refuge. Its "defence is the munition of rocks," or of what is far better and stronger than rocks. (*Ibid.*) *The Church of Christ:*—1. The Architect. 2. The Building. 3. The Foundation. 4. The materials. 5. Its permanence. (*Anon.*) *Castle of Banias suggesting the "rock" figure:*—A little way to the left of the village there stands the majestic ruin of the Castle of Banias, built on the rocky crest of a projecting spur of Hermon, which rises a thousand feet above the village, and it is itself several hundred feet higher. Is it possible to doubt that the eye of the Great Master and His disciples was turned, while He spoke, to that castle upon its rocky base, filling up the whole view eastward, and that he doubled the impression of His sayings, as He so often did, by surrounding them with the framework and casting on them the colouring of a natural picture? (*A. Thomson.*) *The Church a building:*—The Church of Christ is not a material building, a temple made with hands, of brick, or wood, or stone, or marble. It is no particular visible church on earth; it is made up of all true believers in Christ, of every name and rank and people and tongue. All visible churches on earth are its servants and handmaidens; they are the scaffolding behind which the grand building is going on, the husk under which the living kernel grows. The Temple of Solomon in all its glory was mean and contemptible in comparison with this Church, which is built upon a Rock; small and despicable though it may be in this world, it is precious and honourable in the sight of God. Statesmen, rulers, kings, and all the powers of hell, may scheme and plan against it; they are only the axes and saws in God's hands, in the erection of Christ's spiritual temple, the gathering in of living

stones into the one true Church. (*Bishop J. C. Ryle.*) *The foundation of the Church*:—I. THE CHURCH IS BUILT ON CHRIST. It is built on Jesus Christ, and not upon any idea or representation of Him. 2. It is built upon the historical Christ. 3. But if it is built on the historical Christ, then it must be built upon the theological Christ—the Christ as represented in the doctrines of the Church. II. THE CHURCH IS BUILT UPON CHRIST AS THE GOD-MAN. 1. It is built upon the God-man. 2. It is built upon the God-man, and not upon the man-God. 3. It is built upon the God-man, and not upon any theory. III. The Church is built upon Jesus Christ as the God-man SLAIN. 1. To be the foundation of the Church it was necessary that He should be slain. 2. The idea of the God-man slain seems to be the foundation of all the thoughts of God. 3. And as the "Lamb slain" was the centre of the Divine thoughts before the creation of the world, so will He become the centre of the myriad thoughts of redeemed humanity after the creation shall have been destroyed. 4. Make sure of your foundation. Build a Church (1) not on creeds; (2) but on the Bible. (*J. C. Jones.*) *Christianity indestructible*:—There is a picture frontispiece in Wycliffe's Bible which, to my mind, is very significant, very prophetic. There is a fire burning and spreading rather rapidly, representing Christianity; and around the spreading fire are congregated a considerable number of significant and most important individuals, all endeavouring to devise methods whereby they can put the fire out. Among the number, I see there one gentleman with horns and a tail, I suppose representing his satanic majesty; and another is the Pope of Rome, with a few red-coated cardinals; Mahomet, I believe, has a representative there too, and there is another representative of infidelity; and they are all devising some means, suggesting some method whereby to extinguish the fire, and after considerable cogitation one of them suggests that they should all make a desperate effort to blow on the fire till they blow it out. The resolution is adopted, and there they are with swollen cheeks and extended lips, blowing upon the fire with all their might, but instead of blowing it out, they are blowing it up, and they blow themselves out of breath before they blow the fire out. It is an unquenchable flame, and no human power can extinguish it. (*Richard Roberts.*)

Ver. 19. **And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.** *The keys*:—1. The kingdom of heaven does not mean heaven. 2. The kingdom of heaven does not mean the Church. It indicates power: I. ADMINISTRATIVE. II. DIDACTIC. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) "*I will give unto thee the keys*":—The Saviour had spoken of an edifice in which Peter was to be a conspicuous foundation-stone. The edifice was a temple. The scene was then varied a little; and the edifice was a city. The scene was varied again; the city is a kingdom. It is the kingdom of heaven. All the representations are significant. They are all appropriate aspects, though varied, of the grand reality. Our Lord promises to Peter the *keys of the kingdom of heaven*. As the kingdom is a city, keys are needed for the gates. The city is a fortified place, a castle, the palatial residence of the Great King. A steward of the house is required, a major-domo, one who may take charge not only of the keys of the gates, but of the keys of the treasure-house too, and of all the storerooms of the establishment. Our Saviour intimates to Peter that he would be constituted such a steward of the house of God. He was to have great power and authority as the prime minister of the King. Acting according to the commands of his Sovereign, he would have authority to open the gates or to shut them; to open the storehouses or to close them. His power would be, relatively to the King, administrative only. And in discharge of the functions of his high office he would at once be instructed from above by the Divine Spirit, and be assisted from around by other high officials—the other apostles. He and they unitedly would constitute the King's ministry. He would be premier. Hence it was that on the Day of Pentecost he took the lead and opened the gates of the kingdom to the Jews. Hence too, when he was in Joppa, he was instructed by his Lord to open the gates of the kingdom to the Gentiles; and he did it. Hence also, in all the lists of the apostles, Peter is invariably mentioned *first*. He has, however, no successor in his premiership, just as he had no successor as a Foundation-Stone. The Foundation-Stone lasts for ever. So do all the living stones. They live for ever. And so the ministry of the apostles continues for ever. The laws of the King are communicated to us for ever through the ministry of his apostolic ministers. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The keys of the kingdom*:—Every Jewish scribe, when fully trained and authorized to teach his brethren, received from his tutors and superiors

a key, to symbolize the knowledge of the Divine will which he possessed, and was about to dedicate to the service of his brethren; many of them either carried a key at their girdle, or had it woven into their robe, as an open sign of the profession to which they had been set apart. When, therefore, Christ put "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" into the hands of His disciples, they would understand that they were to become *scribes* in His kingdom; teachers of the truth, expounders of the law they had learned from Him; witnesses and exemplars of the life they had seen Him live. These keys we have authority to use too—keys of righteousness and charity, *i.e.*, keys of kindness and good living, as well as keys of wisdom and knowledge. By our daily conduct, and by the spirit of our whole conduct, no less than by our words, we are saying to our fellows, "*This*, so far as we understand Him, is how Christ would have men live; you have only to live *so*, and *you* will be in His kingdom, under His rule and benediction." By our good words, and our good works, we are to constitute ourselves door-keepers in the House of the Lord, and to open the doors to all who would enter in. It is, then, no merely personal salvation, no merely future and distant heaven, no merely selfish and ignoble task, for which we look and to which we are summoned. We are looking for the heaven of being now and always in tune with the will of God, and for a salvation which embraces the whole nature of man, and extends to every race and kindred and tribe. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *Binding and loosing*:—In the language of the Jewish schools, to "bind" and to "loose," meant to prohibit and to permit, to determine what was wrong and must not be done, and what was right and ought to be done. Rabbi Shammai, for instance, *bound* all heathen learning, *i.e.*, he forbade his disciples to acquire it—declared what we should call "classical studies" to be wrong; while Rabbi Hillel *loosed* these studies—declared them to be right, that is, and encouraged his disciples to take them up. In addressing this promise to His first disciples, therefore, Christ meant to say that, humble and unlearned as they were, yet, in virtue of the new spiritual life and insight which He had conferred upon them, they should become "masters of sentences," and their decisions as to what was right and what wrong, should carry no less authority than they had once attached to the decisions of their rabbis and scribes. This promise also extends to us. We are authorized to make those practical applications of truth to the conditions and needs of the hour, by which the moral life and tone of men will be raised and purified. And we have made use of this power in the following, among other ways: 1. Abolishing slavery. 2. Raising the status of woman. 3. Securing the education of children. 4. Advancing the cause of temperance, thrift, industry. 5. Promoting the growth of freedom, and the fraternity of men and nations. In these and similar ways, the general teaching of Christ has been applied to the social and moral conditions of men, bringing out new bearings of familiar principles on human conduct and duty. (*Ibid.*) *Church discipline*:—Once from the pulpit, at an ordination of elders, the late Rev. M. M'Cheyne made the following declaration. "When I first entered upon the work of the ministry among you, I was exceedingly ignorant of the vast importance of church discipline. I thought that my great, and almost only, work was to pray and preach. I saw your souls to be so precious, and the time so short, that I devoted all my time and care and strength to labour in word and doctrine. When cases of discipline were brought before me and the elders, I regarded them with something like abhorrence. It was a duty I shrank from; and I may truly say it nearly drove me from the work of the ministry among you altogether. But it pleased God, who teaches His servants in another way than man teaches, to bless some of the cases of discipline to the manifest and undeniable conversion of the souls of those under our care; and from that hour a new light broke in upon my mind, and I saw that if preaching be an ordinance of Christ, so is church discipline. I now feel very deeply persuaded that both are of God; that two keys are committed to us by Christ—the one the key of doctrine, by means of which we unlock the treasures of the Bible: the other the key of discipline, by which we open or shut the way to the sealing ordinances of the faith. Both are Christ's gift, and neither is to be resigned without sin." *The opening and shutting power of the Christian life*:—Every praying man and every praying woman on the globe that lives in the intelligent knowledge of Christ, and employs the spirit and truth of Christ intelligently, just as much as councils, and synods, and conventions, and churches, has this power of the keys. God gives it to every one that desires to have the living nature of Christ in him. Ah! do you not suppose there have been thousands of men, who have gone down through life arrogating this claim, that never opened the door of heaven to one single soul? And

yet there have been hundreds of poor bed-ridden Christians whose key was bright with perpetual using, and who, by faith, and example, and testimony, and clarity of teaching, did bind iniquity in the world, by the golden cords of truth, and did set loose, by the same truth, those that were bound, giving them power of spiritual insight, giving them emancipation, and bringing them into the large light and liberty of the children of God. Emancipators of the soul they were—humble, uncrowned, uncanonical, unordained, God-sanctified souls. They know Christ, and loved Him, and poured out His spirit upon men. And every man that has that spirit has God's keys in his hands, and has authority to bind and loose—to bind lies and all iniquity, and to set loose all those that suffer oppression by reason of spiritual despotism. They go forth effulgent messengers of God's light and the emancipation that goes with it. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The responsibility of the key-power*:—It is no mean prerogative; it is past all estimation, indeed, for honour and for dignity, to have the power to open heaven to any soul. If God were to give you the power to go forth, and, touching the earth, to open its fruitful bosom, so that wherever you pressed your hand or your foot, out there should pour treasures of grain and treasures of fruit; if God were to give you that power which in ages gone by was attributed to Ceres, when it was supposed that she came to earth and taught men the arts of agriculture—what a power that would be. If God had given you power to touch the hidden treasures of metal; to know where iron lies buried; to know where all the veins of gold and silver are; to open up all the treasures beneath the surface of the earth, men would have supposed that that was a great and sovereign endowment—and it would have been great and sovereign in a lower sphere. But how much more noble is it that God has given men the power to develop, not gold and silver that perish, but riches that never fade, that moth and rust never corrupt, and that thieves do not break through to steal—eternal treasures—the immortal spirits of men. But this is the case. God has given authority to every man that lives in the higher realm of truth, to open the eternal realm to those around about him, as an inspired apostle. For you are a lineal successor of the apostle, every one of you that does the apostle's work. And God sends every man that goes forth to carry the Spirit of God to his fellow-men. And it is no small prerogative, no small honour, but a most responsible trust, to have committed to you the keys of life and death; to carry in yourself those influences that shall be a savour of life to some, and a savour of death to others—that shall be a buttress and a wall of defence to some, and a stumbling-stone and rock of offence and destruction to others. How solemn it is that God gives men to be parents in this life, to rear up congregations out of their own loins, to sit in the church of the family, and makes fathers and mothers to be apostles, and gives to them keys, saying, "What you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." It is even so. You cannot free yourself from the obligation. You cannot help it. You are the key-keeper for your children. You are the door-keeper for your own offspring. Take heed, then, how you carry yourselves as parents in your own household—how you administer God's Word. It depends much upon you whether, at last, your children shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, or whether they shall rise to everlasting shame and contempt. (*Ibid.*) *Inspiration carries the keys*:—When you are inspired you have the keys. In your sublimest moods, when earth fades into a fleck hardly to be seen, and heaven crowds itself in noble fellowship upon your soul, the whole man is lifted up in an ecstasy Divine. In that hour the church holds the keys. You do not hold the keys because of hereditary descent, or ecclesiastical relationship, or mechanical contrivance, or superior patronage—you hold the keys only so long as you realize the inspiration. And no man can take those keys from you; everywhere the inspired man keeps the keys—in merchandise, in statesmanship, in philosophy, in adventure, in religious thinking, in Christian civilization, you cannot keep down the inspired man. (*Dr. Parker.*)

Vers. 21, 23.—**From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer.**—*Christ foretelling His death*:—I. Let us observe THE STATE OF MIND WITH WHICH CHRIST LOOKED FORWARD TO HIS APPROACHING SUFFERINGS. Jesus was not ignorant of the serious sufferings which were coming upon Him. It is no small part of our happiness that future calamity is partly hidden. 1. A state of unshaken constancy. We must be firm in the way of duty, having counted the cost. 2. The principle by which He was supported—faith. "For we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." II. WHAT WAS HIS CONDUCT, IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, TOWARDS HIS

DISCIPLES? 1. His conduct towards them showed great compassion for their infirmities. 2. His displeasure on account of the earthly mind which the apostles betrayed. Learn: 1. How insufficient is our own wisdom or strength to preserve us in the ways of godliness. 2. How secure are they who trust entirely in the power and grace of the Lord Jesus. (*J. Jowett.*) *A recommendation of readiness for suffering*:—I. PETER'S UNWILLINGNESS TO MEET GOD'S WILL IN A COURSE OF SUFFERING, EVINCED BY HIS REBUKE OF CHRIST. 1. There was intimacy—"Then Peter took him." 2. There was disappointment. Peter was disappointed that his Lord should not have the glory he expected. 3. There was ignorance. Peter ought to have known the Scriptures were full of Christ's sufferings. 4. There was presumption. II. CHRIST'S WILLINGNESS TO FULFIL ALL GOD'S PLEASURE, EVINCED IN HIS REBUKE OF PETER. 1. The indignation of our Lord. 2. He exposed the carnality of his views. 3. Christ's love for sinners was persevering. (*A. T. Burroughs.*) *The suffering Saviour*:—I. A SUFFERING SAVIOUR. 1. The suffering was not only great, but peculiar. 2. And all this the text says was *necessary*. The word "must" is prefixed to all these clauses. We may interpret the word in three ways. (1) There is the "must" of destiny—what is to be shall be, it is vain to fight against it. (2) There is the "must" of prediction. (3) There is the "must" of propriety and suitableness—moral fitness, for atonement trembles in the balance—"Without shedding of blood," &c. 3. It is a very peculiar feature of the Saviour's suffering that He had the *foreknowledge* of it in every detail. In this respect He stands alone among the heroes of faith. They had no foresight of the time, place, or circumstances of their sufferings. Our Lord alone lived His life under the shadow of the cross. The majesty of the character which could endure the weight of so terrible a prospect, remain calm, self-forgetting, &c., and even say in the fore-view of death by crucifixion: "I have a baptism," &c. II. THE REPUGNANCE OF HUMAN NATURE TO PAIN AND DEATH. Human nature shrinks for itself from the touch of pain, and doubly for its loved ones. The words do not imply any want of love or reverence—it was their very motive. Love and reverence spoke; but ignorance and presumption spoke too. Human nature shrinks with special sensitiveness, till it is taught of God, from the idea of a suffering Saviour. The revelation of atonement by sacrifice was kept veiled from Peter. A veil is upon the heart still of multitudes—they see not why a Father should not forgive without the intervention of a Mediator, &c. III. THE REPLY OF JESUS TO THE REBUKE OF HIS SERVANT. This shows the Saviour feeling this repugnance to suffering as a severe temptation, repelling the suggestion of the self-sparing as a cruel aggravation of His great life trial, and making the acceptance of suffering the very point of difference between the carnal mind and the spiritual. We have to accept Christ's suffering, and we have to accept our own. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *St. Peter's rebuke of Christ*:—I. HOW SERIOUS WAS THE APOSTLE'S OFFENCE. In reference to religion the seeming generosity of an error is no excuse for it. II. THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE APOSTLE'S ERROR AND SIN. 1. He had misunderstood some part of what he had heard. St. Peter should have looked at the fact of Christ's suffering in the light of His previous communications. 2. There was a second part of what Jesus had said which the apostle ignored altogether. He had said that He would rise from the dead on the third day. 3. The third cause of St. Peter's error was his assuming that his own ideas of what was best must needs be true, or at least were actually true. St. Peter was in reality desiring the worst thing possible; our redemption could not have been accomplished without the cross. III. SIMILAR MISTAKES OCCUR WITH OURSELVES. 1. In reference to the dispensations belonging to our personal history and fortunes. How often a part is misunderstood and left out. In the gloom of trial we overlook the resurrection. 2. In reference to the government of the world and the course of providence generally. 3. In reference to the claims of Divine revelation generally, and especially the claims of Jesus the Christ as the sum and centre of it. Learn: 1. Be resolute in all humbleness when you think of God's ways. 2. Loyalty to the personal CHRIST. 3. Accept Christ's word as He gives it. (*W. S. Chapman, M.A.*) *The temptation arising from human love*:—How are we to explain the severity of our Lord's rebuke? I. WHEN IT WAS THIS REBUKE WAS GIVEN. Our Lord had just entered upon the delicate task of Teacher, the bringing of the minds of His disciples into familiarity with the deeper things in His life and work. In passing from ignorance to knowledge there must be a little contention. This the crucial time—"I must speak of My sufferings." He enters upon the process. St. Peter spoils it. His rashness would not let him learn. Christian progress meets hindrances from two sources: (1) From the wickedness of the wicked; (2)

from the immature goodness of the good. II. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS VERY OFTEN HINDERED BY THAT WHICH IT HAS ITSELF PRODUCED. In society to-day there is a softness, a consideration for ease of life, which has grown up under Christianity, and which is its product. In old days life was hard, there was endurance and great effort. Passive duties have their opportunity in these days. We talk of "Peace on earth." Our idea of peace is quietude. But war is often essential to peace; peace means labour—the sword turned into the ploughshare—that is God's idea of peace. Religious life may become sentimental. Our Lord's rebuke of Peter was severe because Peter's plea was affection throwing itself across the path of duty. Have you never felt how terrible it is to have pleading affection try to hinder some great sacrifice? How much harder that form of opposition than any other. Satan now tries to hinder Christ through the blind love of Peter. Is not the Church of Christ often hindered now by pleadings of love, by those who say: "This be far from thee. Save thyself." It exhibits a friendly consideration for our happiness; save thy money, health, effects. (*R. Thomas.*) *The temptations of love to be rejected:*—If the Pilgrim Fathers had yielded to home sickness and not let that vessel return empty, though she lay so long in the offing, tempting their return, there might have been an America, but it would not have been this America. If Livingstone had listened to the voices of those who thought him mad, Africa to-day would have been still a *terra incognita*. If prudence had prevailed over zeal seventy years ago, there would have been no foreign missions afoot to-day. But all these men who went to do the pioneer work had mothers and sisters and brothers tugging at their heart-strings, and tempting them not to go. And it is ever so. It is not always as in the case of the Rev. Dr. Norman M'Leod, whom I once heard relate how his son had just gone into the ministry, and had accepted a very poor church in the highlands of Scotland, refusing several splendid offers which would have made him wealthy. "But," said Dr. M'Leod, "I thank God for the lad; I would rather see him where he is with his £150 a year, than in the palace with £10,000 a year." It is very hard to say it; but, oh, it is necessary—be on your guard against the temptations of your friends, of your relatives, of your lovers, whose affection is precious to you. Remember that "Satan now is wiser than of yore, and tempts by making rich—not making poor." Remember, specially, our Redeemer's own words, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for My sake, the same shall save it." (*Ibid.*) *Different Effects of Afflictions:*—Afflictions are unavoidable. To be a man, as a man to live upon earth, to stand in connection with other men, and yet to be out of reach of afflictions, that is absolutely impossible. How differently did our Lord think of them from his weak, still worldly-minded disciple, Peter! 1. The dissipated and thoughtless man looks upon the afflictions that befall him and others as the effects of chance, as inevitable misfortunes. 2. The proud man entertains such an opinion of himself, that he thinks no afflictions ought to befall him. 3. The superstitious man looks on all afflictions as punishments of sin. 4. The moralist regards them as necessary results of the original constitution of things. 5. The Christian sees them as the visitations of a wise and benign providence. (*Zollikofer.*) "*Peter took Him.*"—Peter's heart indeed was agitated. Strange surgings swelled within him at the mention of the gloomy ideas which had been mooted. The spray of these surgings lashed upon the picture which his imagination had been busily drawing. That picture was still fresh and madid. It was overlaid with brilliant colouring, which exhibited to the good man's fancy a bewitching minglement of glories, material and spiritual. As the broken surgings dashed upon it, there was *anguish* in the painter's spirit. There was *anger* too. He was displeased. He was chagrined. He said impetuously, and unreflectingly, within himself: What! This will never do. It must not be! (*J. Morrison, D.D.*) "*Began to rebuke Him:*"—He *began* impulsively, vehemently, inconsiderately, as was too often his wont. He *began*, but the gracious Lord rose up in majesty and interrupted him, not allowing him to proceed far in the improper freedom he was using, and the improper feeling he was nursing. (*Ibid.*) "*Satan:*"—Christ looked for the moment through Peter, and saw behind him His old enemy, cunningly making use of the prejudices and impulsive honesty of the undeveloped apostle. It was the old temptation back again, that was now presented through Peter—the temptation to avoid suffering, persecution, bitter hate, scorn and murder; and instead, to erect a secular throne that would in pomp surmount all other thrones upon the earth. The Saviour's spirit was roused when He met His old foe in such circumstances, looking from behind the battlements of the loving but disconcerted heart of the chief of

the apostles. Hence He spoke decidedly and strongly. (*Ibid.*) "*Satan*:"—Good men often do the devil's work, though they know it not. (*R. Baxter.*) I. PETER'S CONDUCT. Characterized by. 1. Arrogant presumption. 2. Ignorance of the end of Christ's sufferings. 3. Mistimed sympathy. II. CHRIST'S REBUKE. Prompt, severe, instructive. (*W. H. Booth.*) *The savour of earthliness*:—1. Some make reason the standard. 2. The life and conversation of too many nominal disciples, as well as their errors in belief, show their savour of earthliness. (*J. Gaston.*) *Noble purposes to be encouraged*:—When your boy says to you suddenly some day, "Father, I think I shall be a missionary and go abroad, and preach to the heathen," don't you put your hand upon the lad's ambition, and put it down; don't throw any impediment in his way. Hear him on another occasion, encourage him to think still further of the scheme; and though the announcement of the lad's idea tear your very heart-strings, because you have said, This son shall comfort me in my old age and feebleness, yet give him time to think about it, and show him the whole case as far as it reveals itself to your own mind, and rather stimulate than discourage him when his mind is set in a philanthropic and noble direction. And so when your husband proposes to give some large sum to this good institution or that, don't tell him that the half of it will do, because he will probably believe you,—it is so easy to go down, and so difficult to get up. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The failure of high spiritual mood*:—What a different figure is Peter now from that which he presented a few verses before. "Jesus said to him," we read in the seventeenth verse, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona." At that moment Simon was lifted above the sons of men. He was the mountain peak that caught the first glance of the morning. And there he stood, king of men, first of disciples, most honoured of the sons of earth; for through him the Father had revealed the Son. What a figure does he present in the twenty-third verse? "Get thee behind Me, Satan." The same man, but not the same character. The mountain is crushed, the great mountain become a plain, become a valley; the chief of the sons of men called a devil and ordered off behind. These are the experiences of some of us. We are to-day the most blessed among men, we seem to see almost into heaven. To-morrow we shall go and say some blundering thing, and we shall be found among the lowest and the vulgarest of our kind. One hour we shall speak music, and another hour our voice shall be hoarse, because we are saying offensive things against God and against man. Do not let us condemn one another because of these changes in our experience. The longer I live the more I feel this, how difficult it is to keep up a continuity of the highest spiritual life. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 24. **If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.**—*Self-denial*:—I. WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DENIAL? It may be said to be in renouncing whatever comes in competition with the love and service of Christ, your turning from things lawful when they become occasions of spiritual injury either to ourselves or others. Self-denial proceeds on high consideration. 1. Love to Christ, which involves obedience to His word. 2. Living not unto ourselves but unto God and for the welfare of others. These two must be combined. It is not self-denial to give our goods to feed the poor; but apart from the principle of love it is not self-denial. Nor is it self-denial for a man to refuse temporal honours for which God has qualified him, and which are given in a providential way. No self-denial in Joseph refusing to be governor over Egypt. Nor is it self-denial to reject a lawful use of God's creatures, or to deprive himself of that necessary to health. II. How SELF-DENIAL IS EXHIBITED. It is the offspring of faith in Christ. 1. It shows itself in the lowest forms; first, in denying sin, things which the world allows, but which the Word of God condemns. 2. In denying what may be called righteous self. "Count all loss for Christ." 3. In things lawful but not expedient on account of their influence on others. 4. In being true to the Word of God. 5. In things agreeable but questionable. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) *The Cross and the Crown*:—It is a proof of the truth and Divine origin of our religion that it gives such a distinct notice of the difficulties which its followers will have to encounter. What other religion could *afford* to speak thus. 1. It is no wonder that Christ laid down self-denial as requisite in His followers, as He emptied Himself, and we cannot in His whole life detect a point where we can see self. 2. The selfishness of one man is not the selfishness of another; every one knows the individualities of his own character. There is one man whose self lies in his intellect. Another man's self is pleasure. Another man's self takes one aspect of religion, he wants to be saved

in a way he has marked out. 3. The believer takes up *his* cross, not another person's. 4. He is to take it up, not to go out of his way to seek it. 5. This he is to do by cheerful act, not waiting for compulsion. "Dragged crosses are very heavy, but carried crosses are very light." 6. What is the cross? not some great thing to come by-and-by. There is some cross to-day, another to-morrow—"daily." The cross is a trial which has something humiliating in it, and which is painful to the old nature. 6. We must follow Christ, for what is it worth to "deny one's self," or to take up a "cross," if it be not done with an express intention towards Christ? (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Self-denial*:—Christianity can never be made popular. It always calls for self-denial and self-sacrifice (Gal. v. 24). I. THERE ARE THINGS EASY IN RELIGION—those in which the recipients are passive. 1. Redemption has been fully accomplished for us by the Saviour. 2. Christ is offered to all as the Saviour from sin. 3. The acceptance of Christ is made a matter of choice. II. THINGS THAT ARE HARD. 1. The renunciation of the world and worldly delights. 2. Self-denial. We must renounce our own wisdom, will, mind, pleasure, &c. 3. Self-sacrifice. Even life itself when duty demands. III. BUT HARD THINGS ARE MADE EASY. 1. When we look at their nature and duration (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18). 2. When we rely upon God's promise and accept His strengthening grace (Deut. xxxiii. 25; 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10; Phil. iv. 13). 3. When we fully accept self-denial and cross-bearing as the rule of our life (Matt. xi. 28–30). 4. When we obtain Divine comfort and Christian consolation (2 Cor. i. 4, 5). IV. INFERENCES: 1. Let us, in the active duties of religion, "Work out," &c. 2. Let us seek out the things which require of us self-denial. This will help us in advance to give them up cheerfully and readily. 3. Let us always look to Jesus and consider His example (Heb. xii. 1–3). (*L. O. Thompson.*) *Self-denial*:—That it is the duty of all that would be Christ's disciples to deny themselves. I. THIS DOCTRINE IN GENERAL. The extent of this duty. 1. For the object—a man's own self; it is a bundle of idols. It seems contrary to reason to deny self, since nature teaches man to love himself; grace doth not disallow it. Therefore (1) you must know when respects to self are culpable. There is a lawful self-love. The self we are to deny stands in opposition to God. Self is sinfully respected when dues are paid to the creature which only belong to God. These are four:—1. As God is the First Cause He would keep up the respect of the world to His majesty by dependence and trust. 2. As God is the chiefest good, so He must have the highest esteem. 3. As God is the highest Lord, it is His peculiar prerogative to give laws to the creature. Self is not to interpose and give laws to us. 4. As God is the last end of our beings and actions, the supreme cause is to be the utmost end (Prov. xvi. 4). 2. The subject. See the extent of the duty; it reaches all sorts of men—"If any man," &c. No calling, sex, age, duty, condition of life, is excluded. All men are to practise it; in all things; always; with all our heart. (1) We cannot else be conformed to our great Master; Jesus Christ came from heaven on purpose to teach us the lesson of self-denial. (2) It is practised by all the fellows in the same school. Christ set the copy, and all the saints have written after it. (3) Jesus Christ may justly require it; all the idols of the world expect it from their votaries. (4) Because self is the greatest enemy both to God and man. (5) Because those that are Christ's disciples are not their own men (Rom. xiv. 6). (6) Because it is the most gainful project in the world. Self-denial is the true way of self-advancing. (7) Because otherwise a man can be nothing in religion, neither do, nor suffer, therefore we must resolve either to deny self or Christ. (8) Self-denial is a special part of faith. 3. The signs of self-denial. (1) Exclusive. It is a sign that self is exalted. (1) When a man did never set himself to thwart his own desires. (2) By an impatiency in our natures when we are crossed by others. (3) When a man is loth to be a loser by religion. (4) When the heart is grieved at the good of others. (5) When men care not how it goeth with the public so they may promote their private interest. 2. Inclusive signs of self-denial. (1) When a man is swayed by reasons of conscience rather than by reasons of interest, when he is content to be anything so he may be sensible to God's glory. (2) By an humble submission to God's will. It is a great conquest over ourselves when we conquer our will. (3) When a man is vile in his own eyes, and reflects with indignation upon his own sins. 4. The means of self-denial, whereby it may be made more easy. (1) Lessen your esteem for earthly things. (2) Seek self in God, this is an innocent diversion. When we cannot weaken the affection let us change the object. (3) Resolve upon the worst to please God, though it be with the displeasure of self and the world. (4) Take heed of confining thy welfare to outward means, as if thou couldest not be happy

without the creature. (5) Often act faith, and look within the veil. Send thy thoughts as messengers into the Land of Promise. (6) In all debates between conscience and interest observe God's special providence to thyself. (7) Consider the right God has in all that is thine. If you would deny self:—(1) Every one must observe the temper and particular constitution of his own soul. (2) Many may deny themselves in purpose that yet fail when they come to act. (3) There is nothing in religion that cannot deny pleasure and delicacy of life. (4) We must deny ourselves in desire as well as in enjoyments. (5) Vainglory is as sordid a piece of self, and as much to be denied, as riches and worldly greatness. (6) We must deny ourselves, not only in case of temptation to direct sin, but also for the general advantage of a holy life. (7) In self-denial regard must be had to the seasons wherein we live—(1) Times of judgment; (2) not to put stumbling-blocks in the way of new converts; (3) in prosperous times. II. THE KINDS OF SELF-DENIAL. Self must be denied so far, as 'tis opposite to God, or put in the place of God. And therefore we may judge of the kinds of self-denial, according to the distinct privileges of the Godhead. 1. As God is the First Cause, upon whom all things depend in their being and operation, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-dependence. 2. God is the chiefest good, and therefore to be valued above all beings, interests, and concernments in the world, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-love. 3. God is (and He alone) the highest Lord, and most absolute Sovereign, who swayeth all things by His laws and providence, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-will, by a willing and full obedience to His laws, and by an absolute subjection to the dominion of His providence; the one is holiness, and the other is patience. The one relateth to His governing, the other to His disposing, will. 4. God is the last end, in which all things do at length terminate, and so we are to deny self, that is, self-seeking. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christian discipleship*:—I. IN RELIGION, CHRIST IS THE SUPREME LEADER OF MEN. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN FOLLOWING CHRIST? It is to—1. Think the thoughts of Christ. 2. To feel the feeling of Christ. 3. To work out the will of Christ. III. THE CONDITIONS OF PERFECT DISCIPLESHIP. 1. Voluntariness. 2. Renunciation of the old life of sin and self. 3. Entire submission to Christ in all things. 4. Perseverance. (*John Millar.*) *The call to follow Christ*:—I. HOW DOES CHRIST CALL US? 1. By the voice of conscience. 2. By sickness. 3. By the death of friends. 4. By His Word. 5. By His ordinances, ministers, &c. And thus He is now speaking to us. Be not deaf to these calls. III. THE CHARACTER REQUIRED OF THOSE WHO HAVE MADE UP THEIR MINDS TO FOLLOW CHRIST. They must be self-denying, and, if need be, a suffering people (Titus ii. 11, 12). Here we have an unerring standard to try ourselves by. (*J. D. Graves.*) *Self-denial not expected by carnal fancy*:—Carnal fancy imagineth a path strewed with lilies and roses; we are too tender-footed to think of briars and thorns. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The wide meaning of the word "self"*:—A capacious word, that doth not only involve our persons, but whatever is ours, so far as it standeth in opposition to God, or cometh in competition with Him. A man and all his lusts, a man and all his relations; a man and all his interests; life, and all the appendages of life, is one aggregate thing which in Scripture is called self. In short, whatsoever is of himself, in himself, belonging to himself, as a corrupt, or carnal, man; all that is to be denied. And indeed, every man hath many a self within himself; his lusts are himself; his life is himself; his name is himself; his wealth, liberty, ease, favour, lands, father, mother, and all relations, they are comprised within the term of self (Luke xiv. 26). (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial not partial*:—As Saul slew some of the cattle, but spared the fat, and Agag. Many can deny themselves in many things, but they are loth to give up all to God, without bounds and reservations. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial to be expected on the road to heaven*:—If a man were told that his way to such a place is encumbered with briars and thorns, and that he must ride through many dirty lanes, and must look for scratching brambles, and many miry places; now when he seeth nothing but a green and pleasant path, he would think he had mistaken and lost his way: so, when you are told your way to heaven is a strait way, and that religion will put you upon self-denial of your pleasure, profit, and carnal desires; and yet you never wrestled with your lusts, nor quitted anything for Christ; and meet with nothing but pleasure, profit, and delight in the profession of religion, you may well think that you are mistaken in the way; and it is a great sign you are yet to seek in the duty, which Christ's scholars must practise. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial the A B C of religion*:—We shall never digest the inconveniences of a spiritual life, till we resolve upon it. We must make over our interests in our lives, and whatever is dear to us, reckon the charges (Luke xiv. 26). A builder spends

cheerfully, as long as his charges are within his allowance, but when that's exceeded, and he goes beyond what he hath reckoned upon, then every penny is disbursed with grudging. Most resolve upon little or no trouble in religion, and from thence it comes to pass, that when they are crossed, they prove faint-hearted. Therefore, put your life in your hand, and resolve to follow Christ, wheresoever He goeth. (*Ibid.*) *Seek glory in God*:—Seek honour in God. Do but change vainglory for eternal glory. That's a lawful seeking of self, when we seek it in God (John v. 44). (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial not temporary*:—We may hang the head for a day like a bulrush. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial regulated by service rather than by pleasure*:—As a traveller, when two ways are proposed to him, one pleasant, the other very craggy and dangerous, he doth not look which way is most pleasant, but which way conduceth to his journey's end: so a child of God doth not look to what's most grateful to the flesh, but how he may do most work and service, and glorify God upon earth. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial must not be constrained by providence*:—Not as a mariner, in a storm, casts away his goods by force, but as a bride leaves her father's house (Psa. xlv. 10). It must be out of a principle of grace, and out of love to Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial must not be selfish*:—The devil disguiseth himself into all forms and shapes. As Jacob put on Esau's clothes, that he might appear rough and hairy, and so get the blessing; so, many seem to deny themselves of the comforts of life, but it is but for their own praise. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial more possible in Christ than in Christians*:—They that caress themselves in all the delights of the world, seem to profess another master than Christ. We are of a base condition, but two or three degrees distant from dust and nothing. The sun can go back ten degrees. Christ, the Lord of Glory, might go back ten degrees, but we have not so much to lose. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial seen most in the best Christians*:—They that are the best scholars in this school, most abhor self-conceit and self-seeking. As the loaden boughs hang the head, and bend downward, so do the children of God, that have been most fruitful in the Christian course; as the sun, the higher it is, doth cast the least shadows. So for self-seeking. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial richer for love than for lust*:—Many a covetous man doth shame many a godly man. Religion is a better thing. Shall lust do more with them, than the love of Christ with thee? (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial consistent in a follower of Christ*:—When men can remit nothing of their vanity and luxury, they make Christianity to be but a notion, and an empty pretence; they are men and women of pleasure, when Jesus Christ was a man of sorrows. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial aided by a moderate esteem of worldly things*:—When an earthern pitcher is broken, a man is not troubled at it, because he hath not set his esteem and heart upon it, being but a trifle. (*Ibid.*) *Seeking God in Himself, not in His creatures, aids self-denial*:—The men of the world have only a candle, which is soon blown out, an estate that may easily be blasted; but the children of God have the sun, which can stead them without a candle (Hos. ii. 11, 12). All the wicked man's happiness is bound up with the vine, and fig-tree, with his estate. Consider, your happiness doth not lie within yourselves, nor in any other creature, but in God alone. God in Himself is much better than God in the creature. Now, carnal men they prize God in the creature, but not God in Himself. And therefore, the first thing we must depend upon, is, that God is an all-sufficient God in Himself; not God in friends, not God in wealth, but God in Himself. We cannot see how it can be well without friends, and wealth, and liberty; therefore our hearts are glued to them. Oh, take heed of this. All these things are but several pipes, to deliver, and convey to us, the influence of the Supreme cause; therefore still prize God in Himself, before God in the creature. (*Ibid.*) *Contentment a great part of self-denial*:—To desire more, it is but to desire more snares. If I had more, I should have more trouble, more snares, more duty. Greater gates do but open to more care. I should have more to account for, more time, and more opportunity; and alas, I cannot answer for what I have already. If a plant be starved in the valleys, it will never thrive on the mountains. So, if, in a low condition, we are not able to conquer the temptation of it, what shall we do, if we had more, if we cannot be responsible to God for what we have? (*Ibid.*) *Expectations in heaven*:—A man will better quit that he hath upon earth, when he hath strong expectations of heaven (Rom. viii. 18). (*Ibid.*) *Self-abnegation in the prosecution of Christ's work*:—I. IN THE WAY OF SELF-INDULGENCE. This appears when in the promotion of God's work we choose to do what is easy and pleasant and leave others to do what is not in accordance with our tastes or which requires sacrifice of any kind. 1. The moral unseemliness of it must strike us at once; when we refuse self-indulgence in ordinary pursuits. 2.

This self-indulgence shows that we lack a genuine interest in God and in His work. 3. It hinders our own progress and success in the Christian service. II. SELF-DEPENDENCE IS ANOTHER FORM OF THE EVIL. In the former case too little was made of human agency; in this, too much. We do God's work without His help. 1. The aggravated ungodliness which this self-dependence involves. In worldly affairs our agency is little compared with God's agency. 2. It hinders the action within us of the Holy Spirit. III. SELF-SEEKING IS ANOTHER FORM OF THE EVIL. 1. Look at the shocking incongruity which self-seeking in connection with God's work involves. Never more out of place than in working for God's glory. 2. Look at what the self-seeking man suffers who indulges it. The pain of envy as he looks at those working on a higher plane; failure. 3. How much the cause of Christ suffers for his self-seeking; because of it he cannot see what is right and best for the cause. 4. Then the loss which the self-seeker sustains should be considered. He loses influence, honour, praise. It is when we seek the things of others that we find our own. On these grounds self-abnegation should be exercised in God's work. (*David Thomas, B.A.*) *God co-operates with the self-sacrificing effort of man*:—He co-operates with the husbandman, and gives him the precious fruit of harvest time, but not with the husbandman who consults only his own repose and quiet and convenience, and will do nothing toilsome and irksome in obedience to the ordinances of nature. No; God does not reward anywhere, that we can see, sloth, and indolence, and pleasure-loving, and disregard to His own ordinances, with His co-operation and with His success; and He will do it least of all where the work is greatest, and where the service is most glorious. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial one aspect of religion*:—This is only one meaning of religion. If I should say of a garden, "It is a place fenced in," what idea would you have of its clusters of roses, and pyramids of honeysuckles, and beds of odorous flowers, and rows of blossoming shrubs and fruit-bearing trees? If I should say of a cathedral, "It is built of stone, cold stone," what idea would you have of its wondrous carvings, and its gorgeous openings for door and window, and its evanescing spire? Now, if you regard religion merely as self-denial, you stop at the fence, and see nothing of the beauty of the garden; you think only of the stone, and not of the marvellous beauty into which it is fashioned. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Victory through self-denial*:—If you would acquire skill in the handling of tools you can only get it by earning it. Nobody can acquire it for you. Nor can you acquire it by seeing others handle tools. Though you know how skilled workmen bring results to pass, you cannot bring the same results to pass unless you have yourself had experience in handling tools. I know precisely how an adept musician rolls out magnificent harmonies on the organ; but when I take his seat I cannot roll out those harmonies. If I choose to go through suffering enough, if I am willing to give the necessary time that I might more pleasantly spend in some other way, I may accomplish it, but not otherwise. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Utility through restraint*:—You may take the finest messenger colt that ever lived, and he never will be valuable unless he goes into the trainer's hands. Pass by the yard. See him with the surcingle tight about him. See him with martingales on, and with his head brought down by them. See him with bit in mouth, and guiding-reins behind. See how fractious he is. He has lost his liberty; but he is on the way to find it. He never would know what he is if it were not for that harness—for a harness is not an instrument for hindering an animal's strength, but an instrument for developing his strength. And as by breaking you keep a colt whole, and have every part of him unwasted, not lost, so it is being broken in, by having their wildness of nature restrained, that men come to their real selves in skill and power. (*Ibid.*) *The future good an argument for self-restraint*:—Then Christianity did more, it carried up the whole ideal life. It not only gave a higher conception of character, and a higher conception of the qualities that constitute a true character; but it introduced another world lying over against this, and bearing a relation to this, just as childhood bears a relation to manhood, making this a prelude and instrument of the other. As we begin in childhood to deny the body for the sake of attaining a higher nature in manhood, so the whole life on earth is a childhood in which we deny ourselves, not for the sake of lacking pleasure, but for the sake of reaping glory and immortality in the heavenly land. (*Ibid.*) *Self-denial really acquisition*:—Men think, "Oh! to be a Christian I have got to give up everything." Good heavens! Give up everything? Suppose that Newton, talking with a blubber-eating Nootka Sound Indian, should say, "Come with me to England as my servant, and I will educate you, and make an astronomer of you;" and

suppose the Indian should say, "No, I will not; I am not going to give up this delicious blubber and this comfortable wigwam of mine." But what would he give up compared with that which he would inherit? And at every step in the Christian life we have treasures that are infinitely greater than those which we lose. We lose only such things as we are a great deal better without than with. (*Ibid.*) *The self-denial Christ requires*:—I. THE SELF-DENIAL WHICH CHRIST REQUIRES FROM HIS FOLLOWERS. 1. Negatively. (*a*) It cannot mean, to renounce our senses and our reason; (*b*) nor to renounce our desire and hope of salvation, to be perfectly disinterested, resigned, and annihilated, as the mystical writers call it; (*c*) nor to renounce our free agency and our acts of obedience; (*d*) nor to reject the comforts and conveniences of life, and to afflict and torment ourselves when nothing requires such a sacrifice. 2. Positively. (*a*) To deny ourselves is to renounce every evil affection and every evil work, and to put off the corrupted man, in order to follow Christ; (*b*) to deny or renounce our own good works, our own righteousness, to renounce them so far as not to be proud of them, not to rely upon them as perfect and meritorious; (*c*) to renounce all those things which concern our worldly interests and our present situation, such as ease and quiet, popularity, riches, inheritances, preferments, dignities, which we possess or pursue. There is a way of renouncing or denying these things, in a moral sense, without forsaking them; and that is, to entertain moderate affections for them, to possess them, according to the apostle's expression, as though we possessed them not; never to prefer them to our known duty in any instance, and to be ready actually to part with them, if God should require it. (*J. Jortin.*) *The duty and difficulty of self-denial*:—To row against the tide of one's inclinations, to stem the rapid current of one's appetites and affections, to struggle against the violent motions of our will, and to wrestle with the opposition of our contending faculties; this is an employment that is laborious and uneasy, this is a performance that we pay dearly for; and the reward of such a warfare will certainly be proportionable to the hardships and difficulties with which we have encountered. I. EXPLAIN AND STATE RIGHTLY THE GREAT DUTY OF SELF-DENIAL, and show wherein the exercise of it does properly consist. 1. It does not consist in utterly refusing, without distinction, all such things as we are inclined to. 2. Neither does the exercise of self-denial *at present* consist in such a constant and entire withdrawing from worldly enjoyments, as was necessarily practised by the first converts of Christianity. 3. The exercise of self-denial does indispensably consist in a total forbearance of *unlawful* enjoyments, however fondly we may be inclined or addicted to them. 4. The exercise of self-denial does further consist in weaning ourselves from all such entertainments, as may withhold or divert us from the service of God. 5. Also in avoiding such things as are neither unlawful nor inconvenient *for us*, if by using them we give just offence to our brethren. 6. Also in being habitually prepared to renounce all things, even our most dear and most lawful enjoyments, whenever God or religion shall require it at our hands. II. LAY DOWN SOME POWERFUL MOTIVES which may forcibly persuade us to the practice of this duty. 1. The example of our blessed Saviour. 2. The immediate happy consequences of such a performance, and the advantages that will attend it in this present life. 3. The vast reward which is annexed to this performance, and the benefit which will redound to us from it in another world. (*Nicholas Brady.*) *Following Christ*: — I. A PRIVILEGE TO BE DESIRED AND ASPIRED TO. II. THREE GREAT DUTIES OR QUALIFICATIONS ANNEXED TO IT. 1. Let him deny himself. (*a*) Deny our natural selves, that is, our reason, will, and affections, when they oppose the revealed truths and will of God. (*b*) Deny our sinful and sensual selves (Titus ii. 12). (*c*) Deny our worldly selves, that is, all earthly possessions, relations, and even life itself, at His call and in His cause. (*d*) Deny our righteous selves, that is, we must renounce all righteousness of our own, and desire to be found only in Christ's righteousness. 2. Let him take up his cross. 3. Let him follow Christ, which includes (*a*) to follow His doctrine; (*b*) to follow His example. (*Matthew Hale.*) *Honour put on the self-denying*:—He whom we love, whose honour we most covet, is he who has most denied and subdued himself; who has made the most entire sacrifice of appetites and passions and private interest to God, and virtue and mankind; who has walked in a rugged path, and clung to good and great ends in persecution and pain; who, amidst the solicitations of ambition, ease, and private friendship, and the menaces of tyranny and malice, has listened to the voice of conscience, and found a recompense for blighted hopes and protracted suffering, in conscious uprightness and the favour of God. Who is it that is most

lovely in domestic life? It is the martyr to domestic affection, the mother forgetting herself, and ready to toil, suffer, and die for the happiness and virtue of her children. Who is it that we honour in public life? It is the martyr to his country; he who serves her, not when she has honours for his brow and wealth for his coffers, but who clings to her in her danger and falling glories, and thinks life a cheap sacrifice to her safety and freedom. (*W. E. Channing.*) *What "self" is to be denied?*—Man has various appetites, passions, desires, resting on present gratification, and on outward objects; some of which we possess in common with inferior animals, such as sensual appetites and anger; and others belong more to the mind, such as love of power, love of honour, love of property, love of amusement, or a taste for literature and elegant arts; but all referring to our present being, and terminating chiefly on ourselves, or on a few beings who are identified with ourselves. These are to be denied or renounced; by which I mean not exterminated, but renounced as masters, guides, lords, and brought into strict and entire subordination to our moral and intellectual powers. It is a false idea that religion requires the extermination of any principle, desire, appetite, or passion, which our Creator has implanted. Our nature is a whole, a beautiful whole, and no part can be spared. You might as properly and innocently lop off a limb from a body as eradicate any natural desire from the mind. All our appetites are in themselves innocent and useful, ministering to the general weal of the soul. They are like the elements of the natural world, parts of a wise and beneficent system; but, like those elements, are beneficent only when restrained. (*Ibid.*) *Growth of appetites:*—Our appetites and desires carry with them a principle of growth or tendency to enlargement. They expand by indulgence and, if not restrained, they fill and exhaust the soul, and hence are to be strictly watched over and denied. Nature has set bounds to the desires of the brute, but not to human desire, which partakes of the illimitableness of the soul to which it belongs. In brutes, for example, the animal appetites impel to a certain round of simple gratifications, beyond which they never pass. But man, having imagination and invention, is able by these noble faculties to whet his sensual desires indefinitely. (*Ibid.*) *Duty of self-denial*:—The Divine wisdom nowhere shines forth more clearly than in this precept. I. HUMAN NATURE IS IN A STATE OF DEPRAVITY AND CORRUPTION. Man is not upright. His passions and affections are disposed to rebel, instead of remaining subordinate to the higher principle. Consequently, self-denial is necessary, and so far as we practise it we advance in virtue. We are so far humble, *e.g.*, as we deny ourselves in the matter of pride; so far heavenly-minded, as we deny our earthly inclinations; so far charitable, as we deny our tempers of self-love and envy; so far temperate and pure, as we restrain our lower passions and lusts. II. THE DESIGN OF RELIGION IS TO HEAL AND RESTORE OUR CORRUPT NATURE. If the disease is to be cured, we must abstain from everything that tends to feed or aggravate it. Even in things lawful, we may have to practise self-denial; as he who wishes to avoid a fall from a precipice, if he be prudent, will not venture too near its edge. The Christian soldier, like all others, must submit to the discipline of war in the time of peace; otherwise, when the hour of actual service arrives, he will be found wanting. He who has accustomed himself to govern his thoughts and words, will easily govern his actions; and he who has learned at proper seasons to abstain, will find no difficulty in being temperate at all times. III. Another reason for self-denial is, THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE BODY EXERTS UPON THE SOUL. The fall of man seems to have consisted greatly in the subjection of the soul to the power and dominion of the body. It is Christ's work to reverse this, and subordinate the body to the soul. The body presses down the soul: it is the business of religion, by means of self-denial, to remove this weight. IV. TAKE EXAMPLE BY THE WORLDLY. There is not a votary of wealth, pleasure, power, or fame, who cannot, and does not, when necessary, practise self-denial,—though in so much less worthy a cause. And shall *we* be out-done by such as *these?* V. THINK OF THE REWARDS ANNEXED TO THE PRACTICE OF SELF-DENIAL. 1. In the present life. Lightness of spirits, cheerfulness of heart, serenity of temper, alacrity of mind, vigour of understanding, freedom from bad desires, &c. 2. Heaven, for ever. (*Bishop Horne.*) *Instances of self-denial apart from religious motives:*—For the sake of collecting what is never to be used, and adding to his beloved heap, the *miser* will forego the comforts, the conveniences, and almost the necessaries of existence, and voluntarily submit, all his days, to the penances and austerities of a mendicant. The discipline of a *life of fashion* is by no means of the mildest kind; and it is common to meet with those who complain of being worn down,

and ready to sink under it. At the call of *honour*, a young man of family and fortune, accustomed to a life of ease and luxury, breaks off all home ties, and submits at once to all the painful duties and hard fare of a camp in an enemy's country. He travels through dreary swamps and inhospitable forests, guided only by the track of savages. He traverses mountains, he crosses rivers, he marches hundreds of miles, with scarcely bread to eat, or change of raiment to put on. When night comes, he sleeps on the ground, or perhaps sleeps not at all; and at the dawn of day, resumes his labour. At length he is so fortunate as to find his enemy. He braves death, amid all the horrors of the field. He sees his companions fall around him,—he is wounded, and carried into a tent, or laid in a waggon, where he is left to suffer pain and anguish, with the noise of battle sounding in his ears. After some weeks he recovers, and enters afresh upon duty. And does the Captain of thy salvation, O thou who stylest thyself the soldier and servant of Jesus Christ—does He require anything like this at thy hands? Or canst thou deem Him an austere Master, because thou art enjoined to live in sobriety and purity, to subdue a turbulent passion, to watch an hour sometimes unto prayer, or to miss a meal now and then, during the season of repentance and humiliation? Blush for shame, and hide thy face in the dust. (*Ibid.*) Religion, in one sense, is a life of self-denial; just as husbandry, in one sense, is a work of death. You go and bury a seed, and that is husbandry; but you bury one, that you may reap a hundredfold. Self-denial does not belong to religion as characteristic of it: it belongs to human life. The lower nature must always be denied, when you are trying to rise to a higher sphere. It is no more necessary to be self-denying to be a Christian, than it is to be an artist, or to be an honest man, or to be a man at all in distinction from a brute. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Self-denial in things necessary*:—A great many persons deny themselves with the most *superfluous* self-denial. They *seek* for things of which they can deny themselves. But you need not do that. Let your opportunities for self-denial come to you; but when they do come, do not flinch. God will send you occasions enough for denying yourself. There is wood enough in every man's forest to build all the crosses he will need to carry. (*Ibid.*) "*His cross.*"—Every one has his peculiar cross: one has it from his wife, or children, or relations; another from character; a third from rivals; a fourth from misfortunes; a fifth from poverty; a sixth from exile, bonds, and so on. (*Lapide.*)

Ver. 25. **For whosoever will save his life.**—*Losing the soul to save it*:—One of the moral paradoxes of Scripture—the most decided, the most contradictory, the most reckless (if we may so say) of them all. A complete inversion of language. And it is no isolated expression. It is forced on our attention again and again. We cannot wander far in any direction without encountering this startling sign-post announcing the path of destruction as the only high-road to salvation. The context, moreover, enhances the paradox. We are told that a man's life (or soul, for it is the same word in the original) is absolutely priceless to him; that no exchange can be an equivalent; that no compensation will requite him for the loss: yet in the same breath we are bidden to despise it, to abandon it, to fling it away like a broken potsherd or a rank weed. The contradiction is direct and positive; and in this contradiction the lesson is to be sought. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE SOUL OR LIFE OF MAN? It is the living principle; the centre of man's capacities, passions, energies; the very seat of his personality. A man's soul is everything to him. Obviously, then, the health or sickness, the saving or the losing, the life or death of this soul, must be a matter of infinite moment, both in time and eternity; for it guides his actions, regulates his affections, influences his feelings. It is to his whole being what the mainspring is to a watch. II. WHAT ARE THE FACULTIES AND DURATION OF THE SOUL? This question cannot be evaded; it must be faced. Its practical consequences are too momentous to admit of delay. If this life which we call "life" is only a passing moment of an infinite future, only the seed-time of a heavenly harvest, the infancy of an eternal manhood,—then treat it as such, educate and discipline it as such. You cannot go on drifting through life, till you find yourself at the edge of a cataract. No man going on a journey neglects so to arrange his route that at nightfall he shall halt at some place where food and shelter will be obtained. Darkness will overtake him, perhaps, in any case, for even the grateful interposition and warning of the twilight may not be sufficient; but what sane man would not shrink from finding himself in the darkness in a barren, trackless desert, exposed to the pitiless storm? III. HOW IS THE SOUL TO BE SAVED? By losing it. The meaning of these words in their primary application is simple.

To Christ's disciples and their immediate followers, no comment was necessary. In an age of persecution, the willingness to lose the lower life for the salvation of the higher would be only too often tested in a literal sense. And the corresponding application now need create no difficulty. Whoever purchases ease by dishonesty, or comfort by neglect of duty, or popularity by concession of principle—preferring self where truth, honour, love, purity, or reverence demands self-negation, self-abandonment—that man loses his soul, loses his life, by saving it. IV. BUT THOUGH THE MAN WHO SAVES HIS SOUL IS SURE TO LOSE IT, THE CONVERSE DOES NOT NECESSARILY FOLLOW. Here an important proviso comes in—"for My sake." There are many ways of losing the soul; but only one way of losing it so as to save. The profligate libertine squanders his means, and neglects his health, and flings himself away; but he does it selfishly, and to him the promise does not apply. V. LOSS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE IS GAIN. This does not merely apply to sacrifices made consciously and directly in the cause of Christianity. If Christ be (as we believe) the very and eternal Word of God; the very expression of the Father's truth, righteousness, purity, love; then the sacrifice of self to any one of these things is a saving of the soul by losing it; then the martyr to truth, to holiness, to purity, to love, may claim his portion along with the martyr to religion, for he has thrown himself away, has lost his soul for Christ's sake. VI. THE SAME CONTRAST AND THE SAME ALTERNATIVE MAY EXIST WITHIN THE SPHERE OF RELIGION ITSELF. It is possible to be anxious about saving the soul, to be extremely religious in a certain sense, but yet to risk the losing of it in the very desire of saving it. The soul must brace itself by vigorous exercise—spend and be spent. The true method of salvation is a great venture of self, a forgetfulness of self, a going out of self. Lose your soul in energy; spend yourself in alleviating some misery, instructing some ignorance, or reforming some vice. Fling your soul away, that, after many days, you may recover it again, purified, strengthened, renewed, living once more. (*Bishop J. B. Lightfoot.*) *Temporal gain eternal loss:*—It hath cost many a man his life, when his house has been on fire, to attempt through covetousness to save some of his stuff; venturing among the flames to preserve this, he has perished himself. Many more have lost their souls, by attempting to carry some of their own stuff—their own self-righteousness—with them to heaven. O sirs! come out, come out; leave what is your own in the fire; flee to Christ naked! (*Gurnall.*) *Life lost in the effort to save it:*—It is reported, in connection with a railway accident that happened a few years ago, that the only person who lost his life was a gentleman who jumped out of the train with a view to save it; all the other passengers who kept their seats were preserved. *Temporal loss eternal gain:*—God can infinitely more than counterbalance all temporal losses by the larger and richer outpouring of His Spirit on the soul. He may demand our worldly wealth; but if He increase our spiritual riches, are we not therein great gainers? Can He not, by the consolations of His Spirit, raise us far above all temporal distresses; and, by opening up a prospect beyond the grave, make us to glory in all tribulations (Romans v. 3-5). It was thus that St. Paul took, as he strongly phrases it, pleasure in infirmities, and persecutions, and distresses, for Christ's sake. It was thus that, in ancient days, they took cheerfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Even so may we expect it to be with us in this world. If our afflictions abound, even so shall also our consolations abound by Christ. And the consciousness, the comfortable reflection, that with a single eye we have sought God's glory, will make every pain a pleasure, every loss a gain. (*R. B. Nichol.*) *Losses and gains connected with religion.* I. THE THINGS OF THIS LIFE MEN MAY OBTAIN BY REJECTING THE RELIGION OF CHRIST. They may obtain a considerable portion of earthly riches; the sensual gratifications of life; the distinctions of worldly honour and praise. II. IN WHAT RESPECT THESE ADVANTAGES SHALL BE LOST TO THEM. They shall often be interrupted in their enjoyment of them. Sometimes they are overtaken with overwhelming calamities. They must all necessarily be forfeited at death. They produce the most appalling consequences in the eternal world. III. WHAT WE MAY BE CALLED TO SACRIFICE IN BECOMING THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS. Christ called His disciples to lose all will and choice with respect to this world's good. We may be called to lose the approbation of friends; to endure the frowns of the world; lose life itself. IV. IN WHAT RESPECTS WE SHALL FIND AGAIN THE THINGS WE SACRIFICE. In the midst of these sacrifices—we have what is better than life; we are attaining a greater assimilation to the life of Christ; all our sacrifices terminate at death; we shall be superabundantly rewarded at the last day. (*J. Burns, D.D.*)

Ver. 26. **For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?**—*The great exchange*:—1. The text assumes a certain inherent dignity in the human soul itself. 2. The folly of those competing rivalries, on account of which men seem willing that this inestimably precious soul should be lost. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The value of the soul*:—1. In its origin. 2. In its operations. 3. In its redemption. (*J. Sherman.*) *Lost*:—What volumes of meaning there are in that one word *lost*. A ship *lost*—a traveller *lost*—a brother *lost*—a parent *lost*—and, notwithstanding every effort to save, all as nothing to a *lost soul*. (*C. T. Pizey, B.A.*) *An appeal to the young*.—I. THE NATURE OF THE SOUL. 1. The soul is the seat of thought. 2. The soul is the subject of moral government. 3. The soul is the heir of immortality. II. THE WORTH OF THE SOUL. 1. Refer to the great atonement as the most magnificent proof of the soul's worth. 2. To the triumphant joy awakened in heaven by the conversion of one sinner from the error of his ways. 3. To the certain anticipations of misery or bliss which await each soul as it passes into eternity. (*J. Morison, D.D.*) *The foolish bargain*:—The man who, for the sake of worldly happiness, shall lose his soul, makes a foolish bargain. I. EXPLAIN AND PROVE THIS. In order to judge of a bargain we must take into account the thing bought, and the price paid for it. Worldly happiness is considerable, but it must come to an end. II. THE WORTH OF THE SOUL. It is the most excellent part of man. It will never die. The value of a thing is often best known when it is lost. How greatly you are concerned in this. (*E. Cooper.*) *The worth of the soul*:—In order to elucidate the meaning of the text—I. INSTITUTE A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE THINGS WHICH ARE HERE SET IN COMPETITION with each other. 1. By "the world," we are to understand pleasure, riches, and honour. This, if considered in itself, is vile. It is earthly in its nature. It is unsatisfying in its use. It is transitory in its continuance. If it be considered as it has been estimated by the best judges, it is worthless (Heb. ii. 8, 9; 24–26; Eccles. i. 14; Phil. iii. 8; John vi. 15; xvii. 16). 2. The "soul," on the contrary, if considered in itself, is noble. It is exalted in its origin (Heb. xii. 9). Capacious in its powers. Eternal in its duration. Doomed to everlasting happiness or misery. As estimated by the best judges, it is invaluable (Acts xx. 24). The gift of God's Son to die for it—of infinite value in His sight. Such being the disparity between the value of the world and that of the soul, we are prepared to—II. SEE THE RESULT OF THE COMPARISON. We suppose, for argument sake, that a man may possess the whole world. We suppose also that, after having possessed it for awhile, he loses his own soul. What, in the issue, "would he be profited"? 1. Enquire concerning this in general. Would carnal enjoyments compensate for the loss of heaven? Would transient pleasures counterbalance an eternity of glory? Would he have anything to mitigate his pain (Luke xvi. 24)? 2. Enquire more particularly. These questions are strong appeals to our hearts and consciences. They bid defiance to all the arts of sophistry. Let the "lover of pleasure," &c., &c., ask, "What shall it profit me," &c.? Conclusion: Which have I more regarded hitherto, the world, or my own soul? Which do I intend in future to prefer, &c.? (*C. Simeon.*) *Caring more for the body than for the soul*:—"Two things a master commits to his servant's care," saith one: "the child and the child's clothes." It will be a poor excuse for the servant to say, at his master's return, "Sir, here are all the child's clothes, neat and clean, but the child is lost!" Much so with the account that many will give to God of their souls and bodies at the great day. "Lord, here is my body; I was very grateful for it; I neglected nothing that belonged to its content and welfare; but as for my soul, that is lost and cast away for ever. I took little care and thought about it. (*Flavel.*) *The value and loss of the soul*:—1. Every man has a soul of his own. 2. It is possible for the soul to be lost; and there is danger of it. 3. If the soul is lost, it is the sinner's own losing; and his blood is on his own head. 4. One soul is worth more than all the world. 5. The winning of the world is often the losing of the soul. 6. The loss of the soul cannot be made up by the gain of the whole world. 7. If the soul be once lost, it is lost for ever; and the loss can never be repaired or retrieved. (*Matthew Henry.*) *What is a man profited . . . ?*—1. The good in the gain is imaginary and fantastical; the evil in the loss is real and substantial. 2. The good in the gain is convertible into evil; the evil in the loss is never to be improved into good. 3. The good in the gain is narrow and particular; the evil in the loss is large and universal. 4. The good in the gain is mixed and sophisticated; the evil in the loss is pure and unmingled. 5. The good in the

gain is full of intermissions; the evil in the loss is continual. 6. The good in the gain is short and transitory; the evil in the loss is eternal. (*Dr. J. Scott.*) *Profit and loss*:—I. The soul's WORTH: (1) nature; (2) capacities; (3) immortality; (4) purchase-price. II. The soul's LOSS, is loss of (1) holiness; (2) happiness; (3) heaven; (4) hope. III. Enforce the question: (1) gain uncertain, loss inevitable; (2) gain imaginary, loss positive; (3) gain temporary, loss irretrievable. (*Pulpit Germs.*) *Value of souls*:—A converted Jew, pleading for the cause of the society through whose instrumentality he had been brought to a knowledge of Christianity, was opposed by a learned gentleman, who spoke very lightly of the objects of the society and its efforts, and said "he did not suppose they would convert more than a hundred altogether." "Be it so," replied the Jew; you are a skilful calculator; take your pen now, and calculate the worth of one hundred immortal souls!" *Inestimable value of the soul*:—Are there not things more precious than gold and bank stocks? When the *Central America* was foundering at sea, bags and purses of gold were strewn about the deck as worthless—as merest rubbish. "Life, life," was the prayer. To some of the wretched survivors, "Water, water; bread, bread;" it was worth its weight in gold, if it could have been bought. And oh! above all—far above all, the salvation of your soul is precious. Is it not yet lost? *Is it saved?* (*Christian Treasury.*) *Insurance of the soul*:—A little boy on his father's knee said, "Pa, is your soul insured?" "Why do you ask, my son?" "I heard Uncle George say that you had your house insured, and your life insured; but he did not believe you had thought about your soul, and he was afraid you would lose it. Won't you get it insured right away?" It was all too true; and the question led the father to seek the Divine guarantee of his soul's well-being. *Care for the soul*:—It is recorded concerning one of the martyrs, that when he was going to the stake, a nobleman besought him, in a compassionate manner, to take care of his soul. "So I will," he replied; "for I give my body to be burned, rather than have my soul defiled. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *The value of the soul*:—I. We possess immortal souls of INCALCULABLE VALUE. The incomparable worth of the soul appears from (1) the nature of its powers; (2) the price of its redemption; (3) the efforts for its possession; (4) the duration of its existence. II. OUR SOULS ARE IN IMMINENT DANGER OF BEING LOST. 1. The loss of the soul is certainly possible. 2. The loss of the soul is highly probable. 3. The loss of the soul is deplorable. 4. The loss of the soul is utterly irreparable. III. NOTHING CAN COMPENSATE FOR THE LOSS OF THE SOUL. 1. The case supposed—"If he gain the whole world." 2. The inquiry instituted—"What is a man profited?" 3. The exchange proposed—"What shall a man give?" (*Sketches.*) *The incomparable worth of the soul will also appear* from the following considerations:—I. From its essence and capacities. The body is composed of dust, like the bodies of other animals, but the soul was infused by the breath of God. It is capable of the heavenly exercises of love, pity, and mercy. The *extent* of its capacities is amazing. It is capable of exerting itself like an angel in the employments of the heavenly world. Vast capacities has the soul for happiness and misery. The happiness which appertains to the soul is far the most noble in its kind. If to contemplate the sun and moon produces a delight full of dignity, what does the contemplation of Him who spoke these orbs into being? The soul alone is capable of enjoying God. What is the world to this? II. From the amazing respect that has been paid to it. *God* has discovered His high regard for the soul by the pains He has taken to give a written revelation to the world. *Angels* also discover their high regard for the soul by leaving the realms of glory to consume their time upon this distant planet by daily ministrations to its salvation. II. What completes the value of the soul is its *immortality and perhaps eternal progression.* How may we best know the worth of the soul? By considering—I. What is meant by the soul. 1. "Soul," or ψυχή, the word here used, is put for *life*, by a metonymy of the efficient for the effect, because our life depends upon the soul. Thus: "Take no thought for your life"—ψυχῇ (Matt. vi. 25). 2. The word "soul" is put for *the whole man* frequently in Scripture. Thus, the number of persons "that came with Jacob into Egypt" is reckoned by so many "souls" (Gen. xlvi. 26). 3. This word "soul" is taken most properly and strictly for the *form, constituent, and better part of man;* that breath that is breathed into him from God, when man becomes a living soul (Gen. ii. 7). In this acceptation we proceed to inquire—II. *What this "soul" is.* (*a*) The soul is a distinct substance from the body. This will appear if we consider (1) that such things as are proper to distinct substances—as, to "dwell in the body," whilst a man lives; to "leave

the body" when he dies—are attributed to the soul; (2) that it does "substare," *i.e.*, is the subject of accidents—such as are virtue and vice, arts and sciences; which cannot inhere in bare matter; (3) that it was made *after* the body; (4) that it exists separately from the body—"Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). It is certain his body was not with our Saviour's. (*β*) The soul is a spiritual substance. 1. Were it only that the soul is so often called "a spirit" by God Himself in His Word, it were a very considerable argument to prove that it is a spirit (Eccles. xii. 7; Zech. xii. 1; Acts vii. 59). 2. That the soul is a spiritual substance, is evident in that it is not produced out of matter (Gen. ii. 7; Eccles. xii. 7). 3. A third argument to prove that the soul is a spirit, is, because in it man bears the image of God—"God is a Spirit" (John iv. 24). 4. The actions or operations of the soul are such as cannot proceed from any bodily being. 5. The soul is a spirit, in that it is in the body, and one body cannot be in another. The soul takes up no place, as bodies do; it is *tota in toto*. (*γ*) In what the soul's excellency does appear. I. The first thing that speaks the soul's prerogative is its original. It is accounted no small privilege to be nobly born. II. Then again *in the end it is designed for*. 1. The soul of man is made for to bring glory to God. 2. The soul of man is made capable *of enjoying God*. The endeavours that are used for to gain souls. I. God's endeavours. 1. His parting with His Son, and Christ with His heart blood and life, for them. 2. I might add unto God's giving of His Son for our souls, His giving of His Spirit to the soul. 3. God's valuing of our soul appears in the care and pains which He takes for our souls daily. (*a*) In that He hath instituted means whereby He might come to obtain our souls, nay, to strengthen and comfort them, and have communion with them. (*b*) He bears with us, and exercises a great deal of patience towards us, if so He might at length gain our souls; and says, "when shall it once be?" (*c*) His bearing with the whole world of wicked men, notwithstanding their blasphemies and open defiances of Him, is only out of love to some few souls who serve and fear Him. (*d*) All the providences of God, in which He worketh hitherto, are intended by Him for the good of our souls, and done by God out of respect unto them. II. Endeavours used by Satan for our souls. (*e*) The duration of our souls. APPLICATION: 1. If the soul be so precious, we have heard enough to make us abhor sin for ever. 2. This does recommend and endear our blessed Saviour to us. 3. This commends holiness in all its parts to us. 4. Have a care that ye do not lose these souls that are so valuable. Consider that—(1) the danger your souls are in is very great; (2) the loss of your souls is very great; (3) the loss is never to be repaired. (4) Shall I add, that this soul is thine own, and that thou hast not, nor ever shalt have, another, and therefore it behoves thee to keep it safe. (5) Thou must answer for the loss of thy soul: God hath entrusted it with thee. (*P. Vinke, D.D.*) *The soul's inestimable value*:—A problem that deserves the study of the longest life. The best medium through which to view this all important question is the following verse. In this light I view this great question, and what do I see? I. THAT WE HAVE IN OUR POSSESSION A JEWEL CALLED THE SOUL, ASTONISHING IN ITS PROPERTIES, AND INESTIMABLE IN ITS VALUE. The soul is—(1) Divine in its origin; (2) astonishing in its properties—vitality, rationality, accountability; (3) an immortal principle; (4) has fallen from its glory; (5) has been redeemed by Christ; (6) angels rejoice over its salvation. II. THE POSSIBILITY OF THAT SOUL BEING LOST, THE LOSS WILL BE INEXPRESSIBLY GREAT. 1. What is the loss of a lost soul? The loss of grace in time. Glory in eternity. III. THE CHARACTERS WHO, IF THEY DIE AS THEY ARE, WILL SUFFER AND ENDURE THIS FEARFUL LOSS. "Is it I?" If you are living in open sin, &c., it is you. Have you repented, believed in Christ, &c.? Look at this matter in the light of the judgment day, and read Matthew xxv. IV. THE INDESIRABLE, INEXPRESSIBLE, INCONCEIVABLE FOLLY OF THE MAN THAT BARTERS AWAY HIS SOUL—get what he will in exchange, riches, honours, pleasures, &c. V. THE WISDOM OF THAT MAN WHO IS DETERMINED TO HAVE HIS SOUL SAVED—COST WHAT IT WILL. VI. THAT NEXT TO THE SALVATION OF OUR OWN SOULS, IT IS OUR HIGHEST DUTY AND BEST INTEREST TO PROMOTE THE SALVATION OF OTHERS. (*W. Dawson*). *The world an impossible enjoyment*:—He that hath all the world (if we can suppose such a man), cannot have a dish of fresh summer fruits in the midst of winter, not so much as a green fig: and very much of its possessions is so hid, so fugacious, and of so uncertain purchase, that it is like the riches of the sea to the lord of the shore; all the fish and wealth within all its hollownesses are his, but he is never the better for what he cannot get; all the shell-fishes that produce pearl, produce them not for him; and the bowels of the earth

shall hide her treasures in undiscovered retirements: so that it will signify as much to this great purchaser to be entitled to an inheritance in the upper region of the air; he is so far from possessing all its riches, that he does not so much as know of them, nor understand the philosophy of her minerals. (*Jeremy Taylor*). *The world-gainer more a delight to others than to himself*:—Nay, those things which he esteems his ornament, and the singularity of his possessions, are they not of more use to others than to himself? For suppose his garments splendid and shining, like the robe of a cherub, or the clothing of the fields, all that he that wears them enjoys, is, that they keep him warm, and clean, and modest; and all this is done by clean and less pompous vestments; and the beauty of them, which distinguishes him from others, is made to please the eyes of the beholders; and he is like a fair bird, or the meretricious painting of a wanton woman, made wholly to be looked on, that is, to be enjoyed by every one but himself: and the fairest face and most sparkling eye cannot perceive or enjoy their own beauties but by reflection. It is I that am pleased with beholding his gaiety; and the gay man, in his greatest bravery, is only pleased because I am pleased with the sight; so borrowing his little and imaginary complacency from the delight that I have, not from any inherency of his own possession. (*Ibid.*) *The world enjoyed by men who do not sell their souls for it*:—The poorest artizan of Rome walking in Cæsar's gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their lord: and although, it may be, he was put to gather fruits to eat from another place, yet his other senses were delighted equally with Cæsar's: the birds made him as good music, the flowers gave him as sweet smells; he there sucked as good air, and delighted in the beauty and order of the place, for the same reason and upon the same perception as the prince himself; save only that Cæsar paid, for all that pleasure, vast sums of money, the blood and treasure of a province, which the poor man had for nothing. (*Ibid.*) *The gain of the whole world no benefit*:—Cannot a man quench his thirst as well out of an urn or chalice, as out of a whole river? It is an ambitious thirst, and a pride of draught, that had rather lay his mouth to the Euphrates than to a petty goblet; but if he had rather, it adds not so much to his content as to his danger and his vanity. (*Ibid.*) *Enjoyment of the world limited by lack of capacity*:—If any man should give to a lion a fair meadow full of hay, or a thousand quince trees; or should give to the goodly bull, the master and the fairest of the whole herd, a thousand fair stags; if a man should present to a child a ship laden with Persian carpets, and the ingredients of the rich scarlet: all these, being disproportionate either to the appetite or to the understanding, could add nothing of content, and might declare the freeness of the presenter, but they upbraid the incapacity of the receiver. And so it does if God should give the whole world to any man. He knows not what to do with it; he can use no more but according to the capacities of a man; he can use nothing but meat, and drink, and clothes; and infinite riches, that can give him changes of raiment every day, and a full table, do but give him a clean trencher every bit he eats; it signifies no more but wantonness and variety, to the same, not to any new purposes. He to whom the world can be given to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him: he needs the understanding of an angel, to take the accounts of his estate; he had need have a stomach like fire or the grave, for else he can eat no more than one of his healthful subjects; and unless he hath an eye like the sun, and a motion like that of a thought, and a bulk as big as one of the orbs of heaven, the pleasures of his eye can be no greater than to behold the beauty of a little prospect from a hill, or to look upon the heap of gold packed up in a little room, or to dote upon a cabinet of jewels, better than which there is no man, that sees at all, but sees every day. (*Ibid.*) *Knowledge has a greater enjoyment of the world than mere possession*:—But then, although they only have power to relish any pleasure rightly, who rightly understand the nature, and degrees and essences, and ends of things; yet they that do so, understand also the vanity and the unsatisfyingness of the things of this world, so that the relish, which could not be great but in a great understanding, appears contemptible, because its vanity appears at the same time; the understanding sees all, and sees through it. (*Ibid.*) *The gain of the world outweighed by a sharp pain*:—The greatest vanity of this world is remarkable in this, that all its joys summed up together are not big enough to counterpoise the evil of one sharp disease, or to allay a sorrow. (*Ibid.*) *The world a poor reward for the pain of getting it*:—But in the supposition it is, "If a man could gain the whole world," which supposes labour and sorrow, trouble and expense, venture and hazard, and so much time ex-

pired in its acquist and purchase, that, besides the possession is not secured to us for the term of life, so our lives are almost expired before we become estated in our purchases. And, indeed, it is a sad thing to see an ambitious or a covetous person make his life unpleasant, troublesome, and vexatious, to grasp a power bigger than himself, to fight for it with infinite hazards of his life, so that it is a thousand to one but he perishes in the attempt, and gets nothing at all but an untimely grave, a reproachful memory, and an early damnation. (*Ibid.*) *The mad exchange*:—And this I observe to be intimated in the word, *lose*. For he that gives gold for cloth, or precious stones for bread, serves his needs of nature, and loses nothing by it; and the merchant that found a pearl of great price, and sold all that he had to make the purchase of it, made a good venture; he was no loser: but here the case is otherwise; when a man gains the whole world, and his soul goes in the exchange, he hath not done like a merchant, but like a child or a prodigal; he hath given himself away, he hath lost all that can distinguish him from a slave or a miserable person, he loses his soul in the exchange. For the soul of a man all the world cannot be a just price; a man may lose it, or throw it away, but he can never make a good exchange when he parts with this jewel; and therefore our blessed Saviour rarely well expresses it by ζημιοῦν, which is fully opposed to κέρδος, "gain;" it is such an ill market a man makes, as if he should proclaim his riches and goods vendible for a garland of thistles decked and trimmed up with the stinking poppy. (*Ibid.*) *The soul exchanged for a paltry convenience*:—But we must come far lower yet. Thousands there are that damn themselves; and yet their purchase, at long-running, and after a base and weary life spent, is but five hundred pounds a-year: nay, it may be, they only cozen an easy person out of a good estate, and pay for it at an easy rate, which they obtain by lying, by drinking, by flattery, by force; and the gain is nothing but a thousand pounds in the whole, or, it may be, nothing but a convenience. (*Ibid.*) *The soul now ignorant of its capability*:—If the elephant knew his strength, or the horse the vigorousness of his own spirit, they would be as rebellious against their rulers as unreasonable men against government; nay, the angels themselves, because their light reflected home to their orbs, and they understood all the secrets of their own perfection, they grew vertiginous, and fell from the battlements of heaven. But the excellency of a human soul shall then be truly understood, when the reflection will make no distraction of our faculties, nor enkindle any irregular fires; when we may understand ourselves without danger. (*Ibid.*) *The loss of the soul an insupportable calamity*:—But yet from these considerations it would follow, that to lose a soul, which is designed to be an immense sea of pleasures, even in its natural capacities, is to lose all that whereby a man can possibly be, or be supposed, happy. And so much the rather is this understood to be an insupportable calamity, because losing a soul in this sense is not a mere privation of those felicities, of which a soul is naturally designed to be a partaker, but it is an investing it with contrary objects and cross effects, and dolorous perceptions: for the will, if it misses its desires, is afflicted; and the understanding, when it ceases to be ennobled with excellent things, is made ignorant as a swine, dull as the foot of a rock; and the affections are in the destitution of their perfective actions made tumultuous, vexed and discomposed to the height of rage and violence. (*Ibid.*) *A foolish choice*:—The old rabbins, those poets of religion, report of Moses, that when the courtiers of Pharaoh were sporting with the child Moses, in the chamber of Pharaoh's daughter, they presented to his choice an ingot of gold in one hand and a coal of fire in the other, and that the child snatched at the coal, thrust it into his mouth, and so singed and parched his tongue, that he stammered ever after. And certainly it is infinitely more childish in us, for the glittering of the small glow-worms and the charcoal of worldly possessions, to swallow the flames of hell greedily in our choice: such a bit will produce a worse stammering than Moses had: for so the accursed and lost souls have their ugly and horrid dialect, they roar and blaspheme, blaspheme and roar, for ever. (*Ibid.*) *A wicked barter*:—You wonder at the folly of that rude and naked savage who would barter a coronet of gold for small worthless trinkets, and buy the wonders of a mirror, the tinkling of a bell, or the string of coloured beads, with a handful of pearls, fit ornaments of a crown. Yet what is that compared with the folly of him who, in exchange for the toys of earth, gives his soul? (*Dr. Guthrie*). *The folly of hazarding eternal life for temporal enjoyment*:—I. How INCONSIDERABLE THE PURCHASE. 1. If we had it all, yet the great uncertainty of holding it, or any part of it. 2. The impossibility of using and enjoying it all. 3. If we had it, and could use it all, the improbability of being contented with it. II. How GREAT A

PRICE IS PAID FOR IT. 1. The loss is great. 2. Irreparable. 3. The severe reflection men will make upon themselves for their folly. (*J. Tillotson, D.D.*) *The world-gainer destitute of the joy of hope:*—God hath so contrived things that, ordinarily, the pleasures of human life do consist more in hope than enjoyment; so that if a man had gained all the world, one of the chief pleasures of life would be gone, because there would be nothing more left for him to hope for in this world. (*Ibid.*) *Prosperity an aggravation of subsequent misery:*—If the happiness were true and real, it were an imprudent method. As if a man should choose to enjoy a great estate for a few days, and to be extremely poor the remaining part of his life. If there were any necessity of making so unequal a bargain, surely a man would reserve the best condition to the last; for precedent sufferings and trouble do mightily recommend the pleasures that are to ensue, and render them more tasteful than they would otherwise have been; whereas the greatest heightening of misery, the saddest aggravation of an unhappy condition, is to fall into it from the height of a prosperous fortune. It is comfortable for a man to come out of the cold to a warm fire; but if a man in a great heat shall leap into the cold water, it will strike him to the heart. Such is the fond choice of every sinner, to pass immediately out of a state of the greatest sensual pleasure, into the most quick and sensible torments. (*Ibid.*) *The after reflection of a lost soul:*—With what indignation will he look upon himself, and censure his own folly! Like a man who, in a drunken fit, hath passed away his estate for a trifling consideration; the next morning, when he is sober and come to himself, and finds himself a beggar, how does he rate himself for being such a beast and a fool, as to do that in a blind and rash heat which he will have cause to repent as long as he hath a day to live. (*Ibid.*) *Is life worth living?*—"What shall a man give in exchange for his *life?*" This question has been largely on the lips of the world of late. I. LIFE, IN ITS ORIGIN AND DESTINY, IS A DEEP MYSTERY. Its only solution, as its only worth, is found in faith and religion. Life is growth under a force and principle, guided by intelligence. To be, to act, and to suffer or enjoy, is to live. II. ITS UNFOLDING MAY TAKE PLACE AROUND EITHER OF TWO CENTRES—SELF OR GOD. Life offers us, in this direction, either bondage or freedom. It is determined by choice. He who decides to live to himself, becomes the slave of sin, passion, and lust. He who chooses God, attains to freedom, &c. III. WHETHER LIFE WILL SECURE WORTH WILL DEPEND UPON WHAT WE BELIEVE. 1. In natural science. 2. In mental philosophy. 3. In morals. 4. In religion. IV. BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE WILL HAVE THEIR EFFECT UPON CHARACTER AND CONDUCT, AND WILL MANIFEST THEMSELVES. In what we become ourselves, and in what we help others to become. V. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE AND FILL IT WITH WORTH. 1. God gave it and upholds it. 2. God has redeemed it in order to give it worth. 3. God has a plan for each life, which, if followed, will lead from grace to glory, and from the utilities of time to the rewards and inheritance of eternity. Unless we do so, most assuredly, in the light of our text, life will not be worth the living, and indeed it were far better never to have been born. (*L. O. Thompson*). *The loss of the soul irreparable:*—If the soul perish, it is, once more, an irreparable loss—a loss that cannot be retrieved. A man may lose health, and yet, by the blessing of Providence upon medical aid, he may become more healthy than before; a man may lose property—his all in the world, and yet, by industry and the smile of Providence, he may become richer than before; a man may lose friends—God may raise up others in their room; but, Oh, if the soul is lost, it is lost not for a day, a month, or a year, but for eternity; and it is that word "eternity" which gives emphasis to bliss or woe, to ease or pain, to hell or heaven. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The loss of the soul eternal:*—There is no proportion between the one and the other. There is some proportion between a particle of matter and the globe—there is some proportion between a drop of water and the ocean; but there can be none between the little drop of time and the shoreless, fathomless ocean of eternity. The man, then, that gains the whole world for time and loses his soul for eternity, can gain no profit. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 27, 28. **For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father.**—*The coming of the Son of Man:*—1. The judgment of the world has been committed to the Son as Mediator, as an appropriate honour to One who had humbled Himself for the redemption of the world. 2. Christ is qualified to be Judge, as the Son of God, of the same essence as the Father; the perfections of the Godhead will appear glorious in Him. 3. The saints in judgment will be manifested as the doers of the

will of God upon earth. 4. The work of the Judge will be, not to justify, or to make righteous, but to prove the saints by their works, that they are righteous already. 5. Men will be judged by their works, to show that God in the work of man's salvation supports the cause of infinite holiness. 6. Judgment will not be according to the works visible to men, but to all done in secret. 7. Judgment according to works will condemn the ungodly, and make them dumb before God. (*D. Charles.*) I. THE SON OF MAN AS THE PROMISED, manifested, ascended One. II. HIS REAPPEARANCE ON EARTH. Predicted, possible, necessary. III. HIS SUPERHUMAN GLORY. His herald, person, retinue is glorious. IV. HIS IMPORTANT WORK. To raise the dead, change the living, judge all, reward each, resign the reins of government into His Father's hand. (*A. Macfarlane.*) I. That the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to this earth as a man in the glory of God with His angels. II. That all Christ's believing people shall appear with Him. III. The Lord at His coming in His glory shall reward every man according to his works. (*H. McNeile.*) *An awful premonition*:—Compared with the doom which will be inflicted upon the ungodly at the coming of Christ, the death of nature is nothing. I. THE SINNER'S DEATH IS BUT A FAINT PRESAGE OF THE SINNER'S DOOM AT THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN HIS GLORY. 1. We can make but little comparison between the two in the point of time. Physical dying is but the work of a moment; the doom of the wicked when Christ comes will never die. 2. In point of loss there is no comparison. 3. Neither does death bear any comparison with the last judgment in point of terror. 4. The pains of death are not comparable to the pains of the judgment at the second advent. II. IN THE STATE OF SEPARATE SPIRITS THEY HAVE NOT FULLY TASTED OF DEATH, NOR WILL THEY DO SO UNTIL CHRIST COMES. Till after the second advent their bodies do not suffer; they know that this present state will end, after judgment no end; they have not been put to the shame of a public sentence. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Waiting for Christ's coming*:—I saw a picture the other day in a shop window, with which I was greatly pleased; it represented a room in which was a window looking out upon the sea; a lady with a grave, anxious face sat by the window, and two little children were playing on the carpet. On the table lay a letter, which seemed just to have been opened, and against the wall was hanging the portrait of a gentleman. There was very little writing underneath the picture, and very little was wanted; for I could understand the story which the picture was intended to tell, as plainly as if the painter had told me himself. The father of these little children was evidently absent from them beyond the sea. There was his portrait, but he was far away. But he had sent them a letter containing the joyful news that he was coming home again! And so there was the mother sitting at that window, day after day, and looking across the wide waters, in the hope of at last seeing the white sails of the ship which should bring the long-expected one home. Now this picture, I think, may remind us of what the Lord Jesus used to tell His disciples about His "coming again." (*Ready for Work.*)

## CHAPTER XVII.

VERS. 1-13. **And was transfigured before them.**—*The mount of vision*:—I. Take what is taught in the passage AS TO CHRIST'S HUMANITY AND ITS ASPECTS. Among all the aspects in which the Saviour is presented to us, this one assuredly is plain, the Saviour as man. And the story of the Transfiguration shows Christ as the man in three ways. 1. It speaks of a human need, the need, namely, of encouragement and strength. Indeed, it seems that the Transfiguration was a turning-point in the mission He had come to accomplish, when His work as a Prophet passed into the background and His work as a Priest came to the front. Not for the disciples only, but for Himself, the establishing of His courage and the reassuring of His hope, was the vision on the mount, with the voice that accompanied it. So low does a Saviour stoop in His humility, that He touches our sinless infirmities at their lowest, and is not ashamed to be our companion and our example in all. 2. And this brings me to the next point, and to pass from considering the human need to consider the human exercise. That exercise was prayer. "He went up," says St. Luke "to a mountain to pray." He was asking

for the wisdom that discerned the Father's will, for the submission that embraced it, for the perseverance that adhered to it, for the joy that illumined it. If you can dispense with prayer, Christ could not. 3. Again, we have here a human experience. Was not the Transfiguration rather a token that associated itself with the Saviour's divinity, an honour that pertained to Him, not as the man, but as God? There is truth in this; but two things must be noticed at the same time. First, that even if it was the Godhead that lent the radiance, it was the manhood that was actually irradiated; and secondly, that what the Godhead effected in Christ, what is *Godlike* effects in His followers. Do not put the Transfiguration of Christ aside as a privilege that is purely supernatural; it is, in one sense, only the transcendent exhibition as it is the efficacious pledge of the changes which grace may work in ourselves. Such transfigurations as these are both symptomatic and prophetic. They are symptomatic of what has already begun, and prophetic of what shall yet be revealed, when the temporary gives place to the permanent, and the partial is drowned in the perfect, and a glorified soul shall create a glorified vesture, from which the last stain of sin shall be purged, and the last line of pain be smoothed out. Oh, our Kinsman-Redeemer, we have found Thee our companion in manhood's weakness, we hail Thee as the type of manhood's coming glory! As Thou has borne the image of the earthly with us, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly with Thee. II. BUT AGAIN, WE HAVE HERE CHRIST'S DEATH AND ITS MEANING. 1. The death of Christ is the glory of the Old Dispensation; its glory, because its fulfilment and crown. That is why Moses and Elias were there. Moses was there to bear witness that in the decease of a Saviour at Jerusalem a nobler Rock would be smitten than the rock he had struck in the wilderness, and that a richer fountain would flow forth than the water that gushed from its flinty clefts. Elijah was there to bear witness that in this same decease at Jerusalem a greater sacrifice would be offered than the sacrifice he had laid upon Carmel's altar, even a Saviour's precious blood, and a more wondrous confirmation be granted than the fire that gave testimony before Carmel's hosts, even a Saviour's glorious Resurrection. 2. The death of Christ is the glory of the New Dispensation. For as it was the glory of the Old Dispensation as its fulfilment, it is the glory of the New as its foundation. That is why the disciples were there. They were there as the sponsors of a Church to be, just as Moses and Elijah were there as the sponsors of a Church and a ritual that had vanished. If Moses and Elias were the flower of the Old Dispensation, Peter and James and John were the germs of the New. 3. The death of the cross is the glory of Jesus Himself. For those that had eyes to see, there was triumph in the very shame, and the crucifixion was itself a coronation—it was His glory in the very endurance, as well as in the ultimate results. III. BUT AGAIN, WE HAVE HERE SOMETHING TAUGHT US AS TO CHRIST'S CHURCH AND ITS FELLOWSHIP. Let us now look at Christ as the living Bond of eternal union. The relation of the Church beneath to the Church above is a question that throbs with a lasting interest. That there is some relation we know; though divided, the companies are in some fashion one. But what is that relation? Certainly not a visible one any longer. There is a knowledge of our friends after the flesh no more. It was, after all, a knowledge of the flesh that Peter was thinking of when he said, in his rashness and witlessness, "Lord, let us make three tabernacles." And that is Christ's answer to Peter. It is as if He had said, "Not as you think, will the relation between us be perpetuated—by fellowship such as you would maintain, in tabernacles such as you would build. There is but one tabernacle prepared for us all, and behold, it is now coming down—the tabernacle and pavilion of Him who is as a wall of fire round His people, and the glory in the midst of them." Stand in the fear and the presence of God, as the disciples stood under the cloud, and that will be the *sphere* of communion; found your interests and your hopes on the cross of Christ, and that will be the *means* of communion; press near to the person of the Crucified, and that will be the *centre* of communion. There is intercourse in no other way. IV. BUT AGAIN, WE HAVE SOMETHING TAUGHT US AS TO CHRIST'S MESSAGE AND ITS AUTHORITY. Was it not as if God meant to say, "Hear the Son, not the prophets of the Old Dispensation merely? Hear the Son, not messengers from heaven, though august as the deputies you have seen." And what God said to the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration He says this day to ourselves, reminding us once more of the whole duty of man—the reception of the message, and the submission to the purpose of His well-beloved Son. Listen to Him, and not to the world. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof. Listen to Him, and not to the flesh. The heart is deceitful above all things and despe-

rately wicked; who can know it? Listen to Him, not to ministers. They are frail, earthly vessels at the best. "No man can serve two masters." Hear *that*. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Hear *that*. V. And once more, in this passage, we have here THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST AND ITS ALL-SUFFICIENCY. He who has come before us in this incident as Man, as Redeemer, as Uniter, and as Prophet, is brought before us in the last place as a Friend. For the time came when Transfiguration experiences ended—the disciples looked up and saw no man save Jesus only. Ah yes, there is a something in our religious life that is transitory, and there is a something that always abides. What is transitory is an experience such as that which the disciples had when they were wrapped with the glory; what is abiding is the Person and Presence of Christ, which form the centre of attraction while Transfiguration experiences last, and which remain to make up for their absence when Transfiguration experiences cease. Happy are they who, when the glamour dies from their sky, and the company vanishes from their path, and life looks bare and common, like the path down Hermon for the descending disciples, have a faith that will strengthen them when feelings pass, and a guidance that will cheer them when friendships are dissolved, and who, lifting up their eyes, see Jesus—Jesus alone, it may be, but a Jesus who is all-sufficient. (*William A. Gray.*) *Tabor flights*:—First, let me remark that it was only once in Christ's life on this earth, and that that once was only given to a chosen few. Some Christians seem to think that they must be always going up to mounts of extraordinary joy and revelation: this is not after God's method. Those spiritual visits to high places, and that wonderful intercourse with the unseen world, are *not* in the promises; the daily life of invisible communion *is*. And it is enough! We shall have the exceptional revelation if it be right for us. When the Master was there, three disciples had it, and nine had it not! And why it was when it was, and why those three were selected, we can see but few reasons. They were the three who walked the closest and dwelt the nearest to the heart of Jesus. They were also the three who were about to have their faith and their feelings strained to the uttermost by witnessing, most closely, the deepest agonies of their dear Lord. Peter was to found the Church; James was to be the first martyr of the Apostolic College; John, the writer of the Revelation. For these reasons, and perhaps also because their characters specially required the encouragements that were the most adapted to the occasion, they were selected. Do not envy others their higher joys or greater privileges. These things are talents. They do not seem to have been either the wiser, or the happier, or the better—at least at the time—for the marvellous vision. If we had to select the most dreadful position in which ever men were placed, we should fix directly on Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the "burning fiery furnace." And if we had to choose the most favoured—Peter, James and John. Yet Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were calm and entirely happy in the fire; Peter, James, and John were fearful and troubled on the Mount. Those on Tabor represented the three great states of God's Universal Church—this earth, the intermediate state, and glory; Christ, in heaven; Moses, upon this earth; Elijah, in paradise. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) The doctrine taught and shadowed forth by the Transfiguration is probably greater fuller, richer than is taught in any other episode in our Lord's life. It teaches—(1) The perfect union of the human and the Divine in the Person of Jesus Christ (2) that the future life of the children of God is not a mere pietistic, sentimental dream, but a glorious reality; (3) that the good, when they depart hence, do not go down into the darkness, but up into the light, and live unto God in a fuller, grander life; (4) that heaven is vitally, closely connected with earth by sympathy and ministry; (5) that the denizens are deeply and profoundly interested in the inhabitants of this sin-stricken world; (6) that Christ's death on the cross was not a surprise, not an accident, but a work which He came to accomplish; (7) that good men cannot for ever dwell in ease and rapture on the mount, but must toil and suffer in the great world below; (8) that mortal man cannot have unveiled audience with God; (9) that Jesus Christ will not abandon His disciples when they are sore afraid, but will draw nigh and comfort them; (10) that the mission of the servants of God is to lead men to Christ and to leave them with Him. (*E. D. Solomon.*) *Creed, worship, and work*:—I. The Church is led to a CREED. The time has now come for estimating the effects of the ministry of Jesus. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" II. In the Transfiguration itself the Church is led on to a foretaste of glorious WORSHIP and high communion—the meeting for awhile of the Church militant with the Church triumphant. 1. As to the reality of the Trans

figuration. We have the calmness of history in the narratives of the synoptics; we have dates and circumstances. The glory above is as historical as the epileptic writhing below. 2. As to the purposes of the Transfiguration. It had a purpose in relation to the human nature of Jesus. A sense of suffering came upon His soul, and He wanted rest. The instinct which draws so many of the highest human spirits to the quiet and elevation of the hills, led Him up into the higher mountain-range of Panens or Hermon. If one might refer to a long-forgotten controversy, the Transfiguration was not a miracle. For such splendour was natural to a body like His, with the perfect soul and its union with Divinity. The repression was miraculous; the Transfiguration was the temporary cessation of that miraculous repression. III. But further, in the transfiguration Jesus leads His Church to a WORK—a work which, indeed, they could not at first perform. What a contrast for Him and for them! For *them:* "Lord, it is *beautiful* for us to be here." A contrast for *Him* also. A contrast between the spirits of "just men made perfect," and the faithless and crooked generation, of whom even His patience cried, "How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" They find a sufferer below. Strange contrast, as we have said. Above: the pure heaven; the words of Divine attestation; the forms of saints floating in light; the glory and honour and majesty given to Jesus. Below: the reproach; the well-meant but baffled effort; the foam on the cut lip; the withered body; the sullen muteness broken by epileptic cries. Yet there is a fresh, unselfish joy in the energy which Jesus throws into that victorious work. Thus, on the whole, in this section of the Transfiguration, Jesus leads His Church in the person of His disciples on to a world of *thought*, up to a world of *worship*, down to a world of *work*. 1. The three words, *creed*, *worship*, *work*, surely indicate, as far as single words can, the leading purpose of the three great periods which the Church has already traversed. The primitive centuries were occupied mainly, but not exclusively, in moulding Christological *dogma:* the Middle Ages (over and above the scholastic philosophy) were busy in elaborating *worship:* before the eye of the modern Church *social* problems have come out with a tremendous significance. 2. Again, we have here a summary of elements which must always, more or less, co-exist in a living Church. *Confession*, *devotion*, *effort*, must be found in her. Without the confession, devotion becomes fanaticism; without the devotion, confession becomes a congelation of dogma; without the confession and the devotion, the effort is soon left to police magistrates and poor-law guardians. 3. It may, I think, further be observed that the Transfiguration stands in our New Testament as one recognition of "the sense of beauty," of which it has been cynically said that "it never furthered a single duty." Nay, more; it is a refutation of him who has told us that beauty is inconsistent with the gospel. It shows Jesus not *doing* something definite *for* us; but showing earth for a moment what He is in His beauty. I conclude by drawing two lessons for the spiritual life of each of us: I. Our individual life must follow and summarize the section of the Transfiguration. 1. We must lay the foundation strong and deep in the confession of Peter. 2. This must be accompanied by a second condition. There must be the love of prayer, of communion with the world unseen. II. Let us think for a few moments of our transfiguration as the result of His. Even our fallen humanity affords hints of this. (*Bishop Alexander, D.D.*) *The Epiphany upon the Mount:*—Some have questioned whether this is to be received as real history. Rationalism calls it "The dream of Peter." Some talk of it as a mere scenic display, to awaken the dull and sleepy disciples, but of no further moment or significance. Even some comparatively sound theologians have satisfied themselves with assigning it a basis of historic truth, but much exaggerated by the dreamy imaginations of the witnesses. A dream! It is not likely that three men would each dream precisely the same thing, at the same time; or that they would all be so perfectly deceived as to tell it for fact in their most serious discourses and writings. Nor do I know by what authority we are to regard that as a dream, which the record says the witnesses beheld when they were wide awake. We will notice—I. THE PLACE. This is specifically described as "up in an high mountain." There is much said in the Scriptures about mountains, and many of the most memorable events of sacred history transpired upon mountains. The Law was given upon a mountain: the last decisive conflict with the prophets of Baal, and the last of the three great conflicts of our Saviour with Satan, occurred on mountains. The offering up of Isaac, the great type, and the subsequent offering up of Christ, the antitype, were accomplished upon mountains. All this is not mere accident. Mountainous elevations are particularly fitted to the sacred and the Divine. They are Nature's

symbols of the Majesty of God. They have a natural harmony with His everlasting purity, power, and Godhead. II. THE WITNESSES. "Peter, James, and John his brother." There were different circles, even within the little circle of the twelve, to which different degrees of privilege and trust were given. Not all the members of our natural bodies have the same functions, or the same honour; and so the members of Christ "have not all the same office." And yet we are to "covet earnestly the best gifts." III. THE TRANSFORMATION—"He was transfigured before them." IV. THE TIME, particularly as related to the act in which the Saviour was occupied—prayer. Prayer is a transfiguring power. It is the opening of the earthly nature to the inflowing of the heavenly. Prayer is the drawing near of the soul to the light and majesty of heaven, and always gathers to itself the gilding of that light. It not only ascends to heaven, but it calls heaven into itself, and illumines with the grace of heaven, and makes, not only the face, but the whole man, more heavenly. V. THE ACCOMPANYING APPARITIONS—"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him." However alone we may seem to be in our devotions, we are never alone. Though effectually withdrawn from this world, beings of another then join us. VI. But, finally, NOTICE THE PARTICULAR MEANING OF ALL THIS. It had, first of all, an important relation to the fore announcements which the Saviour had just been making of His approaching sufferings and death (Matt. xvi. 21; Mark ix. 31; Luke ix. 22). These sad things had greatly disturbed, perplexed, and disheartened the disciples. And it was necessary that they should be strongly certified of the Saviour's Divine glory before He went down into those dreadful depths, lest their faith should utterly fail them when the facts should occur. We are also fully authorized to take the Transfiguration as a picture and earnest of His future coming and kingdom, which is to embody the consummated results of His obedience unto death. If it was a foretaste and pledge of "the glory that should follow" from His sufferings, it must needs be of the same kind and nature with that of which it was a section given in advance. Brethren, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The Transfiguration:*—I. THE PLACE. II. Let us direct our attention to the PERSONS assembled on the Mount. We learn, I think, that saints, after death, know each other. Moses and Elias did so; and even the disciples, in a way not explained, were enabled to identify their celestial associates. Are we to say, then, that an earthly mountain was more than the heavenly Zion? It further appears, from what has been said, that the recompense of saints after death has some proportion to their prior discipleship. Jesus on this occasion had special honour to confer on some members of the heavenly Church, and whom did He select to be the subjects of distinction? In short, we learn here that saints may see more of the Church and of the world after death than before it. Moses desired, prayed for admission to Canaan. The request was denied, and yet here he is—all as you wished, and as he wished—within Palestine, and surveying from no foreign Pisgah, but from one of its own mountains, the inheritance of his people. III. Let us consider the CONDITION IN WHICH THESE PERSONS APPEARED ON THE MOUNT. It is unnecessary that I should expatiate on the aspect of the disciples. No intimation is given of any change in their state. They remained as they had been, and their bodies displayed all the frailties common to our frame. The most interesting fact in their case is that they were not changed; and we hence see the folly of looking for transformation of our natures from any juncture of circumstances. It was otherwise with Moses and Elias. We are told by St. Luke that they appeared in glory. That glory is manifest when we compare what they once were with what they have now become. Moses has no more need of Aaron and Hur to sustain his arm for the discomfiture of Amalek. Though fifteen hundred years have passed over him they have brought no frailties of age, but the inextinguishable fires of an immortal youth. Mark the disparity between them and the apostles. Both parties were on the summit of a mountain, but how different their manner of reaching it! On the one hand the approach was from beneath, by slow, tedious, arduous steps. On the other hand the approach was from above, from the holiest of all in the third heavens, and was effected by a descent which no barrier could obstruct and no distance protract. When a bright cloud came and overshadowed them, the disciples, as we learn from St. Luke, feared to enter into the cloud; its lustre dazzled or appalled them. There was no such apprehension on the part of Moses and Elias; the wide universe contained not that which could frighten them; and as to the glory of God, its light, so inaccessible to mortals, was their element of joy. The disciples fell asleep, overcome by consternation and fatigue. But while they slept Moses and Elias talked with Jesus, and freely discussed the deep things

of God. But I am restricting your attention to mere men, when one and another and many are saying, "We would see Jesus." "His face did shine as the sun." Usually it was darkened by grief; but now gloom is gone. IV. Let us now direct our attention to their DISCOURSE. The subject discussed by such an assembly must surely have been important: it was important to all there assembled. You require no proof that the event spoken of was important to Jesus, for He was to be the sufferer. The subject was also important to Moses and Elias. No doubt they were glorified saints, but all this blessing they had acquired in virtue of the Messiah's anticipated sufferings; and not a plant bloomed in their paradise, not a note thrilled in their songs, not a gem gleamed in their crowns, but was due to the decease which Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem. The three disciples had a like stake in the event, which was not the less precious to them that they were insensible to its consequence. But these disciples were representatives of the New Testament Church, and if so, what was important to them is important to us. Christ died, not for their sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (*David King, LL.D.*) *Lessons of the Transfiguration*:—I. IT WAS DESIGNED TO MAKE THE THINGS OF THE FUTURE WORLD MORE A REALITY, A DISTINCT CONCEPTION. The veil between us and the world of spiritual glory is, as it were, drawn aside, and we are permitted to view the unseen. Humanity, our humanity, is capable of a refinement of feature and expression united to a higher spiritual development in a purer state than the present. II. WE ARE TAUGHT THAT CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD, ITS GLORIES BEING AS MUCH ABOVE IT AS ITS PRINCIPLES. III. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT CONFINED TO, AND DOES NOT CONSIST IN A PARTICULAR PLACE, BUT IN AN INWARD CONDITION OF THE PERSON; that inward condition will inevitably make itself visible, shining through the restraints of adverse and even fleshly circumstances. (*W. I. Keay.*) *The Transfiguration of Christ*:—On this stupendous and yet delightful manifestation we offer a few general remarks. I. The transfiguration is to be considered as ONE OF THOSE SOLEMN ACTS BY WHICH CHRIST WAS INDUCTED INTO HIS OFFICE AS THE TEACHER AND SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. This is the principal truth taught by it. All the old prophets were appointed by some special designation and call of God. But Christ being at once the greatest of all Prophets, it was to be expected that His designation should be accompanied by circumstances which should mark this distinction and superiority. 1. There was their *frequency*. The prophets were generally designated by one glorious appearance of Him who called them. But Christ, by a series of wonders. Then there was the *manner*. The prophets had a glory conferred upon them, but to the Master belonged the greater glory. "Hear ye Him." The command still applies to you. II. From the subject of the discourse held with Christ by Moses and Elias WE LEARN THAT THERE WAS IN HIS DEATH SOMETHING SPECIAL AND EMPHATIC. The mode of expression, indeed, shows this. It was a departure from life which He had to fulfil, &c. His was a sacrificial death. The Old Testament saints were saved in anticipation of this. Let that be the subject of our thought and converse here, which shall be the theme of heaven itself. III. THE CONFIRMATION WHICH THIS EVENT GAVE TO THE ANCIENT PROPHETIC DISPENSATION (2 Peter i. 17–19). The transfiguration thus confirms "the word of prophecy," in several remarkable particulars. 1. The ancient prophets speak of the Messias in terms indicating a strange union of the extremes of debasement and glory. Very strikingly was this illustrated here. 2. The ancient dispensation was marked with special care as to the quality of the sacrifices to be offered to God. Here we see the shadow giving place to the substance. The victim is distinctly marked—"This is My beloved Son." 3. The doctrine of the prophets was that the Messiah should die for the sins of the people. Here the doctrine is both illustrated and confirmed. 4. The law and the prophets were continually holding forth some "better thing" than themselves. Now both Moses and Elias converse with Him, to show the harmony of the whole; and He being declared by the voice from heaven to be the supreme Teacher, they surrender, as it were, their commission into His hands, and then depart, leaving Him the sole object on which the eye of the world should rest for ever. 5. The ancient dispensation was founded on the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and of rewards and punishments in a future life. Here it is confirmed and made clear. In these scenes life and immortality burst upon us. 6. The ancient prophets speak of an advent of Christ in glory. Behold it confirmed. Conclusion: The prophetic word being thus confirmed, there are two important lessons to be learnt. 1. Take heed to it. It is intended to usher in Christ, and the day of salvation. All other light is delusive. 2. The whole history is most encouraging to those who truly believe in Christ. See how

He shares His glory with His disciples. And if you suffer with Him, you shall also reign with Him. (*Richard Watson.*) *The Transfiguration*:—I. Took place amid the grandeurs of nature. II. Was witnessed by three of Christ's most favoured disciples. III. Consisted in an outshining of the enshrined Divinity. IV. Was heightened by the presence of two of the greatest men of past history. V. Was accompanied by a voice of approval from heaven. VI. Did not destroy the human sympathies of the Saviour. He did not rebuke the ecstatic idea of St. Peter. He calmed their fears. (*Anon.*) *The Transfiguration*:—I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND MANNER OF IT. II. ITS CHIEF DESIGN. 1. The inauguration of Christ as the Lord's anointed. 2. A direct confirmation of former dispensations. 3. The law in the fulness of the time to be done away—"they saw no man save Jesus only." III. A FEW SUBSIDIARY MORAL USES. 1. It assured the disciples in sensuous manner that Jesus was the Son of God. 2. The immortality of the soul. 3. An evidence of the nature of our glorified humanity, and of our mutual recognition in the world to come. 4. Christ is one with us in earthly shame and heavenly glory. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The disciples beholding their transfigured Lord*:—1. We must no longer expect any visible or external manifestations of Christ to be made to us. 2. All Christ's true disciples have some manifestations or discoveries of Christ made to them. 3. All Christ's true disciples have not the same manifestations or discoveries made to them; some not taken to the mount. Now turn to the text:—I. PETER'S PROPOSAL. 1. The principal thing right in it is the delight it manifests in the Redeemer's glory. 2. The wrong thing in it is a forgetfulness of the main business of life. II. THE ANSWER GIVEN to Peter's proposal. 1 Our highest enjoyments are sometimes put an end to by God. A cloud came between them and the vision. 2. When God interrupts our enjoyments, He has always some other blessing ready for us, and generally better. The voice which came out of the cloud was something better. 3. We must not judge ourselves by religious ecstasy. (*C. Bradley.*) *The Transfiguration*:—The necessity of having a few intimate friends upon whom one can rest in all the confidence of fraternal sympathy and love seems inexorable. Even our Lord sought such friends in Peter, and James, and John. 2. There was only one Transfiguration in the life of Jesus. Nor were all the disciples permitted to behold even that. This shows that the business of the Christian is hard work, and not the nursing of visions. Visions are rare, and sent only for the refreshment, not for the daily food of the soul. 3. Our nearness to the spiritual world and its supernal glories. Moses and Elias and the rest still continue to be interested in the plan of redemption, and in our personal relation to it. 4. Happy for us if, like Peter, we recognize the value of good company, and are ready to say when in it, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." 5. Glory and suffering are yoked together in this life. The Transfiguration is only a preparation for Calvary. 6. "Moses, Elijah, Jesus, the law, the prophets, the gospel; but the personal Christ is the centre, and the theme of all is the cross." And this will be the theme of the redeemed for ever. (*T. S. Doolittle, D.D.*) *The Transfiguration of Christ—its designs*:—I. To CONFIRM THE FAITH OF THE DISCIPLES IN THEIR LORD as the Son of God and the promised Redeemer. To His enemies He would give no sign; to the disciples He gave this. II. To INAUGURATE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS THE SUPREME HEAD AND LAWGIVER OF THE CHURCH. III. To APPRISE THE DISCIPLES OF THE DEEP AND INTENSE INTEREST FELT BY HEAVEN IN THE REDEMPTION ABOUT TO BE EFFECTED BY THE DEATH OF JESUS. IV. To SUSTAIN THE HUMAN NATURE OF OUR LORD IN THE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT AND THE ACTUAL ENDURANCE OF HIS UNEQUALLED SUFFERINGS. V. To DEEPEN THE CONVICTION OF THE DISCIPLES AND OUR OWN OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AND OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF DEPARTED SAINTS even in a disembodied state. (*G. Brooks.*) Let us contemplate—I. The Lord transfigured before us. Can we not truly say, in viewing Him, "It is good for us to be here"? II. Saints holding communion round about us. III. The world and its misery beneath us. (*C. Gerok, D.D.*) "*Lord, it is good for us to be here*":—It was good for the disciples now, for the following reasons. I. It confirmed their belief in a future state. II. It taught them that there was a spiritual body. III. It revealed to them Christ's Divine character and mission. IV. It prepared them for coming trials. Sorrow often follows closely upon joy. The joy prepares us for the sorrow. 1. It was good to be there; it would not have been good to remain there. There was work to be done, sorrow to be lightened, sin to be grappled with and overcome. (*F. J. A.*) *Peter's ecstasy of the mount*:—I. THE PLACE. The mountain emblematical of God's sanctuary.

As distinctly separate from the world. As the place of happy intercourse with kindred minds. As a place of hallowed instruction. As a place of glorious manifestation. II. THE ADVANTAGES. It is good—As it is acceptable to God, as it is elevating to the mind, as it is joyous to the heart, as it is truly profitable to the soul, as it prepares us for the services of heaven. III. THE SPIRIT WHICH IT SHOULD PRODUCE. A spirit of diligence in rightly using the means of grace, of love and zeal for the prosperity of Zion, of ardent longing for the perfected scenes of heaven. Application: Can you experimentally employ the language of the text? Seek the end of these Christian ordinances. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) I. THIS IS MY BELOVED SON. 1. The Father here comes forth from His concealment, and audibly addresses the disciples. 2. The momentous truth to which He bears witness is—the Sonship of Christ. This showed Divine love to man. This constituted Christ's fitness for the work of redemption. This forms the basis of our confidence in the atonement. 3. He characterizes Christ as His beloved Son. 4. For such a declaration there was the most urgent call. It had a reference to Christ, as about to have His Father's face hid, &c. It had a reference to His disciples, as about to be tried. II. IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. 1. The Father having declared His paternal love, next declares His satisfaction and complacency in Christ as the Surety of man. This regarded His Person, offices, work, people. 2. This testimony was repeated at His resurrection, exaltation, outpouring of the Spirit, every instance of a sinner's being saved. III. HEAR YE HIM. As a Lawgiver and King, as a Prophet. The manner in which He is heard. (*J. Stewart.*) *Prayer is the transfiguration of the soul:*—1. Because in it the soul receives light from God, that she may know Him and herself and all things more clearly. 2. By it the soul seeks and obtains grace to blot out the stains and vices by which she is deformed. In it she receives consolation for desolation; out of weakness she is made strong; from slothful she becomes fervent; for perplexity she hath understanding; for sadness, gladness; and for cowardice, courage. 3. She is raised above herself, and is lifted up to God in heaven, where she learns and sees that all the things of earth are fragile and worthless, so that from her lofty height she looks down upon them as fit only for children. She perceives that the true riches, honours, and pleasures are nowhere but in heaven. 4. In prayer she unites herself to God. (*Lapide.*) *Spiritual suggestions of the Transfiguration:*—I. This incident is valuable as bringing prominently forward the OBJECTIVE element in Christianity. II. As bringing prominently forward the DEVOTIONAL element in Christianity. III. The PROPITIATORY element. IV. The DIVINE element. The eternal Sonship of Christ. V. The PRACTICAL element. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *The Transfiguration:*—"Lord, it is good for us to be here." I. THIS EVENT HAD A SPECIAL EVIDENTIAL VALUE; it proved to St. Peter and to the other apostles with him that their Master's claims were not exaggerated; that in giving up all to follow Him, they were not making a mistake; that the religion He had taught them, and of which He was Himself the centre, had come from heaven. These Jews see their Master in the correspondence with the great lawgiver and the prophets. Also they were assured by the voice out of the cloud. Then our Lord's glorious appearance at the Transfiguration was exactly fitted to remove a prevalent objection to the second advent. That objection was due to sluggish imagination rather than to offended reason. The picture of the Son of Man coming in "the clouds of heaven" seemed to a certain order of minds too remote from all experience to be conceivable, and St. Peter's answer in effect is this: "We have been witnesses of an event which has prepared us for the second advent; we saw in the Transfiguration a rehearsal of the glories beyond." II. Besides contributing an evidence of the truth, the Transfiguration MARKED THE CHARACTER OF THE RELIGION OF CHRIST. It enabled the apostles to distinguish the inner and real value of their Master and His religion from the public estimate of Him. We are all of us affected by the spirit of the men around us. When they saw their Master transfigured, they saw that the vulgar estimate was not the true one; He was not to be measured by that which ordinarily met the eye. "The form of a servant" was but a veil; beneath it were the lineaments of the Lord of glory. In our own day there is a like difference between the popular estimate of the religion of Christ and the true one. But if a man can retire into the solitude of prayer, he may learn to take a different view of religious truth and life. It is not that he invests it with ideal qualities that do not properly belong to it; it is that he escapes from the obscure traditions which have hidden from him the reality. The Transfiguration marked Christianity as a distinctly supernatural religion. We can conceive that Christianity might have been merely natural; in such a system

the Transfiguration would have been out of character. The soul requires an object above this world. The Transfiguration is an answer to this need. III. The Transfiguration was a scene of glory; but it was something more—IT WAS A PREPARATION FOR A SCENE OF SUFFERING. "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Does not this show us the true use of a time of prosperity, whether in material or in spiritual things; to prepare for time of trial. Thus is it with nations: times of peace and plenty enable us to prepare for reverse. On the Mount of Transfiguration we should always hear whispers of Calvary. IV. THE RELIGIOUS VALUE OF OCCASIONAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ABSORBING INTEREST OF ORDINARY LIFE. Not seldom does He now, as of old, take Peter and James and John into a mountain apart, and is transfigured before them. He detaches men by some unforseen providence, by some great perplexity, by some great humiliation, by some heart-searching sorrow, from their surroundings, and from their past; He takes them with Him into a high mountain of thought and feeling to which they were previously unaccustomed, and they see how little hitherto they have understood either themselves or Him. Hitherto they have "known Christ after the flesh;" henceforth know they Him so no more. The prayers which had been long used, but with little sense of their meaning, are lighted up with force and pathos that makes them the very language of the soul; the Scriptures, which had been read only as a more interesting department of literature, are found to be, indeed, as St. Augustine calls them, "Letters from the heavenly country, describing all that is most important to know about God and about man;" the sacraments, which had been scarcely thought of, or which had been noticed only as graceless forms, are now seen to be channels of the life of the Divine Redeemer; fellow-Christians who had in former days been deemed uninteresting or stupid are now reverently looked up to as characters of rare and of unselfish beauty, whom it is a privilege and a blessing to approach. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The Transfiguration*:—I have seen men transfigured by love, by duty, and, in death, by faith. 1. Love was within Christ, perfect, undefiled, intense, filled with the joy of giving and blessing. On the mountain He let His love loose, and oh, what the face of Christ must have been then, when infinite love overflowed His eyes and trembled on His mouth, no tongue can tell. 2. And the mighty stress of duty, filled full with the ideas, infinite in beauty, majestic in truth, which He was yet to accomplish—that and these arose like a tide of light into His expression. 3. And He, too, had come to endure death, and here, on Hermon's side, He realized the last sacrifice. And death seemed to Him then, in that hour of the ecstasy of love and duty, not sad as it was when its power to subdue was brought home to Him by the sin and sorrow of earth, but most beautiful and joyous, full of glory and life. It was beautiful, for it was death for the sake of ideas of eternal beauty; it was joyous, for it was filled with impassioned love; it was glorious, for it was filled with the splendour of the truths He was through death to make alive among men. Therefore as He spoke of His death His face shone like the sun. II. WE SEE CHRIST HERE IN THE UTTERMOST REALIZATION OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION WITH GOD. Always God and He were at one; but the rapture of that union was not always present. From end to end, body, soul, spirit, brain, and heart were all vividly happy with the indwelling God. This the highest conception of prayer ever given to the world—the transfiguration of man through perfect and rapturous union of being with God. There were two special means through which that was reached, and they had been wrought by Christ always. 1. Obedience to God's will. A man must be free to pray perfectly, and no man is free who is under the yoke of his own will to do wrong, who loves pleasure more than God's righteousness. There must be the freedom of love; the man can pray and feel himself one with God. It is possible for him at rare moments to stand on the Mount with Christ and be transfigured. 2. The other element in Christ which secured this communion was loving as God loved. God is love. In giving He is blest and blesses. Such prayer cannot be ours; we are not able to obey and love as Christ did. III. HOW IS THAT PRAYER TO BE LIVED? Not in continued solitary contemplation. In the common tasks of life; making them the Father's business; in it finding communion, prayer. (*S. A. Brooke, M.A.*) *The permanent use of religious ecstasy*:—How short in this vale of tears are those moments—which we most rightly call the most salutary and most blissful of our lives—which beam on our mortal career, soon to be replaced by darkness; yet they are not altogether lost; they leave a dew which does not dry up; a meteor that anticipates our course; a fulness of hidden strength which never abates; a light against tempests, which comes upon us as sweetly as the rays of the moon. One takes, though uncon-

sciously, from such moments a new scrip for the long voyage; a new pilgrim's staff for the steep road, and a flask newly filled for the days of abode in the desert, wherewith the spirit is refreshed; the sails swell freely, the compass points with more force to the polo, and a season draws nigh when we delight in remembering the enraptured scenes on the Mount. (*Dr. Krummacher.*) *The fading of the light on Jesus' face:*—When or how the light died away we are not told. My own fancy is that it went on shining, but paling all the night upon the lonely Mount, to vanish in the dawn of a new day. When He came down from the mountain the virtue that dwelt in Him went forth no more in light to the eyes, but in healing to the poor, torn frame of the epileptic boy. So He vanished at last from the eyes of His friends, only to draw nearer—with a more intense and healing presence—to their hearts and minds. Even so come, Lord Jesus! (*George Macdonald.*) *The Transfiguration a window:*—The story of the Transfiguration is as it were a window through which we gain a momentary glimpse of the region whence all miracles appear. We find a marvellous change, a lovely miracle, pass upon the form itself, whence the miracles flowed, as if the pent-up grace wrought mightily upon the vessel which contained it. (*Ibid.*) *The influence of prayer on the face:*—Gambold, in a letter written while Wesley was in Georgia, tells us that Wesley at Oxford was always cheerful, but never arrogant. By strict watchfulness he beat down the impetuosity of his nature into a childlike simplicity. His piety was nourished by continual communion with God, for he thought prayer to be his greatest duty; and often did Gambold see him come out of his closet of devotion with a serenity of countenance that was next to shining. *The watch before the battle:*—For the disciples, the Transfiguration was intended to illuminate with a ray of glory the dark days that were about to begin; it was designed also to strengthen Jesus for His conflict. It was His first watch before the battle. (*De Pressensé.*) *The mountain, probably Hermon:*—It is impossible to look up from the plain to the towering peaks of Hermon, almost the only mountain which deserves the name in Palestine—and one of those ancient titles ("the Lofty Peak") was derived from this very circumstance—and not be struck with its appropriateness to the scene. . . . High up on its southern slopes there must be many a point where the disciples could be taken "apart by themselves." Even the transient comparison of the celestial splendour with the snow, where alone it could be seen from Palestine, should not, perhaps, be wholly overlooked. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Cloud on Mount Hermon:*—A strange peculiarity has been noticed about Hermon, in "the extreme rapidity of the formation of cloud on the summit. In a few minutes a thick cap forms over the top of the mountain, and as quickly disperses and entirely disappears." (*C. R. Conder.*) It almost seems as if this, like the natural position of Hermon itself, was, if not to be connected with, yet, so to speak, to form the background to what was to be enacted. Suddenly a cloud passed over the clear brow of the mountain—not an ordinary, but a "luminous cloud," a cloud uplift, filled with light. (*Edersheim.*) *The shining face:*—The face of Moses had shone, but as the moon, with a borrowed, reflected light; but Christ's shone as the sun, with an innate, inherent light, which was the more sensibly glorious because it suddenly broke out as it were from behind a black cloud. (*Matthew Henry.*) *Witness of Judaism to Christ:*—While false Judaism rejects the Messiah, the true owns and adores him in the persons of its two most illustrious representatives. The old covenant and the new meet together on the glorious Mount, as righteousness and peace shall soon meet on that other hill which is already before the eye of Jesus. (*E. De Pressensé.*) *The conversation:*—The very mention of Christ's death by such men as Moses and Elias, without any marks of surprise or dissatisfaction, was of itself sufficient to cause a great change in the sentiments of the disciples respecting those sufferings. Christ's assumption of this glorious appearance at the very time was a *visible* and striking proof to His disciples that those sufferings were perfectly consistent with the dignity of His character, and the highest state of glory to which He could be exalted. (*Bishop Porteus.*) *Peter's enjoyment of the scene:*—But what if the contemplation of Christ's glorified *manhood* so filled the apostle with joy that he was unwilling to be sundered from it, how shall it fare with those who attain to the contemplation of His glorious *Godhead*! And if it was so good a thing to dwell with two of His saints, how then to come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born that are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to those, not seen through a glass and darkly, but face to face. (*Anselm.*) *We must come down from the holy mountains:*—Where we have communion with God, and complacency in that

communion, and of which we are saying, "It is good to be here": even there we have no continuing city. Blessed be God, there is a mountain of glory and joy before us, whence we shall never come down. But observe, when the disciples came down, Jesus came with them. When we return to the world again after an ordinance, it must be our care to take Christ with us, and then it may be our comfort that He is with us. (*Matthew Henry.*) *Hear the Son*:—I. The Father's DECLARATION—"This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." No doubt there is an allusion here to Deut. xviii. 18. He is My Son, My own Son (Rom. viii. 32). II. The Father's COMMAND—"Hear ye Him." Hear ye Him, ye thoughtless men and women that dwell at ease (2 Cor. v. 10). Hear ye Him, ye self-righteous souls (Acts iv. 12). Hear Him, ye that have gone on in the ways of ungodliness and wickedness, adding sin to sin, iniquity to iniquity (Isa. xlvi. 12). Hear Him, ye men of delay, whose watchword is, "To-morrow." Hear Him, ye young sinners, whose is the bloom, the blossom, the springtime of existence, but who have not yet begun to live. Hear Him, ye aged sinners, whose is the hoary head, but that head not yet found in the way of righteousness (Prov. xvi. 31). Hear Him, ye backsliders. Hear Him, ye His tried and tempted disciples. He speaks—"It is I, be not afraid." (*J. Evans, M.A.*) *Attention*:—"Hear ye Him." I. WHY SHOULD WE HEAR HIM? 1. Because God Himself commands us. 2. Because He deserves to be heard. 3. Because His message concerns your present and future welfare. 4. With what zest should those of us hear Him who profess to be His disciples. 5. Sinners must hear Him in this day of grace, or in the day of judgment. II. WHAT ARE WE TO HEAR? 1. There is much to hear concerning the Person of Christ. 2. He has many varieties of utterance, but by whomsoever He speaks let us hear Him? 3. The word of the Lord is not always a voice of instruction, but of command. 4. He also gives the word of consolation. III. HOW SHALL WE HEAR HIM. 1. With devout reverence. 2. Believingly. 3. Obediently. IV. WHEN SHALL WE HEAR HIM? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Fear and its antidote*:—What was it the disciples feared? The voice from the opened heavens; the voice which some men think, if they only could hear, all doubts would vanish. If such men felt, under the Divine manifestation, so unnerved, what warrant have we for supposing that if a Divine voice spoke to us from heaven, we should gain any accession of faith? Let us learn to be thankful for the modes in which the Divine Presence is made known to us. Look at these disciples. I. THE LOSS OF THEMSELVES THROUGH THEIR GREAT FEAR. "And when they heard it they fell on their faces," &c. They were no longer the men they had been. This prostration sprang from the conscious nearness of God, and the voice from the cloud was the chief cause of this feeling. Are these not experiences which seem to rob us of our manhood: in great sorrow our powers seem paralyzed. We feel that it has brought us into the presence of God, and we are sore afraid. II. THE GRAVE SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WHICH COMES UPON US IN SOME CRISES OF OUR LIFE. Then the faculties we most want refuse to obey our bidding. The sudden outflashing of some great truth may fill the mind with fear. II. But there is yet another side to look at. We have been looking at the disciples, let us now turn to the Master. IN THE CONDUCT OF CHRIST TOWARDS THESE MEN THERE IS MUCH TO CHEER US. He did not leave them in their helpless condition. His love toward them is unchanged. He comforts as well as delivers from fear. (*J. J. Goadby.*) *Jesus only*:—WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO THE OTHER DISCIPLES AFTER THEY HAD SEEN THE TRANSFIGURATION. There were four things, either of which might have occurred. 1. They might have seen nobody with them on the holy mount; they might have found all gone but themselves. In such a case they would have been in a sorry plight, like those who, having begun to taste a banquet, suddenly find all the viands swept away; like thirsty men who have tasted the cooling crystal drops, and then seen the fountain dried up before their eyes. How many people after such experiences have nothing left of joy or comfort; the whole has been a splendid vision and nothing more. Nothing is left to bless the present hour. Christ is with us for ever by His Spirit. 2. They might have seen Moses only. Who would exchange Christ for Moses; the sun for the moon; love for law. There are many who see Moses only; they delight in outward ordinances, precepts and duties. They had bright visions once, but have relapsed into condemnation. 3. They might have seen Elijah only. Instead of the gentle Saviour they might have seen the stern-spirited Elias. 4. They might have seen Moses and Elias with Jesus, even as in the Transfiguration. Moses could preach the law and make men tremble, then Jesus could follow with His gospel of grace. Elias could flash the thunder bolt in their

faces, and then Christ could have uplifted the humble spirits. Would not the assemblage of such diverse forces have contributed to the greatest success. They were all merged in Jesus only; as the morning star in the sun. II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENED—"They saw no man save Jesus only." 1. This was all they wanted to see for their comfort—"Be not afraid." All the Saviour we want we find in Jesus only. 2. Jesus was enough for a Master—"No man can serve two masters." 3. He was enough as their power for future life. 4. He is enough as our reward. III. WHAT WE DESIRE MAY HAPPEN. That the great object of our thoughts, motives, and acts may be Jesus only. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Jesus only as a doctrine*:—As you grow in grace you will find that many doctrines and points of church government which once appeared to you to be all-important, though you will still value them, will seem but of small consequence compared with Christ Himself. Like the traveller ascending the Alps to reach the summit of Mont Blanc; at first he observes that lord of the hills as one horn among many, and often in the twistings of his upward path he sees other peaks which appear more elevated than that monarch of mountains; but when at last he is near the summit, he sees all the rest of the hills beneath his feet, and like a mighty wedge of alabaster Mont Blanc pierces the very clouds. So, as we grow in grace, other things sink and Jesus rises. They must decrease, but Christ must increase; until He alone fills the full horizon of your soul, and rises clear and bright and glorious up into the very heaven of God. O that we may thus see "Jesus only." (*Ibid.*) *Jesus only as an experience*:—You will see your need all the better if you look at Jesus only. Many a time an appetite for a thing is created by the sight of it. Why, there are some of us who can hardly be trusted in a bookseller's shop, because though we might have done very well at home without a certain volume, we no sooner see it than we are in urgent need of it. So often is it with some of you about other matters, so that it becomes most dangerous to let you see, because you want as soon as you see. A sight of Jesus, of what He is to sinners, of what He makes sinners, of what He is in Himself, will more tend to make you feel your need of Him than all your poring over your poor miserable self. You will get no further there, look to "Jesus only." "Ah," saith another, "but I want to read my title clear, I want to know that I have an interest in Jesus." You will best read your interest in Christ by looking at Him. If I want to know whether a certain estate is mine, do I look into my own heart to see if I have a right to it? but I look into the archives of the estate, I search testaments and covenants. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus only*:—Our life has its resting places, exposed to startling, rude alternations; but it has also, in the midst of all, its grand solace. The first of these truths is illustrated in—1. Our external personal circumstances. 2. Our intercourse with men. 3. Our Christian feeling. High joys seldom last long. Jesus, so to speak, loses His splendour, and comes down again from the mount, as a man, to His humiliation. The supreme solace is that Jesus comes down from the mount along with us. We learn to prize Him in proportion as we learn the deceptiveness of all beside. Out of our ecstasies, which often hide the reality, there comes a gift of God more precious than all—*Jesus Himself*. Whatever form He may assume, He is still the same; still the same whether He goes up the mountain with us, or comes down with us from the mountain. Our illusions vanish, but Jesus does not disappear. (*C. Bailhache.*) *Jesus only*:—Here is set forth the central theme of Christianity—*Jesus only*. This is the theme of thought for the scholar, of proclamation by the preacher, of discussion by the student, of delight by the saint. Not the splendours of transfiguration, but *Jesus only*; not the blessedness of the saints in glory, but *Jesus only*; not the law of the old dispensation represented by Moses, but *Jesus only*; not the prophets of the intermediate dispensation, represented by Elijah, but *Jesus only*; not the apostles of the last dispensation, as represented by Peter, James, and John, but *Jesus only*. (*Dr. J. H. Vincent.*) *Jesus only*:—I. OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE ON EARTH NEEDS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE SPECIAL SEASONS OF COMMUNION WITH JESUS. It was from the midst of the activities of His ministry that our Lord took His disciples to this "mountain apart." Our animal and mental life needs stimulating. II. OUR HIGHER SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES WILL NOT HAVE THEIR RIGHT EFFECT UPON US UNLESS THEY LEAVE OUR ATTENTION FIXED ON "JESUS ONLY." Some seek the evidences of their saved state, and find all their comfort in emotional experiences. It is "very good" to be alone with Christ, and to behold His glory, but we may forget, and lose sight of Him in the sense of personal enjoyment. This was Peter's error. The three disciples were permitted to behold this transfiguration of the Saviour, that their attention might henceforth be fixed more on Him and less on themselves. Do not seek rapturous religious experiences merely for their

own sake. III. No RELIGION WILL DO FOR US TO LIVE WITH, OR TO DIE WITH, BUT THAT IN WHICH WE SEE "JESUS ONLY." Ethical theories, philosophy, &c., will not do for us to live or die on. The simple gospel alone can give peace to the soul in life and death. (*T. Hands.*) *Nothing but Jesus:*—A Spanish artist was employed to paint a representation of "The Last Supper." It was his ambition to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and countenance of the Master; but he put on the table in the foreground some chased cups, the workmanship of which was exceedingly beautiful; and when his friends came to see the picture on the easel, every one was constrained to exclaim, "What lovely cups!" "Ah!" said he, "I have made a mistake; these cups divert the eyes of the spectator from the Master, to whom I wished to direct the attention of the observer." He then took his brush, and deliberately painted them off the canvas; for he was determined that "Jesus only" should be the centre of attraction and admiration. *Contrasts in life:*—Here in London we find, side by side, anxious, earnest, dutiful work, and thoughtless, frivolous, selfish indolence; great intellect expanded by culture and exercise, and stolid ignorance which will not learn; splendid abundance, and squalid want; health radiant in its present joy, and sickness suffering in its gaunt despair; cruelty, and kindness; generosity, and meanness; courage, and cowardice; in the same street—in the same house—some of these antitheses in the same heart! Observe—1. In the STREETS. Apathy and zeal, honesty and fraud, the athlete and the cripple, the millionaire and the pauper, the abstainer and the drunkard, the sister of mercy and the painted harlot, meeting and touching each other—joy and sorrow, good and evil, life and death. I passed by a great mansion glowing with light from roof to basement, with long lines of carriages hard by; and tapers glowed, and music breathed, and beauty led the ball. Not many days after I passed it again, and the stones were thickly covered with litter to deaden the sound of wheels, and I knew that sickness was in that house. And yet once again, and the rooms were darkened which had been ablaze with light, and there was silence where I heard the joyous music, broken now only by the sigh of the sorrowful; and again there was a long line of carriages, but they were filled with mourners, and at the head of all was the hearse. II. In our HOMES—what contrasts! Only an outer wall may separate the house where there is peace and contentment, where hearts are of each other sure, where there is the tenderness, the respect, the loyalty of true affection, where forethought and forbearance unite husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, master and servant, and bring domestic happiness—that only bliss of paradise which has survived the fall. Only an outer wall may divide this bright abode from the dwelling-place of jealous suspicion, fretful disquiet, sullen resistance, waste, lewdness, and tyranny. III. In our HEARTS—ah! you know, *you only*, the bitterness and the joy. Yes, you know the cold, dark shadows and the sunny gleams succeeding in such swift and strange alternation, like the uncertain glories of an April day. (*S. R. Hole, M.A.*)

Vers. 14, 21.—**And when they were come to the multitude.**—*The healing of the lunatic child:*—I. THE DIVINELY APPOINTED ALTERNATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (Mark. ix. 2, 17). II. SPIRITUAL WORK CAN BE DONE ONLY BY SPIRITUAL MEN (Mark ix. 28, 29; Acts xix. 13–16). Correspondence in the worker to the work to be done is never overlooked in any other department of activity. Who employs a plague-stricken nurse to tend a plague-stricken patient? Christ's own argument (chap. xii. 25–28); Satan will not cast out Satan. III. THE WEAKNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN APART FROM CHRIST. IV. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF FAITH. 1. The disciples could do nothing without faith. 2. The father of the lunatic child could receive nothing without faith. How this is to be explained. Faith is more than belief; it is a consequent putting of ourselves into connection with God. The wire must be brought into connection with the battery before it can be charged with electricity. The pitcher must be placed in connection with the fountain before it can be filled. V. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF FAITH. By believing we place ourselves in connection with Almighty God. What pool cannot the ocean fill? What earthly space cannot the sun illumine? No man, then, who desires to be saved, need despair. You cannot expel sin from your own heart; but the word of Christ is omnipotent. (*Anon.*) *The contrast:*—Life is full of changes and contrast. The best of man's quality and character is what he is in, and how he meets these abrupt and broken changes. I. CHRIST'S LIFE WAS MADE UP OF CONTRASTS. NOT ONE MORE MARKED OR EXTREME THAN THIS, AND NOWHERE IS CHRIST SO FULLY AND TRULY SUPREME AND SUBLIMELY HIMSELF. The contrast was painful to Him, painful to all

His soul in its love of the beautiful and true and right. What a descent it was! Every true life has such contrasts, and in them the true man is revealed. Christ found His lifework, not in His glory, but in the valley, and was there truly and fully the Messiah. The value of the vision and glory is but their gift of fitness for work and endurance. II. THE CONFUSED SCENE WHICH GREETS CHRIST IS A TRUE PICTURE OF LIFE, INTO WHICH WITH HEALING AND ORDER MAKING, CHRIST IS EVER ENTERING. 1. A sad picture of the world to-day. We are perplexed and almost despairful. 2. A sad picture of our own inner life, the home of so much strife, of so much unbelief. Our wondering question is often, Why could we not cast them out? (*S. D. Thomas.*) *The gracious welcome:*—"Bring him hither to me." 1. Whose words are these? 2. To whom are they spoken? 3. Concerning whom are they spoken? 4. What do they teach us? (1.) Something as to Christ. He is the great Healer, the sinner's one Physician. (2.) Something as to ourselves. Contact with Him is health, and life, and warmth. Into this close contact He invites us to bring others. And was any "brought one" ever sent away? (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *A grain of faith:*—The boundaries of the province of faith. I. FAITH'S LIMITATIONS. 1. The different ages of the Church have called for different kinds of faith. The faith of a miraculous age would not be the same with the faith of a period when God worked by ordinary operations. But even in the same period, and at the same moment, not only the measure, but the character of the faith of different men must vary. A common man at the time of Christ would not have been reproved as the apostles were for not being able to cast out an evil spirit, because it was an authority only given to the apostles. 3. Faith and its achievements must be as God is pleased to give it to every one. It is a pure creation of God in man's soul. 4. Every man's responsibility is just to use the faith, whatever its measure may be, which God has given him; he cannot go beyond it. Nevertheless within this the state of every man's faith depends upon the condition of his heart, and the life which he is leading. II. THE RANGES OF FAITH. 1. It is plain that everything hinges upon faith, that the success of faith does not depend upon the quantity, but upon the quality—"A grain." You may not be able to remove material mountains, but you can spiritual mountains of sin, care, and difficulty. God puts it into a man's mind to believe what He intends that man to do. But may we not mistake the leadings of faith? Yes: just as we may mistake the leadings of prayer and providence. The security is, in a scriptural mind, disciplined to know the still small voices of God. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Mysterious failure:*—I. That the honest efforts of God's servants MAY SOMETIMES END IN FAILURE. As Christian workers, we often think we succeed when we in reality fail, and the reverse. But in this case there could be no mistake. 1. It was a conscious failure—"Could not." 2. It was a failure without a redeeming feature. In the pulpit we sometimes partially atone for failure in the end by the good impression we made at the beginning, and the reverse. The demon was only exasperated to ten-fold fury, till the "lad" was flung "to the ground, and wallowed foaming." 3. It was a public failure. It was witnessed by the multitude, and among them the vindictive, sarcastic scribes. 4. It was a humiliating failure. This devil in the "lad" was too much for nine men, who were the divinely-credentialed ambassadors of Christ. II. That the failure of Christian workers MAY SOMETIMES BE A MYSTERY TO THEMSELVES—"Why could not we?" They had honestly tried; had no doubt done the like before; certainly they did it afterward; why not now? Everything appeared to justify them in looking for success. 1. They were Christ's chosen disciples. 2. They were His recognized ambassadors. He had confirmed their call by giving them the Divine gift of miracles. 3. They had not put their hands to a work which God designed for others. The very terms of their commission specified the work which they had tried to do and failed—"raise the dead, cast out devils." 4. No reason to believe they used their own names instead of Christ's on this occasion. No wonder they were humiliated and thunder-struck at such a failure. There is comfort here for all disappointed workers. The feeling of disappointment which prompted this question was a hopeful feature in their case. What we should be most concerned about is, not success, but downright honesty in our work. III. THE FAILURE OF MANY MEN IN THE PULPIT AND OUT OF IT NEED BE NO MYSTERY EVEN TO THEMSELVES. Many of us fail because we forget to take aim. Have you tried to "cast out devils," and failed? Tell Jesus about it. (*T. Kelly.*) *Hope in hopeless cases:*—I. THE DETAILS OF THE DEPLORABLE CASE BEFORE US. Physical miracles of Christ typical of spiritual works. 1. The disease appeared every now and then in overwhelming attacks of mania, in which the man was utterly beyond his own control. So we

have seen melancholy persons in whom distrust, despair have raged at times with unconquerable fury. 2. The patient at such times was filled with a terrible anguish. 3. The evil spirit sought his destruction by hailing him in different directions. So with distressed souls: fly to extremes. 4. This child was deaf. 5. He was dumb. 6. He was pining away. Men are a prey to their own unbelief. 7. All this had continued for years. 8. The disciples had failed to cast out the devil. II. THE ONE RESOURCE. 1. Jesus Christ is still alive. 2. Jesus lives in the place of authority. 3. Jesus lives in the place of observation, and He graciously interposes still. 4. Jesus expects us to treat Him as the living, powerful, interposing One, and to confide in Him as such. III. THE SURE RESULT. The word of Christ was sure; was opposed by the devil. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's life made up of contrasts*:—None of them more marked and extreme than this; and nowhere is Christ so fully and truly supreme and sublimely Himself. He needs no pause to fittingly enter the clanging discord of anger, despairing sorrow and rude scorn. He is alike supreme, touching manhood's apex in the mount, and mingling with manhood's depravity in ignorance and evil in the valley. And that not because He lived above and indifferent to each, but because, identifying Himself with each, He was true and great enough to subordinate all to His life's mission. The contrast was painful to Him, painful to all His soul in its love of the beautiful and true and right. From the peace of the Transfiguration glory—the heart's ecstasy touching heaven; touching God in its fellowship; the glad satisfaction of an ideal realized, His life's meaning and appointment found, all Moses promised and Elijah wrought for consummated—to the discordant throng of unhallowed passion and faithless failure. What a descent it was! And this even in a moment, as abrupt as from dream to waking. The change and contrast is infinitely sad. Suddenly Christ, from calm vision and peaceful vow, descending with the glory yet about Him, mantling face and form, is greeted with taunt and scorn, and the bitter cry of shame and despair. Hardly the cross was a sorer trial to the patience, earnestness, and love of Christ. Yet, in the midst He stands, all calm and good, all patiently laying aside His own pain to minister to others—His one concern the honour of the kingdom of man and God. Every true life has such contrasts, and in them the true man is revealed; they compel to the surface that which is most of a man—good or bad, weak or strong. In them we have the gauge of a man's piety and true devotion. It is easy to serve and worship and to be strong in our moments of vision and conscious contact with God, when His Spirit thrills us with joy and faith. It is possible even to brace ourselves up with ardour and enthusiasm for some notable and well-defined task; but to find swift following (all discordant) our vision, a bitter trial, and wake from peaceful resolve to stern reality of strife, and still be true, needs all our faith. It is possible only to the Christ-like man, and should be our aim and glory. (*S. D. Thomas.*) *The power of faith*:—When man has faith in God his nature so opens itself to be filled with God, that God and he make a new unity, different at once from pure heavenly divinity and from pure earthly humanity, the new unit of man inspired by God; and by that new unit, that new being, it is that the evil is to be conquered and the world is to be saved. Can we understand that? Let us take two simple illustrations which may make it plain. Look at the artist's chisel. Most certainly it carves the statue. The artist cannot carve without his chisel. And yet imagine the chisel, conscious that it was made to carve and that that is its function, trying to carve alone. It lays itself against the hard marble, but it has neither strength nor skill; it has no force to drive itself in, and if it had it does not know which way it ought to go. Then we can imagine the chisel full of disappointment. "Why cannot I carve?" it cries. And then the artist comes and seizes it. The chisel lays itself into his hand, and is obedient to him. That obedience is faith. It opens the channels between the sculptor's brain and the hard steel. Thought, feeling, imagination, skill, flow down from the deep chambers of the artist's soul to the chisel's edge. The sculptor and the chisel are not two, but one. It is the unit which they make that carves the statue. Then again, look at the army and its great commander. The army tries to fight the battle, and is routed. Then its scattered regiments gather themselves together, and put themselves into the hands of the great general, and obey him perfectly, and fight the battle once more and succeed. "Why could not I succeed?" the army cries; and the general answers, "Because of your unbelief. Because you had no faith. You separated yourself from me. You are but half a power, not a whole power. The power which has won the battle now is not you and is not I; it is made up of you and me together, and the power which made us a unit was your obedient faith. (*Phillips Brooks.*

*D.D.*) *Faith in action:*—It may be interesting and useful to consider in what way the apostles actually worked out the lessons which our Lord gave them concerning faith. The lessons which Christ gave them while He was yet with them were, doubtless, intended to guide them when they were left to themselves; He dropped into their minds many maxims, and precepts, and seeds of thought, which He knew that they would not understand at the time, intending that the things said should be brought to remembrance by the power of the Holy Ghost, and should then be comprehended in all their fulness, and be guides to their feet and lanterns to their paths. Well, then, how did they deal with the mountains of difficulty which they had to remove in order to lay the foundations of the Church? How did they put in practice the precept of their Lord, that they should command the mountains in faith to be removed? and in what way and to what degree did they realize the fulfilment of the promise that a command so given and backed by prayer should be forthwith obeyed, and that nothing should be impossible? It is plain that you may easily conceive a very wild and fanatical system of attempts to propagate the gospel being based upon our Lord's words literally taken. You may conceive, *e.g.*, of St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, instead of arguing calmly with the people and declaring the facts connected with the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, attempting some striking miracle which would batter down all opposition; or you can conceive of St. Paul at Ephesus, instead of pleading his cause in the theatre, commanding the great Temple of Diana to be removed and cast into the sea; in fact, you may conceive of a course of conduct as different as possible from that which the apostles with one consent and in their corporate capacity actually adopted. Look at the history contained in the Book of Acts, or at the incidental living history which comes out in the Epistles, and you will see that the whole work of the apostles is a combination of faith and prayer with judgment and calm, quiet, good sense; they were conspicuously what we should call good men of business; like all such men, they attended to small matters as well as great; when difficulties arose, they took counsel together, and discussed the difficulties at a general meeting; they framed rules when rules were necessary; they never forgot that in this world prudence is as necessary with regard to the kingdom of God as it is with regard to mere worldly success; this was the way in which the apostles founded and governed the Church of Christ. And yet the apostles would have been the last men to put trust in their own wisdom, or their business capacity, or their powers of organization. At all times of their ministry, in bright days and in dark, in the council chamber at Jerusalem or in prison for the name of Christ, in legislating for the churches or in dealing with individual hearts and consciences, in striving by all manner of means to cast out the legion of devils by which mankind was possessed, they would have in their minds such words as these. (*Bishop Harvey Goodwin.*) *Want of faith the source of weakness:*—How the whole story of humankind is like that scene which took place at the foot of Tabor, while Jesus was being transfigured on the top. You remember how, in Raphael's great painting, the whole story is depicted. Up above Christ is hovering in glory, lifted from earth and clothed in light and accompanied on each side by His saints. Down below, in the same picture, the father holds his frantic child, and the helpless disciples are gazing in despair at the struggles which their charms have wholly failed to touch. It is the peace of Divine strength above; it is the tumult and dismay of human feebleness below. But what keeps the great picture from being a mere painted mockery is that the puzzled disciples in the foreground are pointing the distressed parents of the child up to the mountain where the form of Christ is seen. They have begun to get hold of the idea that what they could not do He could do. So they are on the way to the faith which He described to them when they came to Him with their perplexity. Let the picture help to interpret them to us, and is not the meaning of Christ's words to His disciples this? He claims the disciples for Himself. He tells them that the reason of their failure is that they have been trying to do by themselves what they can only do when He is behind them, when their natures are so open that His strength can freely flow out through them. That, I think, is what He means by faith. The man who is so open Christward that Christ is able to pour His strength out through him upon the tasks of life has faith in Christ. The man who is so closed Christward that nothing but his own strength gets utterance upon the tasks of life has not faith, and is weak because of his unbelief. (*Phillips Brooks.*) *Reason of failure:*—Whence comes it that, when assailed by temptation, we so seldom conquer and so often fail? It is because of our unbelief—because we are fools, and slow of heart to believe all that God Himself has told us. We do not go

to Him first of all; we do not take His instructions, do not consult His revealed will as our first rule of action. Is it not so as regards that evil spirit whose name is Legion, whose accursed power we meet everywhere—not only in our streets, but in some of its manifold influences in our homes and hearts—the spirit of selfishness and sensuality, lust, intemperance, sarcasm, spite, hypocrisy, cheating, lying, meanness? We do not say, we have not faith to say, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out." We dare not say to impotence, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." We have more faith in ourselves; in clever legislation, compulsory education, commercial prosperity, in what we call "progress," in the discoveries of science. We will not read, or we forget, history—how all the great empires of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tiber, and the Tigris rose and fell as they realized that which was true and right in the religion they professed; how the golden glory of Babylon, the silver sheen of Cyrus the Persian, the brazen splendour which gleamed on the victorious arms of Alexander, the iron strength of Rome, were ground into powder as the stone fell upon them, the stone which the builders rejected, but which became the head of the corner and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land—the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and when in this season of decadence, and in the time of their visitation, they heard the war-cry of their conquerors, and staggered from the wine-cup and the harlot's lap to put on the armour which they could hardly bear, and the sword which they could scarcely wield, it was as they asked in their defeat, "Why could not we cast them out?" that the answer came, "Because of your unbelief; because you have ceased to believe in righteousness, and 'righteousness exalteth a nation.'" (*S. R. Hole, M.A.*) Had these disciples been not faithless but believing; had they prayed more frequently and earnestly; had they shown more of that self-denial which He taught and set before them, distrusted themselves and humbled themselves instead of disputing which should be the greatest, they would have cast out that evil spirit. But he perceived, and prevailed over, their want of faith. He said, "Jesus I know, but who are ye that utter His name, but do not believe in its power?" Perhaps the absence of the Master from those nine apostles made them doubtful and fearing among the unbelieving Jews; just as you and I, when we leave the church, or our place of prayer at home, or the company of those whom we most revere and who influence us most for good, are tempted to forget the omnipresent God, to be of the world worldly, and to set our affections upon the things of the earth. So to lose the power, the only true power over ourselves and others, which we have in exact proportion to our faith, our prayers, our self-denial; for they are inseparable, these three—trinity in unity. I. It is impossible to believe in our heavenly Father AND NOT TO GO TO HIM ALWAYS AS CHILDREN TO REJOICE IN HIS LOVE, to thank Him for His gifts, to be protected in danger, taught in ignorance, relieved in pain, and forgiven when we have done wrong. II. WE CANNOT REALLY BELIEVE IN HIS POWER AND LOVE WITHOUT GOING TO HIM AND PRAYING TO HIM OFT AND EARNESTLY; NOT FROM A MERE IMPULSE OF FEAR, in some sudden terror, in the great storm, carried up to heaven and down again to earth, in the valley of the shadow of death; but always out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned. And this true prayer does not begin when we kneel, nor cease when we rise. God has not only given us a voice to pray with, but a mind with which to think about our prayers, and capacities, and means, and time, and money, with which we may fulfil them. True prayer is prayer in action. Duty is prayer, and work is worship. III. SO IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE REALLY IN CHRIST, AND NOT TO PRACTISE SELF-DENIAL. To believe is to love, and to love is to obey. (*Ibid.*) *Spiritual failure—its cause and cure*:—NOTHING CAN BE BETTER THAN TO BRING OUR SPIRITUAL FAILURES TO CHRIST HIMSELF, AS DID THE DISCIPLES. "Why could not we cast him out?" So asked the baffled, eager disciples of old, and got their answer. So let us ask, and hear what Christ will say to us. I. CAUSE OF SPIRITUAL FAILURE. 1. Whatever the peculiar character of the malady, the disciples had had power given them to heal it (Matt. x. 8), which they had already freely and successfully put forth (Luke x. 17). This power was not unconditionally exercised. Some of the conditions of success depended upon the sufferers, some upon themselves. The cause of failure lay, not in forms or methods, &c., the mischief lay deeper down—"unbelief." 2. Are there none possessed with evil spirits within our ken? Do we not in this description recognize phenomena of *our own* life? 3. There are fair excuses enough; undue dwelling upon the evil to be cured; mere reasoning on the causes of evil; reserve and fastidiousness in dealing with religious topics; perfunctory methods of using the gospel means. II. CHRIST'S CURE.

There is no unnecessary upbraiding in our Lord's answer, no dwelling on the merely negative side of truth. From the mention of unbelief He passes at once to the power of faith. 1. Faith needs to be cultivated. In the Revised Version Christ's answer reads, "Because of your little faith." You may trust doubt to spring up readily and flourish easily, but the power to discern the invisible, and hold fast amidst a thousand discouragements our confidence in an unseen God, an unseen Saviour, and in the power of truth which as yet far from prevailing must receive due cultivation if it is to conquer. 2. Let it be clearly understood that while God's power in Christ works the miracle, our faith in that power is a condition of its operation and success. 3. This is no question of fervid enunciation, excited gestures, display of emotion. Faith may be small at first. 4. Our Lord's addition to this main answer to the disciples' query has an importance of its own. Faith in all cases needs to be sustained, but in special cases it needs to be specially sustained by (1) prayer; (2) fasting—self-denial. (*W. T. Davison, M.A.*) *The influence of earnest faith upon men*:—And so for the most part it is not abstract truth that wins men. I can read abstract truth at home and go to sleep over it; argue it out by myself and never be moved to alter my course one jot. What moves me is the sight of a man who is himself moved by the truth of what he proclaims, and in this high region of religious truth a man adequately moved in proportion to the importance of the truth he announces. A true herald of Christ is one who, not in the mere announcing of doctrine, but who in mien, gesture, tone, life, shows that he believes the God-in-Christ doctrine of the salvation of the worst of men who are willing to yield and obey. Such a herald of the gospel is everywhere a quickening power, a kindling flame. (*Ibid.*) *Faith not emotion or formalism*:—Those who would cast out devils in Christ's name are not like pagan exorcists to work themselves into a fever of excitement and imagine that obstacles will disappear before them because they shout and gesticulate. A man's manner may be as quiet or as impetuous as you please, but it should be the natural expression of the truth which animates all the powers of his being. There is electricity enough in nature, and at certain times the air is burdened with it, but a good conductor is needed if its energy is to be gathered and transmitted. And in this case the force is to be gathered, not that it may be dissipated in the earth, but that it may rend rocks and overturn mountains. A great problem of the day is the storage and use of electricity; but who is fit for a work like this, to be in any degree a vehicle of the Divine power to save men? Not the noisy assertor of self who reminds you of his own personality and agency at every turn. Not the formalist, the mechanical utterer of pious phrases, nor the mere excited rhapsodist; but only the man of single eye and pure heart, whose soul is inter-penetrated with the truth as it is in Jesus, and who believes with all his mind, and soul, and strength in its might and efficacy. (*Ibid.*) *The secrets of victory*:—Christ's power, first, last, middle; our faith in that power unhesitating, unshrinking, unwavering; earnest prayer to Him whose ear attends the softest prayer, accompanied by that self-discipline which the holiest saint knows he needs, and the humblest Christian should be the last to disdain, these are the secrets of victory. Constantine, before the great battle of the Milvian bridge, is said to have beheld in the sky a flaming cross, with the words, "BY THIS CONQUER." Only by the power of the Cross can the world be subdued; but only by the faith of its followers can the power of the Cross reach the world's heart and free it from the tyranny of the legion of evil spirits that now rule and riot there. Onward Christian soldiers, and by your faith help to win a world for Christ! (*Ibid.*) *The spirit of worldliness rebuked*:—I. THE EVIL. The efforts of Satan have been different at different times. Persecution; heresy; fashions of men; worldliness. II. THE REMEDY. Faith. By prayer faith is increased, also we shall be given less to luxury. (*S. Robins, M.A.*) *A man wholly consecrated to Christ*:—It is said that shortly before Mr. Moody began those labours which were so marvellously blessed, he was greatly impressed by the remark made by a Christian friend: "It remains for the world to see what the Lord can do with a man *wholly consecrated to Christ*." *The secret of power*:—Consider the principles which flow from this text. I. WE HAVE AN UNVARYING POWER. A gospel which never can grow old. An abiding spirit. An unchanging Lord. II. THE CONDITION OF EXERCISING THIS POWER IS FAITH. The Church to-day is asking the same question as the disciples. What is to blame? Not our modes of worship, &c. While leaving full scope for all improvements in subordinate conditions, the main thing which makes us strong for our Christian work is the grasp of living faith, which holds fast the strength of God. Faith has a natural operation on ourselves which tends to fit us for casting out the evil spirits.

Faith has power over men who see it. III. OUR FAITH IS EVER THREATENED BY SUBTLE UNBELIEF. All our activity tends to become mechanical, and to lose its connection with the motive which originated it. The atmosphere of scornful disbelief which surrounded the disciples made their faith falter. So with us. IV. OUR FAITH CAN ONLY BE MAINTAINED BY CONSTANT DEVOTION AND RIGID SELF-DENIAL. (*Dr. A. Maclaren.*) *The secret of Christian failure and success*:—They were justified in undertaking to cast the demon out, and ought to have succeeded. It was the right and privilege of their discipleship, and they were guilty of the harmfulness of their failure. And so with us, our demons and the world's demons have been subjected to us. Our duty and privilege is to master and exorcise them. And to the measure of our opportunity we are guilty of the world's evilness and our heart's weakness. It should not be Christ's direct act. Thank God it will be that if we fail, they shall at last be cast out; but it should be ours through the Christ-life and power with us. He has committed the work and responsibility of evil's overthrow to us, and sternly and awfully He will require at our hands the lives marred and wrecked by our failure. Our great need is faith in this power of ours. We want to know and feel we are not helplessly in sin's grip, nor weak though despised before evil's array and seeming sovereignty in the world. The world is ours as we are Christ's—ours to be conquered and won. (*S. D. Thomas.*) *Eastern epilepsy and mania*:—In Sidon there are cases of epileptic fits which, in external manifestation, closely resemble that mentioned in this verse. These fits have seized a young man in my house repeatedly; "And, lo! the spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and foameth at the mouth, and gnasheth with his teeth," and is cast down wherever he may be seized, and pineth away until you would think he was actually dead. Matthew calls him a lunatic, but, according to Mark, it was a dumb spirit. And there are cases in which the disease referred to accompanies, and in others it obviously occasions, dumbness. I will not say that such unfortunate creatures are tormented by an evil spirit, but I am sure that no cavilling sceptic can prove that they are not. (*Dr. Thomson.*) *Explanation of devil possessions*:—Many think that in the cases recorded we have but the symptoms of well-known diseases which, from their exceptionally painful character, involving loss of reason, involuntary or convulsive motions, and other abnormal phenomena, the imaginative and unscientific Easterns attributed, as the easiest mode of accounting for them, to a foreign power taking possession of the body and mind of the man. They say there is no occasion whatever to resort to an explanation involving an agency of which we know nothing from any experience of our own; that, as our Lord did not come to rectify men's psychological or physiological theories, He adopted the mode of speech common among them, but cast out the evil spirits simply by healing the diseases attributed to their influences. There seems to me nothing unchristian in this interpretation. But I have no difficulty in receiving the old Jewish belief concerning possession; and I think it better explains the phenomena recorded than the growing modern opinion. (*George Macdonald.*) *Prayer for a wicked son*:—Spener's prayer for his son:—Philip James Spener had a son of eminent talents, but perverse and extremely vicious. All means of love and persuasion were without success. The father could only pray, which he continued to do, that the Lord might yet be pleased to save his son at some time, and in some way. The son fell sick, and while lying on his bed in great distress of mind, nearly past the power of speech or motion, he suddenly started up, clasped his hands, and exclaimed, "My father's prayers, like mountains, surround me." Soon after, his anxiety ceased, a sweet peace spread over his face, his malady came to a crisis, and the son was saved in body and soul. He became another man. *A pitiable sight*:—Whoever has held in his arms his child in delirium, calling to his father for aid as if he were distant far, and beating the air in wild and aimless defence, will be able to enter a little into the trouble of this man's soul. To have the child, and yet see him tormented in some region inaccessible; to hold him to the heart, and yet be unable to reach the thick-coming fancies which distract him; to find himself with a great abyss between him and his child, across which the cry of the child comes, but back across which no answering voice can reach the consciousness of the sufferer—is terror and misery indeed. But imagine in the case before us the intervals as well—the stupidity, the vacant gaze, the hanging lip, the pale flaccid countenance and bloodshot eyes, idiocy alternated with madness—no voice of human speech, only the animal babble of the uneducated dumb—the misery of his falling down anywhere, now in the fire, now in the water, and the Divine shines out as nowhere else—for the father loves his own child even to agony. What was there in such a child to love? *Everything.*

The human was there, else whence the torture of that which was not human? whence the pathos of those eyes, hardly up to the dog's in intelligence, yet omnipotent over the father's heart? God was there. The misery was that the devil was there too. Hence came the crying and tears. "Rescue the Divine; send the devil to the deep," was the unformed prayer in the father's soul. (*George Macdonald.*) "*This mountain*" *as Hermon*:—There cannot be a doubt that the "high mountain apart" was one of the peaks of Hermon, which towers over Cæsarea. On coming down again from the mountain the lunatic boy was healed; and in such a position the force of Christ's rebuke to His disciples could be fully comprehended. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto *this mountain* [Hermon], Remove hence to yonder place [pointing down, perhaps, into the deep valley of the Jordan which lay below], and it shall remove." (*Dr. J. L. Porter.*) *Faith removing mountains*:—A grain of faith can remove spiritual mountains; mountains of guilt from the conscience, mountains of hardness from the will, mountains of earthliness from the affections. (*E. Polhill.*) *Faith that works wonders*:—All the marvels, all the apparent impossibilities, which men have wrought, have been wrought by the energy of faith. It is by his faith in the laws of nature, and in his interpretation of them, that the man of science has achieved the marvels which have altered the whole form and tone of modern life. It is by his faith both in the courage of his soldiers, and in his own power of handling them, that is, his system of tactics, that every great captain has won his victories, often snatching them from the very mouth of defeat. It is by his faith in men, and in his reading of the laws of social and political science, that every great statesman learns how to take occasion by the hand, and to make the bounds of freedom broader yet. It is by his faith in great religious principles and truths that every successful reformer of the Church, *e.g.*, Luther, has purged the Church from its accretions of error and superstition, elevated and liberalized at once her creed, her ritual, and her morality, in the teeth of both priestly and imperial power. By faith the early Church put a new heart into the decrepit Roman empire. By faith the reformers put a new heart into the northern kingdoms of Europe, and suppressed some, at least, of the most flagrant vices and superstitions even of the southern kingdoms who rejected their teaching. (*Almoni Peloni.*) *Power in a mustard seed*:—The mustard seed is one of the tiniest of seeds, although in the fierce heat of the Jordan valley it will grow up into a herb as high as a man on horseback, and throw out sprays on which the birds of the air perch and feed, attracted by its pungent fruit. Take such a seed into your hand and consider it, and you will find it hard, round, dry, and apparently dead and inert. Put it under a microscope and dissect it; and, small as it is, you will find that it contains a germ far smaller than itself in which its whole potency is summed up. Born in the air, nourished by the sunshine and the dew, it yet cannot live and appropriate their virtues while it remains in them, so long as it lies in the pod, or continues above the ground. But bury it in the soil, and soon a process of dissolution and disintegration sets in which is also a process of vitality and growth. Its main bulk rots, but rots only that it may feed the tiny germ of quickened life which resides within it, for even a seed must lose itself to find itself, must die that it may live. Through death it rises into a new life, pushes its way through what, compared to itself in size and weight, are whole mountains of obstruction and resistance, piercing clod after clod, and compelling each to yield its virtues, and to minister to its needs; until, at last, it rises into that fellowship with the air and the sunshine and the dew for which it yearned and was designed. "The mountains of the earth are dead in comparison with its life." Hence it commands them to be removed, and they obey. So astonishing is the vital energy of even the smallest seeds that "mushroom spores, which singly are almost invisible," have been known to lift large paving stones an inch or two from the earth in the course of a single night. (*Ibid.*) *The power of faith*:—I. The text speaks TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO FAITH. The disciples had failed through lack of faith. If we could but believe we should see difficulties vanish. 1. The sphere of faith. Faith has relation to man's spiritual needs; temporal needs not overlooked. The boundaries of faith are to be looked for in the promises. 2. How faith operates. By laying hold on God's power. To make His work serviceable to us it must be done in some way through our instrumentality. But the excellency of the power is His. 3. Its necessity. God's work cannot be done without our faith, He has so appointed. II. OF COMFORT TO THOSE OF LITTLE FAITH. 1. It may be little in two senses: in its object, or in its intensity. 2. Weak faith is faith. It lays hold on God like a thin wire touching a strong battery. 3. It can remove mountains. God will honour faith as such and

not because of its strength merely. (*G. T. Horton.*) *Power through faith*:—That power is put forth according to our faith. You have, perhaps, seen a steam-hammer, or clipper, which is most mighty to crush or cut thick iron like shavings. The force applied is steam, which seems almost omnipotent. But how is it applied? By a simple tube of connexion and a common valve, by which the steam is let in upon the ponderous apparatus. An infant could turn the tap. So faith simply turns on to any work we have to do the whole power of deity; yet He hath appointed us fellow-workers with Him, by entrusting to us this prerogative of faith. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 21. **By prayer and fasting.**—*Fasting a means of subduing sin*:—I. THIS DUTY OF FASTING ADMITS OF SEVERAL KINDS AND DEGREES. For in fasting as well as in feasting we may find variety. 1. The first kind is of constant, universal exercise. It obliges at all times and extends to all persons. This is a temperate use of the creature; in abridging the appetites of nature for the designs of religion. 2. The second kind of fast is of a total abstinence, when for some time we wholly abstain from bodily repasts. The remedy to be successful must bear some proportion to the distemper. Necessity gives place to extremity. 3. The third kind of fast is an abstinence from bodily refreshments in respect of a certain degree, for some space of time. We must distinguish between murder and mortification; Christ never destroys the body to save the soul. Self-denial is a duty, but not self-murder. The height of prudence is in all precepts, laws, and institutions to distinguish persons, times, and occasions, and accordingly to discriminate the obligation. II. THE QUALIFICATIONS THAT MUST RENDER THIS DUTY OF FASTING BOTH ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, AND EFFICACIOUS TO THIS GREAT PURPOSE. 1. The first is, that it is to be used, not as a duty either necessary or valuable for itself, but only as an instrument. There is no excelling in fasting itself; is any spiritual design carried on in it? 2. The second condition of a religious fast is, that it be done with a hearty detestation of the body of sin, for the weakening of which it is designed. Fasting means war against sin; who ever fought valiantly against him whom he did not first hate? 3. The third condition of a duly qualified fast is that it be quickened and enlivened with prayer. The reason of the fast requires the society of prayer for the procuring of good or deprecation of evil. David, Daniel, took this course. 4. The fourth condition of a truly religious fast is that it be attended with alms and works of charity (Isa. lviii. 4, 7). III. SHOW HOW THIS DUTY OF FASTING COMES TO HAVE SUCH A PECULIAR INFLUENCE IN DISPOSSESSING THE EVIL SPIRIT, AND SUBDUING OUR CORRUPTIONS. That it does not effect this work—1. Either by any casual force naturally inherent in itself, for if it did, fasting would constantly and certainly have this effect upon all who used it. 2. Nor does fasting effect this great change by way of merit, as procuring and enjoying the help of that grace that does effect it, it is impossible for a created nature to merit anything from God by way of reward. From whence then does this duty derive this great virtue? 1. It receives it from Divine institution. 2. Fasting comes to be effectual to dispossess the evil spirit, by being a direct defiance to that disposition of body and mind upon which especially he works. 1. It is a notable act of self-revenge. 2. It corrects the ill temper of pride. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Constant temperance better than occasional fasting*:—And whosoever struggles with any unruly corruption, will perhaps find, that the constant turn of a well-guided abstinence will, in the issue, give a surer despatch to it, than those extraordinary instances of total abstinence and higher severities, only undertaken for a time. As a land flood, it carries a bigger stream and comes with a mightier force and noise, yet presently dries up and disappears; but the emissions of a fountain, though gentle and silent, yet are constant and perpetual; and whereas the other, being gone, leaves nothing behind it but slime and mud, this, wheresoever it flows, gently soaks into verdure and fertility. This constant temperance, therefore, is by all means intended by the rules of Christianity; the constancy of which, running through our whole lives, makes abstinence our diet, and fasting our meat and drink. (*Ibid.*) *Obstinate sin to be overcome by strict fasting*:—Every remedy is successful according to the proportion it bears to the distemper: and certainly a cure is not likely to be wrought where an ordinary remedy encounters an extraordinary disease; where the plaster is narrow and the wound broad. Temperance is good, but that is to be our continual diet; and surely, that man is not like to recover who makes his food his physic. Where the humour is strong and predominant, there the prescription must be rugged, and the evacuation violent. We must leave the road of nature when nature itself is disordered, and the principles of life in danger. (*Ibid.*) *Necessity must give place to extremity*:—And the physician

is merciful, if he pines his patient into a recovery. In this case we encounter sin in the body, like a besieged enemy: and such a one, when he has once engarrisoned himself in a strong hold, will endure a storm and repel assaults: you must cut off his supplies of provision, and never think to win the fort, till hunger breaks through the walls, and starves him into a surrender. (*Ibid.*) *Fasting a help to virtue:*—Now, by all that has been said it appears, that fasting is required, not as a virtue, but as a help to virtue; and that by controlling its hindrance, removing its impediments, subduing the emulations of a contrary principle, and so enabling it to act with freedom. Otherwise, were there no reluctancy from the inferior appetites against a virtuous and a pious course, these arts and stratagems against the flesh would be superfluous, and we should have no more need of fasting than the angels or the blessed spirits have of eating. Could the mariner sail with as much ease and safety in a storm, as he does in a calm, he would never empty or unlade his vessel. (*Ibid.*) *Fasting joined with hatred of sin:*—If we have not first wrought our minds to a settled dislike and a bitter disgust of sin as our mortal enemy, all our attempts against it will be faint and heartless, our mortifications treacherous, and our fastings frustraneous; much like David's sending an army against Absalom with a design to save him, and to deal with him gently. It will be only an alarm to sin to put itself into a posture of defence, to retreat further into the soul, and there to rally together its strengths, and to secure itself by a firmer possession. (*Ibid.*) *Fasting joined with humility:*—It is not a mournful expression, a solemn dress, or a thin table, that God so much regards. It is the heart, and not the stomach, that He would have empty; and, therefore, if a man carries a luxurious soul in a pining body, or the aspiring mind of a Lucifer in the hanging head of a bulrush, he fasts only to upbraid his Maker, and to disgrace his religion, and to heighten his final reckoning, till he becomes ten times more the son of perdition than those who own their inward love of sin by the open undissembled enmities of a suitable behaviour. (*Ibid.*) *Fasting and prayer:*—Prayer, joined with fasting, is like "an apple of gold set off with a picture of silver." Now we have it at its best advantage; it shines bright, and it flames pure, like fire without the incumbrances of smoke, or the allay of contrary blasts. (*Ibid.*) *Fasting:*—No doubt the primary meaning of the word translated "fasting," is that abstinence from food which was practised by the saints of the Old Testament, by our Lord Himself, His apostles, and His Church in all times and climes, for the subjection of the flesh to the spirit. But the Church of England, while she commends and commands this Scriptural discipline, makes no severe definitions and lays down no rigid rule, for many and righteous reasons. I. Because no rules could be applicable to all, the young, the old, the weak, the poor. II. Because, if it were compulsory, it would become a mere form or evasion; *e.g.*, a fast from flesh meat might be only a feast on other dainties. III. Because a fast kept ostentatiously in direct disobedience to our Lord's warning that we appear not unto men to fast, would only be a feast of pride—the pride which apes humility. IV. Because under the gospel, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we fast by the love of virtue and our own choice, rather than by the coercion of any law. V. Because the best form of abstinence is to be temperate in *all* things. VI. Because bodily fasting is but a part of that self-denial which Christianity teaches, and which has a far more definite and comprehensive scope. True fasting is, to spend less upon ourselves, that we may have more to spend upon others; less upon luxuries and dainties, that others may have common food. (*S. R. Hole, M.A.*) *Fasting:*—When the greatest speed of a horse is to be tested, the trainer does not allow him to run at will over in the pasture, nor does he simply put him on a wholesale diet. He almost counts the straws that he gives the horse. He cleans and sifts the oats, and gives him the very best kinds He measures the horse's exercise, and every part of the horse is under the trainer's watch and care, that he may be in the finest condition when he puts forth his energy in competition. And shall a man do so much for his horse and nothing for himself? Shall there be no preparation, no discipline, no care as to diet, no training, nothing but going on through the linked year, Sabbath joined to Sabbath, taking things as they come, allowing themselves to move about as the current sweeps them along? Is that the wisest method of spiritual culture? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Extraordinary means necessary:*—When the Christian is buffeted with any temptation, or overpowered with a corruption, and cannot by the use of ordinary means quench the one or mortify the other; when the short dagger of ordinary prayer will not reach the heart of a lust, then it is time to draw out the long sword of extraordinary prayer upon it. Some poor souls complain that they

have come to the Word in their daily prayers, begged power over such a lust, resolved against it many a time, and none of these means cure it; what can they now do more? Here thou art told: bring thy condition to Christ in this solemn ordinance of prayer and fasting; this hath been the happy means of strengthening many a poor Christian, to be avenged on those spiritual enemies which have outbraved all his former efforts, and, like Samson, to pull down the devil's house upon his head. (*Gurnall.*) *National fasting*:—If we are not to expect that the devil should go out of a particular person, under a bodily possession, without extraordinary prayer, or "prayer and fasting;" how much less should we expect to have him cast out of the land and the world without it! (*President Edward.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men.**—*Christ's second announcement of His death*:—1. In rapid succession the Saviour brings before His disciples the great facts in His history as the Mediator—facts which have the most direct bearing on man's redemption and spiritual recovery. 2. His complete knowledge of His future, and the calm magnanimity with which He talked about these stupendous events, demonstrate Him to be superhuman. 3. What considerate kindness toward His disciples does this evince. For it was not only necessary that their material notions of His mission should be corrected (Luke ix. 43, 44); but still more necessary that they should be prepared for these wonderful events, so that when they come they should regard them as the fulfilment of His prediction and an argument for faith. I. THE SAVIOUR FORTELLING THE GREAT FACTS IN HIS HISTORY AS MEDIATOR. 1. He foretells His *betrayal*—"Betrayed into the hands of men"—"men to whom He was allied by nature, and from whom He might therefore expect pity and tenderness; men whom He had undertaken to save, and from whom therefore He might expect honour and gratitude; but these were His persecutors and murderers" (Acts ii. 23). 2. He foretells His passion and *death*. His being "killed" was the mortal termination of His sufferings, and nothing less would satisfy the rage of His foes. (1) The *manner* of His death is expressly mentioned (chap. xx. 17–19). (2) The Saviour declares the *necessity* of His sufferings and death (chap. xvi. 21). This necessity was independent of prophecy. To accomplish His redeeming purposes He "must" suffer and die. God cannot forgive sin on the ground of *mercy*. (3) The voluntariness of His sufferings and death is manifest. He foreknew all. He could have escaped all. He was free. The will of the Father did not coerce the Son. Besides, there can be no merit in exacted suffering. Herein, behold the wonderful love of Jesus! (John x. 18; Rom. v. 5, 6). 3. He foretells His *resurrection*. This event is not only the crowning evidence of His claims, and the commencement of His state of exaltation, but the demonstration of the sufficiency of His atonement (Rom. iv. 24, 25; i. 3, 4; viii. 34; Acts xvii. 31). If we are true believers we have a personal interest in every part of His mediatorial work. II. THE DISCIPLES SORROWING EXCEEDINGLY BUT IMPROPERLY. There is no evidence that their sorrow was on account of the sins involved in these coming events. And though it showed their love to their Master, it also disclosed their ignorance of the real character of His mission. 1. For if it was sorrow for *themselves* it was improper, because the accomplishment of these facts were essential to their happiness (John xvi. 7). How often we regret the loss which serves our highest interest! 2. If it was sorrow for their *fellow-men* it was improper, for His sufferings, &c., were the only means of their redemption and spiritual recovery. 3. If it was sorrow for their loved *Master and Lord* it was improper, for His sufferings, &c., were an essential part of His great plan, and the prelude to His glory (1 Peter i. 11). In His deepest agonies, He is an object for praise not pity—commendation not commiseration. (*A. Tucker.*)

Vers. 24, 27. **And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter.**—*Christ and the tribute money*:—I. ON WHAT PRINCIPLE CHRIST CLAIMED EXEMPTION. This tax levied for temple services. On no principle but that of His being essentially Divine, and therefore not bound to contribute towards services virtually rendered to Himself. Christ was His own Temple. II. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH, NEVERTHELESS, HE DETERMINED ON PAYING THE TAX. Not to put an occasion of stumbling in the way of others. How unwilling we are to withdraw pretensions. It requires Christian discretion to know when to give way. Christ surrendered no principle; He did not say that He was not the Son of God. He forbore from asserting it. III. THE MIRACLE BY WHICH HE PROCURED THE REQUISITE MONEY. Though the Proprietor of all things, He had made Himself poor

for our sakes. He here gave proof of superhuman endowments; omniscience and omnipotence. He knew the money was in the mouth of the fish; His power was felt in the waters. There was propriety in the miracle when we consider which apostle our Lord dispatched on this errand. Had St. Matthew been sent the money would have been got differently, as he was a tax-gatherer; St. Peter was a fisherman, hence he got the money from a fish. Christ put honour on this honest occupation. We are not to neglect means because we seem to need miracles. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The hidden coin*:—1. The Divine knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. A lesson of moderation. The coin was only enough to pay the tax. Christ had no desire for earthly possessions. 3. For the purpose of supporting the ordinances of religion. 4. Learn to trust our Lord in trying circumstances. (*C. J. Maginn, M.A.*) *Peter's money-fish*:—Christ here showed His Divine knowledge, and especially His power over the natural world. 1. Obedience to law is the true guarantee of individual safety, the preservation of justice and right, the peace of society. 2. Christ will use His mighty control of the material world to care for His followers as He did for Peter. 3. Let Christians remember, Christ has moved His treasury from the mouth of the fish to the loving hearts and purses of His people. 4. Now every Christian must cherish the idea, and act upon the recognized principle that God has right of property in all of ours as well as of ourselves, and that we are but agents to distribute, as God wills, what He has placed us in charge of as stewards. (*W. H. Anderson, D.D.*) Notice respecting our Lord—I. HIS POVERTY. Hence learn: Contentment and resignation, benevolence and liberality. II. HIS PEACEABLE SPIRIT. Hence take example—Of a candid spirit towards brethren who differ from us, particularly in meats and drinks; of prudence in our intercourse with the world, especially in attempts to do good. III. HIS DIVINITY. Learn, hence, that He is an all-sufficient Saviour and an Almighty Friend, a formidable enemy. IV. HIS SYMPATHY. He took on Him our nature, that He might sympathize with our weakness and suffering; He gives us a share in all His possessions (John xvii. 24; xiv. 2, 3). (*J. Hirst.*) *Nature attesting Christ's lordship*:—An old ballad represents one of our English kings as losing his way in a wood, and becoming parted from his retinue. A countryman, who met him, began to pick up acquaintance with him in an easy, familiar style, not knowing his dignity. But when the nobles, having discovered their missing monarch, came riding up, with heads uncovered, and lowly homage, the countryman trembled at his mistake. So the laws and powers of nature did homage before Christ, attesting Him to be their Sovereign, and authenticating the apostles as His servants and messengers. *The lessons taught by this episode and miracle*:—I. THE FREEDOM OF THE SON. To this position and privilege Christ here lays claim for Himself. What a deduction must be made from the wisdom of His teaching, and from the meekness of His Spirit, if that claim was an illusion! For, what did it imply? 1. That He had no need of a ransom for His soul. 2. That He needed no temple to worship in. II. THE VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION OF THE SON TO THE BONDS FROM WHICH HE IS FREE. Self-sacrifice even in the smallest details of His life. III. THE SUPERNATURAL GLORY THAT EVER ACCOMPANIES THE HUMILIATION OF THE SON. He so submits as, even in submitting, to assert His Divine dignity. In the midst of the act of submission, majesty flashes forth. A multiform miracle—containing many miracles in one—a miracle of omniscience, and a miracle of influence over the lower creatures, is wrought. The first fish that rises carries in its mouth the exact sum needed. The miracle was for a trivial end in appearance, but it was a demonstration, though to one man only at first, yet through him to all the world, that this Christ, in His lowliness, is the Everlasting Son of the Father. IV. THE SUFFICENCY FOR US ALL OF WHAT HE PROVIDES. That which He brings to us by supernatural act, far greater than the miracle here, is enough for all the claims and obligations that God, or man, or law, or conscience, have upon any of us. His perfect obedience and stainless life discharged for Himself all the obligations under which He came as a man, to law and righteousness; His perfect life and His mighty death are for us the full discharge of all that can be brought against us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Superfluities not to be coveted*:—The piece of money was just enough to pay the tax for Christ and Peter. Christ could as easily have commanded a bag of money as a piece of money; but he would teach us not to covet superfluities, but, having enough for our present occasions, therewith to be content, and not to distrust God, though we live but from hand to mouth. Christ made the fish His cash-keeper; and why may not we make God's providence our storehouse and treasury? If we have a competency for to-day, let to-morrow take thought for the

things of itself. (*Matthew Henry.*) *This singular miracle of finding the coin in the fish's mouth is unlike our Lord's other works in several particulars*:—I. It is the only miracle—with the exception of the cursing of the barren fig-tree, and the episode of the unclean spirits entering into the swine—in which there is no message of love or blessing for man's sorrow and pain. II. It is the only miracle in which our Lord uses His power for His own service or help. III. It is like the whole brood of legendary miracles, and unlike all the rest of Christ's, in that, at first sight, it seems done for a very trivial end—the providing of some three shillings of our money. Putting all these things together, the only explanation of the miracle is by regarding it as a parable, designed to teach us some important lessons with reference to Christ's character, person, and work. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Tribute*:—The whole point of the story depends upon the fact that this tribute-money was not a civil, but an ecclesiastical impost. It had originally been levied in the wilderness, at the time of the numbering of the people, and was enjoined as to be repeated at each census, when every male Israelite was to pay half-a-shekel for "a ransom for his soul," an acknowledgment that his life was forfeited by sin. In later years it came to be levied as an annual payment for the support of the Temple and its ceremonial. It was never compulsory; there was no power to exact it. Being an "optional church-rate," Jews who were or wished to be considered patriotic would be very punctilious in the payment of it. (*Ibid.*) *Christ identifies Himself with a life of poverty*:—The Prince is free, but King's Son though He be, He goes among His Father's poor subjects, lives their squalid life, makes experience of their poverty, and hardens His hands by labouring like them. Sympathy He learns in huts where poor men lie. (*Ibid.*) *The payment of tribute*:—I. IN WHAT SPIRIT WAS THIS QUESTION ASKED OF PETER? It was asked, not by Roman tax-collectors, but by Jews. It is most natural to suppose that they asked the question in a captious spirit. Such a spirit is a bad sign of the state of the heart, and of the intellect too. This is not the right spirit for attaining to a knowledge of truth; it is very dishonouring to God, and very likely to endanger the stability of our faith. II. WHAT ANSWER WAS GIVEN BY PETER? The whole character of the man seems to come out in his eager, positive, instantaneous reply. He was sensitively anxious for the credit of his Master, and he spoke without thought. III. HOW DID OUR LORD PREVENT PETER? IV. ON WHAT PRINCIPLE DID OUR LORD CLAIM EXEMPTION? As the Son of God He was necessarily exempt from an ecclesiastical tax. V. THE REASON FOR HIS PAYMENT. "Lest we should offend them." It is this delicate regard for the scruples of others which constitutes the occasion so signal an example to ourselves. VI. OBSERVE THE DIGNITY, AS WELL AS WISDOM, OF THE MIRACLE. It is Christ's royal mode of answering all cavils. The very *triviality* (so to speak) of this miracle is part of its greatness. How minute is the knowledge of Christ! How vigilantly He watches all the things He has made! There is not a fish on a summer day under the shadow of a stone that is not God's creature still. (*Dean Howson.*) *A likeness between what God does and what man invents*:—They say the story of a fish with a piece of money in its mouth is more like one of the tales of Eastern fiction than a sober narrative of the quiet-toned gospel. I acknowledge a likeness: why might there not be some likeness between what God does and what man invents? But there is one noticeable difference: there is nothing of colour in the style of the story. No great rock, no valley of diamonds, no earthly grandeur whatever is hinted at in the poor bare tale. Peter had to do with fishes every day of his life: an ordinary fish, taken with the hook, was here the servant of the Lord—and why should not the poor fish have its share in the service of the Master? Why should it not show for itself and its kind that they were utterly His? that along with the waters in which they dwelt, and the wind which lifteth up the waves thereof, they were His creatures, and gladly under His dominion? What the scaly minister brought was no ring, no rich jewel, but a simple piece of money, just enough, I presume, to meet the demand of those whom, although they had no legal claim, our Lord would not offend by a refusal: for He never cared to stand upon His rights, or treat that as a principle which might be waived without loss of righteousness. I take for granted that there was no other way at hand for these poor men to supply the sum required of them. (*George Macdonald.*) *The payment of the tribute money*:—I. The extreme POVERTY of Christ. II. The strict INTEGRITY of Christ, "render to all their due." III. The peculiar RELATIONSHIP of Christ, "The Father's house." IV. The admirable PRUDENCE of Christ. V. The wonderful KNOWLEDGE of Christ. VI. The BOUNDLESS POWER of Christ.

(*Expository Outlines.*) *Finding the tribute money*:—I. The MODESTY of Jesus. Rather than offend prejudice He would waive His claim—the children are free. II. The POVERTY of Jesus. III. The RESOURCES of Jesus. Though He had not the money, He knew where it was. If God dare trust His people He would put them in the way of getting wealth that now lies waste. IV. GOD DOES NOT OFTEN ACT WITHOUT HUMAN AGENCY. He uses the best means—Peter was a fisherman. V. HE WHO WORKS FOR JESUS IS SURE TO GET HIS PAY. "And give unto them for thee and me." Peter in obeying Christ paid his own taxes. In keeping His commandments there is great reward. (*T. Champness.*) *The Divine resource*:—This is true of everything that God needs. He can help Himself to what He wants out of Satan's lockers. Was not Saul of Tarsus as much out of the Church's reach as the piece of money many fathoms deep? And yet Christ put a hook in Satan's nostril, and brought Saul to make many rich by circulating among the heathen. It may be that some of us may live to see the work of God carried on by hands now used to build forts for Satan to occupy. Was not Luther the monk as much hidden as the piece of money? And it may be that from the Romish communion we may get some one who shall be as effective as he was. (*Ibid.*) *The Temple Tax: An illustration of the Sermon*:—Our Lord had been preaching humility to His disciples; now He exhibits it in His own self-humiliation. He would say in effect, "Were I covetous of honours I should stand on my dignity as the Son of God, and claim to be free from servile obligations; but I suffer my honours to fall into abeyance, and make no demands for a recognition which is not voluntarily conceded." I. The MANNER of payment was also so contrived by Him as to reinforce the lesson. He gave directions as the Lord of nature to whom all creatures in land or sea were subject. "Behold who it is that pays this tax and that is reduced to such straits; it is He who knoweth the paths of the sea." II. The REASON which moved Him to adopt the policy of submission to what was in itself an indignity, "Lest we should offend." How careful was our Lord not to offend. He did not take offence. He did not resent the demand for tax as an insult. The lowly one did not assume this attitude, but gave what was asked without complaint. It teaches the children of the kingdom not to murmur because the world does not recognize their status and respect their dignity. They must wait for the manifestation of the sons of God. III. A lesson for those who consider themselves aggrieved by demands for "church rates" and "annuity taxes." Let the children be free if possible, but beware of imagining that it is necessary for conscience' sake always to resist indignities, and to fight for a freedom which mainly concerns the purse. It is not a mark of greatness in the kingdom to bluster about rights. The higher one rises in spiritual dignity the more he can endure in the way of indignity. The humility of Jesus was thus shown in not *taking*, so His love was manifested by His solicitude to avoid *giving*, offence. "Lest we should offend." How happy for the Church and world if this conciliating spirit ruled. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER XVIII.

VER. 1. **Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?**—*The greatest in the kingdom of heaven*:—I. THE OCCASION OF THIS QUESTION. The payment of the tribute money (Matt. xvii.) They might have learnt from hence humility and obedience to princes, though tyrants exacting that which is not due; and a willingness to part with their right rather than to offend. But prejudice makes Christ's humility an occasion of evil. Some of the Fathers were of opinion that the disciples, when they saw Peter joined with Christ in this action of the tribute, did imagine that he was preferred before them. The true explanation is that "We trusted that this had been he" (Luke xxiv. 21). Can Christ do this, and thus submit Himself? Can He be a king that thus pays tribute. This, instead of teaching the disciples humility, foments their pride. II. THE PERSONS THAT MOVE THE QUESTION—"The disciples." The disciples had been instructed that the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, yet conceit shut their understanding against the truth. "Ambition finds a pillow to sleep on even in the bosom of disciples themselves." Satan makes snares of our own desires. He maketh curious nets, entangles our fancy, and we straight

dream of kingdoms. "Who shall be greatest?" They are not always the worst men that put this question. 1. And this we need not much marvel at, if we consider the nature of this vice. It is a choice vice, preserved by the devil to abuse the best; this weed only grows in a fat soil. Base natures seldom bear it. What cares the covetous person for honour, who will bow to dirt? 2. It is a vice to which the world is much beholden, and therefore finds more countenance than any. Ambition has been productive of the world's chiefest books and deeds. 3. It is a vice which amongst many men hath gained the reputation of virtue. It is the kindler of industry. Inferences:—1. Prejudice kept the disciples so long from the true knowledge of the Messias who had been so long with them. Prejudice puts out the eye of our judgment. So dangerous was it to the disciples that no words or miracles could root it out; not till the fiery tongues consumed it (Acts ii. 2. 3). 2. Since the devil made use of this error of the disciples, and attempted them where they were most open to him, let us as wise captains used to do, double our watch, and strengthen our weakest part. If the disciples leave all and follow Christ, he will tempt them with honour. 3. Let us not seek the world in the Church, nor honours and preferments in the kingdom of Christ. Let us not fit religion to our carnal desires, but lay them down at the foot of religion. Let Christianity swallow up the world in victory. Let us clip the wing of our ambition, and the more beware of it because it carries with it the show of virtue. III. THE QUESTION ITSELF. The disciples were mistaken in the terms of their question, for neither is greatness that which they supposed, nor the kingdom of heaven of that nature as to admit of that greatness which their fancy had set up. In this kingdom Lazarus may be ruler over Dives. The difference between this kingdom and the kingdoms of this world. 1. The subjects of this kingdom are unknown to any but God Himself. 2. Of this kingdom there is no end. 3. The seat of this kingdom is the hearts of the faithful. 4. Their laws are different. It is a common error amongst men to judge of spiritual things by carnal. Goodness is greatness. Let us seek for honour; but seek for it in its own coasts; let us look up to the highest heavens where its seat is. (*A. Farindon, B.D.*) *Prejudice fruitful of mistake:*—For all mistake is from the eye, all error from the mind, not from the object. If the eye be goggle or mis-set, if the mind be dimmed with malice or ambition and prejudice, it puts upon things what shape it pleaseth, receiveth not the true and natural species they present, but views them at home in itself, as in a false glass (which renders them back again as it were by reflexion), which is most deceitful. This makes gods and sets up idols in itself, and then worships them. And this is the reason why Christ is so much mistaken, why the gospel of Christ receives such different entertainment. Every man lays hold on it, wrests it to his own purpose, works it on his own anvil, and shapes it to his own fancy and affection. (*Ibid.*) *Desires turned into snares:*—The craft of Satan is various, and his wiles and devices manifold. He knows in what breast to kindle lust, into which to breathe ambition. He knows whom to cast down with sorrow, whom to deceive with joy, whom to shake with fear, and whom to mislead with admiration. He searcheth our affections, he fans and winnows our hearts, and makes that a bait to catch us withal which we most love and most look upon. "He fights," as the father speaks, "with ourselves against ourselves;" he makes snares of our own desires, and binds and fetters us up with our own love. If he overcome us with his more gross temptations, he insults: but if he fail there, he then comes towards us with those temptations which are better clothed and better spoken. He maketh curious nets, entangles our fancy, and we straight dream of kingdoms. Like a wise captain, he plants all his force and artillery at that place which is weakest and most attemptable. We see the disciples' hearts were here the weakest, and here lay most open: hither therefore the devil directs his darts, here he placeth his engines, to make a breach. So dangerous a vice is ambition; and so hard a thing it is even for good men, for mortified persons, for the disciples of Christ to avoid it! (*Ibid.*) *Greatness adds nothing to virtue:*—Nothing accrues to a good man when he rises and comes on in the world; nothing is defalked from him when he falls and decays. The steed is not the better for his trappings; nor doth the instrument yield sweeter music for its carved head, or for the ribbon which is tied unto it. (*Ibid.*) *Greatness adds nothing to comfort:*—It is but a fancy, and a vain one, to think there is most ease and most content in worldly greatness, or that we sleep best when our pillow is highest. Alas! when our affrighted thoughts shall awake each other, and our conscience put forth her sting; when those sins shall rise up against us, by which we have climbed to this pitch; all the honour of the world will not give

his case. (*Ibid.*) *Ambition corrected:*—I. A STRANGE INQUIRY. 1. They did not inquire about character, but persons. 2. They did not perceive the nature of His kingdom. 3. They thought of the crown without the cross. 4. They set up a mistaken claim. 5. They forgot the Saviour's omniscience. II. AN INSTRUCTIVE REPLY. 1. It shows a danger. 2. It teaches a necessity. 3. It speaks a privilege. (*Congregational Pulpit.*) *The peerage of the kingdom:*—I. THE QUESTION. It showed ignorance, pride, selfishness. II. THE ANSWER. Learn: The way of entrance. The principle of recompense, not merit; not personal worth and greatness. The acknowledgment of unworthiness even to get in at all. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The members of Christ's kingdom:*—I. None but the childlike are in the kingdom at all. The entering implies a "conversion," a turning of the back upon the old course of life, and setting the face in the opposite direction. II. The most childlike are the greatest. That which is most admirable in a Christian man, and the mark of truest greatness, is childlike humility. III. The childlike are Christ's truest representatives in the world. (*Dr. Culross.*)

Vers. 2–5. **And Jesus called a little child unto Him.**—*Christian humility:*—The question of the disciples brings them very distinctly before us, and makes them very real to us, as men like unto ourselves. Nothing can be more artless, and evidently truthful, than their representation in these Gospels of their own thoughts and conduct. How beautifully does Jesus rebuke all this. What a profound and original idea of greatness does this unfold! I. THE COMMENDATION OF HUMILITY. That humility is not set forth as the sole condition of the heavenly estate. The Saviour's words do not limit the entire range of Christian character to this one quality. It is its secret fountain. What humility is not. 1. Humility is not a weak and timid quality. It must be distinguished from a grovelling spirit. We should think something of our humanity, and not cast it under men's feet. Servants to all; servile to none. 2. It is not to be confounded with that morbid self-abasement which grows out of certain religious views. We may well be humble when we see the infinite love against which we have sinned. 3. Genuine humility is not incompatible with a consciousness of merit; for a secret persuasion of power is the spring of noble enterprise. The consciousness of possessing something is essential to the sense of deficiency which makes us truly humble. 1. Now see how humility lies at the base of all true greatness. We instinctively associate humility with greatness. We always suspect ostentation. 2. The weakness which pride covers, but does not obviate, in the matter of dress and show. It is a great thing for a man to know and feel that he is a man; it is a great thing for him to understand where he is, and to profess what he is. Humility is the spring of all intellectual greatness; also of religious. The man who is convinced that he is perfect, the farthest from being perfect. "God be merciful to me, a sinner," is the spring of all real acquisition in religious things. The child's humility is unconscious; man's humility is reached by experience. 3. The child-like relation in all who in any degree enter into the sphere of Christian faith and feeling. Christ would bring all men to filial dependence upon God. There is no humility without love and confidence; subjection to a tyrant is not humility; but the reverence which I give to a father. (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) *Greatness determined by use, not extent:*—When you take the loftiest standards in comparison, who is filling a great sphere in God's universe? What king, what president, what statesman, what man of pride and renown, is filling a great sphere? But the moment you come down and take the ordinary earthly standards, the true test of any man's condition is the uses to which he puts it—and to which the Almighty Himself puts it. The uses of a thing make it great, not its extent. The uses of the wayside spring, that refreshes the traveller's march; or the flower that grows at the foot of awful ice-peaks and battlemented crags, unfolding all the summer long its beautiful parable of Providence and love—who can limit the usefulness of that? and who can say that it is nothing, because its sphere is little? (*Ibid.*) *Humility the spring of intellectual greatness:*—The humbler men are, the greater they are. What are the proudest triumphs of our day, intellectually speaking? They are in little things. The great men of our day do not construct cosmologies; do not sit down and build up great theories of the universe. We laugh at such things; we suspect their soundness at once. When a man comes to us and tells us that he has a new theory of creation, we begin to think whether he had not better have a theory of his own sanity. The things which occupy the greatest minds of our day are the little sparks of electricity, the little wayside shells,

the blossoms, the infusoriæ myriad-fold that hang in a single drop of water. Down in the little lowly things men find the great secret of the world; away down they begin to find the spring and sources of things, and the profoundest books of science are founded on these little ordinary, unobserved affairs. Humility is the spring of all intellectual greatness. (*Ibid.*) *The unconscious humility of a child combined with the experience of a man*:—But we have—and let us thank God that we have—something better than childhood's innocence, if we have lived truly and Christ-like. We have strength to overcome evil which the child must learn; we have a power to trample sin underneath us that the child must undergo much to gain; we have not the innocence of Eden, but by God's help and Christ's example we may have the victory of Gethsemane. It is a great thing to have the humbleness of a child. But it is to be joined with the consciousness and the effort of the man. (*Ibid.*) *The spiritual worth of childhood*:—But, moreover, there is testimony in Christianity, not only for the love of God to the child, but to the spiritual worth of the child. The child illustrates the value of the soul as Christ brings it before us here. Now, observe, there is no materialistic theory that would be consistent with the way in which Christ treats the child, because, on the materialistic theory, everything grows upward, grows wider and better. But the doctrine of the text is not the doctrine of development; we must go back to childhood again; we don't develop humility. We may develop physical strength; we may develop intellectual splendour; we may develop imagination or reason, but we do not develop humility. In that the child has the advantage of us. If it were merely material, why should not the child have less humility than the man? No; we come back to the child's condition, in some respects; and that illustrates the child's share of our common spiritual nature. And here is the reason why we find the element of greatness set forth as it is by Jesus Christ. Greatness is in spiritual power; it is not an outward attainment that the man can attain and the child can not. It is not any outside clothing; it is not in crowns; it is not in the world's fame; it is a spiritual quality, and the child has that spiritual quality which is the condition of all greatness. (*Ibid.*) *The nature and necessity of conversion*:—I. The NATURE of conversion. A change of character (Psa. li. 13; Acts xiii. 19; James v. 20) implies—1. A change of mind. 2. A change of heart. 3. Followed by a change of conduct. Regulated by the word of God. II. The EFFECT of conversion. Its subjects become as little children, not, indeed, in every respect—ignorance, idleness, &c. But, 1. In the affectionate dispositions of their hearts towards each other. 2. In simplicity and sincerity. 3. In humility and lowliness of mind. III. The NECESSITY of conversion. 1. What we are to understand by the kingdom of heaven. 2. The necessity of conversion in order to enter into this kingdom. The unconverted have no right to, and no meetness for, this kingdom. Were it possible for them to enter they would still be unhappy. (*R. Treffrey.*) *The necessity of conversion*:—I. The NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, and what is implied in entering into it. 1. The kingdom of Christ is, His reign in and over mankind. It must be considered in two states and periods—(1) In a state of imperfection, warfare, and suffering on earth. (2) In a state of perfection, triumph and joy in heaven. 2. We enter this kingdom by becoming members of Christ's true Church—militant, triumphant. II. The NATURE of this conversion, or in what sense we must be converted and made like little children, in order to our entering into this kingdom. 1. It implies being turned from self to Christ; from the world, and sin, &c. 2. It implies being inwardly changed, understanding enlightened, &c. 3. Conversion makes us like little children—sincere, humble, &c. 4. The works of conversion. Light in the understanding; love to the godly; obedience to all God's commands; hatred to, and victory over all known sin; avoiding temptation, &c. III. The absolute NECESSITY of this conversion. Unconverted persons are unfit for heaven. (*Joseph Benson.*) *Conversion*:—The occasion of this remark was like the manifestation of a desire for pre-eminence. I. The NATURE of conversion. II. THE EVIDENCE OF IT IS THE DISPOSITION OF A CHILD. 1. A disposition which is the opposite of an ambitious spirit. 2. A child is confiding. It trusts its parents. 3. A child is submissive. III. WHY THIS CHANGE IS NECESSARY. Because the disposition of a child is the only one that agrees with our relation to God. This will apply—1. To our ignorance. 2. To our weakness. 3. To our guilt and pollution. IV. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THIS DISPOSITION. 1. The peace it gives. 2. The security it affords. God cares for us. 3. It places us in our normal relation to God. 4. It secures our admission into the kingdom of God, of which Christ is the head and centre. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) This teaches us all—I. The necessity of humility in order to salvation. II. That

even converted souls have need of a daily conversion. III. How abominable in the eyes of God ambition and pride are in any, especially in ministers of the gospel. IV. That in the Church the way to be great is to be humble. V. That true humility consists in a mean opinion of ourselves, not minding high things, not being wise in our own conceits, in honour preferring one another. (*M. Pool.*) *Conversion:*—Let us see what "turn" is necessary before we can be Christians. I. It is evident that we are all too much men and women, else it would not have been said, "Turn and be children." 1. We as men fancy ourselves independent and self-sufficient; we must get back to simplicities, self-renunciation, to a babyhood of trust. 2. To be a little child is to be in a state to receive. Be a little child in the lowest form and receive discipline. 3. This image does not convey the idea of a perfectly new being, but of an old being begun again, that it may do better. 4. There is another beautiful trait of childhood, purity. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Conversion; its nature, effects, and importance:*—I. ITS NATURE. II. THE EVIDENCES of conversion. 1. A child is inquisitive. 2. Teachable in his disposition. 3. A child believes the testimony of his parents. III. ITS NECESSITY. (*J. Williams, M.A.*) *Conversion:*—I. THE TEMPER THAT DISTINGUISHES THE SUBJECTS OF DIVINE GRACE. "As little children." Not like them in ignorance, not in fickleness, not in waywardness. Little children are teachable and ready of belief; are devoid of malignity; are characterized by humility. II. THE WAY IN WHICH WE ARE TO ATTAIN IT. We must be "converted" and "become as little children." 1. The temper we are required to possess is not in us naturally, but is the consequence of a Divine change. 2. The change is to be judged of by its effect. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF POSSESSING THIS TEMPER. "Ye shall not enter," &c. This exclusion—1. The most awful. 2. The most unavoidable. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." 3. The most universal. 4. What a difference there is between the opinion of the world and the judgment of God. (*W. Jay.*) I. CHILDLIKENESS IS THE TEST OF GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Resemblance to children, not in ignorance or in fickleness, but—1. In a teachable spirit (Acts ix. 6; x. 33; xvi. 30). 2. In a consciousness of weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9; Phil. iv. 13). 3. In a dependent spirit (Matt. vi. 31; Phil. iv. 18, 19). 4. In freedom from ambition (Rom. xii. 16). 5. In a forgiving temper (1 Cor. xiv. 20; Eph. iv. 32). II. THE DEGREE OF CHILDLIKENESS IS THE MEASURE OF GREATNESS. 1. Because it raises its possessor in the scale of our excellence. 2. Because it qualifies its possessor for higher usefulness. 3. Because it assimilates its possessor more nearly to the Redeemer. 4. Because it secures for its possessor a more exalted position in the heavenly world. (1) The necessity of conversion. (2) The beauty of humility. (3) The attraction of heaven. (*Various.*) *Humility:*—1. Some are naturally more humble than others; there is a natural humility. 2. Still lower than this, there is a humility of word, love, and manner, which is a mere worldly ornament to be put off and on. How shall we cultivate humility? 1. Be sure that you are loved. We are all inclined to be proud to those whom we think do not like us. 2. Realize yourself the object of great mercy. 3. Seek to be reverent in worship, for if humble before God, you will be before men. 4. Always try to re-live the life of childhood, to think and feel as when you were a child. 5. Deal often with your real self in some of the humbling parts of your history. 6. Exercise inward discipline to meet the first buddings of pride. 7. Do acts of humility. 8. God always empties before He fills; He will humble before He will use a person. 2. It is a great thing to have much intercourse with little children. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *A lesson of humility:*—The question of the disciples reveals the appearance and the nature of the kingdom of heaven. To these disciples it was the most natural question in the world. I. THE AMBITION TO BE GREATEST IS A VERY COMMON WEAKNESS IN OUR NATURE. But there are very many considerations which wonderfully qualify this desire to be first. 1. It is a thing of great responsibility. 2. You may be first and be very miserable. 3. It is utterly inconsistent with the religion of Jesus Christ. II. HOW OUR LORD TAUGHT THE LESSON OF HUMILITY TO HIS DISCIPLES. He not only spoke about it to them, but He showed it to them. What is the ground of comparison between that beautiful boy and a true disciple—a disciple in the right spirit? 1. The perfect non-resistance of a child. Christ called the child, and the child came, &c. There was no resistance. The very reverse of this was the case with the disciples. Give instances. They did not, like the little child, yield and come the moment the Master called. They resisted the Spirit of Christ; the darkness in them opposed the light that came from Him. There is very much in the best of us that resists Christ. 2. Perfect trust and the absence of all fear. It was so with this child. To

be a Christian is to trust Christ perfectly, and to cast all fear to the wind. In our darkness and ignorance, &c. In our sin and weakness. In our trials and perplexities. And when death comes. 3. Humility. Observe what Christian humility is —Coming when Christ calls, &c., without endeavouring to appear to be anything that we are not. Conclusion. The dignity and glory of true humility. (*Thomas Jones.*) *The nature of humility* :—It is not at all the thing that people suppose it to be. Take Christ's exposition of it. The child humbles himself. How did the child humble himself? He came when Christ called, he suffered himself to be embraced, and he stood where Christ put him, without pretending to be anything more than he was, an honest, fine, healthy-looking boy. Christ calls that humility. People think that going and moping about the world and saying, "I am very imperfect," is humility. Protect me from such humility. Some of the proudest creatures I ever met in the world were the most humble, if that be humility—people who complained about themselves; but if you were ever to say to them, "Yes, sir," or "Yes, madam, I know you really are bad," they would turn round and say, "Who told you so? What do you know about me?" That is not Christian humility. Humility is that of the boy coming when Christ called, suffering himself to be embraced, standing there as long as Christ wanted him to stand, without endeavouring to appear to be anything that he was not. That is Christian humility. There is a real charm in this child, if you will only think of it, in his unconsciousness. He never thought he was doing anything praiseworthy; it never entered into his little head that there was anything beautiful in his little actions. That is the essence of the thing. He came quickly when the Master called, he looked happy in His arms, he stood where Christ put him, and he never thought for one moment that there was any praise due to him for that. He was moved to confidence; the instincts of the boy were moved by the tenderness of Christ's voice and the expression of His face. The little man went under his natural instincts and never thought for a moment that there was any virtue or beauty in his actions. What is that? That is Christian humility—to yield ourselves to Christ, to serve Him, to serve our brothers and our sisters, going about doing good, beautiful as lamps in the darkness, sweet and fragrant as the breeze from the south. Go and do this, live this beautiful life, yet never showing that we are conscious of its beauty, never letting it escape the lip that we know we are doing anything grand. What is the most beautiful thing in the world? A man or a woman living a high Christian life without ever letting it escape the lip or the expression that they consider there is anything beautiful or grand in it. It is the unconsciousness of the child that constitutes the highest climax of the Christian life. To be great, to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven is to excel in that direction. I have looked lately at some large fruit trees covered with fruit; and a rich fruit tree is a very beautiful object; it has a massive trunk and far-stretching boughs; the foliage is rich, the dew of the morning is wet upon its leaves, and the sun plays in the little crystal drops, and the branches bending under their fruit barely move in the very gentle movement of the wind. There are very few things in nature more beautiful than a tree like that, and a man of sensibility, a man with a right state of heart, looking upon such a thing cannot but admire it. But if (which of course it is folly to suppose) that tree for one moment could be self-conscious, if it had the power of speech for one instant and let out the secret that it thought itself very beautiful, it would be a different thing to us the moment it had spoken. It is the unconsciousness, the absence of the knowledge of self, that is one charm of the vegetable world. So in character. It is very difficult to be this, my brethren; it is very difficult for me to stand here Sunday after Sunday and speak to you without revealing some little bit of vanity, some little bit of self-consciousness; but if I have not got it I cannot show it. Two great preachers in Wales met at a public meeting. It was usual then, I am sorry to say, as it is now, for men of different denominations to justify their appearing before each other. One of them was a very eloquent man, one of the greatest preachers in the Principality, and he said he had left his party zeal at home before he started. Another as great as he got up and said, "Well, I thank God I had none to leave, and I came here just as I was at home." Let a man be free from vanity and self-consciousness, and it will not appear. This is Christian humility as taught by the Saviour. (*Ibid.*) *The desire to be great natural* :—Now this ambition to be the greatest is a very common weakness in our nature,—to be great, to be first, to be the greatest anywhere, however small the little kingdom may be, to be the first minister in the kingdom, or, if you can, to be the king of the little kingdom. Better reign anywhere than serve in high positions. To have power, to see our own thoughts

carried out, to make men, and things, and circumstances, do as we like,—it is very delightful, exceedingly fascinating, and it has a great charm for our minds. I believe somewhat of it is natural, and I do not think it is altogether sinful. The natural is not sinful. Whatever God has put in us is right. A lad has fine powers, and God has put ambition into the lad to use his powers, so that if he is at school he desires to take the first place. Do not blame him; it is quite natural; the ambition is in him. But, on the other hand, I must say what is true about this. There are very many considerations which wonderfully qualify this desire to be first. (*Ibid.*) *The responsibility of greatness overlooked* :—To be first in the world is a thing of great responsibility. To be first is very pleasant. Yes, but it has a burden of responsibility. To be the first poet—the fierce rays of criticism beat upon you; to be the first preacher, the first minister—it is a most solemn responsibility. Nothing is expected of a delicate flower but that it should be beautiful and just give a little fragrance. Everybody is satisfied with the flower if it will do these two things. But a large tree upon which nature has expended years of time and care, and made the trunk massive, and the boughs wide, and the foliage thick and rich, a tree that nature has taken years of trouble with, much is expected from that. Oh, delicate flower, if thou art beautiful and hast a little fragrance nobody will blame thee; but oh, great, massive tree, everybody will blame thee, and thy foliage, and thy massiveness, except thou bringest forth much fruit. Like the delicate flower is the man with one talent, the humble Christian man, doing his duty, walking humbly with God. I think myself that is the finest life in the whole world, incomparably the most blessed life in the world—not to be rich, not to be very poor, to have a little home of your own, surrounded by those you love and by whom you are loved, unobserved by the world around, like the delicate flower, just being beautiful and giving forth fragrance. The world never criticises you, never says anything about you; you pass on doing your duty, you lay your throbbing head down in death, you shall rest and go home and be with God, and the report of your doings shall be read in another world than this. The responsibility of being first is very great, and the criticism upon those who are first is very fierce. Plant the sapling in the valley, it shall have shelter,—put the same sapling on the mountain top, and the fury of every element shall be expended upon it. There are men in England, authors, statesmen, and preachers, upon whom every element, good, bad, and indifferent, at the command of criticism comes in all its fury, expending its strength upon them. I would not be one of them for any earthly consideration. I would not be first in England for the possession of a nobleman's estate. To be in such a position, especially as Tennyson says, "in the fierce light of the throne," is to be in a position of solemn responsibility. My friend, if God has not called you to be very prominent you have reason to thank God that He has consented you should live a quiet, reverent, honest, generous, Christian life, uncriticised, unpraised, and unabused. (*Ibid.*) *Child-like non-resistance* :—There is very much in the best of us that resists Christ. We are not like that little child. Christ calls (it is all the better for you if I am not speaking truth), but there is no answer; Christ commands, but we do not obey; Christ stands at the door, and we do not open; He has been there long, He is there now, and will be there to-morrow, and many of you keep Him out. The comparison in the Bible to express this want of child-likeness, this want of non-resistance, is a rock. The rain comes, the rock is not softened; the winds blow, the rock makes no response; the sun shines, the rock is not made fertile; summer comes, autumn comes, winter comes, spring comes—spring, summer, autumn, winter find and leave the rock the same cold, hard, insensate thing as it ever was. I do not know you, but I am describing exactly the state of many hearts even in the Church of God. The gospel comes like rain showers upon the rock, but it has not softened you; breezes from the eternal mountains blow upon you—they are not vivifying; God's eternal love shines upon you—it has not changed you; life with its wonderful lessons comes—you grow very little better. Do you not know men in the circle of your acquaintance who are not at all better than they were ten years ago? Success came—they were no better; disappointment came; the marriage morning came, they were the same; the funeral day—they were the same. All the elements of the gospel, all the influence of the Divine Spirit, all the wonderful events of life, all its friendships, all its love, left them where they were. They resist God, they resist His influences. Brethren, I ought to be a better man, having enjoyed the friendship of many of you for many years; I should be unworthy of that friendship, if I were not wiser and better, and more humble and more reverent. You ought, as day after day carries

you nearer to eternity, to resist God less. Oh, my friends, be as little children; lean to Christ, resist not the Holy Spirit of God. (*Ibid.*) *The mission and ministry of infants in the family and in the world*:—I. Some of the DOCTRINAL lessons taught us by the mission of infants. 1. By man's original trangression temporal death ensued to infants as a part of the race. 2. Universal atonement. 3. Their immortality. 4. Their resurrection. II. Some of the PRACTICAL lessons. 1. The duty of parental watchfulness and tender care over the helplessness of infancy. 2. The duty of self-sacrifice is taught by the mission of infants. 3. The solemn responsibility of a most important trust. 4. The duty of resignation to the work of God, in the dispensations of His Providence. 5. The ministry of infants in the family is intended to teach patience. 6. It teaches the highest Christian virtues, such as innocency, dependence. 7. God's providential care over childhood. 8. That the path of true greatness lies through the vale of humility. (*J. E. Edwards, D.D.*) *God's care of little children*:—A poor little boy was found standing in the streets by a kind-hearted man. The child was lean and thinly clad, bearing the marks of hunger and poverty. "What are you doing here?" inquired the man. The boy replied: "I am waiting for God to come." "What do you mean?" inquired the man, touched by the novelty of his reply. The poor little boy responded: "Mother and father, and my little brother died, and my mother said God would come and take care of me. Won't He come?" "Yes," replied the man, "I have come." "Mother never told me a lie," said the little boy; "I knew you would come; but you have been so long on the way." *Childhood educates man on the best side of his nature*:—It is probable that every one of the traits of higher manhood in adults springs from the drill and the training which little children require and inspire. I doubt whether preceptual teaching could ever have brought into this world any considerable degree of disinterested affection. I doubt if self-denial and heroism in that direction could ever have been propagated in this world as a matter of duty. Conscience never brings forth love. Intellectual reasoning never produces rich and warm caresses. It is the economy of God's providence to set men and women together in the household, and give them little children, and draw them toward these little children by the instinct of love (instinct in the early day, and companionable love in a later day), and out of this love to develope all the character, forethought, and industry which are necessary for the good of these children. There are men who are very selfish toward their neighbours, very selfish in their business, very selfish in their pleasures; there are men who, as citizens, are not true to the laws under which they live, not true to commonwealth, but who, if you go into their households, and see how they deal with their children, seem to have an entirely different nature. They lay aside their selfishness. The pride and greediness which characterize them out-of-doors are gone when they are indoors. Indeed, the faults which they exhibit outside are often faults which they take on for the sake of being able to take care of the little children that are inside. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ in a child*:—There is an old story, a kind of Sunday fairy tale, which you may sometimes have seen represented in pictures and statues in ancient churches, of a great heathen giant who wished to find out some master that he should think worthy of his services—some one stronger than himself. He went about the world, but could find no one stronger. And, besides this, he was anxious to pray to God, but did not know how to do it. At last he met with a good old man by the side of a deep river, where poor wayfaring people wanted to get across and had no one to help them. And the good old man said to the giant, "Here is a place where you can be of some use, and if you do not know how to pray, you will, at any rate, know how to work, and perhaps God will give you what you ask, and perhaps also you will at last find a master stronger than you." So the giant went and sat by the river-side, and many a time he carried poor wayfarers across. One night he heard a little child crying to be carried over; so he put the child on his shoulder and strode across the stream. Presently the wind blew, the rain fell, and as the river beat against his knees, he felt the weight of the little child almost more than he could bear, and he looked up with his great patient eyes, and he saw that it was a child glorious and shining, and the child said, "Thou art labouring under this heavy burden because thou art carrying one who bears the sins of all the world." And then, as the story goes on, the giant felt that it was the child Jesus, and when he reached the other side of the river, he fell down before Him. Now he had found some one stronger than he was, some one so good, so worthy of loving, as to be a master whom he could serve. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Nature of conversion*:—Converting grace makes persons become like little children; both like those just born, and

those who are a little grown. I. CONVERTS RESEMBLE LITTLE CHILDREN NEWLY BORN. 1. Children enter the world with much difficulty and hazard. So God's children have a difficult entrance into a state of grace. 2. An infant has always a principle of life and motion; so converts have a principle of spiritual life infused into their souls. 3. The child bears the image of the father; so converts bear a likeness to God; they have His image. 4. A child comes weeping into the world; so God's children are crying children. 5. There is a natural instinct in children, as soon as born, to seek the mother's breast; so a gracious soul, when newly converted, desires "the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby." 6. Converts resemble little children in their weakness and dependence. 7. There is a resemblance between little children and converts in their harmlessness. II. CONVERTS REPRESENT CHILDREN A LITTLE GROWN. 1. In their guileless disposition. Little children are generally plain and downright, what they seem to be, and do not dissemble. 2. They are of a gall-less disposition; they may be angry, but bear no malice. 3. They are submissive to correction. 4. They are full of jealousies and fears. 5. They are very affectionate. 6. They are very inquisitive. 7. They are generally tractable. 8. They do all for their parents, and acknowledge them in all they have; so the child of God does nothing for himself but for God's glory. 9. Converts resemble little children in their growth. 10. They are mostly of an humble and condescending disposition. Application—(1) If converting grace makes persons become like little children, then conversion is no half work; (2) If true conversion makes men become like little children, then there is reason to fear few people go to heaven. (*Oliver Heywood.*) *Marks of a true conversion*:—I. What are we to understand by our Lord's saying? The words imply—1. That before you or I can have any well-grounded, scriptural hope, of being happy in a future state, there must be some great, some notable and amazing change pass upon our souls. 2. That little children are not perfectly innocent, but in a comparative and rational sense. 3. That, as to ambition and lust after the world, we must in this sense become as little children; we must be as loose to the world, comparatively speaking, as a little child. 4. That we must be sensible of our weakness, as a little child. 5. That, as little children look upon themselves to be ignorant creatures, so those that are converted, do look upon themselves as ignorant too. 6. That, as a little child is looked upon as a harmless creature, and generally speaks true, so, if we are converted, we shall be guileless as well as harmless. (*George Whitefield.*) *Humility aids spiritual vision*:—He that is in the low pits and caves of the earth, sees the stars in the firmament, when they who are on the tops of the mountains discern them not. He that is most humble, sees most of heaven, and shall have most of it; for the lower the ebb, the higher the tide; and the lower the foundation of virtue is laid, the higher shall the roof of glory be over-laid. (*John Trapp.*)

Ver. 6.—**But whoso shall offend one of these little ones.**—*The claims of the young upon the Church*:—1. In presenting these claims I would remind you of the peculiar tenderness which our Lord Himself manifested in relation to children. 2. I would urge the claims of the children upon the care of the Church by reminding you of their peculiar susceptibility to influence, whether for good or for evil. 3. Their claims are strong when we remember that upon them the Church depends for its future workers. 4. They will not always remain "little ones." (*F. Wagstaff.*) *The crime of degrading men*:—I. Parents are frequently the cause of many of the faults which grow into great depravities in their children. II. Our pride and inconsideration may, and often do, result in a train of evils to the character of our servants, of our clerks, and of the working men that are under our care. III. By the inconsiderate use of our liberty we are in danger of causing men to offend, and of essentially damaging human nature. IV. Men deteriorate their fellow-men, and weaken society, by such conduct as puts men in their commercial intercourse into very tempting relations to each other. V. Avarice—and that, too, in its most ignoble forms—is continually tempting so-called good men to the injury of their fellow-men. VI. Great damage is done by men professing godliness, as well as men professing honesty, though not avowedly Christian, by the injustice which lurks, and is almost inherent, in their vanity. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 7.—**Woe unto the world because of offences.**—*Christian Influence*:—Some sinners defend themselves by saying that if they had not tempted their comrades to evil, some one else would. If your notion made no difference in the man's ultimate course, it is not excused. It may be true; hat the temptation would have

come without you; it by no means follows that it would have been equally powerful if you had not put it in the way; your example may have given it special force. How often is this so between friends and near kindred! Obedience to God extends to the temptation that is likely to lead to sin. The eye, the hand, must be plucked out, cut off, if it proved a temptation too strong for the man's resistance. If the temptation is clearly too much for you, you are bound to put yourself in such a position that it shall not be able to reach you. But our Lord not only requires a man to deal thus with himself, but also with his neighbour. We are not allowed to suppose that our brother's conduct is indifferent to us. We are to have regard to the effect of our conduct upon others. Let us consider the form which this teaching takes in some of the ordinary relations of life. I. Look at life in our own HOMES. The doctrine that each must look only to himself would not be admitted here. We are ready to interfere with what affects our comfort; are we as ready with loving care to remove stumbling-blocks. It is easy to expose selfishness, but not so easy to be perpetually setting an example of sacrifice. II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF MASTER AND SERVANT is peculiarly one which calls for the constant care for one another. How many temptations can we remove from the path of servants if we give our thoughts to it. Living in a household, servants imbibe the principle of their masters. What a power for removing temptation from a child does every servant possess. III. Look at SOCIETY and see how the rule applies there. In a Christian country society should have regard for the weaknesses of humanity; to mould the customs of society so as to put as few temptations as possible in the way of these weaknesses. True, the demand for this is not so strong here as in our own homes; but it is easier to recognize. In the home you deal with individuals, peculiarity and diversity of temperament, and it may be hard to recognize what is a temptation, and what the best way of removing it; but in regard to society we have no such difficulties; here we have to deal with the effects of temptation on thousands, and this does not admit of much doubt. Every member of society is responsible for his share in customs which create temptation. IV. Consider this rule as applied to LEGISLATION. No act of legislation ought to pass without consideration as to its moral effects, its likelihood to increase or diminish the temptations of the people. It is often urged that man gains strength by conflict with temptation, and that the removal of temptation is a weakness. This not the entire truth: the removal of temptation is often the only thing which gives the soul time to gather the forces of grace to triumph. (*Bishop Temple.*) *Offences:*—I. LET US INQUIRE WHY IT MUST NEEDS BE THAT OFFENCES COME. 1. Not from any fault in the gospel of the Redeemer. 2. Not that God necessitates men to lay before others these hindrances in the path to heaven, and encouragements to sin. 3. Why then? "Light has come into the world, and men love darkness," &c. He does not interpose by omnipotent force. II. LET US EXAMINE WHAT ARE THE CHIEF OFFENCES AGAINST WHICH WE SHOULD GUARD? 1. False sentiments in religion, and doctrines inconsistent with the Word of God often prove an offence and tend to lead others away from felicity. 2. The influence of unholy examples. 3. Persecution. 4. The unsuitable walk of professing Christians. III. ILLUSTRATE THE PROPRIETY OF THE DOUBLE WOE PRONOUNCED BY OUR LORD. 1. Woe to the world because of offences, for many will be seduced by them. 2. Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. (1) Because he frustrates as far as in his power the design which Christ had in coming into the world. (2) Because he renders himself guilty of all the crimes he has led others to commit. (3) Because the reparation of those evils is morally impossible. (*H. Kollock, D.D.*) *Offences inevitable and evil:*—A caution this, as Jerome has well observed, "particularly necessary for the disciples at this time striving for superiority; for if they had continued in that spirit, they would have turned out of the way those they had gained to the faith." Let us inquire—I. WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND HERE BY "OFFENCES." Stumbling-blocks in the way that leads to heaven. Figurative expression (Rom. xiv. 13, 21): offences may be taken when they are not given. Offences may be given when they are not taken. Stumbling-blocks are of three kinds—1. Such as God has laid in the way. (1) Jesus Christ is in this sense a stumbling-block (1 Peter ii. 6, 8; Rom. ix. 31–33; Isa. viii. 13–15; Luke ii. 34; Matt. xiii. 57; xxvi. 64, 65). (2) The doctrine of Christ is a cause of offence (Matt. xv. 12; xix. 22; 1 Cor. i. 22, 23; John vi. 61–66; Matt. xiii. 54). (3) The suffering and death of Christ on the cross is a stumbling-block (1 Cor. i. 23; Matt. xxvi. 31, 33; Luke xxiv. 21). The Jews called Christ, in derision, "Talui," the man that was hanged. An offence without reason. 2. Such as are laid in the way by the subtlety and malice of the devil and his children,

Such as false doctrine, reproaches, &c. 3. Such as, through the devices of the grand adversary, are laid in the way by the inattention, folly, and misconduct of those who are, or profess to be, the children of God (Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 7, 9). II. HOW IT APPEARS THAT IT MUST NEEDS BE THAT OFFENCES COME. 1. Offences of the kind first mentioned must come (Matt. ii. 6). These are only stumbling-blocks in our apprehension. They that stumble at these, stumble at their own mercies and salvation. 2. Offences of the second kind will come, not, strictly speaking of necessity, but in the nature of things. For the devil and his children will hate the children of God, &c. (Zech. iii. 2; 1 Cor. xi. 19; Acts xx. 30; 2 Cor. xi. 26). 3. Offences of the last kind will also come, as appears from the text, and from (Luke xvii. 1), where the Greek word imports *it is not to be expected*, &c. He does not appoint or ordain these offences. He does not withhold the grace whereby they may be avoided. But He permits, or does not absolutely hinder them. III. WHY OUR LORD PRONOUNCES A "WOE" UPON THE WORLD BECAUSE OF OFFENCES, AND UPON THAT MAN BY WHOM THE OFFENCE COMETH. 1. By "the world," may be here meant, those that know not, and love not, God (John xv. 18, 19; xvii. 9, 14; 1 John v. 19). Through offences, especially those of the last-mentioned kind, many of these perish eternally. Therefore, woe to them! They dishonour God, obstruct and injure others, and lose their own souls. 2. "The world," may mean mankind in general, including even the people of God. 3. "Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." For he dishonours God in a manner none else can do—he does the work of the devil and pleases him—he confirms the wicked in their prejudices, &c. All this mischief will be required at his hands, &c. Application—1. See that you offend not (ver. 6). 2. See that you be not offended yourself (ver. 8, 9). (*Joseph Benson.*) *A discourse of offences*:—i. The unavoidableness of offences. ii. The woes pronounced against them. I. What we are to understand here by offences. II. From whence the unavoidableness of them doth arise. III. That offences are of woeful consequence, both to men in general, and to those particular persons by whom they come. (*Bishop Fowler.*) *Ways of offending*:—1. The drawing of our brethren into erroneous opinions; such as have an ill-influence on men's lives and manners. 2. Enticing men to sin by wicked advice and solicitations. 3. Affrighting or discouraging others from being religious, or from the doing of their duty in particular instances: such things as (1) persecuting for righteousness' sake: (2) representing the ways of religion as very rugged and difficult, and the duties thereof as over-harsh and severe: (3) making a great number of additions to the law of God, and imposing them as necessary to salvation: (4) treating those who have fallen into errors of judgment or practice, with too great harshness and severity. 4. Offering an evil example. (*Ibid.*) *Necessity of scandals arising*.—Let us grant that in individual cases a man may give such care and attention as not to sin, yet it is impossible that—taking all contingent events in the lump—a man should not sometimes be remiss, and fail, or slip. For this is the infirmity of the mind of man since the Fall. In the same way it is necessary that the most skilful archer, who to a certainty hits the mark as often as he chooses to do so, should sometimes miss it, if he is perpetually shooting at it. For this is a condition and result of human weakness—that mind, hand, or eye cannot long keep up the strain of their attention, that a man should hit the mark a hundred times running. He must miss sometimes. (*Lapide.*)

Vers. 8, 9. **Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee.**—*Renouncing things that hinder*:—The every-sided development of all our faculties, the inferior, as well as the more elevated, is certainly to be regarded as the highest attainment, yet he who finds by experience that he cannot cultivate certain faculties—the artistic for example—without injury to his holiest feelings, must renounce their cultivation, and make it his first business, with painstaking fidelity, to preserve entire the innermost life of his soul, that higher life imparted to him by Christ, and which, by the dividing and distracting of his thoughts, might easily be lost, nor must it give him any disturbance, if some subordinate faculty be thus wholly sacrificed by him. Assuredly, however, we must add, that this loss is only in appearance, for, in the development of man's higher life, everything of a subordinate kind which he had sacrificed is again restored with increase of power. (*Olshausen.*) *Better suffer than sin*:—It is not merely that we should abstain from actual wrong-doing. That of course. It is not even that we should shun the avenues of sin; but, whatever the pain or loss involved, we are utterly to renounce that which we find to be the *occasion* of sin. The merely literal and outward is not the thing to dwell upon.

A man might cut off both hands, or pluck out both eyes, and yet leave the root of sin untouched. What Christ summons to is the surrender of everything, however pleasant, or dear, or seemingly necessary for the present life, and whatever suffering there may be in the surrender, rather than sin against God. The boldly figurative language well expresses the intensity of the change. (*Dr. Culross.*) *Moral surgery* :—I. THAT THE SINNER'S SIN IS HIS OWN—A PART OF HIMSELF. "Thy right hand." Few people admit the ownership of their sins. II. THAT DELIVERANCE FROM SIN CAN BE EFFECTED ONLY THROUGH THE SINNER'S OWN ACT. "Cut it off." 1. Painful. "*Cut* it off." 2. Promptness. "Cut" with a determined stroke. 3. Persistent. "Cut it *off*." III. That heroically, in order to make reformation a permanent blessing, must the sinner abandon his sin. "Cast it from thee." 1. This figure is suggestive of danger. The last resort. 2. The great Physician Himself urges the operation. 3. Every consideration, past, present, and future, calls upon the sinner to decide. "It is profitable for thee." 4. The fearful consequences of neglect. "Cast into hell." (*J. Kelly.*) *Self-discipline* :—The Rev. R. Cecil possessed remarkable decision of character. When he went to Cambridge, he made a resolution of restricting himself to a quarter of an hour daily in playing the violin—on which instrument he greatly excelled, and of which he was extravagantly fond; but, on finding it impracticable to adhere to his determination, he cut the strings, and never afterwards replaced them. He had studied for a painter; and retained through a life a fondness and taste for the art. He was once called to visit a sick lady, in whose room there was a painting which so strongly attracted his notice, that he found his attention diverted from the sick person and absorbed by the painting; from that moment he formed the resolution of mortifying a taste which he found so intrusive, and so obstructive to him in his nobler pursuits, and determined never again to frequent the exhibition. *Self-mortification* :—This is the circumcision of the heart, the mortifications of earthly members, which is no less hard to be done than for a man with one hand to cut off the other, or to pull out his own eyes, and then rake in the holes where they grew. And yet, hard or not hard, it must be done; for otherwise we are utterly undone for ever. Hypocrites, as artificial jugglers, seem to wound themselves, but do not; as stage-players, they seem to thrust themselves through their bodies, whereas the sword passeth only through their clothes. But the truly religious lets out the life-blood of his beloved lusts, lays them all dead at his feet, and burns their bones to lime, as the king of Moab did the king of Edom (Amos ii. 1). As Joshua put down all the Canaanites, so doth grace all corruptions. As Asa deposed his own mother, so doth this, the mother of sin. It destroys them not by halves, as Saul; but hews them in pieces before the Lord, as Samuel. (*John Trapp.*)

Ver. 10. **Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.**—*Contempt* :—Look at the sources of contempt; and what are its correctives. I. THE SOURCES OF CONTEMPT. 1. Want of knowledge will produce contempt. You could not despise the smallest and meanest in God's great universe if only you had a true and enlarged conception of what that universe is. God watches over all; how can we treat with contempt the meanest object of His care. 2. Want of wisdom produces contempt. I cannot imagine it being said it is hardly true that enlarged knowledge diminishes contempt. As we grow older we find out the weaknesses of those we were taught to reverence. But no wisdom lies in that. A wise man never despises; he reads beneath the surface. There is an angel behind the meanest form. 3. Want of reverence produces contempt. II. THE REMEDY. Sympathy is the antidote to contempt, as love is the restorative of all the ills of the universe. This shows that in the meanest men there are splendid possibilities. (*Bishop Carpenter, D.D.*) *Contempt for the little impossible, when regarded as part of a great whole* :—And just as surely as a crushed finger is understood and felt by the thrill and ache in the brain, so the wounded one here, or the little one injured and offended and despised here, is not simply a thing isolated from the rest of God's universe, but one bound with it in the whole relationship and web of life, so intimately connected, that its grief and its sorrow and its wound is felt right away up there, where God sits enthroned. As He gives us that conception of life, so He says it is impossible now you should despise. Let a larger knowledge of being enter into your thoughts, and then you will see all creation is interlocked and interlaced in such a way that to understand one is to understand the whole; that there is no creature, however mean, that is outside the range of Divine superintendence and Divine knowledge, "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."

(*Ibid.*) *Contempt banished by insight*:—A wise man never despises. See one moment. Unwise men are ready to despise because they do not understand, or think out the meaning of little things. But the man of wisdom sees there is nothing in the world, however mean, that cannot have a real significance, and that just as you can see that the universe is one so you may see in a single thing the whole universe reflected. Here is the man who will not despise. Other men have been looking day by day at the same thing, but they have not had the wisdom to read beneath the surface. To them this is merely a bit of broken crystal; but the eyes of the man of wisdom look underneath the fractured morsels and see the law of form. This is but a swinging lamp in the eye of the world; but this man sees in it the angel of the law of movement. There again is only a falling stone, and yet he, with his keen eye, shall read beneath it the law of order in the universe. Surely, it is true, where great wisdom exists there is an inclination to banish contempt, for contempt hinders the growth of knowledge. (*Ibid.*) *Contempt ignoble*:—The man who is above all these things looks with profound disdain upon the toys of the little children around him. Do you think he is nobler at that moment when he says he is above all these things, than that other who stoops from out of his range of knowledge to help the little child with the broken toy? There is a contrast of character. The one has knowledge and conceit, which is always twin brother to contempt, and the other has the sympathy and the reverence, and these are linked in their kinship together. Or it takes the form in another man's nature of that determination to view himself as exempt from the laws which govern other men. Other men are studious, other men are prayerful, and other men watch their characters and examine themselves. He says, "I never could do that sort of thing." There is the spirit of contempt for that which is the help of others. But is it a great thing to hold ourselves above our fellows, or is it not the very teaching of Jesus Christ that the noblest thing for man is to recognize that he is man, and that his best manliness is in submitting himself to those laws and orders which are needful for the education and discipline of man? It is always Satan's method to say, "Ye shall be as gods;" and it drops in well with our conceit, and it ministers to our contempt. (*Ibid.*) *The Nemesis of contempt*:—There comes a time when we esteem ourselves so great and others so little, we get into a habit of a *nil admirari*, and we never think it noble or great to show pleasure or admiration at anything. And thus it happens that a human being, born into God's world with all the rich glories of creation falling thick and fast in light and form and colour about him, stands there where thousands and tens of thousands of men, poets, painters, orators, and historians, have stood and gazed upon that world, with its growth and beauty, with admiration aghast, and he sees nothing to admire in it. What a miserable distortion of humanity! What a miserable falling back into a vain and irretrievable egotism, because he has allowed the spirit of contempt to get hold of him! (*Ibid.*) *The dullest life has angelic light behind it*:—Is it not true also in regard to human life? Over all the dark angel of contempt hovers. But is there not, if we look wisely at human life, a marvellous display of real angelic force? Mark this life you will be disposed to despise. Who can find anything of angel ministers and poetry in that of a mere labourer of the fields, whose to-day is just like yesterday—rising early, ploughing, casting in the seed, reaping, and with an ignorant and dull brain following the plough, and pursuing the field labour from day to day, no other thought leaping up in his mind but a moody anticipation of next year's harvest. Yet, if you look aright, there is a light as of an angel's presence behind such a life as that. This is one of God's ministers. Is it nothing to stand before the face of the great Creator and receive from His hand, as the disciples did of old, the bread to be distributed to the sons of men? Behind the most prosaic life there is an angel form for those who look through it. Take the dull round of the man of medicine. With its weariness there grows upon him the feeling that life is nothing but a monotonous round of visits—fruitless visits if he has to minister to the miserable hypochondriac—and then follows despair that his life is a useless one. Yet behind it there is the light of the angel's wing, for when he is present that poor hypochondriac has her powers and energies strengthened to excite themselves against the weakness of her nature. His is the soothing hand that restores to the tired nerves their power. Yes, the dullest life, the hardest existence, the most monotonous career, has an angel of light behind it. (*Ibid.*) *Guardian angels*:—The offices of the guardian angels are—1. To avert dangers both of the body and the soul. 2. To illuminate and instruct those committed to their charge, and to urge them to good works. 3. To restrain the devil, that he may not suggest

wicked thoughts, or furnish occasions for sin. 4. To offer to God the prayers of him whom He guards. 5. To pray for him. 6. To correct him if he sin. 7. To stand by him at the hour of death, to comfort and assist him in his last struggle. 8. After death to convey the soul to Paradise. (*Lapide.*) I. How great is the dignity of souls, that they have angels for their guardians. II. How great is the condescension of God, that He assigns to us such guides. III. How great is the humility and love of the angels, who do not disdain these offices, but delight in them. (*Ibid.*) *The guardian angels of nature*:—The knowledge of nature is a conception which has broadened our thoughts and ensured our convictions. And in proportion as this is true, does not the thought rush upon us that this great creation, with its law, and system, and organization, becomes ministerial in its aspect? Everything ministers to another. Our angels are not vanished, but our conception of angel ministers is enlarged. We need not to wait for some angelic beings as guardian angels to direct our steps and hold us up in their hands. Now every law and every force becomes God's angel. The flame that leaps up from our hearths, the wind that beats in our face, and star that shines in the sky, these are God's angels as much as ever were the guardian around us. The flowers that dispelled their fragrance in our faces, the great blue sky, and the cheery breezes, all these excited our admiration and stimulated our reverence. (*Bp. Carpenter.*) *Training the little ones*:—Ministry of angels to Christian children. Practical lessons. I. BEWARE LEST YOU PUT STUMBLING-BLOCKS IN THEIR WAY. It is impossible to say how early the real moral and spiritual character begins to form itself—long before we can externally trace what is going on. Flowing from this is the great blessedness of being allowed to deal with such creatures. "Workers together with God." The great danger that you should do your work badly through any fault of yours. The nurse who lets the child drop and gets crippled for life never forgives herself. But what if they should become spiritual cripples! II. HE GUARDS AGAINST DOING THIS. Knowing what the treasure is that is committed to you. Not a *class*, but *souls*, for whom Christ died, &c. This idea, once laid hold of, settles all difficulties about what should be taught. Deal with them separately. (*S. Wilberforce, D.D.*) *Value of a little child*:—Louis IX., king of France, was found instructing a poor kitchen boy, and, being asked why he did so, replied, "The meanest person hath a soul as precious as my own, and bought with the same blood of Christ." *Despising the little ones*:—Anniversary address to parents. We all need this text and its kindly warning, for we are all in danger of "despising the little ones." See how—I. BY UNDERVALUING THE INFLUENCE THEY CAN EXERT. Especially on a mother. On a home. In saving men from vice. II. BY UNDERESTIMATING THE CARE AND HELP THEY NEED IF THEY ARE TO GROW UP GOOD. III. BY MISUNDERSTANDING THE PECULIARITIES OF THE LITTLE ONES. IV. BY CHERISHING THE NOTION THAT THEY MUST BE BIG BEFORE THEY CAN REALLY LOVE AND SERVE CHRIST. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *What value Christ sets on every man*:—1. Think of His words, and you will see that Jesus isolates each of us, setting us man by man apart: "despise not *one*"; "if one of them be gone astray." He who counts our hairs, much more counts us. 2. Jesus measures the worth of each human being by God's special and separate care of him. Feebleness commends us to His care; much more does sin. He has more pity even for the "lost," more than for the "little ones." He seeks them. 3. Such teaching from the lips of Jesus was a new thing in the world, and wrought a revolution. How cheap men held human life till Jesus taught the equal worth of manhood. 4. It deserves special notice in what way it is that the teaching of Jesus has cut the roots from that self-valuing or self-praising which has always led men to undervalue and despise others. There are two ways in which to correct the boastful man's estimate. I may seek to sober his conceit by showing him man's littleness at his best. Christ did not lower the dignity of human nature; He came to cure contempt for the little and lost by making us think more. He came to put our self-esteem on its true footing; not on what is accidental or peculiar to one man, but on what is common to the race. In such an atmosphere as Christ lived in pride dies. 5. Let me show you one or two of these inward prerogatives which assert your personal value in God's reckoning to be as great as any other man's. (1) From each one of us God claims a separate responsibility. We have each a moral constitution of our own, as recognizable as the features of our face. (2) From the moment of birth God subjects each person to a separate course of training. (3) That God is Father as well as Judge to all, and permits each soul ready access to Him. (4) Perhaps you say, "can a man be of value to God after his soul is ruined." God's love is indestructible by human sin—He came to save sinners. (5) Let us embrace in a

hopeful charity the worst of our fellow men. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) *Self-respect inspired by the view of a common manhood:*—I pray you note how at one stroke Jesus has thus annihilated our pride and heightened our self-respect. Pride lives on the petty pre-eminences which here for a little lift one mortal an inch or two higher than another; an extra handful of gold, a better education, a longer pedigree, a title, a serener, and less tempted life. Among the ups and downs of society these look mighty things, as straws and leaves look large to emmets' eyes, and they fill the foolish hearts of men with vain conceit and unbrotherly scorn. From the height from which God and His Son Jesus survey this human world, such paltry degrees of more and less dwindle into insignificance, and are lost in the broad, equal level of a common manhood. (*Ibid.*) *Self-respect inspired by the Divine culture of men:*—Next, from the moment of birth, God subjects each person to a separate course of training. Men never appear before God's sight clustered in crowds; never like the countless pines which on the lower ranges of the Alps stand undistinguishable, row behind row, in thickset serried masses like a host; but like the singled vines of the vineyard, each of which the husbandman knows and tends with a care that is all its own. To each of you He has ordained your own career, with its early influences, domestic or educational, its companionships, its experiences, its trials, duties, losses, labours. All through your life He is moulding it to suit both what He made you to begin with and what He means you to become at last; so that from your deathbed you look back along a life history, wholly your own and not another's, the match of which no mortal man ever lived through before. (*Ibid.*) *Despising the little ones:*—I. A strict prohibition, and that ushered in with a severe charge by way of caveat (Take heed!). 1. Whom Christ means by these *little ones*. 2. What it is to despise them. II. A solemn reason given for the prohibition; and this reason backed with our Saviour's own authority and sacred Word. Those little ones have angels for their guardians and attendants, and those angels none of the lower form, but the most eminent favourites, who continually stand in God's presence, and do always behold His face. (*Adam Littleton.*)

**Vers. 11, 13. If a man have an hundred sheep.**—*Seeking the lost:*—1. The image under which it pleases God to describe His creatures upon earth, "Sheep" "gone astray." 2. What is said as to the dealings of God with His creatures under these circumstances, "seeketh," &c. 3. The feelings with which the Shepherd is described as regarding the sheep when found, "He rejoiceth more," &c. 4. The general deduction which our gracious Saviour draws from these several particulars—"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (1) What a conception does this text lead us to form of the character of God our Redeemer. (2) What an encouragement does the doctrine of the text supply as to our dealings with others. (*J. W. Cunningham.*) *The example of saving the lost:*—I. WHO ARE THEY that are here described as persons *lost*, and what is meant by the expression? Our blessed Saviour means all who did not receive Him as the messenger and interpreter of the Divine will to mankind. II. IN WHAT SENSE OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR IS HERE SAID TO HAVE COME TO SAVE MANKIND. (1) He came to instruct mankind in the true and the whole nature of the Divine will: (2) to show, in His own example, that human nature is capable of such a degree of perfection, as will make us fit objects of the Divine favour: (3) to make a satisfaction for us upon the cross, such as showed that God would not pardon the sins of men unless His justice was satisfied; and, therefore, Christ's suffering and death upon this account were a full and proper satisfaction made to the Divine justice for the sins of such as were till then lost to the benefits of eternal life. III. HOW FAR SHOULD THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST, IN THIS PARTICULAR OF SAVING THAT WHICH WAS LOST, BE IMITATED BY US. The natural means, those of instruction and of example, which He made use of in His life-time for reforming mankind, and improving their morals, these are what we may copy after Him. (*Nich. Brady.*) *A needful caution:*—I. A NEEDFUL CAUTION. "Take heed that ye despise not," &c. 1. To despise them is fearfully dangerous. 2. The interest taken in them by the highest intelligences should prevent us from thinking lightly of them. 3. The high destiny which awaits them. II. A BLESSED ANNOUNCEMENT. "For the Son of Man is come," &c. 1. The title assumed. 2. The act declared, not merely to improve, but to save. 3. The miserable objects regarded. III. A FAMILIAR COMPARISON. "How think ye" (ver. 12). These words may be considered: 1. In their literal signification. The recovery of lost property is a principle of human nature. 2. In

their spiritual allusion. IV. AN ENCOURAGING INFERENCE. "Even so it is not the will of My Father," &c. 1. The harmony that existed between the mission of Christ and the purposes of the Eternal Father. 2. If it is not the will of God that the most despised and insignificant believer should perish, their salvation is assured. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The Son of Man the Saviour of the lost:*—I. A PROOF AND STATEMENT OF THE SAVIOUR'S WORK AND ERRAND. 1. One feature of the mediatorial character is particularly displayed in the very name in which the Saviour is introduced to our attention, "the Son of Man." 2. These words point out the fact of the Saviour's incarnation, "The Son of Man is come." 3. This description of the object of His coming we may contrast with another, when He comes a second time into this our world. II. VIEW THE SAVIOUR'S ERRAND AND WORK AS IT IS EXHIBITED TO US IN THAT FIGURATIVE ILLUSTRATION THAT FOLLOWS THE TEXT. 1. He represents the state of the guilty sinner whom He came into the world to save under the idea of a wandering sheep. Prone to wander. 2. The care and kindness of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Manifests particular care over case of individual sinner. 3. Christ's search for the lost embraces all the means used for the salvation of sinners. 4. He carries back the sheep when He has found it. To prevent exposure to danger. 5. His joy. III. THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF THE DIVINE CONDUCT THAT IS DEVELOPED IN THE WORK TO WHICH WE HAVE TURNED YOUR ATTENTION. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven," &c. 1. The connection that is here obviously formed between the end in view, and the means for the accomplishment of that end. 2. In redemption the will of the Father and Son are equal. 3. The work of Christ was designed to accomplish that intention, and is efficacious to its accomplishment. 4. Magnify the fulness of Christ's work. 5. Have you learnt that your characters are that of lost sheep? (*W. H. Cooper.*) *God's minute and all-inclusive care of the universe:*—I. He is the Shepherd of the flock. II. His love is *impartially* shown to all who are in the fold. III. The salvation of the *least* is worth all the efforts of the *highest.* (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The shepherd faithfulness of the Son of Man in seeking the lost:*—I. Let us notice THE CONSOLATION in His comparing them with sheep who have gone astray. 1. It reveals to us how dear every single soul is to the Lord. 2. He misses each sheep as soon as it is lost. 3. He will leave the ninety and nine on the mountains and hunt for only one that has gone astray. 4. He rejoices over the one that is found. II. FOR WHAT DOES IT RENDER US RESPONSIBLE? 1. That we keep watch over those who are liable to go astray. 2. The shepherd-faithfulness of our Lord renders you responsible for compassion on the lost. 3. Also for active, zealous seeking and leading home all who are willing to be saved. 4. It requires us to rejoice over every one who lets himself be saved. (*T. Christlieb, D.D.*) *The lost sheep and the seeking Shepherd:*—I. THE FIGURE OF THE ONE WANDERER. 1. All men are Christ's sheep. All men are Christ's because He has created them. "We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." 2. The picture of the sheep as wandering, "which *goeth* astray." It pictures the process of wandering; not the result as accomplished. The sheep has gone astray, though when it set out on its journey it never thought of straying; more mischief is wrought from want of thought than by an evil will. 3. The progressive character of our wanderings from God. A man never gets to the end of the distance that separates between him and the Father if his face is turned away from God. Every moment the separation is increasing. 4. The contrast between the description given of the wandering sheep in our text and in St. Luke. Here it is represented as wandering, there it is represented as lost. God wants to possess us through our love; if He does not we are lost to Him. II. THE PICTURE OF THE SEEKER. The incarnation of Christ was for the seeking of man. (*Dr. Maclaren.*)

Ver. 14. **Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven.**—*The children's friends:*—I. THE CHILDREN AROUND US HAVE FRIENDS. 1. They have Divine Friends. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, are these Friends. 2. They have angelic friends. 3. They have human friends. Some in heaven; also on earth. II. LESSONS. 1. These thoughts should encourage anxious parents. 2. These thoughts should encourage despondent teachers. 3. These thoughts should encourage neglected and sorrowing children. (*J. Morgan.*) *The children's foes:*—1. Among the children's foes may be reckoned physical diseases and ailments. 2. Among the children's foes must be ranked evil passions. 3. Among the children's foes are to be found many vile and malicious demons. 4. Among the children's foes are to be found many foolish and wicked men. (1) Persons who indulge vicious habits. (2) The circulators of profane literature. (*Ibid.*) *Hidden*

*force in a child* :—For they are the men and women of the future, and within them lurk wondrous possibilities and powers which shall be developed and manifested and felt another day. Naturalists tell us that in every single drop of water in the ocean there is electricity enough to generate two thunder-storms. The power is there silent and hidden, nevertheless ready at any moment to leap forth and do terrible execution. So within the soul of every little child in our homes, in our schools, and in our streets, there is a moral force lying hidden on which two utterly opposite eternities hang. (*Ibid.*) *Children in danger of perishing* :—The children around us are in danger of perishing. What that means none of us can fully describe or imagine. We may have seen a superb mansion perish by a fire, or an extensive mill perish by an explosion, or a magnificent ship perish in a storm, and may have attempted to estimate the loss, and have mourned over the wreck and ruin. But for a child, with a God-given, a God-endowed, and a God-redeemed nature to perish, must be something far more terrible than the loss of any mansion, or mill, or ship that ever was built, however elaborately finished, or expensively furnished. (*Ibid.*) *God's love for little children* :—1. It is a love of utter unselfishness. 2. It is the love of delight in them. 3. It is a love of compassion toward them. 4. It is the love of trust in the almost infinite capacities of children. (*T. Gasquoine, B.A.*) *Destitute children* :—I. A CAREFUL REGARD SHOULD BE PAID TO CHILDREN. II. THEY ARE LIABLE TO PERISH. 1. Through lack of food. 2. Through lack of knowledge. 3. In a moral sense they are liable to perish. III. IT IS NOT THE WILL OF THE PARENT OF GOOD THAT THESE LITTLE ONES SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN PERIL AND RUIN. (*D. Ace, M.A.*) I. THE DANGEROUS EXPOSURE OF MANKIND. II. THE WILL OF THE FATHER RESPECTING US. III. HOW THAT WILL IS TO TAKE EFFECT. (*J. N. Pearson, M.A.*) *God's care for His children* :—1. The existence of things which put in peril the souls of them that may be the children of God. 2. It is contrary to God's will that these dangers should be fatal to the salvation of His people. 3. The means which God has provided for the accomplishment of His gracious will in the salvation of the little ones. 4. The encouragement which the text affords to those who are desirous of imparting that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. (*Bishop Sumner.*) *The Father and the little ones* :—I. THE TRUTH ASSERTED. God's will is for their welfare. 1. Because He is their Creator. 2. Because He is Love. 3. These words apply to the whole realm of childhood. They are not limited to children of the good and wealthy. II. A SAD TRUTH IMPLIED. That notwithstanding God's will children may ripen for evil and be lost. (*C. Vince.*) *Not an ideal child* :—I saw some time ago a great painter's representation of this scene. He makes this child so noble-featured, full of brightness and beauty, standing there as a young prince, fetched for the purpose from a fair palace. That is artistic, but it does not answer the purpose. What was done was done on the spot. The Master did not send for and bring the fairest and best-trained child that Galilee contained. No; it was a street loiterer He called to Himself. Some little one busy at play in the market-place, or one looking on wondering at the edge of the crowd—the first little one on which His eyes could rest; and taking him with gentle hands, with all the roughness in which He found him, the Master pointed to him, and said: "Do not despise him; deem him not unworthy of your regard, but rather with all your powers influence him for good. Win his heart for God. Open to him the gates of heaven, and do all you can to smooth his path. Do not despise one of these." (*Ibid.*) *Men must co-operate with the will of God* :—Still there is room for human labour. What would the earth be without it? Suppose that where we see the corn ripening we saw only a barren waste; if the ground had not been ploughed, or the seed not sown, or the plants not tended, could we look on it and say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight?" No; we should have to say: "It is not according to God's will; God's goodness has been defeated, and man's badness crowned with triumph." God in the course of providence ordains that our work and effort should be used to produce that on which He has set His heart. When a house is being built, there are different sets of labourers. On a certain day you see the work standing still, and on inquiry as to the cause you find that one set of men were idlers, they had gone holiday-making, and all the others were baffled and could do nothing. Look into the sluggard's garden; the sun is there, and the dew, and they cannot do anything; the showers descend; all God's celestial workers are there; but they cannot do anything because man is idling, has not dug the earth, has not scattered the seed; therefore God's means can do nothing. This is one of the great mysteries of the universe. I wonder

that God did not determine to do it all Himself, and not wait for our work, and have His purposes baffled, because we do not do our share of the labour. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 15, 18. **Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee.**—*How to meet offences*:—Observe the method Christ has laid down—I. THE TRESPASS SUPPOSED, whether accidental or designed. Whether it regards reputation, or property, or feelings, &c. Then, the direction given—II. SEEK A PRIVATE INTERVIEW. That he may explain, if possible. Better adapted for him to confess. More faithfully and affectionately admonished. III. IF THIS FAIL, TAKE ONE OR TWO MORE. Let them be unobjectionable, peaceable, prudent persons. These are to witness and aid by their counsel and influence. If this fail—IV. BRING IT TO THE CHURCH. Do so for these reasons: 1. For the offender's sake. He may hear the Church. 2. For Christianity's sake. 3. For the world's sake, that they may see we are neither indifferent or malevolent. If he refuse to hear the Church, then he must—V. BE REMOVED FROM CHRISTIAN COMMUNION. This is the last act, and if this is rightly done, it is ratified in heaven (verse 18). Do not let us neglect this order. You object, "He is not worthy of all this," &c.; "This is troublesome," &c. But it is your duty; Christ demands it. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Tell the offender his fault*:—A person came one day to see Mr. Longdon, of Sheffield, and said, "I have something against you, and I am come to tell you of it." "Do walk in, sir," he replied; "you are my best friend. If I could but engage my friends to be faithful with me, I shall be sure to prosper. But, if you please, we will both pray in the first place, and ask the blessing of God upon our interview." After they rose from their knees, and had been much blessed together, he said, "Now I will thank you, my brother, to tell me what it is you have against me." "Oh," said the man, "I really don't know what it is; it is all gone, and I believe I was in the wrong!" (*Anon.*) *Private reproof*:—A reprover is like one that is taking a mote out of his brother's eye—now this must be done very tenderly. For this purpose it would be convenient, where it may be, that reproofs be given privately. "If thy brother offend thee, tell him his fault between him and thee." The presence of many make him take up an unjust defence, who in private would have taken upon him a just shame. The open air makes sores to rankle—other's crimes are not to be cried at the market. Private reproof is the best grave to bury private faults in. (*Swinnock.*) *Brotherly reproof*:—I. WHOM are we to reprove? Our brother. This term, in general, comprehends all mankind. II. FOR WHAT are we to reprove our brother? It is for trespassing against us. III. How we are to reprove. 1. Be sure that the person whom you are about to reprove is really guilty of the sin. 2. See that the sin, which you are about to reprove, be that heinous sin which you have taken it to be. We are not for every trifle to fly in the face of our brother, and to hale him before our tribunal. 3. When you are about to reprove a brother, you should consider whether there is any probability of your doing him any good by your reproofs. If the goldsmith were persuaded that his toil and sweat at the refining pot would answer no good but to injure his health, and perhaps to shorten his days, he would sooner break his utensils in pieces, and burst his bellows apart, than engage in such unprofitable and unhealthy employment. Equally fruitless it is to reprove some men. To reprove successfully requires no small degree of dexterity and penetration. It must be the combined work of a cool head, and a gracious compassionate heart. 4. When you are about to reprove a brother, go to him yourselves. Do not wait until he comes of his own accord to you. 5. He who would reprove with success, should be as unblemished as possible in his own conduct. IV. FOR WHAT END we are to reprove him. Not to please ourselves, or to gratify our private resentments—not to triumph over his infirmities or to display our superiority to him; not to insult him, or to make ourselves merry with his faults; but that we may win him over from the camp of the aliens, and restore him to his rightful owner. (*Daniel Rowland.*) *The necessity of ecclesiastical discipline*:—I. The gospel cannot be preserved without salt; nor—II. Fraternal love without frankness; nor—III. A particular Church without discipline; nor—IV. The Church in general without a spirit of discipline. (*J. P. Lange.*) *Correction of fault a duty*:—He who sees his brother commit a sin and keeps silence, is equally in fault with him who does not forgive him who repents. The very elements teach us the benefit of this correction. For so fire chastises, and by burning purifies the air. The air by the blasts of winds chastises and purifies the water. In like manner, so does the water the earth. There can be no Christian charity in any

one unless he afford the medicine of correction to an erring brother. (*Anon.*) *Private admonition best*:—It is true open sinners deserve open censures; but private admonitions will best suit private offences. While we seek to heal a wound in our brother's actions, we should be careful not to leave a scar upon his person. We give grains of allowance in all current coin. That is a choice friend who conceals our faults from the view of others, and yet discovers them to our own. That medicine which rouses the evil humours of the body, and does not carry them off, only leaves it in a worse condition than it found it. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *Do not parade other people's faults*:—They are fittest to find fault in whom there is no fault to be found. There is no removing blots from the paper by laying upon them a blurred finger. What do you get by throwing stones at your enemy's windows while your own children look out at the casements? He that blows into a heap of dust is in danger of putting out his own eyes. (*Ibid.*) *Test of friendship*:—It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend of his faults. If you are angry with a man, or hate him, it is not hard to go to him and stab him with words; but so to love a man that you cannot bear to see the stain of sin upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving words—that *is* friendship. But few have such friends. Our enemies usually teach us what we are at the point of the sword. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 19–20. **For when two or three are gathered together in My name.**—*The presence of Christ in the sanctuary*:—1. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS PROMISE OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE. God comes not here as to a court of assize, but to a Bethesda, to dispense mercy. II. THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE PROMISE WILL BE FULFILLED. 1. To meet in the Saviour's name is to seek its exaltation. 2. His name must be pleaded as the ground of approach to God. 3. The sole authority of Christ must be recognized if we would meet in His name. III. THE JEWISH CHURCH AS WELL AS THE CHRISTIAN HAD GOD'S GRACIOUS PRESENCE. 1. The incarnation was substituted for the Shekinah—a symbol. 2. The bodily exercises, carnal ordinances are at an end in the Christian worship. 3. We have the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. 4. Let us expect the Divine blessing. 5. If the presence of God be promised, how is it that professors are content with an occasional visit to the sanctuary? (*J. S. Pearsall.*) *The presence of Christ in the meetings of His people*:—I. THE PROMISE. 1. There is a sense in which it is true that Jesus is present with all men at all times. 2. But in the text He meant something different from that to which we have referred. Jacob at Bethel. 3. It implies a readiness on the part of Christ to do for His people what they ask. 4. It implies a gift of those graces which are fitted to sweeten the spiritual intercourse of the soul with Himself, and to enrich it with those Divine ornaments which shall best display the lustre of His own glory. II. THAT IN ORDER TO REALIZE THE RICHES OF THE PROMISE THE DISCIPLES MUST BE GATHERED TOGETHER. Also to meet in the name of Christ. Acknowledge on our part all fulness and power in Christ. (*W. Willson.*) I. WHEN THE PEOPLE OF GOD MEET TOGETHER FOR RELIGIOUS WORSHIP IT SHOULD BE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. 1. With His authority. 2. Agreeably to His directions. 3. That our expectations of success are founded on the influence which may connect itself with His name. II. WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE THUS GATHERED TOGETHER THEY MAY EXPECT THEIR MASTER'S PRESENCE. 1. A large number not necessary. 2. A particular class not necessary. 3. A particular place not necessary. Christ once present. III. THE REDEEMER HAS IMPORTANT ENDS TO ACCOMPLISH IN CONNECTION WITH THE VOUCHSAFEMENT OF HIS PRESENCE WHEN HIS DISCIPLES ARE ASSEMBLED. (*T. Bradshaw.*) *Christ's presence consecrating His Church*:—I. THE SPEAKER. 1. The beaming of His essential glory. 2. How our Lord claims to Himself omnipresence. 3. That our Lord here claims to Himself self-existence, independent existence. 4. Our Lord does not contemplate His own existence as a contingency. II. THE ACKNOWLEDGED RELATION IN WHICH CHRIST STANDS TO HIS CHURCH. 1. Our Lord declares His headship. 2. The declaration which He here makes of His mind towards the Church (1) condescension; (2) faithfulness. III. THE VIEW HERE GIVEN BY CHRIST HIMSELF OF THE CHURCH. 1. The amount, "two or three." The Church small in the world. 2. The unobstrusive, humble character of the Church. 3. The special bond of the Church. IV. THE GRACIOUS PROMISE WHICH CHRIST HERE MAKES TO THE CHURCH AS THUS EXERCISED. (*J. Macdonald, M.A.*) *United prayer*:—I. UNITED PRAYER IS TO THOSE WHO EXERCISE IT A MEANS OF GRACE. 1. In recognizing this, you will get a clue to the advantages to be derived from united prayer as an agency for personal and relative spiritual advancement. 2. United

prayer strongly tends to draw out the souls of those engaged therein in sympathy and care, and love for one another, and for Christians generally. II. UNITED PRAYER IS AN INSTRUMENT OF SERVICE FOR CHRIST. Some phases of service to which Christians are called. The cultivation of personal spiritual life. The development and maintenance of the true nature, status, and influence of the Church of Christ. Effort to save souls. III. HOW SHALL WE, AS CHRISTIANS, AVAIL OURSELVES OF THIS MEANS OF GRACE and instrument of service for Christ? Exercise united prayer for the outpouring of God's Holy spirit upon the Church, &c. For the conversion of men, women, and children. For the agencies employed, that they may accomplish the devout ends they have in view. (*John Thomas.*) I. THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST IS SOCIAL. "Two or three." Man is a social being. The gospel raises men to considerations of the highest nature, and to a uniting order of things. The servants of God have similarity of views; a common ground of dependence, a common relation to Christ; the same object of endeavour; oneness as to cause and interest, look for the same blessed end. We are not surprised that they "meet together." II. WHEREVER THEY MEET CHRIST IS IN THE MIDST OF THEM. 1. It is His word, grace, and spirit that forms the Church. 2. It is the love of Christ that prompts and influences them. 3. This subject constitutes a criterion of discipleship. 4. It may serve to encourage us when few in number. 5. It animates our thought in view of the eternal world. In heaven there will be a great gathering. (*J. Birt.*) *An august visitor*:—I. THE PLACE. "Where," &c. A meeting place is intended; simple; it may be lonely. II. THE PRESENCE. A spiritual presence. The world sees Him not. Time was when He granted sensible tokens of His presence to man; burning bush, Jacob; Christ incarnate; now the Comforter is come. III. THE PURPOSE. He is in the midst for (1) inspection, "His eyes are as a flame of fire;" (2) for protection; (3) direction; (4) probation. He is in the midst to try with means and mercies—(5) salvation. (*J. Basley.*) *Jesus present in worship*:—More than the numbers stated here have thus met. Christ is here. If we had met this evening to discuss questions concerning geography, we should probably have felt ourselves honoured with the presence of such a man as Sir Roderick Murchison or Dr. Livingstone. Had the discussion related to history, to antiquity, to chemistry, with what elatedness and bated breath should we have listened to that prince of historians, the late Lord Macaulay, to the world-renowned Layard, and to the wonder-working Faraday. Had this been a congress of nations—a meeting of crowned heads—planning the course of politics, disposing of the destinies of nations, and marking the limits of empires, how important should we have deemed the occasion! Notable visitors from other climes, men of mark and might from other lands, would have attracted our observation—have riveted our attention; our interest would have risen with the occasion. But we meet with other ends in view. We come together about our souls' affairs; our present peace, and our everlasting salvation, are the matters which concern us. Compared with these other things are temporary and trivial. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus present in a simple sanctuary*:—"*Where* two or three are gathered together." There is evidently a meeting-place intended. Proud mortals love display. When Henry of England and his neighbour monarch of France met with friendly greetings, it was amid the most gorgeous glitter on the Field of Cloth of Gold. Christ makes no demand for parade or ostentatious display. It forms no condition in the terms upon which He will visit us. We have not a tesselated pavement; we can worship God without it. We have no encaustic tiles; Christ does not want them. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus present to inspect*:—He is Light. He is the Searcher of hearts, the great Revealer. He visits thus all His Churches. He knows them all—their constitution, their practice, their state. He visits them as the florist visits his garden, to watch the progress of choice plants and flowers. He visits them as the shepherd does his flock, to inspect the condition of his sheep. He visits them as the officer does his soldiers, to see if they are at their post, if their discipline is as it should be, and their arms in good condition. What a sight for Christ do some churches professedly Christian present! How must His holiness loathe the worldliness, selfishness, pride, and the many foul abominations that are covered with a Christian name! Christ is here for inspection. No member, no character, no practice, no thought, word, wish, or feeling, escapes the notice of His eye. Christian professor! Christ sees thee. Thou art fully and thoroughly known to Him. (*Ibid.*) *Four present, but only one visible*:—When it was decided to close the prayer-meeting in a certain village, a good woman declared that she would be there if no one else was. She was true to her word, and when the next morning some one said to her rather

jestingly, "Did you have a prayer-meeting last night?" "Ah! that we did," she replied. "How many were present?" "Four," she said. "Why," said he, "I heard that you were there all alone." "No," she said; "I was the only one visible, but the Father was there, and the Son was there, and the Holy Spirit was there, and we were all agreed in prayer." Before long there was a revival prayer-meeting and a prospering church. (*Ibid.*) *In My name*:—I. THE PLACE WHICH THE NAME OF JESUS OCCUPIES IN CHRISTIANITY. The subject of knowledge. The object of faith and love. Doctrines, duties, precepts permeated with His name. Does not imply nominality, as the name of a book; but He is the substance of the thing. He is the life of Christianity. II. ON WHAT GROUND DOES THE NAME OF JESUS OCCUPY THIS PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY. 1. The Father's appointment. 2. On His own authority as Messiah. 3. His Divine nature. 4. His perfect manhood. 5. His mediatorship. *Jesus*:—1. The central force of Christianity. 2. The radiating glory of Christianity. 3. The attractive power of Christianity. 4. The ultimate victory of Christianity. 5. Who then will be ashamed of the name of Jesus? (*J. Bate.*) *Public worship acceptable to God*:—No doubt the prayers which the faithful put up to heaven from under their private roofs were very acceptable unto Him. But if a saint's single voice in prayer be so sweet to God's ear, much more the church choir. His saints' prayers in consort together. A father is glad to see any one of his children, and makes him welcome when he visits him, but much more when they come together; the greatest feast is when they all meet at his house. The public praises of the Church are the emblem of heaven itself, where all the angels and saints make but one consort. There is a wonderful prevalency in the joint prayers of His people. When Peter was in prison, the Church meets and prays him out of his enemies' hands. A prince will grant a petition subscribed by the hands of a whole city, which may be he would not at the request of a private subject, and yet love him well, too. There is an especial promise to public prayer "Where two or three," &c. (*Gurnall.*)

Vers. 21, 22. **Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?**—*The forgiveness of injuries*:—I. THE BEST EXEMPLIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS IS OUR LORD'S OWN LIFE. There were two kinds of sin in these days of which Christ took cognizance; those against society or the race, and those against Himself. To each He applied the principle of the text. He forgave the vilest sinners who came to Him; and Saul who persecuted His Church. But we find the highest illustrations of His love when we mark His dealings with the souls He seeks to save. Christ does not turn against the man who rejects Him. II. THIS PRINCIPLE IS INTENDED TO GUIDE US IN OUR ACTIONS TOWARDS OUR FELLOWS. 1. Shall not Christians be forbearing towards other men. Let us bear wrong in as generous a spirit as we can. The feeling of brotherhood must be kept higher than that of revenge. 2. This law must be observed in the family. 3. Christ teaches the spirit in which we must regard offenders whose sin is against society. Unlimited forgiveness you will say is unpractical. Put it into action, and let it fail. Christianity conquers by failing; its martyrs are its victors. This is not a dead law; but life-giving. (*A. J. Griffith.*) *Forgiveness of offences*:—I. A PERSONAL OFFENCE IS ANYTHING WHEREBY WE ARE PERSONALLY INJURED IN OUR FEELINGS, OUR REPUTATION, OUR PERSON OR ESTATE. A public offence is one by which the Church is injured by any of its interests. II. THE QUESTION IS, WHAT IS OUR DUTY IN REFERENCE TO PERSONAL OFFENCES? 1. We should not cherish any malignant or revengeful feelings towards those who injure us. 2. We should not retaliate, or avenge ourselves on our offenders. 3. We should cherish towards those who offend us the feelings of kindness, regarding them with that benevolence which forbids our wishing them any harm. 4. We should treat them in our outward conduct with kindness, returning good for evil, and acting towards them as though they had not injured us. III. WHEN ARE WE TO FORGIVE? There are two classes of passages which bear upon this subject. 1. Those which prescribe the condition of repentance (Luke xvii. 3). 2. Those in which no such condition is prescribed (Matt. vi. 14, xviii. 21, v. 44, 45). So Christ prayed for His crucifiers. So Stephen prayed. So is God in His dealings with us. These passages are not inconsistent. The word forgiveness is used in a wider or a stricter sense. In the wider sense, it includes negatively, not having a spirit of revenge; and positively, exercising a spirit of kindness and love, and manifesting that spirit by all appropriate outward acts. This is forgiveness as a Christian's duty in all cases. In a more restricted sense it is the remission of the penalty due to an offence. This is illustrated in the

case of an offence against the Church. Repentance is the condition only of the remission of the penalty, not of forgiveness in the wider sense. There are penalties proper to private as well as public offences. IV. GROUNDS OF THE DUTY. 1. God's command. 2. God's example. 3. Our own need of forgiveness. Our sins against God are innumerable and unspeakably great. 4. The threatening that we shall not be forgiven unless we forgive others. 5. It is a dictate of Christian love. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The duty of forgiveness*:—I. Is urged by a consideration of the greatness of God's mercy to us. II. Of the lightness of our brother's sins. III. Of the terrible consequences of indulging an unforgiving spirit. (*Dr. Dobie.*) *The forgiveness of sins*:—1. If God commands us thus to forgive, there must be an infinite ocean of forgiving love in His own heart. 2. That God's forgiveness is altogether above man's conception of it. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *A forgiving spirit essential to vital religion*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF FORGIVENESS. II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF REFUSING TO FULFIL THAT DUTY. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *The duty of forgiving offences*:—There are many wrong notions about forgiveness. Consider the following conspicuous points—I. The principle of forgiveness is single. II. Forgiveness and forbearance are two separate principles of action. III. The object of the Christian religion is to make like God, and therefore the Christian is called upon to imitate God in his action. IV. Compassion and forgiveness are very different things. V. Forgiveness has an element of justice in it. (*N. Schenck, D.D.*) *Limited forgiveness*:—This question was framed in the very spirit of the old law of retaliation. By proposing any limit whatever to forgiveness, Peter showed that he still considered that to forgive was the exceptional thing, was to forego a right which must some time be reassumed, was not an eternal law of the kingdom, but only a tentative measure which at any moment may be revoked; that underneath the forgiveness we extend to an erring brother, there lies a right to revenge which we may at any time assert. This feeling, wherever it exists shows that we are living with retaliation for the law, forgiveness for the exception. But Christ's law is, that forgiveness shall be unlimited. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *Injuries not to be made public*:—A man strikes me with a sword, and inflicts a wound. Suppose, instead of binding up the wound, I am showing it to everybody, and after it has been bound up I am taking off the bandage constantly, and examining the depths of the wound, and making it fester, is there a person in the world who would not call me a fool? However, such a fool is he who, by dwelling upon little injuries or insults, causes them to agitate and influence his mind. How much better were it to put a bandage on the wound and never look to it again. (*Simeon.*) *The superior influence of forgiveness*:—A soldier in the American army heard of the severe illness of his wife. He applied for leave of absence but was refused. He left the army, but before he got away he was retaken, and brought in as a deserter. He was tried, found guilty, and summoned before the commanding officer to receive his sentence. He entered the tent, saluted, and stood perfectly unmoved while the officer read his fearful doom—"To be shot to death with musketry on the next Friday." Not a muscle of his face twitched, not a limb quivered. "I deserve it, sir," he replied, respectfully; "I deserted from my flag. Is that all, sir?" "No," replied the officer; "I have something else for you;" and, taking another paper, he read aloud the doomed man's pardon. The undaunted spirit which severity had failed to move was completely broken down by clemency. He dropped to the ground, shaking, sobbing, and overcome, and, being restored to his regiment, proved himself grateful for the mercy shown him, and was soon promoted for good conduct. *Forgiveness awakens gratitude*:—A private was court-martialled for sleeping at his post. He was convicted, sentenced to death, and the day fixed for his execution. But, the case reaching the ears of the President, he resolved to save him; he signed a pardon and sent it to the camp. The day came. "Suppose," thought the President, "my pardon has not reached him." The telegraph was called into requisition; but no answer came. Then, ordering his carriage, he rode ten miles and saw that the soldier was saved. When the Third Vermont charged upon the rifle-pits, the enemy poured a volley upon them. The first man who fell, with six bullets in his body, was William Scott, of Company K. His comrades caught him up; and, as his life-blood ebbed away, he raised to heaven, amid the din of the war, the cries of the dying, and the shouts of the enemy, a prayer for the president. (*Moore.*) *Forgiveness*:—Peter's question showed that he wholly misunderstood the nature of forgiveness. He thought it was something he might withhold or give as he pleased. Our Lord shows that it is a state of the heart which cannot be called forth by order or calculation. I. Both in

the parable and in the teaching of our Lord here it is admitted THAT ALL MEN HAVE CLAIMS ON ONE ANOTHER. These are not to be compared, in point of magnitude, with the claims which God has on all, but still they are claims. The man who is debtor towards God may be a creditor towards somebody, and the man who has committed most wrongs may be able, in his turn, to say that there is some one who has wronged him. II. Admitting to the full the claims which one man has against another in the way of personal offences, YET THERE IS SOMETHING OF MORE IMPORTANCE STILL THAN THE RECTIFYING OF A WRONG ACT OR WORD. It is of importance to have the wrong righted, but Jesus Christ has more respect still to the character, repentance, and restoration of the individual who has offended. It is difficult to realize that the offender has inflicted a worse injury on himself than on the offended, the injury he has wrought on his own spirit. This truth will come out more clearly when you consider the precepts Christ gives for guidance in the matter, and the great result of success—"Tell him his fault between thee," &c., "Thou hast gained thy brother." This is above all personal gain. Charity is victory. III. This duty of forgiveness is ENFORCED BY A PARABLE WHERE OUR CLAIMS ON OTHERS ARE PLACED IN CONTRAST WITH GOD'S CLAIMS ON US. We have no hope but in forgiveness. If we feel the need of Divine compassion, have we not learned the worth of it towards our fellow-creatures. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *Forgiveness not a matter of calculation*:—Suppose a man were to put the question, How often must I admire what is beautiful and great in creation? how often must I cherish affection for my child? how often must I honour God? how often must I practise the duty of kindness? or how often must I feel sympathy for the unhappy and the suffering? You will see that any answer which could be given to such a question would be misleading, simply because the question proceeded on a false notion of what admiration, or affection, or sympathy is. To give a direct answer to such questions, you could only say, in Christ's words, "Until seventy times seven"—*i.e.*, numbers have nothing to do with the matter. Forgiveness is a simple state of mind, like admiration of God's creation, for which all that a man needs is a sense of beauty and order in his nature. Forgiveness is a state of heart, just as affection or sympathy is. And no man thinks of determining how often and how far he must feel sympathy, or how often and how far he must love those who are dear to him. The sympathy is always there, the love is always in the heart, and it requires only to be appealed to and touched to come forth. You could not imagine a man of genuine tenderness of heart making up his mind and calculating whether he should feel pity for a case of distress or not. You could not imagine a friend debating with himself whether he would sympathize with his friend in some calamity. Sympathy is free and spontaneous; it does not come and go at one's call: love is only love; sympathy is only sympathy, when it can't help itself. (*Ibid.*) *The offender the greatest sufferer, and therefore needs pity most*:—If a man, in robbing us of a trifle, were to meet with an accident which disabled him and made him a sufferer for life, we should feel that his punishment far exceeded our loss; and most of us would have the heart to commiserate him, even though he had only himself to blame. And if the injury is not to life or limb, but to the immortal part of the man—if he destroys his own spiritual life—we should commiserate him all the more. (*Ibid.*) *Forgiveness must be real and true*:—We may not forgive with our lips, and bear malice in our hearts. Such sham forgiveness is only too common. A man was lying on his sick bed, and the clergyman by his side was urging him to be reconciled to some one who had injured him. After much persuasion the man said, "If I die I will forgive him, but if I live he had better keep out of my way." And again, our forgiveness must be willing, not forced from us. (*Buxton Wilmot.*) *Forgive and forget*:—How many are there who profess to forgive, but cannot forget, an injury. Such are like persons who sweep the chamber, but leave the dust behind the door. Whenever we grant our offending brother a discharge, our hearts also should set their hands to the acquittance. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *A sensibility to injury not sinful*:—We may without sin be sensible of injuries (a sheep is as sensible of a bite as a swine); but it must be with the silence of a sheep, or at utmost the mourning of a dove, not the roaring of a bear, or bellowing of a bull, when baited. All desire of revenge must be carefully cast out; and if the wrongdoer say, "I repent," you must say, "I remit," and that from the heart; being herein like that king of England of whom it is said that he never forgot anything but injuries. (*John Trapp.*)

Vers. 23-35. **Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain**

king, which would take account of his servants.—*The unmerciful servant*:—I. THAT WE ARE ALL GOD'S DEBTORS. Debt in the New Testament is a common figure for sin; but duty is a moral thing, not a commercial. It is used figuratively to denote an obligation which one has failed to meet. Let us compare our character with the requirements of God's law. II. THAT NONE OF US HAS ANYTHING WHEREWITH TO PAY HIS DEBT TO GOD. Few will admit this. They say, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." They will try to make themselves better. III. THAT GOD IS WILLING TO FORGIVE US ALL OUR DEBT. IV. THAT THE RECEPTION OF THIS FORGIVENESS BY US INVOLVES IN IT THE OBLIGATION TO FORGIVE THOSE OF OUR FELLOW-MEN WHO HAVE TRESPASSED AGAINST OURSELVES. How far this obligation extends. It does not imply that we are to take no notice of the wrong done us: this would be selfish indifference alike to our brother and his guilt. But how comes it that the obligation to cherish this forgiving spirit is connected with our reception of God's mercy. All who accept God's pardon are at the same time renewed into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit; and so resembling Him in character, they seek to do unto others as He has done to them. Gratitude will take this form (Ephes. iv. 32). Lessons: 1. That our sins against God are vastly greater than our neighbour's trespasses against us. 2. We are constantly needing the forbearance of God and the long-suffering of our fellow-man. 3. That implacability on our part is an evidence that we are as yet unforgiven by God. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Man's unavailing effort to pay his sin debts*:—Commonly the very last thing which he will admit is that he can do nothing to make atonement for it. He *will* go about to establish his own righteousness. He *will* try to make himself better. He *will* promise future obedience, as if that could be a satisfaction for the sins of the past. It is thus with him as it is too often with business men in a time of embarrassment; for, no matter how involved his affairs may be, the very last thing that a merchant will admit is that he is hopelessly insolvent. Hugh Miller, in his autobiography, thus describes what he learned by his experience as a clerk in the branch bank of Linlithgow: "I found I could predict every bankruptcy in the district; but I usually fell short from ten to eighteen months of the period in which the event actually took place. I could pretty nearly determine the time when the difficulties and entanglements which I saw, *ought* to have produced their proper effects, and landed in failure; but I missed taking into account the desperate efforts which men of energetic temperament make in such circumstances, and which, to the signal injury of their friends and the loss of their creditors, succeed usually in staving off the catastrophe for a season." So the sinner, in his attempts to work out his own redemption, sinks only the deeper into the mire. (*Ibid.*) *Forgiveness—one law for lord and servant*:—It is a parable to show us that our life must be a repetition of the life of God. "How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" I. THE ANSWER OF THE LORD, FOLDED UP IN THIS PARABLE, IS "AS OFTEN AS GOD FORGIVES YOU." As soon as the lord began to reckon with his servants, he found this great defaulter; in any company God would immediately find such an one. What our Lord represents as one act, is really a continued flow of acts; every hour we are the subjects of forgiveness. Just as often you are to let forgiveness flow forth to others; the heart of the servant must be in unison with the heart of the master. II. GOD'S MERCY TO US IS TO BE A SPRING OF MERCY IN US TO OTHERS. The unmerciful servant would not resemble his master. We are receivers mainly that we may be givers. Observe the circumstances in which as Christians we are expected to exercise a forgiving spirit. Christ does not ask us to make bricks without straw. Everything that we need for the fulfilment of the command is provided. The Holy Spirit is given to mould us to the form of mercy which is in Him. It is a reasonable and ample provision. Christ endeavours to open our hearts by kindness; not by reproaches or commands, but by forgiveness. He dies that our transgressions may be put away. If the power to forgive be greater in us in this way than any other, the responsibility under which we lie to put forth that power is enormously increased. III. WE MUST TAKE THE ENTIRE GIFT, OR LOSE ALL. The entire gift of the king was something more than forgiveness. It was also a forgiving heart. It is the gift of a new life. He took the liberty, joy, relief, and then stopped. He took the remission of his debt; but not the debt-remitting heart. Pardon is not salvation; there must be holiness as well. (*A. Macleod, D.D.*) *God's mercy reproduced in the life of the Christian*:—If you cleave a stem of rock crystal into fragments, every fragment will be found a repetition more or less complete of the unbroken crystal. In a single drop of sea-water you will find all the elements of the sea itself. Pluck a leaf from the oak,

the beech, the plane, or any forest tree; place it between you and the light—you will find that the profile of the leaf is the profile of the perfect tree. Look at its veins; they are a little map of the branches of the tree. The tree reproduces itself in the leaf; the leaf is a picture of the whole tree. The form of the fragment, of the drop, of the leaf, is the form of the whole to which it belongs. This law holds throughout the wide variety of nature. A single bone reveals the animal: a single ray of light contains the mysteries of all light; the pebble you start with your foot is an epitome of the globe we inhabit. (*Ibid.*) *The unmerciful servant:* —This parable. I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO ITS DELIVERY. Our Lord had been giving instructions to his disciples concerning the restoration of an erring brother. The injured party should be ready to forgive. II. THE SEVERAL PARTS OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED. The king is intended to represent the Most High; but He is not too exalted to attend to the concerns of His subjects. 1. A servant is in debt to his sovereign. (1) Its amount exceedingly great. Our sin is great. (2) This servant being unable to meet his heavy liabilities, the claims of justice are advanced. (3) To arrest the execution of the sentence a humble and earnest plea is presented. (4) Touched with a feeling of pity the king relinquishes his claims and extends to the debtors a full and free pardon. 2. One servant in debt to another; even to him who had been so heavily in debt himself, but was most generously released from all his obligations. (1) A contrast truly appalling. (2) A punishment richly deserved. III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS IT ENFORCES. (*Expository Outlines.*) *Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity:* — Warn against misapplications of the parable. 1. It would be an error to apply it to the subject of property obligations and money-debt. 2. Neither does it relate to civil punishments (Rom. xiii. 1–5). 3. Neither are we to see in this parable the history of any particular persons, but simply the exhibition of the nature and working of the Divine principle of grace, first in absolving us, and then in the temper which it begets in the hearts of those who are the subjects of it. 4. Neither is it intended to teach us by this parable, that our exercise of forgiveness is in any way the procuring cause of God's forgiveness. The way thus cleared, consider some of the elements of the parable itself. 1. Man is an immense debtor. 2. Sad is man's estate in view of this enormous indebtedness. There is a way, however, for these terrible consequences to be averted. 4. But there may be great debtors to whom the Lord's word of entire forgiveness has been spoken, who yet in the end fail of the advantages of it. 5. God's forgiveness is not bestowed that we may indulge our selfishness and greed. 6. There are other servants spoken of besides the two debtors. "When they saw what was done they were very sorry." This is the form which true charity takes when called to witness sinfulness. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The unmerciful servant:* —I. The PRACTICE of forgiving injuries. II. The principle of forgiving injuries. (*W. Arnot.*) *Mercy uncommunicated, not truly received:*—If the channel of his heart had really been inserted into the fountain-head of mercy for receiving, mercy would infallibly have flowed in the way of giving, wherever the need of a brother made an opening; if the vessel had been charged, it would certainly have discharged. No compassion flowed from that heart to refresh a fellow-creature in distress, because that heart had never truly opened to accept mercy from God; the reservoir was empty, and therefore the outbranching channels remained dry. (*Ibid.*) *The magnitude of injury determined by our temper towards it:*—Most of the injuries with which we are called to deal are small, even in relation to human capacity; they are very often precisely of the size that our own temper makes them. Some people possess the art of esteeming great injuries small, and some the art of esteeming small injuries great. The first is like a traveller who throws a great many stones out of the burden which he carries, and so walks with ease along the road; the other is like a traveller who gathers a great many stones on the wayside, and adds them to his burden, and is therefore soon crushed by the load. (*Ibid.*) *Man freed from an unforgiving temper by the gentle influences of the Divine love, not by self-determination:*—A traveller in Burmah, after fording a certain river, found his body covered all over by a swarm of small leeches, busily sucking his blood. His first impulse was to tear the tormentors from his flesh; but his servant warned him that to pull them off by mechanical violence would expose his life to danger. They must not be torn off, lest portions remain in the wounds and become a poison; they must drop off spontaneously, and so they will be harmless. The native forthwith prepared a bath for his master, by the decoction of some herbs, and directed him to lie down in it. As soon as he had bathed in the balsam the leeches dropped off. Each unforgiven injury rankling in the heart is like a leech sucking the life-

blood. Mere human determination to have done with it, will not cast the evil thing away. You must bathe your whole being in God's pardoning mercy; and these venomous creatures will instantly let go their hold. You will stand up free. (*Ibid.*) *A wide view of heavenly good lessens the power of earthly wrongs*:—While a few acres of cold barren moorland constitute all your heritage, if a neighbour encroaches on it by a hair's-breadth, you assert your right and repel the aggression; possibly you may, in your zeal, accuse him of an intention to trespass, if you see him digging his own ground near your border. While your property is very small, you are afraid of losing any of it; and perhaps you cry out before you are hurt. But if you become heir to a broad estate in a fertile valley, you will no longer be disposed to watch the motions of your neighbour, and go to law with him for a spadeful of moss that he may have taken from a disputed spot. Thus, while a human soul has no other portion than an uncertain shred of this uncertain world, he is kept in terror lest an atom of his property should be lost; he will do battle with all his might against any one who is, or seems to be, encroaching on his honour, or business, or property: but when he becomes a child of God, and an heir of an incorruptible inheritance—when he is a prince on the steps of a throne, he can afford to overlook small deductions from a possession that is insignificant in itself, and liable to be taken away at any time without an hour's warning. (*Ibid.*) *The forgiving spirit aided by prayer*:—The miller, finding that some of the lumps are large and hard, and that the mill-stones are consequently almost standing still, goes quietly out and lets more water on. Go you, and do likewise. When injuries that seem large and hard are accumulated on your head, and the process of forgiving them begins to choke and go slow under the pressure, as if it would soon stop altogether; when the demand for forgiveness grows great, and the forgiving power in the heart is unable to meet it; then, enter into your closet and shut your door, and pray to your Father specifically for more experience of His forgiving love; so shall your forgiving love grow stronger, and overcome every obstacle that stands in its way. (*Ibid.*) *Sin as debt*:—I. That sin is a debt, a vast debt; or that there is much, yea great, exceeding great evil in sin, considered as a debt. II. That sinners are debtors, and have nothing to pay, and therefore are forgiven freely, as an act of God's mercy, all their debts without any satisfaction made by them. III. That God doth and will call sinners who are debtors to Him, to an account, be they willing or no. IV. That a pardoned person, or one that God hath forgiven, does forgive from his heart all those that have injured him, and they that do not so are not, nor shall be ever forgiven. (*Benjamin Keach.*) *Evil of sin*:—1. Sin is a vast debt, or an exceeding great evil in respect of God, against whom it is committed. 2. Sin is a vast debt, considering what wrong it hath done to God; it is a crossing His will, a violation of His law, a contemning His authority, a despising of His sovereignty and dominion, a defacing His image, and resisting His spirit, abuse of His patience, and a slighting of all His love, mercy, and goodness. 3. Sin is a great debt, because all men, yea, all the saints of the earth, nor angels of heaven can pay this debt. 4. Sin is a vast debt, because it exposes the sinner to eternal wrath and vengeance. (*Ibid.*) *Ways of being debtors*:—1. By owing money. 2. By being a trespasser, offender, or guilty person. 3. By robbery of a man's goods or good name. 4. By violating a covenant. 5. By receiving kindnesses. He owes the debt of gratitude and thankfulness. (*Ibid.*) *Sinners like debtors*:—1. In their unwillingness to be called to account. 2. Attended with shame. 3. They have many shifts and delays. 4. Do not like to meet their creditor. 5. Continually afraid of arrest. (*Ibid.*) *Compassion God-like*:—There is nothing that makes a man so unlike to God, as a hard heart; without pity, without patience. In the tabernacle, the doors of the *sanctum sanctorum* were of olive-wood (1 Kings vi. 31); which is the hieroglyphic of mercy: but the gates of that fearful dungeon, which is hell, are said to be of brass and iron; "He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder" (Psa. cvii. 16); the signs of hard hearts and instruments of destruction. Which serves to show, that the way to hell is by inhumanity; to heaven, by pity. Of all the passions in us, compassion is the best; and a man without this tenderness, is but the statue of a man; a mere stone in a human figure. The very stones will seem to weep, when foul weather is a-coming; and as if they had been once so full of sorrow for Christ's sufferings, that their solid breasts could no longer contain it, they brake in pieces. There be men harder than stones, that have hearts more impenetrable, obdurate, and unrelenting, and less capable of remorse; nay, instead of pitying the wounds of the miserable, they make those miserable wounds. (*T. Adams.*) *In-*

*fluence of forgiveness*:—The fate of the unmerciful servant tells us in the plainest language that the mere cancelling of our guilt does not save us. It tells us that unless the forgiveness of God humbles us, and begets within us a truly meek and loving spirit, we cannot be owned as His children. The best assurance that we are ourselves forgiven is the consciousness that the very spirit of the forgiving God is working in our own hearts towards others. (*Marcus Dods.*) *Forgiveness*:—Forgiveness is cheaper than revenge, and is sweeter and more valuable. Prudence, as well as piety, counsels quiet to men under reproof or reproach. If a bee sting you, will you go to the hive and destroy it? Would not a thousand come upon you? If you receive a trifling injury, don't be anxious to avenge it. Let it drop. It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you have received. When enemies see they have hit you they know where to strike next time, while if you show no signs of disquiet, they think their stroke must have missed its mark. Lie quiet, and you will be likely to be let alone. (*H. L. Hastings.*) *The parable of the king that took account of his servant*:—Note—I. THE GREAT GOODNESS AND CLEMENCY OF GOD. Delay was asked for, and remission was given. How great the love; the gift exceeds the petition. II. THE GREAT POWER OF HUMILITY. The servant kneeled down and prayed in a few simple words, and he was forgiven his debt. Certain lions spare a prey that prostrates itself before them. III. THE PUNISHMENT IS ONE THING, THE FAULT IS ANOTHER. There is a freeing from the dominion of Satan, and then there is a remission of the punishment. Two distinct acts. Absalom was pardoned, yet he was not admitted to David's presence (2 Sam. xiv. 28). IV. THE INCONSTANCY AND MUTABILITY OF MAN. V. The NEED WE HAVE TO FORGIVE INJURIES. Like our blessed Lord and St. Stephen, we must pray for our murderers. (*From the Latin.*) *The just account*:—I. THE SUBLIMITY OF THE JUDICIAL CONDITION. "A certain king," endowed with the highest powers, will be our judge—Jesus Christ (Rev. xix. 16). His three attributes are—1. Infallible knowledge. 2. Inflexible justice. 3. Invincible power. Hence He is to be greatly feared (Jer. x. 7). II. THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF FINAL AVOIDANCE — "which would take account." III. THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENT SUBJECTION. "Servants," implying total subjection to Him (Levit. xix. 37). (*Ibid.*) *Our great creditor*:—God is our great creditor on account — I. OF ORIGINAL SIN (Ephes. ii. 3). II. Of ACTUAL sin (Isa. lix. 2). III. Of OBEDIENCE by natural and Divine law (Rom. ii. 14, 15). 1. Natural. God is our creator (Acts xvii. 28). Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. 2. Divine. He is our King (Rom. xiii. 1). We are His spiritual subjects and followers. IV. OF GRATITUDE FOR ALL BLESSINGS. Temporal and spiritual (1 Cor. xii. 6–11). V. OF EARNEST LOVE FOR ANY GOOD WHICH WE MAY HAVE DONE. To Him be all the praise and honour (Psa. cxv. 1). (*Ibid.*) *The tormentors*:—The torment of this place of tormentors (Matt. xxv. 30), arises from—I. THE HOPELESSNESS OF ESCAPE. The imprisonment here knows no end (Matt. iii. 12, xxv. 46; Isa. lxvi. 24). II. THE WEIGHT WHICH PRESSES DOWN THE CONDEMNED. III. THE UNCEASING TORMENT. Never any relief; not a moment's ease or forgetfulness (Rev. xiv. 11). IV. THE WEARINESS AND PAIN OF BEING. A wakeful night seems multiplied into three. The same round, or rather, unvarying sameness, which makes an agony of itself. V. THE SPECTATORS OF THIS WRETCHEDNESS (Rev. xiv. 10, vi. 16, 17). This formed the agony of Samson (Judg. xvi. 27, 28). It carries shame here; it will increase the agony of hereafter. (*Ibid.*) *The debt of man*:—Let us consider the nature of our debt. I. To GOD. Pay the debt of (1) Love; (2) Honour; (3) Fear; for He is Lord of all. II. To OURSELVES. Pay thy debt of (1) Love; we ought to love ourselves since God loves us, and we ought to obey the commandment of love—to love ourselves; not in and for ourselves, but as in and belonging to God. (2) Care; we ought to guard and preserve ourselves from dangers ghostly and bodily. Hence the gift of reason to defend and protect the course of life. (3) Salvation (Phil. ii. 12; Eccles. ix. 10). III. To our NEIGHBOUR. Pay thy debt of (1) Love (Matt. xix. 19), dealing with him as with thyself. (2) Instruction; if he wander, seek to lead him back into the paths of righteousness (chap. xviii. 15; James v. 20). (3) Help and succour (1 John iii. 17, 18; Isa. lviii. 7). *Epilogue*.—1. Husband and discipline every resource. 2. Strive and pray honestly to meet this triple debt. (*Ibid.*) What contrasts are here! I. God, the King of kings, towards a servant; and again, a servant towards his fellow-servant. II. An infinite debt, and again, a small debt. III. Impossibility and inability; and again, possibility and ability. IV. Compassion and kindness; and again, hardheartedness and cruel behaviour. (*Heubner.*) *The sinner's debt*:—This "servant," or "minis-

ter," must have been some high functionary of state, who manipulated the revenues of provinces. He represents the sinner—every sinner. The debt for which every sinner is accountable, or liable, to God is enormous. It is not easy to determine exactly what was the value of the Hebrew talent. It contained 3,000 shekels of the sanctuary, and is supposed by some to have corresponded exactly to the Greek Æginetan talent, which exceeded the common Attic commercial talent. This common Attic talent is estimated by Bœckh as equivalent to 1,375 German thalers. Taking the German thaler as equivalent to 3s. sterling, a single Attic talent would amount to a little above £200; so then ten thousand talents would be something more than £2,000,000 sterling, an immense sum, more especially in those ancient times, when the relation of bullion to commodities was such that the prices of commodities in bullion were far smaller relatively than now, with our vast importations of gold from America and Australia. This immense sum, almost baffling ordinary conception, represents the sinner's spiritual debt or guilt. (*J. Morison, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER XIX.

**VERS. 1–12. Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause.**—*The marriage tie:*—I. ITS PRESCRIBED LIMITATION. Enforced by (1) numerical proportion of the sexes; (2) evils of polygamy; (3) teaching of the Bible. II. ITS TENDER INTIMACY. III. ITS CONDITIONAL DISSOLUBILITY: (1) toleration of Moses; (2) justifiable grounds of divorce. IV. ITS OPTIONAL FORMATION. (*Dr. Thomas.*) *The doctrine of Christ concerning marriage:*—(1) Its binding character as instituted by God; (2) its decay in the progress of history; (3) its prepared restoration under the law; (4) its transformation by the gospel. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) Husband and wife should be not only one flesh, but also one heart and mind. (*Hedinger.*) *Marriage and celibacy:*—Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities and churches, and heaven itself. Celibate, like the fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness, but sits alone, and is confined and dies in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house and gathers sweetness from every flower, and labours and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world with delicacies, and obeys their king and keeps order, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interests of mankind, and is that state of good things to which God has designed the present constitution of the world. Single life makes man, in one instance, to be like angels; but marriage, in very many things, makes the chaste pair to be like Christ. This is (as St. Paul says) a great mystery; but it is the symbolical and sacramental representation of the greatest mysteries of our religion. Christ descended from His Father's bosom, and contracted His Divinity with flesh and blood, and married our nature, and we became a church, the spouse of the Bridegroom, which He cleansed with His blood, and gave her His Holy Spirit for a dowry, and heaven for a jointure; begetting children unto God by the gospel. (*Bp. Jeremy Taylor.*) *Marriage:*—This union should not be entered into lightly, or rashly. It involves *all* the happiness of this life, and *much* of that to come. The union demands congeniality of feeling and disposition; of rank in life; of temper; similarity of acquirements; of age; of talent; intimate acquaintance. It should also be a union on religious feelings and opinions: because religion is more important than anything else; because it will give more happiness in the married life than anything else; because where one only is pious, there is danger that religion will be obscured and blighted; because no prospect is so painful as that of eternal separation; because it is heathenish to partake the gifts of God in a family and offer no thanksgiving, and inexpressibly wicked to live as if there were no God, &c.; because death is near, and nothing will soothe the pangs of parting but the hope of meeting in the resurrection of the just. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Advantages of marriage:*—If you are for pleasure, marry; if you prize rosy health, marry. A good wife is heaven's best gift to man: his angel of mercy; minister of graces innumerable; his gem of many virtues; his casket of jewels; her voice, his sweetest music; her smiles, his brightest day; her kiss, the guardian of his innocence; her arms, the pale of his safety, the balm of his health, the balsam of his life; her industry, his surest wealth; her economy, his safest steward; her lips, his faithful counsel.

lors; her bosom, the softest pillow of his cares; and her prayers, the ablest advocates of heaven's blessing on his head. (*Bp. Taylor.*) *The scriptural view of divorce:*—I hold that there is only one cause for which a man can lawfully be divorced from his wife, according to the Scriptures; that is, adultery. I. LET US TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES IN PROOF OF THIS VIEW. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." God thought it not good for man to be alone; so He made him an helpmeet. Had it been better for a man to have more than one wife, God would doubtless have made two. But in our Saviour's time women had multiplied; but He did not change the original law. The relation of man and wife is nearer than that of parent and offspring. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother," &c. Where is the nation or man who shall assume authority to put apart these thus joined together save for the one cause? "And I say unto you, whoso shall put away his wife," &c. St. Paul says, "The woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth." II. THE VIEWS OF SOME OF THE LEADING WRITERS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Dr. A. Clarke, in his Commentary, has the following: "It does not appear that there is any other case in which Jesus Christ admits of divorce" (Matt. v. 32). On Matt. xix. 9, "The decision of our Lord must be very unpleasant to these men; the reason why they wished to put away their wives was, that they might take others whom they liked better; but our Lord here declares that they could not be remarried while the divorced person was alive; and that those who did marry during the life of the divorced person were adulterers." "In this discourse our Lord shows that marriage, except in one case, is indissoluble, and should be so. 1. By Divine institution (ver. 4). 2. By express commandment (ver. 5). 3. Because the married couple become one and the same person (ver. 6). 4. By the example of the first pair (ver. 8). And 5. Because of the evil consequent on separation (ver. 9). Watson's "Theo. Institutes," vol. ii., p. 543, has the following: "The foundation of the marriage union is the will of God that the human race should increase and multiply, but only through a chaste and restricted conjunction of one man and one woman, united by their free vows in a bond made by the Divine law indissoluble, except by death or by adultery." Dr. Wayland, in his "Elements of Moral Science," says: "In the act of marriage, two persons, under the most solemn circumstances, are thus united, and they enter into a mutual contract thus to live in respect to each other. This relation, having been established by God, the contract thus entered into has all the solemnity of an oath. Hence, he who violates it, is guilty of a twofold crime: first, the violation of the law of chastity, and second, of the law of veracity—veracity pledged under the most solemn circumstances. 1. The contract is for life, and is dissoluble for one cause only: the cause of adultery." Referring to the text, he says: "We are here taught that marriage, being an institution of God, is subject to His laws alone, and not to the laws of man. Hence, the civil law is binding upon the conscience only, in so far as it corresponds to the law of God." Matthew Henry's testimony is, "Christ allows of divorce in cases of adultery; He disallows it in all others." Olshausen says: "This union is to be considered indissoluble, one which man cannot, and only God can dissolve, and in which the Omniscient does really dissever only in cases of adultery." Such are the opinions of some of the most learned and pious Biblical scholars. III. NOW LET US TURN TO THE QUESTION ALREADY ANTICIPATED: WHAT MAN OR NATION DARE ASSUME AUTHORITY TO PUT ASUNDER THOSE WHOM GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER? The answer I call your attention to is this: 1st, the Jews, and 2nd, our own nation. 1. The Jews. I quote from Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary, Matt. xix. 3. "At this time there were two famous divinity and philosophical schools among the Jews, that of Shammai, and that of Hillel. On the question of divorce, the school of Shammai maintained that a man could not legally put away his wife, except for adultery. The school of Hillel taught that a man might put away his wife for a multitude of other causes; and when she did not find grace in his sight, that is, when he saw any other woman that pleased him better." Rabbi Akiba said: "If any man saw a woman handsomer than his own wife, he might put his wife away; because it is said in the law, 'If she find not favour in his eyes'" (Deut. xxiv. 1). "Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, in his Life, tells us, with the utmost coolness and indifference, About this time I put away my wife, who had borne me three children, not being pleased with her manners." These cases are enough to show to what a scandalous and criminal excess this matter was carried among the Jews. 2. Then we inquire, How is it with us in America? I find that divorces are very common, some

for one cause and some for another. So that the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" is far from being foreign, but really is applicable to us, and a question of the greatest importance. For, for almost any little thing that springs up between man and wife, a divorce is applied for, and is obtained. From the *Standard*, a Baptist paper, I took the following: "Those whose attention is not directed to the subject of divorce, will be surprised at the number of applications in the courts of our large cities and centres of population to have the bonds of marriage dissolved. In Indianapolis, in 1866, there were 822 marriages, and 210 applications for divorce, which is more than one to four of the whole number of marriages. In Chicago, the same year, there were 4,182 marriages, and 330 applications for divorce, being nearly one to every thirteen marriages. In both these cases the number seeking divorce is alarming. But the unenviable and disgraceful distance in which Indianapolis leads Chicago in this warfare on marriage, is to be attributed to the peculiarly lax legislation of Indiana, which, for years, has been notorious on the subject of divorce." "The various courts of Chicago granted bills of divorce in 1865 to the number of 274; in 1866, the number was 209; in 1867, 311; making the whole number of divorces granted in three years, 794. Is not this appalling? But since 1868, Chicago has registered as high as 730 applications in a single year, representing families containing about 3,500 souls, and the most of which are poor women." The *Christian Statesman* says that the number of divorces in eight years, in four States, viz., Vermont, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Connecticut, have been 5,831. And in the year 1877, in Maine, there were 500 divorces. Brethren and fellow-citizens, I believe that our lawmakers are to blame for allowing such laws to exist as they do, and not bringing the law of divorce in these United States to the Scriptural standard. Look at our statutes of Minnesota, and see the looseness of this matter. In the General Statutes of Minnesota, page 407, sec. 6, we find the following: "A divorce from the bonds of matrimony may be adjudged and decreed by the district court on suit brought in the county where parties, or either of them, reside, for either of the following causes: 1st, adultery; 2nd, impotency; 3rd, cruel and inhuman treatment; 4th, when either party, subsequent to the marriage, has been sentenced to imprisonment in the State Prison; 5th, wilful desertion of one party by the other for the term of three years next preceding the filing of the complaint; 6th, habitual drunkenness for the space of one year, immediately preceding the filing of the complaint." Here, then, are six causes in our State statutes for which a man or woman may put away wife or husband. The first is according to Scripture; the others are unscriptural. What latitude is here given for divorces! I remark, further, that the peace of the churches is endangered by this ungodly practice of divorce. All Christian people and all true philanthropists must awake to their duty. Politicians have made these laws, and by them public sentiment has been educated. (*A. Cressey, in American Homiletic Review.*) *Jewish divorce customs*:—Divorce is still very common among the Eastern Jews. In 1856 there were sixteen cases among the small Jewish population of Jerusalem. In fact, a Jew may divorce his wife at any time, or from any cause, he being himself the sole judge; the only hindrance is that, to prevent divorces in a mere sudden fit of spleen, the bill of divorce must have the concurrence of three rabbis, and be written on ruled vellum, containing neither more nor less than twelve lines; and it must be given in the presence of ten witnesses. (*Allen, "Modern Judaism."*) The usual causes of divorce (in Asia Minor) are a bad temper or extravagance in the wife, and the cruel treatment or neglect of the husband. (*Van Lennep.*) *The Rule of Reformation*:—"From the beginning it was not so." Which rule, if we apply unto the scope of this text, as it stands in relation unto the context, we shall have more to say for it than for most constitutions, Divine or human. For that of marriage is almost as old as Nature. There was no sooner one man, but God divided him into two; and then no sooner were there two, but he united them into one. This is that sacred institution which was made with mankind in a state of innocence; the very ground and foundation of all, both sacred and civil, government. It was by sending back the Pharisees to the most venerable antiquity, that our Lord here asserted the law of wedlock against the old custom of their divorce. Whilst they had made themselves drunk with their muddy streams, He directed them to the fountain, to drink themselves into sobriety. They insisted altogether on the Mosaical dispensation; but He endeavoured to reform them by the most primitive institution. They alleged a custom; but He a law. They a permission, and that from Moses; but He a precept, and that from God. They did reckon from afar off; but not, as He, from the beginning. (*Thomas Pierce.*)

**Vers. 13–15.—Then were there brought unto Him little children.**—*The children for Christ:*—I. THEY NEED THE SAVIOUR. 1. As children, they are within the covenant and provisions of grace. 2. They are naturally blind and dark. 3. Nor let us forget that they are guilty. 4. They need, therefore, to be led to Jesus as penitent sinners for forgiveness and peace. They need a guide, a shield, a true friend, &c. II. THEY MAY BE BROUGHT TO HIM WHEN VERY YOUNG. 1. On this point, opinion among godly people has been very much modified since the general establishment of Sunday-schools. 2. It is a great mistake, and involves a great wrong to the child, not to insist upon his deciding and choosing Christ *now*, for unbelief and carnality are gaining strength. 3. There is no kind of knowledge which will find readier access to the juvenile mind, and be more easily retained there, than the knowledge of Christ. 4. How many and how marked are the examples of early piety which the Bible records. 5. The religion of children—if genuine and healthy—will differ in some respects from the religion of elderly people. Ignorant prejudice has done a world of mischief. III. ONE OF THE FIRST DUTIES WE, AS A CHURCH, OWE THE LORD JESUS IS TO ASSIST IN BRINGING THESE CHILDREN TO HIM. 1. They are our own flesh and blood. They are our own immediate successors in the Church and the world. They are immortal. They are the object of Jesus' redeeming love; they are brought within our influence that we may be Christ's ministers to them, and their guides to Him, &c. 2. The present is the golden opportunity. The promise is true to your children, that they also shall receive "remission of sins," and "the gift of the Holy Ghost." Bring them to Jesus! Alas! some of you parents, masters, heads of households are not yourselves following Christ, and how can you bring your children or young people to Him? Teachers, suffer the children to come to Jesus, and hinder them not, &c. (*J. Findlay.*) *A sermon on Sunday-school work:*—I. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL SHOULD BE FOUNDED. It must be founded and carried on in *Faith*, in its usefulness, its worth, its importance. Faith in your schools; faith in God; in the child whom you teach; and in the Scriptures which are to be taught. II. THE END, THE GREAT OBJECT, WHICH SHOULD BE PROPOSED AND KEPT STEADILY IN VIEW BY ITS FRIENDS. The great end is, to awaken the soul of the pupil, to bring his understanding, conscience, and heart into earnest, vigorous action on religious and moral truth, to excite and cherish in him spiritual life. The great end in religious instruction, whether in the Sunday-school or family, is, not to stamp *our* minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own; not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own; not to give them a definite amount of knowledge, but to inspire a fervent love of truth; not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs; not to burden the memory, but to quicken and strengthen the power of thought; . . . not to *tell* them that God is good, but to help them to see and feel His love in all that He does within and around them. In a word, to awaken intellectual and moral life in the child. III. WHAT IS TO BE TAUGHT IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS? The *Gospels*, the Gospels, these should be the text-book of Sunday Schools. There are three great views of Christianity, which pervade it throughout, and to which the mind of the learner must be continually turned. 1. The spirituality of the religion. 2. Its disinterestedness. 3. The vastness, the infinity, of its progress. IV. HOW SHALL IT BE TAUGHT? Attention must be secured by moral influence. You must love the children. You must be interested yourselves in that you teach them. Be intelligible. Teach by questions. Teach graphically where you can. Lay stress on the most important things. Carry a cheerful spirit into religious teaching. (*Dr. Channing.*) *Little children brought to Christ:*—I. WHO WERE NOW BROUGHT TO CHRIST? Probably infants. None of them were arrived at the full exercise of reason; and some of them might be carried in the arms of their friends. II. FOR WHAT END WERE THEY BROUGHT TO CHRIST? Probably not to be healed of sickness or weakness. It was, that He might lay His hands upon them and bless them. They had a high opinion of the piety of Jesus, and of His interest in the Divine favour. III. THE RECEPTION JESUS GAVE THE CHILDREN. Kind and gracious. IV. THE DECLARATION HE MADE CONCERNING THEM. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Christ commends in children three or four things, wherein they who are adult ought to resemble them. 1. Freedom from prejudice or openness to conviction; freedom from pride, or humility; freedom from worldly affections, or indifference to earthly things: and finally, freedom from custom of sinning, or innocence. (*Nath. Lardner.*) *Reflections on the incident:*—1. The doctrine of this text may afford comfortable thoughts concerning such as die in infancy, or in

very early age, before they have done good or evil. 2. It teaches us to be cautious, how we disparage the human nature, and say, that it is, in its original conception, corrupt, depraved, and defiled. 3. This history teaches us the right of young persons to be present at the worship of God, and seems to hold forth the duty of those under whose care they are, to bring them early to it. 4. We may infer that it is not below persons of the greatest eminence for wisdom and piety to show affection and tenderness for little children. 5. We hence learn, that all of us arrived to years of knowledge and understanding should see to it, that we bear a resemblance to little children. And 6, this history affords encouragement to young persons arrived to the use of reason and understanding to come to Christ, and offer up themselves to God in and through Him. (*Ibid.*) *Our likeness to little children.* 1. As respects faith. Children are trustful; its trust has little to do with the intellect. Faith is not a thing of the understanding, but of the heart. When you read the Bible, do it as a little child, "My Father says thus." A child's joy is always truer than a child's sorrow. 2. A child's mind has a wonderful power of realization. They soon picture what is said to them. We should realize the invisible. 3. Little children may be angry, but their anger never lasts. 4. They are innocent and do not hurt. 5. They are, as a rule, generous with their possessions. 6. The sympathy of a child is perfect, to a tear or a smile he will respond in a moment. 7. A little child is a thing new born. We must be born again. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) "*Suffer little children to come:*"—I. WHAT MOTHERS WANT FOR THEIR CHILDREN. II. WHAT DISCIPLES SOMETIMES WANT FOR THE CHILDREN. To run away and not be troublesome. Sometimes they would keep them away from Christ until they grow big. Whence can such a mistake arise? From such ideas as—1. Christ is too busy with saving men to care about the children. 2. Children have not the needs which Jesus came to supply. 3. If the children get the blessing now they will lose it ere they become men. III. WHAT JESUS WANTS FOR THE CHILDREN. To come to Him. They can trust, love, &c. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Jesus and children:*—The most beautiful scene in the Bible. I. JESUS IS ATTRACTIVE TO CHILDREN. Some men and women for whom they do not care. Jesus not like these. There are others for whom children are never shy, or afraid. Jesus like these. II. JESUS IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN CHILDREN. III. JESUS PRAYS FOR CHILDREN. "He put His hands on them," &c. Ancient custom. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us. IV. JESUS WISHES CHILDREN TO BE HAPPY. He blessed the children who came to Him, and He blesses you. V. MANY CHILDREN ARE WITH JESUS IN HEAVEN. (*Alex. McAuslane, D.D.*) I. WHO SPAKE THESE WORDS, AND WHY WERE THEY SPOKEN, "Jesus said." Because He loved children and came to do them good. II. HOW SHOULD LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO CHRIST. 1. By thought. 2. Prayer. 3. Obedience. III. WHAT KEEPS LITTLE CHILDREN BACK FROM CHRIST, AND WHO FORBIDS THEM TO COME TO HIM. The disciples. I will point out what in yourselves keeps you back. 1. Idleness. 2. The mockeries of your playfellows. 3. Satan. IV. WHAT IS TO BE GAINED BY COMING TO CHRIST. (*T. J. Judkin, M.A.*) *Blessing by imposition of hands:*—From Christ has been derived the custom among Christians, that lay people, and especially children, should ask a blessing from their elders and from priests. This is the case in Belgium, where boys will run up to the priests and religious men, and ask them to sign them with the sign of the cross. They are taught to do this, both by the catechists and by their parents. Remigius says this was a custom among the Jews before the time of Christ. The great Sir Thomas More, the glory of England and a martyr, when he was Lord High Chancellor, publicly asked his aged father to give him his blessing. Moreover, the Church uses this ceremony of imposition of hands in baptism, confirmation, and orders. It is to pray for and obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost. (*Lapide.*) *Christianity cares for children:*—The gospel alone opens its warm bosom to the young. Christianity alone is the nurse of children. Atheism looks on them as on a level with the brutes. Deism or scepticism leaves them to every random influence, lest they catch a bias. The Romans exposed their infants. Barbarians and ancient tribes offered them as burnt-sacrifices to Moloch. Mahometanism holds mothers and infants as equally of an inferior cast. Hindooism forgets the infant she bears, and leaves it to perish on the banks of the Ganges. The Chinese are notorious as infanticides. Christianity alone contemplates them as immortal creatures, and prescribes for their tuition for heaven. And the nearer the time that the rising of the Sun of Righteousness approached, the warmer and the more intense did the interest of the Church show itself in regard to the young. Moses gave directions on the subject.

Joshua and Abraham commanded their households after them; David declared how the young were to purify their way; and Solomon distinctly enjoined them to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; but it was reserved for Him who spake as never man spake, to press that sentence, "Suffer the little children," &c. The temple of Juggernaut presents a grave; the mosque, contempt; infidelity, neglect for children. The bosom of the Son of God alone finds them a nursery and a home. (*Salter.*) *Children specially susceptible of spiritual influences.* In their case there is still—1. Confidence, instead of scepticism. 2. Self-surrender, instead of distrust. 3. Truth, instead of hypocrisy. 4. Want of pretension, instead of pride. (*Lisko.*) *Ideas of women and children in the East:*—Women were not honoured nor children loved in antiquity as now they are; no halo of romance and tenderness encircled them; too often, indeed, they were subject to shameful cruelties and hard neglect. (*Farrar.*) *How children are forbidden:*—They may be "forbidden," both by neglect and injudicious teaching. I. By not being taught of Christ through word and example. II. By being taught legalism; that is, "Be good, or God will not love you," instead of this: Christ (God) loves you, therefore go to Him in order to be good. (*Schaff.*) *Christ's example of dealing with children:*—I. His sympathy for and with children. 2. Our right to bring children to Him for blessing, and this before they can understand anything concerning Him or His truth. 3. That they are members of Christ's kingdom, and are so regarded by Him, and are to be so regarded by us, and this irrespective of any parental faith. 4. That such as die before they have wandered out of God's kingdom into the kingdom of Satan are certainly saved, since they are of the kingdom of heaven. 5. The incident condemns all conduct on the part of the church, the teacher, or the parent, which tends to repress, chill, or check the enthusiasm of childhood for Christ, and darken its simple faith in Him. (*Abbott.*) *A sermon to mothers:*—I. A mother's love. II. A mother's responsibility. III. A mother's consolation. (*P. Robertson.*) *Maternal influence on children:*—It has been truly said that although women may have produced no work of surpassing power, have written no Iliad, no "Hamlet," no "Paradise Lost;" have designed no Church of St. Peter's, composed no "Messiah," carved no "Apollo Belvidere," painted no Last Judgment; although they have invented neither algebra nor telescopes nor steam engines, they have done something greater and better than all this: it is at their knees that virtuous and upright men and women have been trained—the most excellent productions in the world. If we would find the secret of the greatness and goodness of most famous men we must look to their mothers. It was the patient gentle schooling of Monica which turned Augustine from a profligate to a saint. It was the memory of a mother's lessons which changed John Newton, of Olney, from a blasphemous sailor to an earnest minister of God. It was a mother's influence which made George Washington a man of such truth, such nobleness, and such power, that he swayed the people of America as one man. (*Wilmot Buxton.*) *Early conversion:*—Conversions after forty years are very rare: like the scattered grapes on the remotest branches after the vintage is over, there is only one here and there. I have sometimes seen an old withered oak standing with its stiff and leafless branches on the slopes of a woody hill; though the same refreshing rains and genial sunshine fell on it as on its thriving neighbours, which were green with renewed youth and rich in flowing foliage, it grew not, it gave no signs of life, it was too far gone for genial nature to assist. The old blanched, sapless oak is an emblem of the aged sinner. (*Dr. Thomas.*)

**Vers. 16–22. And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do?**—*Formal obedience insufficient:*—It is certainly the doctrine of Scripture that moral integrity alone can never benefit us with God; that even the offering of our prayers is accounted worthless except as it is perfumed with love. Evidently, then, his confidence is false and dangerous indeed who, because he keeps unbroken the great laws of social morality, imagines his claim to mercy and salvation secure. Besides being unscriptural, such a theory is not rational. I. IT IGNORES THE VERY DESIGN OF MAN'S CREATION, viz., the glory of God. Social morality is at best a very inferior virtue. It is only the submission of one part of man's nature to an inferior series of God's laws. If this world were all, that might be enough. Man is endowed with faculties which can only be exercised toward the unseen world. As well might the planet, obeying the one law of its propulsion around the earth, break away from the other which binds it to the sun, and yet hope

to escape, as he who, fulfilling his duty to man, neglects his duty to God. II. IT IS FOUNDED ON A FALSE IDEA OF RELIGION. God seeks not mere abject obedience, but the devotion of the heart. Without a distinct movement of the will and affections towards Him, all religious observances are worse than naught. They are the casket without the diamond—the body without the sustaining, invigorating, glorifying life. III. IT MAKES THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST AN UNNECESSARY THING. If man by being honest and upright and humane and gentle could merit heaven, no need for Calvary. Yet Jesus laid aside the robes of His Deity and came to earth, and offered Himself a sacrifice on the cross. To rely for salvation on natural morality is, then, to mock Christ in His sufferings; it is to go up, as it were, upon the blood-stained slopes of Calvary, and, beholding Him in His agony, to cry aloud, "We need not Thy blood, we despise Thine aid!" (*W. Rudder, D.D.*) *Coming to Jesus*:—A right thing to come to Jesus, in a right way, for a right thing, in a right spirit. This last element of coming rightly was here left out. I. How he came. 1. Publicly. 2. Eagerly—"running." 3. Humbly—"kneeling." 4. Respectfully—"good Master." II. WHY he came: "inherit eternal life." 1. Belief in a future state. 2. Concern to obtain it; in this he differed from many. 3. Thought something must be done; many think not of this, and consequently do nothing. 4. Thought he was willing and able to do anything needful; but did not know himself; had not counted the cost. III. LEARN—1. Salvation not by works. 2. Works an evidence, not a cause of grace. (*The Hive.*) *The rich youth's application to Christ*:—I. THE CHARACTER AND PRETENSIONS OF THE YOUTHFUL APPLICANT WHO APPROACHED OUR LORD. Something in his character exceedingly favourable, interesting external appearance, air of sweetness about his address, correct in morals, of ample means, fair reputation, he entertained proper views of our Lord; he had serious regard for religion. But—1. He was ignorant of his moral inability. 2. He displays an ignorance of his actual guilt. 3. He was ignorant of the prevailing disposition of his heart. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE APPLICATION WAS MET. 1. Our Lord repels his adulatory address. 2. Our Lord shows the imperfection of his obedience. 3. The youth went away sorrowful. III. THOSE IMPORTANT LESSONS WHICH NATURALLY ARISE OUT OF THIS INTERESTING CASE. 1. Learn the danger and prevalence of self-deception. 2. The great responsibility which the ministerial office involves. 3. The dangerous situation which the rich occupy. The subject guards us against the following: Low thoughts of God, high thoughts of ourselves, slight thoughts of sin, and mean thoughts of Christ. (*J. Thorp.*) *Men's persuasions of their own obedience*:—Whence this ariseth. 1. Ignorance of the total, deep, and universal pollution of our natures. 2. Ignorance of the spiritual exactness and obligation of the law. 3. Attention only to the negative commandments. 4. Not understanding either positive or negative precepts in their comprehensive sense. 5. Neglecting self-reflection and self-examination. 6. From the abominable self-love, and self-flattery, which cleaveth to every man. 7. Fear of guilt makes men hoodwink their eyes that they may neither look into the law, nor into their hearts. 8. Ignorance of regeneration and the necessity for being born again. 9. The devil hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts. 10. Every man is naturally destitute of the Spirit, without which we are all devoid of light and life. (*Anthony Burgess.*) *The rich young ruler*:—I. EXAMINE THE YOUNG MAN'S BOAST. He boasted that his obedience was: 1. Extensive. 2. Exact. 3. Constant. II. ANSWER HIS QUESTION. He lacked: 1. A new heart. 2. A sense of guilt and sin. 3. Faith in Christ. 4. Spirituality and self-denial. (*G. Brooks.*) I. How entirely even an intelligent man may misapprehend his own spiritual attainment. II. And his willingness to attain. III. Between our present attainment and perfection there may be a sacrifice equivalent to cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. IV. The one thing essential, if we are to attain perfection, is the following of Christ. V. Other things may also be lacking, as, for example, determination to be holy. Conclusion: The lack of one thing may make all other attainments useless. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *The young ruler*:—I. A HOPEFUL MEETING. It was—1. A young man—special promises to the young. 2. A meeting with Christ—patient and physician. 3. One who was in earnest. Mark says, "he came running." 4. One who had many rare qualities. "Jesus loved him." 5. One who was bold (compare Nicodemus); yet reverent, for he "kneeled." II. AN IMPORTANT CONVERSATION. It reveals: 1. Our simpleness—unable to keep the law. 2. Our pride—trusting to our own works. 3. Our idolatry—loving other things better than Christ. 4. Our only hope of salvation—willing to leave all, take the cross and follow Christ. III. A SORROWFUL PARTING. 1. It was parting with Christ, therefore no hope. 2. It was a deliberate

parting—not a sudden step. 3. It was a final parting. IV. IMPORTANT LESSONS. How far some may advance and yet not be saved. Abandon at once that which keeps us from Christ. (*D. Macmillan.*) *Morality made a snare:*—Take heed that thy morality be not thy snare. The young man in the gospel might have been a better man if he had not been so good. (*Gurnall.*) *Youth's obstructions in their way to Christ and eternal life:*—I. SELF-CONCEIT. This young man thought that he had kept all the law. Young people with a smattering of knowledge soon imagine themselves competent judges of all truth and conduct. They have righteousness to recommend themselves to God's favour. II. THE PLEASURES AND VANITIES OF YOUTH; especially when they are fed by great possessions. These unreasonable sordid pleasures are not to be compared with the exalted substantial delights that are to be found in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. III. A FALSE PREJUDICE, as if the ways of Christ were nought and melancholy. Thus the young man thought when Christ told him to take up his cross and follow Him. Grace would give new tastes and make the burden easy. Christ will never let you be a loser by Him. IV. AN INCONSIDERATE, HEEDLESS TEMPER. To be heedless about small matters is a blemish; about essential, a reproach without excuse. V. A PRESUMPTUOUS, DARING RASHNESS OF SPIRIT. Young persons are most sanguine, even to foolhardiness. VI. THE COMPANIONS OF YOUTH. VII. AN APPREHENSION OF LONG LIFE. They have a long day before them and can put away the thought of death. (*John Guyse, D.D.*) *A sorrowful departure:*—1. He was sorry at the thought of giving up those large possessions of which he was naturally proud. 2. He was also grieved at the idea of losing heaven. 3. Thus opened to the young man's mind some of the difficulty which there always is in the attainment of everything which is really worth having. 4. Part of his sorrow was the discovery which he was making at that moment of his own heart. 5. But he was most sorrowful of all in the wretched sense he had of his own guilty hesitation and inexcusable weakness. Many worldly people are sorrowful in the midst of their worldliness; it indicates life and struggle. In any state of life the characteristic of the Christian is self-renunciation. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Jesus' answer to the young ruler's address:*—I. WHAT WE MAY INFER FROM OUR LORD'S QUESTION. 1. That our Master was not fond of flattering titles. 2. The language affords a remarkable instance of our Lord's modesty and humility. 3. Our Lord's question contains a proof of His reverence for His Father. II. EXPLAIN AND ENFORCE OUR LORD'S ANSWER. 1. There is none good in comparison of God; and consequently, our sentiments of regard and devotion should not stop short of Him. 2. God alone is absolutely good. His goodness is from Himself, independently of all others. Application—1. Our Lord hath set us an example for our imitation. 2. Our Lord will not finally approve of any pretended reverence and respect paid to Himself which in the least lessens the glory due to His Father. (*Thomas Twining.*) *The way to happiness:*—I. We have the example of one who was solicitous and inquisitive after his future condition, and desirous to know upon what terms he might hope for happiness. II. We have the ordinary way to happiness marked out to us. III. In some extraordinary cases God does require some extraordinary things of particular men, which are not generally necessary to the salvation of all men. IV. We have the sad example of one that went far towards happiness, and yet fell short. (*Samuel Johnson.*) *What are the senses in which none is good but God?*—I. God is the only necessarily good being. II. God is the only originally good being. III. God is the only self-subsistently good being. IV. God is the only immutably good being. 1. If God is alone supremely good, He alone is to be glorified and adored. 2. If He alone is supremely good, it is sin, and the very essence of it, not to glorify Him. (*Dr. Shedd.*) *What he lacked:*—1. A sense of guilt. He was self-complacent. He had obedience, self-respect, morality. He rested in these and boasted of them. He did not know the estimate which heaven places upon the righteousness which is of the law. He was under condemnation, and thought himself justified. 2. Faith in Christ. As the only Saviour. He did not know that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness. 3. A new heart. An essential. He loved the world, &c. This shows the old heart. 4. Self-denial. He loved ease and riches. He had no heart to give these up for Christ. He had much to give up, and the surrender would be hard; but a Christian spirit is willing to give up all; even life if needs be for Christ, and the "needs be" is Christ's word. (*Anon.*) *A new year's personal inquiry:*—I. THERE MAY BE MANY EXCELLENCES, AND MUCH THAT IS AMIABLE IN MAN, WITHOUT TRUE RELIGION. Morality, benevolent and social virtues, orthodoxy, reverence for Divine ordinances, &c. II. THERE ARE VARIOUS EVILS WHICH KEEP MEN FROM BEING ENTIRELY THE

SAVIOUR'S. Self-complacency, favour of the world, attachment to riches, unwillingness to deny self, &c. III. THE INQUIRY OF THE TEXT IS ONE WHICH IS WORTHY OF PERSONAL CONSIDERATION. Ask the question as in Christ's presence, with all possible seriousness, with perfect deference to God's word, in the spirit of prayer and with a resolution to obey the answer. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Good things to do:*—Sidney Smith tells us that he cut the following from a newspaper, and preserved it for himself: "When you rise in the morning, say that you will make the day blessed to a fellow-creature. It is easily done; a left-off garment to the man who needs it; a kind word to the sorrowful; an encouraging expression to the starving—trifles as light as air—will do at least for the twenty-four hours. And if you are young, depend upon it, it will tell when you are old; and, if you are old, rest assured it will send you gently and happily down the stream of time to eternity. By the most simple arithmetical sum, look at the result. If you send one person away happily through the day, that is three hundred and sixty-five in the course of a year. And, suppose you live forty years only after you commence that course of medicine, you have made fourteen thousand six hundred persons happy—at all events, for a time." *Heaven won by being, not doing:*—Very likely the question involved a mass of confusions. The young man thought, perhaps, that heaven was to be won by external actions and quantitative merit. He did not understand that we must enter into heaven by being, not by doing. He held perhaps the vulgar notion that eternal only means endless, so that eternity becomes the infinitude of time instead of its antithesis. He very likely did not know that every holy soul has entered already into eternal life: that to all who are in Christ it is now as the invisible bright air they breathe. He certainly did not realize that "this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." But yet, because the question was sincere and noble, and did not spring from Pharisaism—the one thing which the Lord detested most—but from the Divine dissatisfaction of a struggling soul which God alone can fill, Christ answered it. (*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*) *Man not left in doubt as to the good:*—"Why dost thou ask Me about the good?" that seems to have been our Lord's answer, not "Why askest thou Me?" as it is often read—for whom else should the young man ask? but "Why dost thou ask Me about *the good?*" Has God left you in any doubt as to what is good? Have you in your heart no voice of conscience? Has duty never uplifted within you that naked law of right, so imperial in its majesty, so eternal in its origin, which you know that you ought to follow even unto death? If not, and if experience has had no lessons for you, and history no teaching, was there no Sinai? Do not the cherubim of your temple veil with their golden wings the tablets—alas! the shattered tablets of your moral law? And there Jesus might have stopped. But, being unlike us, being infinitely patient with man's irritating spiritual stupidity, not loving, as we do, to be cautious and reticent, and "to steer through the channel of no meaning between the Scylla and Charybdis of yes and no," He added, "but, if thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments." (*Ibid.*) *The first step towards righteousness:*—Christ did not begin with the injunction, "Go, sell all that thou hast." He began very much lower; He said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Let us learn to flutter as sparrows, before it is worth considering whether we ought also to soar as eagles. Let us cease to be very guilty before we can be righteous. Let us be righteous before we can attain to the greatness of good men. Let us be but ordinary good men before we ask Christ for His counsels of perfection, or attempt to attain to the stature of His saints. Christ knew this well. We come to Him, and say, "O Saviour, whom I love, tell me what I must do to inherit eternal life." And so long as we are all standing ankle-deep, chin-deep, in the world's mire, would it be of any use for Him to point to some shining cloud in the deep blue, and say, "You must stand there"? Ah, no! He says to you, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Until you have learnt to plant firm feet on the green lower slopes, how can you breathe the difficult and eager air, or stand in the glory of the sunrise on the splendour of the snowy heights? (*Ibid.*) *The commandment regarded as ordinary:*—The young ruler, not being so familiar as we are with those accumulated cobwebs of two thousand years which priests, and churches, and sects, and theologians, and theorists, and system-mongers, and schoolmen, have spun over wellnigh every simple word of Christ; the young ruler, whose natural instincts were not crushed under hundreds of ponderous folios of human doctrines and commandments of men, which, with inconceivable arrogance and a bitterness which has become universally proverbial, would fain palm themselves off as infallible theology; the young ruler, hearing the answer from the lips

of Jesus, in all its bare, naked, unqualified, unmistakable simplicity, was quite frankly amazed. He was like the child Charoba in the poem, who, having been talked to about the majestic glory of the sea, and being led to the shore, innocently exclaimed, "Is that the mighty ocean? Is that all?" "Keep the commandments." Is that all that Jesus has to tell him? Surely there must be some mistake! It did not need a prophet to tell us that! This youth had gone to Christ seeking for some great thing to do, and secret thing to know. The great Teacher could not mean anything so commonplace, so elementary, so extremely ordinary, as those old ten words which He had learned to lisp, ever so many years ago, when He was a little child, at His mother's knee? (*Ibid.*) *Self-satisfaction*:—This young man thought himself somewhat beforehand, and that God, perchance, was in his debt. Truly, many nowadays grow crooked and aged with over-good opinions of themselves, and can hardly ever be set right again. They stand upon their comparisons—"I am as good as thou;" nay, upon their disparisons, "I am not as this publican." No, for thou art worse; yea, for this, because thou thinkest thyself better. This arrogant youth makes good that of Aristotle, who, differencing between age and youth, makes it a property of young men to think they know all things, and to affirm lustily their own placits. (*John Trapp.*) *What lack I?*—I. EXAMINE HIS BOAST. His obedience was: 1. Exact. 2. Extensive. 3. Constant. II. SHOW HIS DEFICIENCIES. 1. A sense of guilt. 2. Faith in Christ. 3. A new heart. 4. Self-denial. (*Pulpit Germs.*) This query must not be regarded as an expression of satisfied self-righteousness, as if it implied, "In that case I lack nothing." It is, indeed, true that the young man was still self-righteous. He had no conception of the spirituality, the depth, or the height of the commandments of God. Taking only the letter of the law, he considered himself blameless, and perhaps even righteous, before God. Yet his heart misgave him, and he felt that he still lacked something. Under this sense of want, he put the question to the Saviour, as if he would have said, "What is it then that I yet lack? All these things have not given me peace of mind." (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Self-righteousness*:—The various forms of self-righteousness. 1. Of the head and of the heart (of doctrine and of sentiment); or, Pharisees in the strictest sense. 2. Self-righteousness of the heart with orthodoxy of the head, as in the case of some in the Church who seem to be zealous for soundness of doctrine. 3. Self-righteousness of the head, combined with a deep sense of spiritual need, although its grounds may not be fully understood, as in the case of this young man and of many Christian legalists. (*Ibid.*) *Why wealth is to be renounced*:—What did our Lord mean by this reply? Did he mean that the mere giving up his wealth to the poor would make this man acceptable with God? Certainly not. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. He asks no sacrifice from human hands. Man can give Him nothing that is not His already. This, therefore, could not have been His meaning. Did He, then, mean that the voluntary poverty caused by this distribution of his wealth would render him meritorious with God? Poverty in itself is no more a merit than riches. To this question, therefore, we must say, as to the other, certainly not. Well, then, what did He mean? Evidently this: that whatever may be our moral excellence; however exactly we may fulfil the law toward our neighbour; unless there is, besides this and behind all this and originating all this, an ardent love of God—a love fulfilling the first and great commandment, and fastening upon God with all the heart and soul and mind; a love born of faith, and yet increasing faith—unless there is such a love as this seated on the very throne of our being, originating all our motives and our acts; making our purpose not expediency, but the glory of God; causing us to be ready if need be to sell all that we have—unless there is such a love ruling in our hearts, our moral excellences, however great, are, in the sight of God, of no account. This unquestionably was His meaning; this was the doctrine which He designed to teach. (*W. Rudder, D.D.*) *The true spirit of renunciation*:—To the question "What lack I yet?" Christ answers in substance, "This: the temper that counts property worthless beside true life. You come to me with your money, with your sense of complacency, of consequence, of power, and you want to bring these with you into the kingdom of God. You are not indeed satisfied with things as they are. How can you be, so long as you are vainly striving to feed your immortal nature upon husks and chaff? You want to be enlarged into a life nobler, fuller, worthier of your better self. But you would come as Dives, not as Lazarus. What you have, you think, ought to be reckoned in with what you are. You and your estate are in your own conception too entirely identified to be separated. Believe me, my young brother, the kingdom of Jesus can not know you upon any

such terms. It is not necessary that you should be stripped bare of all your belongings in order to enter it. But you should be willing to be stripped bare. You must come to look upon what you call yours as though it mattered not, when you set your face toward the kingdom of God, whether it were yours or no. The spirit of renunciation must be so deep in you that you must be ready to give up all for Christ. And this not from any arbitrary reason, but simply because a human heart is not large enough to hold two thrones. If Christ is to be in it at all, He must be king of the whole domain; and if He is to be king, the money power, the sense power, the brain power must go to the rear. There will be a place for each of these in every sanctified life, but it must be a subordinate place. "Go," or at least, if it be a question between your securities and your Saviour, be ready to go, "and sell all that thou hast, and follow Me!" (*Bishop H. C. Potter.*) *Obedience to this command not necessarily literal:*—It is not to be hastily concluded from this, that the rich man is to give all that he has to the poor. If, in deference to any narrow and superficial interpretation of Christ's language, a man should take his wealth and distribute the whole of it in largesses to the poor to-morrow, he would be doing the poor an incalculable evil and not a benefit. Men ask, "Why do not you, as a believer in Jesus Christ and the Sermon on the Mount, make common cause in the things of this world with the destitute around you, and trust for the needful food and raiment to Him who feeds the birds and clothes the lillies?" Why not, indeed! Is it merely because such an act would be fanatical and enthusiastic, or because political economy forbids it? Or, because, whatever else I ought or ought not to do, I ought not to do my brother man a wrong? Is anybody ignorant of the fact that every human life needs the discipline of forethought and self-denial, of responsibility and self-help; and that if I by my ill-judged kindness enable another to escape things, I am degrading and hurting him as well as abusing my own power? What would be the effect of the announcement that half a dozen rich men had disinherited themselves, and that to-morrow morning fifty millions of dollars would be distributed to the poor? Does anybody care to contemplate the pandemonium that New York would become—the idleness, the licentiousness, the fierce hatreds, the bitter discords, the mad license that would be engendered: and ought a Christian man to do an act that would make his brother men incalculably worse instead of better? (*Ibid.*) *Great possessions a hindrance in the way to heaven:*—How nimbly does that little lark mount up, singing, towards heaven in a right line! whereas the hawk, which is stronger of body and swifter of wing, towers up by many gradual compasses to his highest pitch. That bulk of body and length of wing hinder a direct ascent, and require the help both of air and scope to advance his flight; while the small bird cuts the air without resistance, and needs no outward furtherance of her motion. It is no otherwise with the souls of men in flying up to their heaven. Some are hindered by those powers which would seem helps to their soaring up thither: great wit, deep judgment, quick apprehension, send about men with no small labour, for the recovery of their own incumbrance; while the good affections of plain and simple souls raise them up immediately to the fruition of God. Why should we be proud of that which may slacken our way to glory? Why should we be disheartened with the small measure of that, the very want whereof may (as the heart may be affected) facilitate our way to happiness? (*Salter.*) *The worth of heaven:*—Far beyond the treasures of Egypt, which yet is called Rahab because of the riches, power, and pride thereof. Oh! get a patriarch's eye to see the wealth and worth of heaven, and then we shall soon make Moses's choice. In the year of grace 759, certain Persian magicians fell into that madness, that they persuaded themselves and sundry others that if they sold all they had and gave it to the poor, and then afterwards threw themselves naked from off the walls into the river, they should presently be admitted into heaven. Many were cast away by this mad enterprise. How much better (if without superstition and opinion of merit) Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, who being asked by certain ambassadors that came to his court what hounds he had, for they desired to see them, showed them next day a pack of poor people feeding at his table, and said, "These are the hounds wherewith I hunt after heaven." (*John Trapp.*) *Deteriorating influence of riches:*—Many a Christian do you find among the rich and the titled, who, as a less encumbered man, might have been a resolute soldier of the cross; but he is now only a realization of the old Pagan fable—a spiritual giant buried under a mountain of gold. Oh! many, many such we meet in our higher classes, pining with a nameless want, pressed by a heavy sense of the weariness of existence, strengthless in the

midst of affluence, and incapable even of tasting the profusion of comfort which is heaped around them. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The danger and misery of self-deception:*—I. THE STATE AND CHARACTER OF THE PERSON WHO HERE ADDRESSES OUR LORD. 1. We discover many circumstances which are calculated at first sight to impress us with very favourable sentiments of his state and character. He was young; engaging manners; amiable disposition. He exhibits a pleasing combination of many attractive qualities. 2. How inadequate his conception of the corruption of his own heart. What "good" thing can he do? 3. The defective views which he entertains of his own guilt. 4. He is not better acquainted with the secret bias of his affections than with his depravity and guilt. II. THE CONDUCT OF OUR LORD ON THIS OCCASION. 1. He does not promote the self-deception and thus augment the danger. He does not compliment the young man on his moral attainments. He acts the part of a true Physician and Friend; palliatives will only increase the disorder. 2. Compassionate regard. 3. Admirably suited to the peculiar circumstances of his case. Christ mentions the law as a corrective to his pride and self-sufficiency. 3. Eminently calculated to prove in the highest degree beneficial to his most important interests. (1) The misery of a state of self-deception. (2) That in removing the specious covering which self-deceit imposes, and in disclosing the sinner to himself, consists one important part of the duty of a minister. (3) Reflect on that disposition of heart which Christ requires of His people. Follow Me. (*E. Cooper.*) *The Christian's life-long work after confirmation:*—"What lack I yet?" 1. A thorough devotion to God's service. 2. A spirit of prayer. 3. A due appreciation of the work that God has appointed you to do. 4. You may lack patience. 5. You require to be incited to perseverance. (*J. H. Norton, D.D.*) *The great question answered:*—The path a soul treads when it comes to Christ is one of beauty. To come to Jesus is a noble and manly act. It is a soul drawn by the good; rising above sinful forces which have enslaved it; of special interest to see the young come to Christ. The conditions necessary to such an approach are illustrated in the young man—1. He believed that the character of this life determines that to come. 2. He believed that obedience to God was the first principle of religion. 3. He desired to exhaust his powers in perfecting his character. 4. He had faith that Christ would show him the way of salvation. "What lack I yet?" I. SELF-RENUNCIATION. "Sell that thou hast." This embraces a recognition of the supreme right of God over the soul. God gave all; this leads to an abandonment of selfish pursuits. Why religion makes this demand. 1. Selfishness is deceitful and delusive; it does not see man's real interests; it does not comprehend the Divine relations of man; it looks only at things seen. 2. Selfishness and self-love dwarf manhood; narrow the thought and corrupt the affections; they shut out noble sentiment which leads men to deeds of daring. 3. There must be this self-abandonment to allow a higher ideal of life to possess the soul. That man who is full of himself can contain nothing beside. He must forget himself who would live after the pattern shown him on the mount. II. Religion demands CHRIST CONSECRATION. 1. Supreme affection for Christ. The heart must be first given to Him. 2. The purposes of the heart must be turned to Christ's cause. 3. The influence must be for God. 4. Human passions must be at God's disposal. Is the demand too rigorous, and does it embrace too much? It may encourage us to yield full submission to call to mind a few precious facts. 1. It assimilates us to a likeness of Christ. His soul exceeded all bounds and barriers, and poured out its life an immortal benediction upon His enemies. The widowed mother, whose midnight toil earns bread and raiment for her darling ones, is embalmed in poetry and song; the artist weaves a crown of glory about her brow. But such labour and consecration is yet only that of a true heart and human impulses. But he who is consecrated to Christ is Godlike. 2. It brings peace to the heart. Men who are vacillating are unhappy. No soul rests so perfectly at ease as that one which has its home on God's altar. 3. It centralizes and makes the man strong. Scattered men are weak. A consecrated man is a felt man. 4. It enlivens and sets the life on fire. Men go to sleep and are frozen, as the fairy city celebrated in story. God breathes on the powers of the man consecrated; he is set on fire by the breath of Jehovah. Such a life will have given back to it from God, in its new realm, a better being. The curtains are now withdrawing. See, yonder the field is fairer and the sward is all green! There that life runs on and on and on for ever! It gathers to itself all that was of possible value on earth in the years of its pilgrimage, and, having yielded obedience to the conditions of its noble being, enters upon that higher life of love and joy for which it has been fitted by a faithful stewardship.

(*J. W. Holt.*) *Christ and good people*:—The gospel indicates three particulars in regard to their mutual relations. I. THERE IS A POINT WHICH ATTRACTS THEM TO EACH OTHER. A noble young man; although surrounded by great wealth, he has not yielded himself to youthful frivolities, but has kept his spirit intent on higher aims than earthly qualifications. He is modest enough to be conscious of imperfection, and to make inquiry where there is an opportunity to learn. He retains enthusiasm, and the object of his enthusiasm is no inferior one. Such people must feel the attraction of the person of Jesus Christ. They love the good, and Christ is the good One. All their ideals are realized in Jesus. The rich young man felt this. But this attraction was mutual. Jesus came to seek the lost and to save the sinner; much more would the purity of this naturally noble heart receive His recognition. Neither is this mutual attraction for a moment merely; the attraction remains, though the discipline required is hard to understand; an inner impulse draws us to Him. II. THERE IS A POINT WHICH SEPARATES THEM FROM EACH OTHER. At the very point where the Lord exerts the strongest power of attraction upon the naturally noble, their separation begins. It is a necessity of the case. Our Lord's word about the "good," and the mention of the commandments, had been designed to awaken distrust of self. Then comes the unheard-of demand, "Sell all," &c. He was touched in his heart's core. Christ exposes the point in which this good person was not good. Christ wants complete persons for His followers; it takes a complete person to win the prize of eternal life. If you want to be perfect you must renounce the secret reservations you oppose to the rigour of the Divine commands, put away the lusts which hamper the inner man. Renew your heart; put a new object in its centre. But for the sake of one thing you will turn away from your Saviour, in spite of all your noble efforts and ideal endowments. III. THIS SEPARATION MUST BE REALIZED IN ORDER TRULY TO FIND THE LORD. When the physician performs an operation, it is because he wants to heal; and when our Lord seems to discourage nearer approach it is because He wants to deepen the reason for it, so that after they unite nothing shall be able to separate them. Hence we believe this young man's separation was not final. He will return, no longer fiery and with a surplus of power; for with God all things are possible. It was necessary that he should be impressed with the requirements of Christ, for as long as he can say, "All these things have I kept," a Redeemer is superfluous—a Moses or a Socrates would suffice. But when he learns to despair of his own strength, then he arrives before the gate of salvation and stretches imploring hands for a Redeemer. Therefore Christ first destroys this young man's merit; and this is the more difficult from his high virtue. In the light of Jesus little sins becomes great. To sacrifice for Him for love is to lose nothing. His yoke is easy. (*E. Dryander, D.D.*) "*What lack I yet?*" This young man was hungry for improvement; that was all right. But there were other things for which he had a stronger hunger. Morality is the endeavour according to a man's power to obey laws, and I will divide moralities into five different kinds. 1. We call that physical morality which consists in the knowledge of men, and of those physical laws which surround them. Thus a man is immoral who violates law in eating and drinking and sleeping. 2. Next is social morality. Men are obliged to obey those laws which connect them with their fellow men; also as members of the household; as neighbours. 3. Next comes civil morality. Men are organized into states and nations. 4. Business morality. What is the relation of obedience in these different spheres to the nature and character of men? 1. All these observances are external. They are not in their nature internal at all. They leave out entirely the vital question of character. A man may be obedient to physical law, and yet be proud. Man is a creature of two worlds; so that when he is called to the other sphere the physical elements which he has accumulated here drop off. The spiritual only he carries with him. 2. This lower morality leaves out of view the higher human relations to God. A man may be an atheist and yet good in lower respects; but it is not fair to measure his genial qualities by his atheism as he has been brought up amidst Christian influences. A man has an immortal self as distinguished from his physical, social, and civil self; what about that part of him which is to live for ever? Are there no laws higher than those which belong to secular affairs, which apply to the higher reason and the moral sense. Are there no laws for faith, imagination in its dealings with religion, which connect a man with the invisible, universal, and infinite? Is there no morality which reaches beyond the earthly sphere? Morality is not complete without religion. There are practical uses in the inferior forms of morality; from them we learn the typical forms of the higher religion. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his

brother, he is a liar," &c. The lower moralities are schools, as it were; it is a great preparation for religion. Generally speaking the higher you go the more difficult is the achievement. Few men are competent to be eminent artists. In realizing the higher conceptions of religion there are inherent difficulties; but some make it harder than they need. The sun may shine on a slate roof for ever, and yet the garret beneath it may be dark; but make the roof of glass and the sun will shine through. Let your higher life have the best care. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The central principle of character*:—There are multitudes of men who live moral lives, generous lives, lives that are good in a thousand respects; but it does not come to this, that their whole being is centred in God and spiritual things. It is centred, rather, in the possession of wealth. (*Ibid.*) *Selfishness may be associated with many virtues*:—I remember watching, last summer, spiders that burrowed in the crevices of a trellis where the wind had borne much dust. I noticed that the hole where they lay lurking looked dark and ugly. I also noticed, as I sat one day watching, a vagrant spider taking a morning glory, in full blossom, and spin his web over the mouth of it. And there never was a prettier nest in this world—a nest more richly gemmed with beauty—than this was. But, after all, it was the same spider, whether he lay in the dark hole at the corner of the trellis, or in the blossom of that exquisite flower. Now, selfishness may weave its web in the dusky places, or in the hideous-looking recesses of a man's disposition, or about the mouths and graces of sweet affections; but it is the same selfishness after all. The place is changed, and the appearance of the surroundings is changed, but the spider is not changed. So, the point to be remembered is, that in every man there is a centre around about which his life really swings. There is a balance-point, and it preponderates one way or the other. The great influences of life weigh down toward the flesh, or else they go toward the spiritual. You may change the circumstances of a man's life, and it may be modified one way or the other; but after all there is a predominant force in his character, and that controls all the minor forces. (*Ibid.*) *Morality not to be despised*:—Again, a selfish-centred man, clothing himself with all manner of Christian graces and aspirations, is not to be condemned as if these graces and aspirations were of no account. Here is a point where ministers have trouble in preaching to men. When we see men embowered under external moralities, and attempt to teach that morality is not enough, the impression arises that we undervalue morals. I do not undervalue morals any more than the tax-collector undervalues a hundred dollars, when I go to pay my taxes, and offer him that amount, when my bill is five hundred. He says: "I will not take it. It is not enough." He does not despise the hundred dollars. He merely says: "You must put more with it." And I do not despise morality because I say that it does not rise high enough. It is good as far up as it goes. So is a grape-vine good as far up as it goes, when it is two or three feet high; but it does not arrive at what it was planted for until it reaches that point where it has blossoms and clusters. It is the cluster that determines its value. (*Ibid.*) *Refined selfishness*:—A man may love poetry and music, and have generous impulses which draw him toward a higher range of life; but after all, it is only a polished form of selfishness, or selfness that is manifesting itself in him. It is *self* that is at the bottom. I do not say that it is not better that a man should be refinedly selfish than coarsely selfish. It is a great deal better. It is better that man should be intellectually selfish than coarsely selfish. It makes social intercourse easier. It makes it easier for men to get along with each other. And if the centre of a man's disposition is selfish, and at the same time he has aspirations and refinements, and generosities and kindnesses, I do not say that he is no better for having these things: I say that as a member of society he is a great deal better. He energizes society. He adds something to those elements which take away attrition and harshness and rudeness from society. But he is not inwardly better; for nothing makes a man better within until the centre of his life and character are changed. Every blossom that you put upon a man who is radically selfish, and is going to be selfish, the worse you make it for him. The prettier you make a man's selfishness, the more music there is that accompanies it, the more flowers there are that decorate it, the more balm there is along with it, the more sunlight there is shed upon it, the more it is painted with glowing colours, the better is it for society; but the worse it is for him, because these things delude; because they are satisfying; because they hide the mischief; because they do not let him see what an unforgiveable and what a demoralizing quality selfishness is. (*Ibid.*) *The need of an inner spiritual change*:—What is that change? It does not consist in doing a few more things, or in adding a few more excellences, as the young man

thought it did. "Good Master, what new thing shall I do? What new prayer shall I say? What extra morality shall I take on? What other charities and bounties shall I bestow for man's relief? I should be glad to add to my stock of excellences." That was the purport of the young man's inquiry. The Master said to him, in substance: "Your whole character is wrapped up in your position. You are rich, you have large estates, and you know it, and you stand centred in them. And now, with this centre, you want to add various excellences. Go sell all these, give them away, and take up your cross and follow Me." That brought him to a decision instantly. Choosing between the higher and the lower, he took the lower, and went away sad and grieved. And Christ everywhere brought men to this choice. If you are to be Christians, Christianity does not mean having some few things on a selfish basis. You must change the foundation of your life. You must pass over from the animal, up from the lower, away from the predominantly self-seeking life that is in all of us by nature. You must come into the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of love. Beneficent love, love for others, and not for yourself, must be the predominant, the governing tendency. (*Ibid.*) *Religion more than an outward addition*:—Being possessed of all that could gratify his senses, he did not mean to be over-indulgent in it, but he did not want to give it up. Being in this position, he wanted, not to exchange it for anything else, but simply to have sprouting up around about him, over-arching him, and embowering him, flowers of spiritual and poetical aspirations, and all manner of Divine feelings, so that he should have both things—his feet rooted in this earth, and his head placed in the other life. He wanted to take this world first, and then superadd the kingdom of God as a polish to it. He wanted all spiritual excellence to sit, as it were, in the clouds above him, like an orchestra, and play sweet music to him, while he sat below, on a level with the earth, sensuous, and indulging himself selfishly. (*Ibid.*) *The spiritual must supplant the physical life*:—Men have wanted, in every age, to have both worlds—a thing which Christ said was impossible. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Our Saviour taught this young man that the spiritual life must supplant the physical life. The two can co-exist; but the spiritual life must be in the ascendency, and must control the lower physical life. Our Saviour taught all the way through His life that spirituality cannot be simply the complement of secularity. It cannot be a parasite growing on the boughs of worldly prosperity. If a man is to have the kingdom of God, he must make that first, and that must be supreme. Or, to change it to a more psychological statement, if a man is to be truly a Christian, his spiritual nature must predominate and bear rule over everything else that is in him. You cannot have the temporal, lower nature strongest, and then expect the spiritual nature to please it and play down to it. And yet, that is what men are attempting to bring about everywhere. Every person has some dominant point. There is no uncentred character anywhere. There is a point in every man's character which rules, and to which everything is brought for comparison and settlement. This point often seems to shift and change; but, after all, there is some point in a man's character which you may say is the dominant point, and before which all things above it and below it have to come into judgment. It is this that gives character to a man, and determines whether he is high or low, good or bad. *Religious impressions soon shaken off*:—After a shower in the night, if you go out in the morning, it is scarcely safe for you to go near a bush or a tree, because if you touch it, there will rain down such multitudes of drops on you. I sometimes think this church is like a tree that has stood out in the open air, and collected the dew. Every leaf is covered with it. If you shake the tree, down comes a shower of drops. I see you moved to tears every Sunday. I know that you follow and enjoy the service of prayer and of song and of preaching. You have much deep religious feeling, and a great deal of thought. The pews are full of young men and young women who are going to Christ and saying: "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And Christ says, by me, to-day, to every one of you, "It is not adding one good thing to another that you need, but that you should rise from the centre of selfishness, and go over to the centre of true Divine benevolence, by the power of the Holy Ghost, without which power no man can rise to the higher level." (*Ibid.*) *The price of a great ambition*:—Yours is a great ambition, and, withal, a very noble ambition: are you prepared to pay the price for your great ambition? You are a man of the very finest impulses, but you live in a fine house and know nothing of hardship, and while these things may do for your old life, the new to which you aspire demands sacrifice and surrender. Sell up all, and let us know how much is due to an impulsive temperament and how much to

inherent nobility. If it be due to that no change of circumstances will matter. It was a Spartan-like call to duty, but did he not look, like a Spartan youth, equal to it? (*J. W. Thew.*) *Nobility worthy of the highest culture*:—I apprehend that here lay the chief reason of our Saviour's great demand upon him. Is it not precisely because he is so *good that that demand is so great?* Is it venturesome to say the Master would not have made such a demand upon an inferior mind to his? That was not simply because, being a young man, he was better able to bear it: it was because, standing already, as he does, so high, occupying such a vantage ground—shall I put it this way—the Master's ambitions are fired, He sees him on such a level, and He would have him, at one grand stride, take the highest level of all. As when you have a lad at school of more than ordinary promise, you keep him longer there, you say the lad shows signs of genius, and the opportunity of becoming a genius shall not be wanting. Here are signs of uncommon goodness and greatness, and the opportunity should be afforded for accomplishing good. This view is borne out by the story. "Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor," is not given in answer to the question, "What good thing shall I do?" but in answer to the question, "What lack I yet?" It is not, "If thou wouldst be saved, sell all that thou hast;" it is, "If thou wouldst be perfect." It is not merely a question of eternal life, but of eternal distinction. It is not a mere matter of getting through the curriculum, but of getting through it with honours. (*Ibid.*) *The whole surrender*:—I. THERE IS A CERTAIN SPURIOUS SORT OF RELIGION WHICH BECAUSE IT IS NOT COMPLETE (OR PERFECT) IS USELESS. A vessel may look very well, but if it have a hole in the bottom, it will hold nothing—useless for want of being perfect. II. THE WHOLE SURRENDER. The decisive act which consecrates all to the kingdom. —MUST BE DONE BY THE MAN HIMSELF. Not even God can do it for you. It was useless for Christ to say "Follow Me" as He was, for his body only could have followed, his anxieties would still have been with his possessions. It was also a prudent provision against approaching persecution. III. HOW CAN I GO AND SELL? By a full consecration to God. Like the whole burnt-offering, every portion must be consumed on the altar. IV. IT IS AN AWFUL CONSIDERATION THAT THE WORD OF LIFE ITSELF IS POWERLESS TO PERSUADE A COVETOUS WILL. (*W. I. Keay.*) *On being right in the main*:—I. He displayed a degree of moral earnestness. 2. He employed the language of veneration. 3. He was well instructed in Biblical ethics. 4. He was inordinately attached to worldly possessions. Christ's conduct showed: 1. That He compels men to look at the logical consequences of their own admissions. 2. That personal regard may be entertained where full moral approbation cannot be expressed. I. THE NECESSARY LIMITATIONS OF THE MOST CAREFUL RELIGIOUS TRAINING. II. THAT THE FINAL ATTAINMENT OF EDUCATION IS THE CONQUEST OF THE HEART. 1. That Christ-following involves self-abnegation. 2. That Christ-following must be the expression of the soul's supreme love. 3. That Christ-following means self-giving. III. THAT LACK OF ONE THING MAY BE LACK OF EVERYTHING. IV. THAT THE SINCERITY OF MEN MUST BE TESTED ACCORDING TO THEIR PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES. What is a test to one man may be no test to another. A man must be prepared to surrender what he values most. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The lack of one thing the lack of all*:—The garden is beautifully laid out: the straight lines and the curves are exact; the terraces are arranged with artistic taste; but no *seed* is sown,—and the summer says, "One thing thou lackest." The machinery is perfect: cylinder, piston, valve, are in excellent order; no flaw is in the wheel, no obstruction in the flue; finer engine never stood on the iron way; everything is there but *steam*,—and the intending traveller says, "One thing thou lackest." The watch has a golden case, the dial is exquisitely traced and figured, the hands are delicate and well-fixed; everything is there but the mainspring—and he who inquires the time says, "One thing thou lackest." (*Ibid.*) *Sins as great possessions*:—There are sins so rooted, so riveted in men, so incorporated, so consubstantiated in the soul, by habitual custom, as that those sins have contracted the nature of ancient possessions. As men call manners by their names, so sins have taken names from men, and from places; Simon Magus gave the name to a sin, so did Gehazi, and Sodom did so. There are sins that run in names, in families, in blood; hereditary sins, entailed sins; and men do almost prove their "gentry" by those sins, and are scarcely believed to be rightly borne, if they have not those sins. These are great possessions, and men do much more easily part with Christ than with these sins. But then there are less sins, light sins, vanities; and yet even these come to possess us, and separate us from Christ. How many men neglect the ordinary means of their salvation, the coming to these exercises, not because

their undoing lies on it, or their discountenancing, but merely out of levity, of vanity, of nothing, they know not what to do else, and yet do not this. You hear of one man that was drowned in a vessel of wine, but how many thousands in ordinary water! And he was no more drowned in that precious liquor than they in that common water. A gad of steel does no more choke a man than a feather or a hair. Men perish with whispering sins, nay with silent sins, sins that never tell the conscience they are sins, as often as with crying sins. And in hell there shall meet as many men that never thought what was sin, as that spent all their thoughts in compassing sin; as many who, in a slack inconsideration, never cast a thought upon that place, as that by searing their conscience, overcame the sense and fear of that place. Great sins are great possessions, but levities and vanities possess us too; and men had rather part with Christ than with any possessions. (*J. Donne.*) *Estimate of the ruler*:—He was not a spiritual man; there was really nothing spiritually good and loveable in him; nothing truly gracious, as a Puritan divine would call it. He was but a natural man after all—a beautiful specimen of the natural man, as Dr. Chalmers said of some one, but still only a natural man. Nature had indeed done much for him, all it could for him; it had endowed him with riches, power, a high moral nature, an amiable, warm, frank, loving, loveable disposition. See here what nature *can* do; she can raise her favourites very high in the scale of humanity, so as to compel the homage even of the Saviour's love and admiration. See here what nature *cannot* do; she cannot carry any one across the boundary that separates the kingdom of God from the world; she can bring him to the very threshold, but there she leaves him; there she is powerless; there her weakness is made known. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *Giving up all for Christ*:—The words are terribly clear, sharp, and stern. Francis of Assisi heard them once. Straying into a church, they were in the lesson for the day which was read. The words seized on his conscience; they haunted him, they tormented him. He sold everything but the bare garment which clothed him. Still the obedience seemed to fall short of the Saviour's command. So he stripped himself even of his poor raiment; and they clothed him there in the church, for very shame, in a peasant's tunic, which he wore on till death. (*J. B. Brown.*) *Human perfectibility*:—It is as if our Lord had said, "Thou aimest at perfection, and on the footing of this thou art looking for eternal life; thou indulgest the dream of human perfectibility. Well, I will put thee here to the test: sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor. What! dost thou hesitate? What, then, becomes of thy favourite doctrine of perfectionism? Ah! thy fond idol is dashed to pieces, and by thine own hand, too; and wilt thou still indulge in such a golden dream? Is this all the length thy doctrine of human perfectibility can carry thee?" *If*—an important qualification this—if thou wouldst be perfect! Who can fail to see a delicate yet severe irony here? The Saviour is not teaching the doctrine of perfection in any sense, but is trying to wean him from a theory which was deeply rooted in his mind, and which was exercising so prejudicial an influence over him. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *Possessions that possess*:—Every man hath some such possessions as possess him, some such affections as weigh down Christ Jesus, and separate him from Him, rather than from those affections, those possessions. (*Dr. Donne.*) *Not wise to go from God*:—That no man that ever went from Him went by good way or came to good end. There is none good but God; there is centrical, visceral, gremial gold, goodness in the root, in the tree of goodness, God. (*Ibid.*) *The regulation of conduct*:—Conduct may be regulated in two ways:—1. By the hand; 2. By the heart: as with a watch so with the life. The face of the watch may be made to represent the truth by simply altering the hands, or it may be corrected by touching the interior works. Here is a young man who says, "What shall I do to make my watch tell the hour accurately?" He is answered, "Thou knowest the great clocks by which time is kept in the city." He replies, "All these have I observed." He is then told to open his watch and correct the regulator. So is it with human life: many seek to correct it by the outside; they search for models, they inquire for foot-prints; but they neglect the life-spring within, and consequently never get beyond the affectation of artificialism, or the stiffness of Pharisaic conceit. (*Dr. Parker.*) *But how is this spiritual lack to be supplied?* How is this hiatus in human character to be filled up? How shall the fountain of holy and filial affection towards God be made to gush up into everlasting life, within your now unloving and hostile heart? There is no answer to this question of questions, but in the person and work of the Holy Ghost. If God shall shed abroad His love in your heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you, you will

know the blessedness of a new affection, and will be able to say with Peter, "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." You are shut up to this method and this influence. To generate within yourself this new spiritual emotion which you have never yet felt is utterly impossible. Yet you must get it, or religion is impossible, and immortal life is impossible. (*W. G. T. Shedd, D.D.*)

*The remorse occasioned by enlightened reason on the rejection of Christ*:—There is no misery comparable to that which follows after a near access to happiness; nor any sorrow so quick and pungent as that which succeeds a preconceived, but disappointed joy. Neither was the proposal unreasonable, because usually practised, even by the most worldly, it being frequent with men to sell an estate in one place to buy another in a more convenient. We may observe in this passage these four things considerable—1. The person making the address to Christ, who was one whose reason was enlightened to a solicitous consideration of his estate in another world. 2. The thing sought for in this address, *viz.*, eternal life. 3. The condition upon which it was proposed, and upon which refused; *viz.*, the sale and relinquishment of his temporal estate. 4. His behaviour upon this refusal. He that deliberately parts with Christ, though for the greatest and most suitable worldly enjoyment, if but his natural reason is awakened, does it with much secret sting and remorse. I. I SHALL SHOW WHENCE IT IS THAT A MAN ACTUATED BY AN ENLIGHTENED REASON FINDS SUCH RELUCTANCY AND REGRET UPON HIS REJECTION OF CHRIST. It may proceed from these causes—1. The first may be taken from the nature of conscience, that is apt to recoil upon any error, either in our actions or our choice. After a good action, though never so difficult, so grim, and unpleasant in the onset, yet what a lightsome, refreshing complacency does it leave upon the mind! What a fragrancy, what a cheerfulness, upon the spirits! So, on the contrary, an action morally evil and irregular. A man no sooner displeases God but he presently displeases himself. No sooner is the action past but conscience makes the report. As soon as David cut off a piece of Saul's robe how quickly did his heart smite him! An impure heart, like a foul gun, never vents itself in any sinful commissions but it recoils. It is impossible to sequester and divide sin from sorrow. That which defiles will as certainly disturb the soul. As when mud and filth is cast into a pure fountain, it is not so much said to pollute, as to trouble the waters. And do you think that this young man had not the experience of this? He departed indeed, but it was sorrowful, his conscience ringing him many sad peals within, hitting him in the teeth with the murder of his soul; that he had foolishly and irrationally bartered away eternity for a trifle, and lost a never-returning opportunity, in its improvement invaluable, and in its refusal irrecoverable. 2. The second cause of this trouble and reluctancy that men find in the very instant of their rejecting Christ is taken from the usual course of God's judicial proceeding in this matter, which is to clarify the eye of reason to a clearer sight of the beauties and excellences of Christ in the very moment and critical instant of his departure. God can affect it with a sudden, instantaneous view of a good. It is like a sudden lightning that flashes in the face, but alters not the complexion; it is rather vision than persuasion; it struck his apprehension, but never changed his resolution. This is another cause that whets the sting, that enhances the vexation, and sends him away sorrowful. 3. The third and last cause of the anxiety that a sinner feels upon his relinquishment of Christ, if his reason be enlightened, is because there is that in Christ and in the gospel, even as they stand in opposition to the best of such enjoyments, that answers the most natural and generous discourses of reason. For the proof of which I shall produce two known principles of reason into which the most severe, harsh, and mortifying commands of the gospel are by clear and genuine consequence resolved. (1) The first is that the greatest calamity is to be endured rather than the least sin to be committed. (2) A second principle is this, that a less good is to be forsaken for a greater—an aphorism attested to by the natural, untaught, universal judgment of reason. Now to reduce this principle to the case in hand we are to demonstrate two things. 1st. That the good promised by our Saviour to the young man was really greater than that which was to be forsaken for it. Christ opposed eternal life to the young man's possessions, and what comparison is there between these upon terms of bare reason? 2nd. The second thing to be demonstrated is that the good promised by our Saviour was not only greater in itself, but also proposed as such with sufficient clearness of evidence, and upon sure, undeniable grounds. II. TO SHOW THE CAUSES THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING ALL THIS REMORSE OF CONSCIENCE, THE SOUL IS YET BROUGHT IN THE ISSUE TO REJECT AND SHAKE HANDS WITH CHRIST. 1. The first cause is from this, that the

perceptions of sense overbear the discourses of reason. The young man desired eternal life; but he had no notion of the pleasure of it, what kind of thing it was; but he knew and found the sweetness of an estate, so that the sensible impressions of this quickly overcame and swallowed up the weak and languid conceptions that he had of the other. 2. The second cause or reason of this final rejection of Christ is from the prevailing opposition of some corrupt affection, which being predominant in the soul, commands the will and blears the eye of the judgment, showing it all things in its own colour by a false and partial representation. Come to the sensual and voluptuous person and convince him that there is a necessity of his bidding farewell to all inordinate pleasure in order to his future happiness; perhaps you gain his reason, and in some measure insinuate into his will; but then his sensual desire interposes and outvotes and unravels all his convictions. As when by much ado a vessel is forced and rowed some pretty way contrary to the tide, presently a gust of wind comes and beats it further back than it was before. 3. The third cause, inducing men to relinquish Christ contrary to the judgment of their conscience, is the force and tyranny of the custom of the world. And amongst other dissuasives from following Christ the young man could not but be assaulted with such as these: "What! part with all for a new notion of another world? Sell land to buy hope, be preached out of my estate, and worded out of such fair farms and rich possessions?" He would do like the world though he perished with it; swim with the stream, though he was drowned in it; rather go sociably to hell than in the uncomfortable solitude of precise singularity to heaven—the jollity of the company made him overlook the broadness and danger of the way. Now the inferences and deductions from the words thus discussed are these: (1) We gather hence the great criterion and art of trying our sincerity, which is by the test of such precepts as directly reach our peculiar corruptions. (2) The issue of the whole action in the young man's not closing with Christ's proposals about eternal life, and his sorrowful departure thereupon, lays before us a full account of that misery which attends a final dereliction of Christ. (*a*) Of that which is eternal. (*b*) But it bereaves even of temporal happiness also, even that which it promises, and which only it designs, and for the retaining of which it brings a man to part with his hopes of that which is future and eternal. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Man ruled by his affections*:—In sum, the economy of the soul in this case is like a public council sitting under an armed force; let them consult and vote what they will, yet they must act as the army and the tumult will have them. In this sense every soldier is a commander. In like manner, let both the judgment and the will be for Christ, yet the tumult of the affections will carry it; and when they cannot out-reason the conscience, they will out-cry it. (*Ibid.*) If Christ ever wins the fort of the soul, the conquest must begin here: for the understanding and will seem to be like a castle or fortified place; there is strength indeed in them, but the affections are the soldiers who manage those holds, the opposition is from these: and if the soldiers surrender, the place itself, though never so strong, cannot resist. (*Ibid.*) *The evil temper varied*:—Now, as in a tree, it is the same sap and juice that spreads itself into all that variety of branches: some straight, some crooked, some of this figure, some of that: so it is the same stock and furniture of natural corruption that shoot forth into that great diversity of vices, that exert such different operations in different tempers. And as it is the grand office of judgment to separate and distinguish, and so to proportion its applications; so herein is the great spiritual art of a prudent ministry, first to learn a man's proper distemper, and then to encounter it by a peculiar and suitable address. Reprehensions that are promiscuous are always ineffectual. (*Ibid.*) *Sincerity tested*:—Observe the excellent method that Christ took to convince this person. Had he tried him by a precept of temperance, chastity, or just dealing, He had never sounded the bottom of his heart: for the civility of his life would have afforded a fair and satisfactory reply to all these: but when He came close to him, and touched upon his heart-string, his beloved possessions, the man quickly shows himself, and discovers the temper of his spirit more by the love of one particular endeared sin, than by his forbearance of twenty, to which he stood indifferent. (*Ibid.*) Every man's sincerity is not to be tried in the same way. He that should conclude a man pious, because not covetous, would bring but a short argument; for perhaps he may be lustful or ambitious, and the stream be altogether as strong and violent, though it runs in a different channel. (*Ibid.*) *Sins of omission*:—When the archer shoots at the target, he as really fails to strike it if his arrow falls short of it, as when he shoots over and beyond it. (*Dr. Shedd.*)

Ver. 19. **Honour thy father and thy mother.**—*Honouring parents* :—Implies: I OBEDIENCE. Keep their commands (Col. iii. 20; Eph. vi. 1-3). II. RESPECT, reverence. III. REGARD THEIR OPINIONS. Do not despise them or ridicule them. IV. RESPECT THEIR HABITS. May be different from ours, antiquated, &c. V. PROVIDE FOR THEM. Deny ourselves to promote their welfare. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *The duties of children* :—I. You are required to view and treat your parents with RESPECT. Nothing is more unbecoming in you, nothing will render you more unpleasant in the eyes of others, than forward or contemptuous conduct towards your parents. II. You should be GRATEFUL to your parents. Consider how much you owe them—every comfort, &c. III. You must make it your study to OBEY your parents, to do what they command, and to do it cheerfully. IV. Do all in your power to ASSIST AND OBLIGE your parents. You can very soon make some return for the kindness you receive. V. Place your UNRESERVED CONFIDENCE in them. Be honest, sincere, and open-hearted. VI. Attend seriously to their INSTRUCTIONS AND ADMONITIONS, and improve the advantages they afford you for becoming wise, useful, good, and happy for ever. (*W. E. Channing, D.D.*) **And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**—*Loving our neighbour* :—I. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOUR? II. THE DUTY OF LOVING OUR NEIGHBOUR. 1. This commandment evidently means—that we should not *injure* our neighbour in his person, property, or character; that we should seek to do him good; that in case of debt, difference, or debate, we should do what is right, regarding his interest as much as our own, that in order to benefit him we should practise self-denial, or do as we would wish him to do to us (Matt. vii. 12). 2. It does *not* mean—that the love of ourselves, according to what we are, or according to truth, is improper; that I am to neglect my own business to take care of my neighbour's (1 Tim. v. 8; Titus ii. 5). (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Love thy neighbour* :—I. THE COMMAND. 1. Whom am I to love? Thy neighbour (1) albeit that he be of a different religion; (2) although he oppose thee in trade; (3) though he offend thee with his sin. 2. What am I to do to my neighbour? It prohibits all rash temper. Then do not neglect him. 3. How we are to love our neighbour. II. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD OBEY this command. 1. God commands it. 2. Selfishness itself would bid you love your neighbour. It is the short way to make yourself happy. 3. Because that will be the way to do good in the world. 4. The quiet of us all. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Our neighbours* :—A gentleman once said to Dr. Skinner, who was asking aid for foreign missions, "I don't believe in foreign missions. I won't give anything except for home missions. I want what I give to benefit my neighbours." "Well," the doctor made reply, "whom do you regard as your neighbours?" "Why, those around me." "Do you mean those whose laud joins yours?" "Yes." "Well," said Dr. Skinner, "how much land do you own?" "About five hundred acres," was the reply. "How far down do you own it?" inquired Dr. Skinner. "Why, I never thought of it before, but I suppose I am half way through?" "Exactly," said the doctor, "I suppose you do, and I want this money for the Chinese—the men whose land joins yours at the bottom." Every Christian should say in a higher sense than the heathen poet, "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me." To a believer in Christ all men are neighbours. *Selfness versus selfishness* :—1. Christ made a change from selfishness to benevolence the very marrow of religion. Selfness is to become a mother and ministrant of true benevolence—"as thy self." He did not put His hand upon slavery, but if this principle could be secured all these evils would die away. 2. Religion, both in the individual and in the sects, as well as in theology, is to be tested by its power to develop benevolence. 3. All great schemes of reformation will fail which do not begin with releasing men from animal selfishness. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Social evils not removed by outward means* :—Go out in early June, and with your scythe cut the May-weed that grows dense and malodorous along the sides of the road: and then let it come up again, not destroying root nor seed, simply cutting it off. That is Nihilism. It proposes to cut to the surface of the ground everything that has been developed out of human life and experience, but not to touch the root out of which they have selfishly and wrongfully developed. It leaves men just as they were, to destroy simply these accretions of oppression and wrong. Some good will be done, doubtless, in destroying multitudes of manners and customs, even by revolutionary evolutions—some good came from the red-hot ploughshare of the French Revolution; but, after all, as a philosophical method of correcting the evils of mankind and of the world, a child could have conceived something better than that. To destroy the outward forms of human society and to leave the inward causes of them, is to attempt to dry up a

river, and let alone the springs from which it is fed. Nihilism is contemptible, except as a piteous exposition of men's suffering, and of their ignorance of how to remedy that suffering. It is not the king, it is not the prince, it is not the inexorable law; it is the vital selfishness of the individual and the collective heart, that makes the trouble in this world. It is the fact men treat each other as animals treat each other, and only to a limited degree have transformed self-seeking into a form of benevolence toward others. Just in the proportion in which it is transformed men grow happier and happier in society, and the average condition is better. (*Ibid.*) *Social suffering arising from selfishness:*—The same is true of all the schemes of Fourier and Comte, and of all the social reconstructionists that are writing and planning to-day. They vitiate the result that they seek, by leaving out of consideration the prime factor of the mischiefs that they would exterminate. If a man takes a book that is being printed, and attempts to erase in each proof-sheet a misprinted or a blotted word, but does not correct the wrong types in the form, the errors will reproduce themselves just as fast as they are erased. All the forms of suffering in human society have causes that lie in the animal selfishness of the human race; and if you will correct them—except for a moment, as it were, making a temporary correction, others developing in the same way—you must teach men, being born again, how to make themselves the instruments, not of selfishness, but simply of benevolence and selfness. All the efforts which are, in our day, being made to do this by law—as if machinery would ever correct human nature—are ineffectual. (*Ibid.*) *The effective operation of the law of love in social life:*—Faithful and uniform obedience to this royal law throughout the churches of Christ would be of itself an evangelistic power, an aggressive spiritual energy far transcending all the revival meetings ever held. Just as the regular action of the tides does more to purify the ocean than the occasional storms that sweep over its surface, so would the constant operation of this law of love do for humanity more than the occasional excitements that sweep over the surface of society. (*D. Jackson.*) *The ideal the true object of love:*—If my neighbour be an evil-living man, who is not subject to the law of Christ; or if he be a proud, overbearing man, caring only to further his own selfish interests, regardless how he may wound the feelings of others, and cause them to suffer wrong—if, I say, my neighbour be such a man, I cannot, and I ought not, it would be against the royal law, to love these things in him, just as it would be wrong to love them in myself. (*Ibid.*) *The law of self-love:*—It is very dangerous for a man to care for himself, and not for anybody else; and it is even more dangerous for a man to expend himself on other persons, and neglect or care nothing for himself. The danger is as great, and, if possible, greater, when the law of self is paralyzed, than when the law of benevolence itself is paralyzed. These two laws must work under mutual restraint. They are antithetical. They are counterparts. They are complements the one of the other. To care for yourself is an indispensable pre-requisite of caring for anybody else. If this be so, then, first, to rear up children to be cared for, and not to learn to care for themselves, is to make them self-indulgent, soft, worthless. Secondly. Any method of charity which weakens or destroys self-reliance is not charitable, but is cruel. Thirdly. It is therefore dangerous to interfere with the law of suffering. Suffering is as beneficent as enjoying. Indeed suffering is better than enjoying under certain circumstances. If a man have a diseased brain, and the whole world to him sparkles with fantastic visions of pleasure, and if, in order to restore him to a healthful and normal condition, it is necessary to put a blister on the nape of his neck, then in his case surgery, with all its attendant suffering, is better than the pleasing sights and sounds that he sees and hears. Charity should be so directed as that it shall inspire men to avoid the reasons of suffering, and as that it shall make suffering, when it cannot be avoided, educate men to bear it till they can get out of it. An easy relief of suffering not only is unwise as it relates to humanity, but it is contrary to the fundamental principles on which the globe has been organized. This leads me to say, fourthly, that the social tendencies and theories which are beginning to be preached are demoralizing and dangerous, and to no other part of the community so much as to those who are seeking to better their condition by promulgating them. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 23, 24. **That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.** —*The hindrances and temptations of the rich:*—I. HINDRANCES. 1. Riches tend to obscure faith; to make one trust in them, instead of in God. 2. They encourage their possessor to love the world, and to withhold his heart from God. 3. They

exclude disinterested love and goodwill toward others. 4. They hinder humility. People dare not tell a rich man of his faults, so he seldom gets an opportunity of mending them. 5. They prevent meekness. 6. They make a man hard and unyielding, difficult to convince of what is true, unwilling to be persuaded, or to submit in any way to others. II. TEMPTATIONS. 1. To atheism. With riches a man seems dependent on no one. He thinks himself his own master. 2. To idolatry. From the worship of no God there is an easy transition to the worship of false gods. He who loves not the Creator will certainly love the creature, *e.g.*, the gratification of the outward senses. Not necessarily gluttony and drunkenness, destroying the body. A moderate sensuality, a regular kind of epicurism will be quite enough to keep the soul dead to God and all true religion. 3. To the gratification of the imagination—beautiful houses, elegant furniture, curious pictures, delightful gardens. Innocent in themselves, how do all these things draw off the mind from more serious pursuits! 4. To self-inflation. 5. Pride. 6. Self-will. 7. Contempt of inferiors. 8. Fretfulness and peevishness. A gentleman of large fortune, while we were seriously conversing, ordered a servant to throw some coals on the fire. As he did so, a puff of smoke came out, on which the gentleman threw himself back in his chair and cried out, "Oh, Mr. Wesley, these are the crosses which I meet with every day!" I could not help asking, "Pray, Sir John, are these the heaviest crosses you meet with?" Surely these crosses would not have fretted him so much if he had had only fifty pounds a year, instead of five thousand. (*John Wesley.*) *Danger of riches*:—It is hard to carry a full cup with a steady hand. High places are dizzy places, and full many have fallen to their eternal ruin through climbing aloft without having grace to look up. Trailing robes raise a dust, and gather upon themselves all sorts of filthiness, besides being subjected to needless wear and tear. A man may have so much of this world that he misses the next. His long robe may trip him up in the race for the heavenly prize, and he may fall a victim to the wealth he idolized. Alas, for the poor rich! Faring sumptuously every day, and yet full often strangers to that deep and peerless joy which belongs to those who, in the deep waters of poverty, find a boundless bliss in trusting God. When the rich are saved they should count it a miracle of grace, and feel great gratitude to Him who enables a camel to go through the eye of a needle, notwithstanding his hump. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Beware of growing covetous*, for of all sins this is one of the most insidious. It is like the silting up of a river. As the stream comes down from the land it brings with it sand and earth, and deposits all these at its mouth, so that by degrees, unless the conservators catch it carefully, it will block itself up, and leave no channel for ships of great burden. By daily deposit it imperceptibly creates a bar which is dangerous to navigation. Many a man when he begins to accumulate wealth commences at the same moment to ruin his soul; and the more he acquires, the more closely he blocks up his liberality, which is, so to speak, the very mouth of spiritual life. Instead of doing more for God, he does less; the more he saves, the more he wants; and the more he wants of this world, the less he cares for the world to come. (*Ibid.*) *Salvation easier for humble rank*:—Pope Adrian VI. said that nothing befell him more unhappy in all his life than that he had been the head of the Church and monarch of the Christian commonwealth. Another pope said that when he first entered into orders he had some good hopes of his salvation; when he became a cardinal he doubted it; but since he was made pope he almost despaired of it. *Small threads best for the needle's eye*:—Let rich men often ruminate this terrible text, and take heed. Let them untwist their cables, that is, their heart, by humiliation (James i. 10; v. 1), till it be made like small threads, as it must be, before they can enter into the eye of a needle, that is, eternal life. (*John Trapp.*) *The tendency of wealth to produce moral insensibility*:—When we read history, whether it be the history of Dives in the parable, or of Shylock in the play, we see how *hard* wealth can make men—how it can contract their vision and dwarf their aspirations and extinguish their sympathies. Nay, when we read the lives of our fellow-men, as they are lived alongside of us, we see how wealth can benumb the conscience and brutalize the moral sense, so that a rich man's career shall remind you of nothing so much as those buccaneers of the Spanish main with whom might made right, and who knew no law but the law of a triumphant audacity. When one notes these things and sees what a power there is in the possession of wealth to stimulate the instincts of cruelty and a petty revenge, and to extinguish those finer traits which make life sweet and sunny—above all, when one sees how riches rear a dome of brass over so many human lives, and make heaven and Christ and the life to come as unlonged-for and unappreciated as

would be a lock of a dead child's hair to a pawnbroker—then one can at least understand why Christ should pronounce the solemn words which are recorded here. (*Bishop H. C. Potter.*) *The difficulties in the way of salvation for a rich man are*—I. THAT RICHES ENGROSS THE AFFECTIONS. II. MEN CONSIDER WEALTH AS THE CHIEF GOOD, and when this is obtained think they have gained all. III. They are PROUD OF THEIR WEALTH, and are unwilling to be numbered with the poor and despised followers of Jesus. IV. RICHES ENGROSS THE TIME, fill the mind with cares and anxieties, and leave little for God. V. They OFTEN PRODUCE LUXURY, dissipation, and vice. VI. IT IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN WEALTH WITHOUT SIN, avarice, covetousness, fraud, and oppression (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17; James v. 1-5; Luke xii. 16-21, xvi. 19-31). All these may be overcome. God can give grace to do it. Though to men it may appear impossible, yet it is easy for God (ver. 26). (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *The pride of wealth*:—Heaven is a stately palace, with a narrow portal; there must be both stripping and straining ere one can get through this strait gate. The greatest wealth is ordinarily tumoured up with the greatest swelth of rebellion against God. Pride breeds in wealth as the worm doth in the apple, and he is a great rich man indeed and greater than his riches, that doth not think himself great because he is rich. Have them we may, and use them too; but mind them we may not, nor love them; that is spiritual harlotry, such as God's soul hateth, and He smiteth His hands at. (*John Trapp.*) *Danger of riches*:—Though we may not be exposed to this danger, thinking of it may free us from envy. There is danger in—I. The ACQUISITION: fraud, &c., heart drawn away from God. II. The POSSESSION: *hoarded*, they beget covetousness; *enjoyed*, lead to riot, &c., may be loved inordinately; *trusted in*, may lead to pride and contempt of the poor. Learn—1. A difficult thing to get wealth rightly, and use it well. 2. An awful thing to die a rich man in a world of so much sorrow; give an account of stewardship. 3. Do not envy the rich. 4. Remember that the true and lasting riches may be easily got. (*The Hive.*) *The dangers of wealth*:—The danger of the possession of wealth being admitted, let us now examine a few of the causes of this danger. 1. There is a fascination in the ownership of money, for it represents much of this world's power; there are few worldly things it cannot purchase. Besides, there is a satisfaction to the rich man in counting his money, in the quiet contemplation, the secret consciousness of the power which if he pleases he can wield through it. 2. Money takes from man the feeling of dependence on God. Possessing it, he is apt to say to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years"—why then should he trouble about possible future wants, when his income is so far above his expenditure?—and hence his state of mind is entirely opposed to the spirit in which we are taught to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." The possession of wealth is therefore destructive of humility, of dependence upon God. 3. Riches incline a man in all ways to lean upon the world, which provides him with too much in which he delights, to make this world his home, thus hindering him from looking up; for we cannot live by faith and sight any more than we can serve two masters. 4. The possession of wealth tempts a man to be self-indulgent; to a needless display of magnificence in himself and his surroundings. Through the pleasures his wealth creates he soon gets entangled, and the daily cross of a disciple of Christ is altogether kept out of sight; the soul's eye becomes darkened, the affairs of time seem to be the only reality, those of eternity a shadow, a dream about which the man who is happy need not trouble himself. But there are many who have the feeling that they are not rich, and cannot therefore be concerned in the danger which the possession of riches brings. This may be true in one sense, but then "riches" is a word having different meanings to different people. Again, many who have not money look upon its acquisition as the aim of life, and accept success in gaining it as the measure of happiness. Many suffer the danger of the rich, because their thoughts are all centred on becoming rich. Labour being the ordinance of God, we ought to be able to find in our work the path allotted to us by His will. We should love God, not self, the centre, the ultimate aim of our toil. But not one of us, left to himself, is capable of efficiently discharging the responsibilities entailed by the possession of wealth; we need to be sustained by God. (*Canon Gregory.*) *Wealth a hindrance on the heavenly way*:—When a man is to travel into a far country, a great burden at his back will but hinder him in his journey; one staff in his hand may comfortably support him, but a bundle of staves would trouble him. Thus a competency of these outward things may happily help us in the way to heaven, whereas abundance may be hurtful, and, like long garments to a man that walks on in the way, will trip up our

heels too, if we look not well about us. (*Sibbes.*) *Riches a nest of evil:*—Thorns are the shelter for serpents, and riches the den of many sins. Riches is a warm nest where lust securely sits to hatch all her unclean brood. (*Adams.*) *Wealth hinders soul elevation:*—Our Saviour, indeed, doth not speak of an impossibility, but of the difficulty of it and the rareness of it. Job unfolded the riddle, and got through the needle's eye with three thousand camels. But it is hard to be wealthy and not wanton; too often are riches, like birdlime, hindering the soul in its flight towards heaven. (*Swinnock.*) *The world in the heart:*—A man in the very prime of life was lying on his death-bed. Paralysis had seized upon his body. It was creeping up, slowly and surely, to his heart. His very hours were numbered. A faithful minister of God sat beside him, showing him the way of life. He was agonized in the effort to listen, to comprehend, but the old habit of years bound him so firmly that he could not fix his mind upon what his friend was saying. His life had been spent in the acquisition of wealth. Honestly, honourably it had been gained. There was no stain upon it, but yet it proved the millstone to drag him down. "Why, why!" he exclaimed in a voice of keenest anguish, "at this awful moment, can I think of nothing but my bank stock?"

Ver. 25. **Who, then, can be saved?**—*Who, then, can be saved?*—This sounds as if there were some great difficulty in the way of being saved. How is this, is not salvation free? Yes. Then where is the difficulty? Man's restoration is not merely *legal*, but *moral*, and in the latter the real hindrance will be found. Men make excuses, &c. I. WHAT IS MEANT BY BEING SAVED? In the narrative connected with the text, our Saviour calls it "Entering into the kingdom of heaven." The governing power of true religion over a man. Governed by love. To be saved is to be delivered from the kingdom of Satan, &c. It is a *present* change. Would you WISH to be SAVED? Or, would you like to compromise this matter in the way of postponement? Or, would you wish to have your love of "good society," &c., made secondary to the love of Christ? Let these questions sink deep into your hearts. The Young Ruler. II. THE HOLY GHOST CAN DEAL, AND DOES DEAL, WITH THIS MORAL HINDRANCE in the way of man's salvation as effectually as God the Son has dealt with the *legal* hindrance by His work of substitution for man. There is hope for us all. To YOU is the word of this salvation sent. Use the appointed means, for God works by means, &c. (*Hugh McNeile, D.D.*) *Who can be saved?*—I. TO PUT THE QUESTION. This inquiry sometimes arises—1. From partial views of the character of God. 2. It is often suggested by correct and scriptural views of the Divine law. 3. It arises from ignorance of the plan of human redemption. II. TO ANSWER THE INQUIRY. 1. Shall I first tell you who cannot? Not the ignorant, proud worldling, not the impure. 2. Who, then, can be saved? The vilest can. (*Dr. T. Raffles.*) *Who can be saved?*—I. THAT MEN OFTEN ERR AS TO THE REAL DIFFICULTIES OF SALVATION, that they are prone to under-estimate its cost, effort, self-sacrifice, and demanded pains. Christ never deceived anybody as to the real cost of discipleship. Salvation under the gospel is not an easy thing. II. The disciples were left to derive from this incident the lesson THAT MORAL UPRIGHTNESS WAS A DIFFERENT THING FROM GOSPEL PIETY. The young man had kept the law. Christ will not be in the heart except He have absolute dominion there. III. OUR PARTICULAR IMPEDIMENT TO SALVATION. Riches. A wealthy class of men in a community is a social necessity. Greed to be avoided; compassion to be cultivated. IV. A practical inference is that, however difficult salvation be, IT IS NEVER IMPOSSIBLE—at least, the impossibility is only relative. With man it is impossible; but with God it is possible and promised. (*D. Moore, M.A.*)

Vers. 27–30. **Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?**—*The advantages of following Christ:*—I. THAT A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST POSSESSES A CHARACTER OF HIGH AND ESSENTIAL IMPORTANCE. To be a follower of Christ we must—1. Believe the testimony which the Word of God has given as to His character and office. 2. From this principle of faith emanates all the other elements which compose the Christian character. 3. A public profession of His name, and exertion in His cause. Do you believe, &c.? II. THAT IN SUSTAINING THIS CHARACTER PAINFUL SACRIFICES MUST FREQUENTLY BE MADE. The disciples, primitive Christians, &c. 1. Remember for whom these sacrifices are to be made. 2. Remember for what these sacrifices are to be made. Are you determined at all costs to follow Christ? III. THAT OUR PRESENT SACRIFICES IN THE SAVIOUR'S CAUSE SHALL ISSUE IN A GLORIOUS REWARD. 1. Here is an advantage pro-

mised as to the present life. 2. As to the life to come. The *time* and *nature* of the recompense. What encouragement does this subject hold out to the followers of Christ? (*A. Weston.*) *The reward of Christ's followers*:—I. The evils they renounce. We must forsake all our sinful practices, ungodly associates, unholy attachments. II. The example they follow. Christ, as our Teacher, Sovereign, Pattern. III. The reward they anticipate. Following Christ will secure our personal salvation, our temporal interests and our eternal happiness. (*Sketches.*) *Christian fidelity and its rewards*:—I. THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE ABANDONING THE WORLD THE BETTER TO SERVE CHRIST. What was left? (1) A home that was dear; (2) friends of the old time; (3) a familiar occupation; (4) the religion of forefathers. II. THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE ENGAGED IN DUTIES OF CHRISTIAN PROFESSION. It involved (1) being thrust out of synagogue; (2) ceaseless combat with the world —opinions, fashions; (3) arduous labours. III. THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE'S RECOMPENSE. What shall we have?—(1) Present peace; (2) joy of discipleship; (3) anticipation of sharing in future results of all Christian work; (4) the final rest and reward. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The gain greater than the loss*:—We must understand the requirements of religion; and not over-value the things which we are obliged to give up. Some say "that a Christian must renounce all the world, all its gains, and pleasure." This has been true in the world's history; as in case of Xavier, Wesley, and missionaries. These exceptional cases. Then some people think that if they love Jesus Christ, they must be careful not to love wife and children too much. This is a mistake. God has made the family and cemented it with love. It is not necessary for a man to love God more that he love family less. There is a difference between that sacrifice which brings everything to God, to be regarded as His, and that slavery which dispossesses of all worldly goods and earthly affections in order to appease the heart of the infinite Creator. Love of God intensifies our home affections. So with regard to worldly possessions. A man is not called upon to endanger his working capital, but to consecrate it. The rules of the gospel bend to wealth; and a Christian has a larger expectancy of possessing the good things of this life. But he views himself as the steward of God, and does not allow it to imperil his soul's salvation. Then comes another question: If I am a follower of Christ, what is to be my attitude towards the world's amusements and pleasures. Give up the follies of the world, not its true pleasures. There is a high sense in which a man is to live soberly in Christ Jesus. If any man has a right to the pleasures of the earth, it is His disciple; he has a right to inherit its fruits, blessings. He has the joys of sense, and others much higher and richer in the green pastures. I would like to ask the Christian if he really thinks that he gives up much in following Christ? Our sacrifices have been joys to achieve in faith and love. But there will come a time when the text will have a certain literalness about it, when there will be no question as to what we leave, but what we are going to find? The man will have to turn his back upon his possessions. All will have forsaken us. He will then fulfil the promise of eternal life. This the final consummation. We shall not then in the eternal sunshine be disposed to think much of what we have given up to follow Christ. (*J. R. Day, D.D.*) *The hundred-fold recompense*:—This reply of our Lord as furnishing guidance for us in our endeavours to act upon men and persuade them to give heed to religion. It will not do, constituted as men are, to enlarge to them abstractedly on the beauty of holiness and on the satisfaction derivable from a conscience at rest. They will not regard virtue as its own reward. We must admit that religion requires great sacrifices; but we contend that even in this life they are more than counterbalanced by its comforts, and that in the next they will be a thousand-fold recompensed. I. Take the case of the YOUNG. You are reluctant to lose the pleasures of earth. We do not wish to deprecate these; all your senses are against our arguments. Christ did not tell Peter that his boat and net were worth but little at the most. We admit the extent of the sacrifice. We take the ground of recompense more than equivalent for all renounced. A nobler pursuit; reward more enduring. II. It is the apparent conflict between duty and interest which causes us in a variety of cases to disobey God and withstand the pleadings of conscience. The conflict is only apparent, as our true interest is always on the side of duty. Here, again, we must magnify the remunerative power of Him in whose cause the sacrifice is made, rather than depreciate the sacrifice itself. But the duty is clear, and the difficulty of discharging it will not excuse its neglect. A man says he must sell his goods on the Sabbath in order to support his family, his interest demands it. But if he follows duty as against apparent interest, we assert that he engages on his side all the aids of Pro-

vidence. If you cannot be religious but through bankruptcy, let not your name in the *Gazette* scare you from inscribing it in the Lamb's book of life. We remind you of the inexhaustibleness of God; He is the Proprietor of both worlds. To men who are in danger of being engrossed in business, as well as those who are tempted to swerve from rectitude, we say, dwell on the word "hundred-fold" in our text as suggestive of the Divine fulness and power. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Forsaking all to follow Christ*:—I. CHRIST IS THE PRE-EMINENT OBJECT AND THE BOUNDLESS SOURCE OF ALL MORAL ATTRACTION AND INFLUENCE. 1. He is the pre-eminent object of moral attraction. He is the centre of all moral power. It is the overpowering force of the sun's attraction that regulates the motion of the planets; it is the overwhelming attraction of the earth that neutralizes the mutual attraction of things upon its surface, and prevents them from inconveniently clinging together. So is Christ the centre of the moral world. As God, He claims our adoration: as Man, our lively affection. He is the realization of every Divine idea. In a gallery of paintings, comprising portraits, allegories, historic scenes, and ideal creations, one grand masterpiece, long concealed, is at length uncovered and disclosed to view. Immediately all others are forsaken; the admiring gaze is directed to this. It is "the attraction," not because of its mere novelty, but because it comprises all the subjects and all the excellences of every other work, and displays them with unrivalled power. He is the way to the Father, and to the soul's everlasting home. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by Me." A wild country is spread before us, with numerous paths, by-ways, and intersecting roads. Many of these tracks are toilsome, but supposed to lead to the possession of some profit and gain; many are pleasant, but of doubtful issue; many are perilous; many are evidently ways of perdition. But at length a bright "way" appears, and it is seen to lead upwards, and to terminate in a glorious "city of habitation." Shall we not forsake every other way to follow this? He is the fulness of all good. He is all and in all. Is it not great gain to forsake all and to follow Him? He is the friend beloved. When a beloved friend arrives, business and pleasure are alike abandoned, for the joy of his society. Jesus comes, He calls to us; He announces the joyful news of reconciliation with God. Should we not forsake all to follow Him, and to be received into His everlasting friendship? He is the heavenly Bridegroom. The bride forsakes her father's house, her country, her early associates for the bridegroom. 2. He is the boundless source of moral influence. He changes the earthly into the heavenly. No teacher nor doctrine can produce a transformation like this; the all-powerful influence is with Christ alone. If we desire our own true glory, should we not forsake all to follow Him? He changes the corrupt into the spiritual. He raises the spiritually dead into a Divine life. This reminds us that the attraction and influence of the Lord Jesus Christ can only be savingly experienced through the instrumentality of faith. II. TO FORSAKE ALL AND TO FOLLOW CHRIST IS ALIKE OUR INDISPENSABLE DUTY AND OUR TRUE HAPPINESS. 1. It is our indispensable duty to forsake all and to follow Christ. It is not by abstract considerations we usually judge of duty, but by contemplating actual and living relations. Now, if we contemplate the actual relations Christ sustains to us, and of the reality of which we are assured by Divine testimony, the entireness of His claims will become immediately evident. As the Son of God, He claims supreme homage and entire obedience: as Mediator, He has a peculiar claim, because we are the subjects of His all-prevailing intercession. This imperative duty is sustained by every conceivable motive; it is also indispensable. It is the divinely appointed condition of salvation. We must look at the awful alternative. We are all under the most sacred obligation to hold the possession of earthly things in subservience to the service of Christ. 2. It is our true happiness to forsake all to follow Christ. "What shall we have therefore?" Is it not true happiness to derive present and everlasting joy in the contemplation of so pre-eminent an object of love; to experience the transforming influence of His Spirit and truth changing us into His likeness; and to enter into living and effectual relation with Him, all whose names are significant of unlimited blessing? "What shall we have therefore?" Exemption from eternal death, and the inheritance of everlasting life. The truth of Christ. The fellowship of the saints. An infinite compensation; a blissful result of self-denial. "And the last shall be first." As the first in their own and in the world's esteem should be really the last, so the last shall be first. The last in worldly esteem. The last in social conditions—Christians are required to avoid all vain display and ostentation. The last in their own esteem. "What things were gain to them, these they counted loss for Christ." (*J. T. Barker.*)

What called forth this question? An event had just taken place which had made a deep impression on the minds of the disciples. I. LET US CONSIDER THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THOSE WORDS WERE UTTERED BY ST. PETER. There are some who always seem to delight in putting a bad construction upon the actions and words of God's saints. We have no sympathy with such men. They judge others by their own standard and motives. But in the words of the text we find no instance of human infirmity. Whatever St. Peter's faults may have been, certainly he was the last man to think of payment for service, or of reward. He was impetuous, affectionate, generous. Nor, again, can we admit that there was something vain-glorious in the words. What, then, led St. Peter to say, "What shall we have therefore?" It was thankfulness. He was thrilled with gratitude at the thought of the grace which had enabled him to do what others had not done. But further, instead of pride there was, we believe, humility in this utterance. It was as much as to say, "What condescension that thou hast chosen us, such as we are, for so great a vocation!" They felt the greatness of the love which had called them, and their own unworthiness of the dignity. Let us look at the statements which are made. They are two. Christ had bidden the rich youth to give up all, and St. Peter now says, "We have done this—we have forsaken all. Yes, it was not much, but it was all, and the sacrifice is to be measured not by the amount which is surrendered, but by the love which prompted it. Again, St. Peter adds, "We have followed Thee." This was the second thing which our Lord demanded of the rich youth. Perfect does not consist in the mere abandonment of external goods. St. Peter was careful to add that they had forsaken all with a definite motive—that of following Christ, and of being like Him in the external conditions of his life. It is not merely world-surrender, but self-surrender which Christ demands. The forsaking is the preliminary of the following. Detachment from the creature is useless unless it leads to attachment to the Creator. Sin consists in two things—the turning away from God, and the turning to the creature. "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, saith the Lord, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no waters" (Jer. ii. 13). Holiness, on the other hand, requires a spirit of detachment from visible things, and love for God. They loved Him. It was a progressive love. II. OUR LORD'S REPLY TO ST. PETER'S QUESTION WAS AN ENCOURAGING ONE. He did not find fault with the question, knowing the purity of motive which prompted it. But He was careful to elevate their thoughts. They should have some great honour, some mysterious union with Christ in His exaltation, as they now had fellowship with Him on earth. Christ is Judge alone. They can have no share in His judiciary authority. In what sense, then, will the Apostles sit with Christ and judge the world? By the judgment of comparison. They will be examples of faithfulness to grace, condemning those thereby who have clung to earthly things and forsaken Christ. And besides this, by the judgment of approbation. They will be Christ's court, His princes, marked out from others by special glory and blessedness as the recompense of their allegiance to Him. Is this honour to be confined to the original disciples? We are not called, as Apostles were, actually to forsake all, and to follow Christ. But all Christians must share their spirit. We must "use this world, as not abusing it" (1 Cor. vii. 31). The outward acts of religion, necessary as they are, will not compensate for a worldly spirit. But the Christian life is no mere negative thing—the quenching of the love of the temporal; it is the following of Christ. Try by meditation to gain a clearer view of our Lord's example. Nor is it a sordid movement of soul to desire to look over the hills of time into the glories of the eternal world. Love, not selfishness, prompts all sacrifice made for Christ. But He who "for the joy which was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. xii. 2), permits the inquiry of the text when made in the spirit of hope and thankfulness. "What shall *we* have therefore?" It is not merely happiness, it is blessedness. (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *Hundredfold reward*:—We must not understand this of an hundredfold in specie, but in value. It is—1. Joy in the Holy Ghost, peace of conscience, the sense of God's love; so as, with the Apostles, they shall rejoice that they are thought worthy to suffer for Christ. 2. Contentment. They shall have a contented frame of spirit with the little that is left to them; though they have not so much to drink as they had, yet they shall have less thirst (Phil. iv. 11, 12). 3. God will stir up the hearts of others to supply their wants, and that supply shall be sweeter to them than their abundance was. 4. God sometimes repays them in this life, as He restored Job after his trial to greater riches. (*M. Pool.*) *The Christian's recompense*:—The man who for-

sakes his possessions and friends for Christ's sake, shall find that Christ will take care that he has "a hundred," *i.e.*, very many others, who will give him the love and help of brothers, wives, and mothers, with far more exceeding sweetness and charity; so that it shall not seem that he has lost his own possessions, but has only laid them down, and in Christ's providence has multiplied them with great usury. For spiritual affections are sweeter than natural ones. (*Lapide.*) *The reward of self-sacrifice*:—This implies—1. The security of those who are poor for the gospel's sake. 2. The privilege of judging. 3. Dignity and eminence above others. 4. The nearest place to Christ and most perfect union with Him. 5. A principality of grace, happiness, and glory, that inasmuch as they are princes of the kingdom of heaven, they should have the right of judging, and of admitting into it those who are worthy, and excluding the unworthy. (*Ibid.*) *The Christian's possession*:—He who has left all things begins to possess God; and he who has God for his portion is the possessor of all nature. Instead of lands, he is sufficient to himself, having good fruit which cannot perish. Instead of houses, it is enough for him that there is the habitation of God, and the temple of God, than which nothing can be more precious. For what is more precious than God? That is the portion which no earthly inheritance can equal. What is more magnificent than the celestial host? What more blessed than Divine possession? (*Ambrose.*) *The joy of the virtuous*:—If, instead of the perturbation of anger and fury, you weigh the perpetual calmness of the mind; for the torment of anxiety and distraction, the quiet of security; for the fruitless and penal sadness of the world, the fruit of sorrow unto salvation; for the vanity of worldly joy, the richness of spiritual delight:—you will perceive that the recompense of such an exchange is a hundredfold. (*Cassian.*) *The first last*:—This is an awakening sentence to the best of men. It was as much as to say to the Apostles, "You have forsaken all and followed Me; but you had need look and consider, from what principle, with what love, and to what end you have done it; you had need keep a watch upon yourselves, and see that you hold on, and that you have no confidence in yourselves. For many that are first in profession, first in the opinion of others, first in their own opinion and confidence, at the Day of Judgment will be found to be last in Mine and My Father's esteem and reckoning; and many who make not so great a noise, nor have so great a name and repute in the world, and who have the lowest and meanest opinion of themselves will be found first and highest in My favour. The Day of Judgment will frustrate many expectations. (*M. Pool.*)

## CHAPTER XX.

VERS. 1-16. **For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.** —*The labourers in the vineyard*:—1. This story is on the face of it improbable. It is unusual for an employer to give as much remuneration to those who have wrought one hour as to those who have wrought nine or twelve. The householder was a peculiar character, and had his own way of doing things, and did not care how people regarded him. He must be such an one if he is to represent God and His dealing with men. "My thoughts are not your thoughts," &c. God's kingdom is not of this world. 2. The act of the householder seems to be unjust. Some think that the late-comers did as much work in one hour as the others in nine; others that the late-comers were paid with a brass denarius, the others with a silver one, or with a gold one; so they say one heaven for all, yet of varied glory. But if the early workers had a gold denarius they would not have complained. We have to admit the inequality of the treatment; it is explained by the spirit of the workers, of which earthly employers take no thought. 3. The difficulty of finding spiritual analogues for each of the particulars in the parable. The grumbling workers are to be taken as the impersonations of an evil principle that often exists in Christian hearts; they correspond to the elder brother in the parable. There is much of the hireling disposition even in true disciples. Work in this spirit, however great it may seem, is small in the sight of God. The "perfect" and the "chosen" labour for love. The first bargained with the householder; the last trusted to his generosity without question. To those late he was better than they expected. To the hireling He shows Himself a hirer; to the trustful worthy of confidence. The bargainers

are filled with dissatisfaction, the confiding ones with joy. The parable teaches a change of place between the first and the last; not unusual. There will be first who shall remain first. 4. This view does not approve late coming into the vineyard. Service is not determined by duration, but by spirit. Motive gives character to work. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The worth of work determined by the spirituality of its motive:* — The Church is composed, indeed, of those who have confessed Christ; but it is a society, existing for certain purposes, and, as such, it has its machinery for the carrying out of these purposes, like any other society that has been formed in the world. Now, the keeping of any part of that machinery in motion is in itself no more a spiritual work than the carrying-on of any other machinery; and if it is not done with a spiritual motive, then, even though it be done for the Church, it is not spiritual work such as God can value and reward. Thus, in a missionary society, the great object is spiritual; but it has to be sustained and carried on like any other business society; its books have to be kept like those of any commercial firm, and he who keeps them is not in that doing a spiritual work, any more than a bookkeeper in a mercantile house is doing a spiritual work. The mercantile bookkeeper may make his work spiritual by doing it as unto the Lord; but the missionary bookkeeper will make his secular if he does it simply for his wages, and as work. So, again, in the office of the ministry, there is much in common with ordinary departments of life. It gratifies literary tastes; it affords opportunities for study; it has associated with it a certain honour and esteem in the eyes of others; it furnishes occasions for the thrill that every real orator feels in the delivery of a message to his fellow-men, and the like. Now, if a man is in the ministry simply for these kinds of enjoyment, there is no more spirituality in his work, than there is in that of the *littérateur*, or the political orator. Theirs may be spiritual, indeed, if they are doing it out of love to God; but his must be merely secular if he does it only from such motives as have place in ordinary literature or eloquence. (*Ibid.*) *God Himself the best reward:*—Beautiful exceedingly in this connection is the story—mythical, no doubt, in form, but probably true in substance—that is told concerning Thomas Aquinas. Worshipping one day in the chapel in which he was accustomed to perform his devotions, it is said that the Saviour thus addressed him: "Thomas, thou hast written much and well concerning Me. What reward shall I give thee for thy work?" Whereupon he answered, "*Nihil nisi te, Domine*,"—"Nothing but Thyself, O Lord!" And in very deed He is Himself the best of all His gifts. He is Himself the "exceeding great reward" of all His people. Let the spirit of the angelic Doctor, as enshrined in this simple story, fill our hearts, and there will be no room within us for the hireling's selfishness. (*Ibid.*) *Christian condition and Christian character:*— The eleventh-hour workmen are made to feel that envy is worse than idleness. One exposition is that this parable refers to complete Christians, the reckoning at night-fall being taken for entrance into the bliss of heaven. Such would not be serious complainers; would not be sent away with humiliating rebuke; they would not regard eternal life as a compensation for work done. Some say that its design is to show that the judgment of Christian character does not depend on the length of service, but on its energy and spirit. This inadmissible; nothing is said of the one-hour servants working with more energy or a better spirit. Some imagine that our Lord teaches here that all souls in heaven will be equally rewarded. Inadmissible; though every labourer take his penny, some take it grudgingly and others cheerfully, some with envy and others with charity. Some among the ancient Fathers suggest that Christ alluded by the several hours of the working day, to the great periods in the world's religious progress. Adam, Noah, Moses, and the Prophets endured the burden and heat of the world's great day. No exclusive application to the Jews; Adam, Noah, &c., were not murmurers at the end; their earthly service did not last to the gathering of the nations about the cross. Again it has been said that these hours of the day stand for the different stages in men's lives when they make answer to the call of God. This fails as regards the judgment, when last converts serving one hour will not enjoy equal reward with life-long Christians. The word "Christian" is used in two senses. This is a "Christian" land: 1. This is the Christianity of *condition*. It is the visible Christian estate or kingdom that Christ has set up on the earth; it is a state of salvation. The heathen are outside this. 2. There is the Christianity of *character;* not of provision, but of possession. We get it by the channel of a living faith. Thus "many are called, few are chosen." "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." The call of Christ is impartial. The night-fall is not death or judgment; but

simply the end of one period of labour, of one test of character—the one ultimate reckoning lying still far in the future. The early and late workers have alike the promised penny, the common and open privilege of the gospel and Church. But have you turned the Christianity of condition and privilege into the personal Christianity of choice and character? The length of time you have been in the Church is now of little consequence; all that is over. Are you Christ's men? What are your feelings toward the brother-souls that live and work near you? The parable strikes a blow at the notion that any works of ours are profitable to God, or even to our salvation. The quality, not the performance, is the accepted thing, the heart of faith and love, not any self-complacent operations. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *Septuagesima Sunday*:—I. GRACE, IN ITS MOVEMENTS TOWARDS MAN. 1. There is the constitution of a vineyard (Isa. v. 1–7). 2. Having constituted a vineyard, the next movement of Divine grace is to call and engage men as labourers in it. 3. Divine grace purposes to make active servants and labourers of men. God does not save men without effort; a variety of work. 4. Nor is it a bootless service to which grace calls men. The householder has wages for every labourer. Godliness is profitable (1 Tim. iv. 8). II. THE CONDUCT OF MEN TOWARDS IT. All were idlers at the commencement; man has endowments for work which ought to be employed. Some prefer idleness and continue in it. Many have entered the vineyard, but are not all satisfactory labourers. Some however are good and faithful servants. 1. Let us learn to admire the glorious beneficence of God. 2. There is something for us to do. 3. Let us move forward and see how it will be with us when the bustle of this world is over, and the Lord of the vineyard sends His steward to settle up our earthly accounts. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Diversity of reward imaged in nature*:—I suppose we have all noticed the curious diversity of the seeds we sow in the spring. There are some that shoot out and grow up days before the others from the same paper, sown in the same bed, and that seemed exactly like the rest. It is so with a number of fruit trees in a young orchard. Each tree may get an equal care, and appear to have the same natural advantages, but one will spring out into an early fruitfulness, while another holds back, summer after summer, and perhaps, only when the husbandman begins to despair of its ever doing any good, it bears fruit. (*R. Collyer.*) *The labourers in the vineyard*:—May we not then draw from this parable the lesson, that God takes into account not only the work we do, but also our opportunities. He does not allow us to be discredited with Him for not doing what we could not do, if only we show the disposition to do it. (*J. M. Ludlow, D.D.*) *Similarity of reward not equality*:—So, then, we do the work without any reference to the reward. You who came to Christ full fifty years ago will have your penny—as well the dying thief that had to bring yesternight only one foot out of hell. Will you, then, be placed on equal terms? It never can be so. Can a man of fine capacity and mind go along any road and have as the result of his walking only that which the common clodhopper has, who "thought the moon no bigger than his father's shield, and the visual line that girt him round the world's extreme?" Have they both equal enjoyment out of the same circumstances? It is impossible. The walk to the philosopher is a walk in church, a climbing up the altar stairs. He sees angels, he hears voices, he is touched by reverences, he is in the presence and sanctuary of God. Yet the road the same, the day the same—the road through a garden, the day the queenliest in all the summer train, yet in that walk one man found Heaven, the other only a convenient road to a place to sleep in. (*Dr. Parker.*) *The vineyard labourers*:—I. IDLING. Men who needed work. Whom work and its rewards would benefit. Waiting according to custom to be hired. Important to be where the call of the Master may meet us. There are many idlers in the world. II. CALLING. God calls men to work for Him in His vineyard. Some in early life—Josiah, &c. He continues to call up to the eleventh hour. This call He sends in various ways. He confers a great honour by calling. The honour of working for Him is a sufficient reward. Very sinful to refuse to obey (Prov. i. 24). There will be a last call—we know not how soon—may be now. III. WORKING. He calls to work. 1. For ourselves. To secure and work out our salvation. Follow after holiness, &c. 2. For others. We must do good, as well as get good. This work brings comfort to the worker. IV. PAYING. God will be no man's debtor. He will give what He has promised. More than we deserve, more than the most sanguine expect. Learn—1. All living without working for God, is but idling. 2. Now that God calls us to work, let us not refuse. 3. Our best works will not deserve heaven. 4. We all need the work of Divine grace in our souls. (*J. C. Gray.*) *God's sovereign grace*:—Certainly it is sovereign grace alone which leads

the Lord God to engage such sorry labourers as we are. Let us inquire—I. How MAY THE LORD BE SAID TO GO OUT? 1. The impulse of grace comes, before we think of stirring to go to Him. 2. In times of revival, He goes forth by the power of His Spirit, and many are brought in. 3. There are times of personal visitation with most men, when they are specially moved to holy things. II. WHAT IS THE HOUR HERE MENTIONED? It represents the period between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age, or thereabouts. 1. The dew of youth's earliest and best morning hour is gone. 2. Habits of idleness have been formed by standing in the market-place so long. Harder to begin at third hour than first. Loiterers are usually spoiled by their loafing ways. 3. Satan is ready with temptation to lure them to his service. 4. Their sun may go down suddenly, for life is uncertain. Many a day of life has closed at its third hour. 5. Fair opportunity for work yet remains; but it will speedily pass away as the hours steal round. 6. As yet the noblest of all work has not been commenced; for only by working for Christ can life be made sublime. III. WHAT WERE THEY DOING TO WHOM HE SPOKE? Standing idle. 1. Many are altogether idling in a literal sense; mere loafers with nothing to do. 2. Many are idle with laborious business—industrious triflers, wearied with toils which accomplish nothing of real worth. 3. Many are idle because of constant indecision. 4. Many are idle though full of sanguine intentions. IV. WHAT WORK WOULD THE LORD HAVE THEM DO? He would have them work by day in His vineyard. 1. The work is such as many of the best of men enjoy. 2. The work is proper and fit for you 3. For that work the Lord will find you tools and strength. 4. You shall work with your Lord, and so be ennobled. 5. Your work shall be growingly pleasant to you. 6. It shall be graciously rewarded at the last. V. WHAT DID THEY DO IN ANSWER TO HIS CALL? "Went their way." May you, who are in a similar time of the day, imitate them! 1. They went at once. Immediate service. 2. They worked with a will. 3. They never left the service, but remained till night. 4. They received the full reward at the day's end. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Slothfulness condemned*:—I. A WORK SUPPOSED. (1) Its object one of supreme importance; (2) Proposed by highest authority; (3) Requires long, steady, earnest application; (4) Certain of ultimate success. II. A STATE CONDEMNED—idleness. (1) By limited time—a day; (2) By analogy of worldly employments; (3) By certainty of future reckoning. III. A QUESTION URGED: Why? (1) Aversion to work; (2) Indifference; (3) Indecision; (4) Procrastination. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The world a market-place*:—I. The ordinary walks of life are as a market-place to men whose highest aim is to buy and sell and get gain. II. Outside this market-place is a vineyard, which the great Owner of the world and Proprietor of human life would have cultivated. III. All hiring, and looking out for hire, is but a profitless idling till the Master calls to a higher work. IV. Call a man to labour when He will, He will give what He pleases of His own at the end of life's day. (*Ibid.*) *Labourers*:—I. Idleness rebuked. II. Service required. III. Toil rewarded. IV. Discontent manifested. V. Murmuring silenced. VI. Administration vindicated. (*M. Braithwaite.*) I. There is a householder who has a vineyard. The householder—Jesus. The vineyard is the Church. II. The householder calls labourers into his vineyard at different hours in the day. III. In the evening the labourers are called to receive their reward. IV. The early labourers murmur against the householder. V. The householder defends his conduct; and expostulates with the murmurers. VI. The parable concludes with an awful inference to the Jewish nation. (*J. Edmonson.*) *Work and wages*:—I. The Church of God is brought before us as a place of work. By no means the ordinary idea. Members, not workers. II. There is much work to be done, and many kinds of work, and, therefore, that there is room and need for many workers of many kinds. III. That no work shall be left without wages. IV. That the wages are not proportioned to the work. (*Anon.*) I. Called to work. 1. Who calls? 2. Who are called? 3. When called? II. Humility in work. Shown in obedience, hearty service, thankful spirit. III. Reward for work. To the first. To the last. (*G. M. Tait.*) *The labourers in the vineyard*:—I. OUR ATTENTION IS CALLED TO AN EXAMINATION OF THE PARABLE. 1. God hires labourers into his vineyard. 2. At different periods has God made Himself known to the children of men. 3. They labour until the evening arrives. II. ENFORCE THE TRUTHS WHICH CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE THIS PARABLE WAS INTENDED TO TEACH. 1. That the rewards of Christianity being rewards of grace, and not of works, are regulated only by the beneficent will of Him who is debtor to no man; and that such conduct is consistent with strict equity. 2. To expose the hypocrisy of some professors of religion, and remind us of the frailty which attaches even to those

whose sincerity cannot be doubted. 3. To remind us of the real dignity of the work, independently of the reward annexed to it. 4. To warn us of the period to our exertions, and the hour of final reckoning—(1) Payment; (2) Disappointment; (3) Gladness. 5. To instruct us in the temper of real Christianity. (*J. Styles, D.D.*) *Love makes labour light*:—Two young girls were going to a neighbouring town, each carrying on her head a heavy basket of fruit to sell. One of them was murmuring and fretting all the way, and complaining of the weight of her basket. The other went along smiling and singing, and seeming to be very happy. At last the first got out of patience with her companion, and said, "How can you go on so merry and joyful? your basket is as heavy as mine, and I know you are not a bit stronger than I am. I don't understand it." "Oh," said the other, "it's easy enough to understand. I have a certain little plant which I put on the top of my load, and it makes it so light I hardly feel it." "Indeed! that must be a very precious little plant. I wish I could lighten my load with it. Where does it grow? Tell me. What do you call it?" "It grows wherever you plant it, and give it a chance to take root, and there's no knowing the relief it gives. Its name is, love, the love of Jesus. I have found out that Jesus loved me so much that He died to save my soul. This makes me love Him. Whatever I do, whether it be carrying this basket or anything else, I think to myself, I am doing this for Jesus, to show that I love Him, and this makes everything easy and pleasant." (*Bible Jewels.*) *Disadvantage of Envy*:—The benevolent have the advantage of the envious, even in this present life; for the envious is tormented not only by all the ill that befalls himself, but by all the good that happens to another; whereas the benevolent man is the better prepared to bear his own calamities unruffled, from the complacency and serenity he has secured from contemplating the prosperity of all around him. (*Colton.*) *Hired late in the day*:—By these labourers that were hired long after the morning, we are to understand men in whom nothing appeared that should dispose any person to have a favourable opinion of them, or who were at least destitute of anything truly good, whilst others made a figure in the Church. I. SPEAK OF OLD SINNERS THAT NEED CONVERSION. 1. There are some who have never thought seriously about the state of their souls; or their serious thoughts, if ever any obtained possession of their minds, have left no impression. 2. There are some who entertain a groundless opinion of the goodness of their state. 3. There are some who live in suspense about their condition. 4. There are some too well enlightened to flatter themselves with groundless hopes. II. SHOW THAT OLD SINNERS MAY BE CONVERTED. 1. God deals with them, by the gospel, as well as with sinners who are yet in the days of their youth. 2. The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation to sinners. God spares long, to give space for obtaining pardon and salvation. 3. From the grace of God bestowed upon transgressors in former days, it appears, that there is mercy with him for old transgressors. III. Consider the encouragement given to old sinners to repent. The gracious reward promised to those who enter into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, must have a powerful effect upon all who believe the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*George Lawson.*) *The festive evening time*:—The reward which the Lord will ultimately grant to His servants. I. It is not ARBITRARY, but in accordance with the strictest justice. 1. He rewards only His labourers. 2. He rewards all His labourers. 3. He gives the same reward to all His labourers as such. The equality of the penny a figure of the equality of God's justice. II. It is not LIMITED, but free and rich, according to the fulness of His love. III. It is not a MYSTERIOUS and silent fate, but the ways of wisdom, which justify themselves. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *God a good paymaster*:—Consider His payments. I. An easy conscience. II. The comfort we have in doing something for Jesus. III. The reward in watching first buddings of conviction in a soul. IV. The joy of success. V. The final entrance into the joy of our Lord. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Hiring labourers in the East*:—The most conspicuous building in Hamadan is the Mesjid Jumah, a large mosque, now falling into decay, and before it a *meidan*, or square, which serves as a market-place. Here we observed, every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous body of peasants were collected with spades in their hands, waiting, as they informed me, to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields. This custom forcibly struck us as a most happy illustration of our Saviour's parable of the labourers in the vineyard; particularly when, passing by the same place late in the day, we still found others standing idle, and remembered His words, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" as most applicable to their situation; for in putting the very same question to them, they answered us, "Because no man hath hired us." (*Mr. Morier.*) During

the whole season when vineyards may be dug, the common workmen go very early in the morning to the *Sook*, or market-place of the village or city, where comestibles are sold. While waiting to be hired, they take their morning cup of coffee, and eat a morsel of bread. The owners of vineyards come to the place and engage the number of labourers they need. These immediately go to the vineyard and work there until a little while before the sun sets, which, according to Oriental time, is twelve o'clock, so that the "eleventh hour" means one hour before sunset. We have often seen men stand in the market-place through the entire day without finding employment, and have repeatedly engaged them ourselves at noon for half a day's job, and later for one or two hours' work in our garden. In such a case the price has to be particularly bargained for, but it is more often left to the generosity of the employer to give whatever *backshish* he feels disposed. (*Van Lennep.*) *God's bounty to those who trust*:—He promises not to us, as to those first labourers, a certain hire. Even while He would wholly restore us in His mercy, He would keep in us the humility of penitents. He seemeth to tell us thus, that we have forfeited our claim, that we must labour on in faith, and hope, and confiding trust, making no bargains, as it were, with Him, looking for nothing again, but what He of His free bounty will give us. But so will He give us, not what we could dare to ask or think, but "what is right;" not "right" with regard to us, or any poor claims or demerits of ours, but right in His sight whose mercy is over all His works, right for Him who doth what He will with His own, Who is not stinted to any measure of proportion, but giving us out of the largeness of His love; not what is "right" for us, but for Him in whose right we receive what we deserve not, even His, Who gave up that which was His right by nature, and emptied Himself, that, what is His right, we might receive. This is our very hope, and trust, and gladness in our toil, that we labour, not with any calculating spirit, or to set up for ourselves any claim with God; the rewards of desert were finite; the reward of grace is infinite, even Himself, Who hath said, "I am thine exceeding great reward." (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *God's persevering activity*:—See how actively the householder employs himself. His loving heart is so comprehensive that He cannot have enough labourers in His vineyard—not enough souls with which He can, as it were, share the joy and the glory of the extension of His kingdom. How many a human being who has been troubled at having missed the first appearance of the householder at daybreak, now rejoices at being called into the vineyard before the sun is too high in the heavens. He does not think first of stipulating about his hire; the word of the Lord, "Whatsoever is right, I will give you," is even more than he requires, and at the sixth hour he joyfully enters into his work in the Lord's vineyard. It has been painful to him to stand idle; to gaze for half a day upon that which is intended for working, and yet to be unable to work at it. (*R. Rothe, D.D.*) *Idle*:—If we, with the eye of God, could look down upon the proceedings of this life, how startled we should be at the host of idlers in the midst of the turmoil of life. The Lord sees clearly that which our merely human understanding can also perceive, that there is only one activity upon earth which is really activity, because it produces a real result—activity for the kingdom of God and in His service. Every other effort of human strength, if it has not a decided reference to the kingdom of God, and finds in its source as well as its aim, is only a busy idleness, a sad and mournful unreality, with which the prince of this world detains in its prison those who have fallen into its unhappy slavery. Every other activity which does not build, only destroys, and the more noble the power is which calls it forth, the more destructive is its working, until at last it destroys itself. (*Ibid.*) *Never too late for God's grace*:—An old sailor, who was very ragged, and whose white head spoke the lapse of many years, was leaning against a post in conversation with another sailor. A member of the Bethel Union spoke to them, and particularly invited the old man to attend the prayer-meeting. His companion, after hearing the nature of the invitation, said, "Thomas, go in! Come! come, man! go into the meeting; it won't hurt you." "Puh! puh!" cried the old seaman, "I should not know what to do with myself. I never go to church or prayer-meetings; besides, I am too old. I am upwards of seventy, and I am very wicked, and have always been so; it is too late for me to begin, it is of no use; all is over with me, I must go to the devil." After a moment's pause, the member, looking with pity upon the old veteran, answered, "You are the very man the prayer-meeting is held for." "How so?" (with much surprise). "Because Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners. When young, I suppose, you were tempted to think it would be time enough to be religious when you came to be old?" "Ah! that I did," replied the sailor. "Now you are

old you say it is too late. Listen no longer to these suggestions; come with me: no time is to be lost, for Jesus is waiting to save you, poor sinner, or He would have sent you to that place where hope never comes, before this; your sins deserve it." His companion then said, "Thomas, go to the prayer-meeting. You have need, at your time of life, to prepare to die." He went, and attended regularly, and with the best results. Some time after he was asked, "Well, my aged friend, do you think you are too much in years to be saved? too old in sin for the blood of Christ to cleanse you?" "No, sir," said he; "I bless God, I do feel a hope, a blessed hope, which I would not give up for worlds; a hope which encourages me to think that God will be merciful to me, and pardon me, old sinner as I am." *The grudging spirit*:—It was now plain that the early-hired labourer had little interest in the work, and that it was no satisfaction to him to have been able to do twelve times as much as the last hired. He had the hireling's spirit, and had been longing for the shadow and counting his wages all day long. English sailors have been known to be filled with pity for their comrades whose ships only hove in sight in time to see the enemy's flag run down, or to fire the last shot in a long day's engagement. They have so pitied them for having no share in the excitement and glory of the day, that they would willingly give them as a compensation their own pay and prize money. And the true follower of Christ, who has listened to the earliest call of his Master, and has revelled in the glory of serving Him throughout life, will from the bottom of his heart pity the man who has only late in life recognized the glory of His service, and has had barely time to pick up his tools when the dusk of evening falls upon him. It is impossible that a man whose chief desire was to advance his Master's work, should envy another labourer who had done much less than himself. The very fact that a man envies another his reward, is enough of itself to convict him of self-seeking in His service. (*M. Dods, D.D.*) *Unto this last*:—I. The work to which all were called; and in which the first bore the heat, &c. II. The reason of the idleness of those who were called at the eleventh hour. III. The Lord's justification of His ways. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*) *Mine own*:—We have here: I. The assertion of the absolute proprietorship. Both the whole world and every man belong to God. They are His (1) by creation; (2) by providence; (3) by grace. II. A vindication of final decisions based on this absolute right. III. A censure pronounced on all criticisms adverse to these decisions. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The evil eye*:—1. I have been good in that I hired you at all. 2. Hired you before you had shown what you could do. 3. I now give you all I promised, without criticising your work. 4. In being good to others I do not wrong you. Learn, if one should say—"Since I shall be no better off in the end than those who began late to work for God, and I may therefore delay," he should reflect that *this hour* may be *his* eleventh. (*Ibid.*) *Waiting to be called*:—So, then, when I see a young man slow and backward, and in a poor place, whose soul I know would expand in the sunshine of prosperity and fill a better place: or a woman, waiting with her unfulfilled life in her heart, willing to give it in any high, pure fashion to the Lord, if He will but come and take it; or a preacher, with a mighty power to preach somewhere in his nature, if he could only find the clue to it; or a man who has waited through his lifetime for the Lord to show him the true church, the place where he can feel that the religious heart of him is at rest;—if in these things or in any of them, I feel I have found my place, and am doing my work, I must feel very tenderly, and judge very generously, all the waiters in all these ways; must call up this picture of the faces so wistful in the old market-place, watching for the coming of the Lord: "Who has made me to differ, who has called me at the first hour, why do I succeed where others fail?" It is the gift of God; it is not of works, lest any man should boast. It is the difference between the seed the husbandman, for his own good reason, will leave dark and still in the granary, and the seed he sows which can spring at once to the sun and the sweet airs of the summer. It is the difference in the home, in our conduct towards our children, when we know it is best to let one go forward in the school and keep another backward. (*R. Collyer.*) *The call of nations*:—This is true, finally of our country. England and Germany begin in the early morning, and in the wild woods of Britain and Gaul, to earn their penny; and it is their lot for long centuries to toil, winning, as they can, this and that from the wilderness, —trial by jury, Magna Charta, free speech, free press, free pulpit,—and when many hours are past, and much hard work is done, a voice comes to a new nation, and tells of a new world, and says, "Go work there;" and when the old world looks up, the new is abreast of those nations that have borne the burden and heat of the day,

and will have its penny. And in this new world itself, there are men living here in Chicago, who can remember very well when our great prairies lifted their faces wistfully to the sun, and cried, "No man hath hired us;" when our streets, now so full of life, sounded only to the voice of the mighty waters and the cry of the savage. Now the whole civilized world has to come and see what has been done. Not many years more will pass, we who live here believe, before this new worker will be abreast of the oldest, and will win her penny. (*Ibid.*) *Reward given during work as well as after it is done*:—I think the most heart-whole man I ever knew, was a man who had waited and watched, breaking stones through all weathers on the cold shoulder of a Yorkshire hill, and he could hardly see the stones he had to break he was so sand blind. His wife was dead and all his children; his hut was open to the sky, and to the steel-cold stars in winter; but when once one said to comfort him, "Brother, you will soon be in heaven!" he cried out in his rapture, "I have been there this ten years!" And so when at last the angel came to take him, he was not unclothed, but clothed upon; mortality was swallowed up of life. (*Ibid.*) *Disinterested service*:—Christ nowhere offers us heaven as a price for good behaviour, as foolish parents, or rather wicked parents, lure their children to obey with sweetmeats and toys. It is in no such sense as this that He engages to be a Rewarder of them that seek Him. The very passage just quoted discredits such a thought; for it says, "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?" There must be spontaneous service. The heart must go into it, uncalculating and ungrudging. You must love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and bless them that curse you, and lend, hoping for nothing again. Then you will be the children of the Highest; and, precisely because you expected no reward at all, verily your reward shall be great. There is a striking legend of saintly old Bishop Ivo, who walked with God, and saw through the self-seeking religionists of his time, and longed for larger faith. He describes himself as meeting one day, a figure in the form of a woman, of a sad, earnest aspect, like some prophetess of God, who carried a vessel of fire in one hand, and of water in the other. He asked her what these things were for. She answered, the fire is to burn up Paradise, the water is to quench Hell—that men may henceforth serve their Maker, not from the selfish hope of the one, nor from the selfish fear of the other, but for love of Himself alone. God does not consume paradise, nor quench hell. He keeps the fountains of sweet and living waters leaping and flowing in the one; He keeps the awful fires of the other burning. But surely all this promise and penalty do not mean that we are to stop in their discipline, and calculate the price of our obedience. Oh, no! not while the glorious voice of the apostle rings out over the centuries: "The love of Christ constraineth me; I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him." Not while the Saviour says to the aspiring heart of the world, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect;" hoping for nothing again. (*Bishop Huntingdon.*) *The thought of reward does not enter into the higher aspects of service*:—The reward is in doing them; in the inevitable feeling that goes along with them, far enough from being set about as the end, but interwoven with them by the gracious bounty that ever surprises faithful souls. With all these true acts and emotions of the really spiritually-minded man, it is precisely as it is with any of those acts of common life that the heart goes most into. You cannot speak of any rewards for the love that is the bond of a true marriage, without insulting those to whom you speak. You cannot connect the notion of compensation, pay, with the affection that twines a child's arms about the mother's neck, or that keeps her waiting in vigils that outwatch the patient stars, over the child's pain or sin, without profaning that affection. You cannot associate the prospect of a reward with the heroic humanity which keeps the friendly vessels hanging close, many days and nights, in the frightful companionship of a common peril, to take off the passengers of the imperilled and sinking ship; nor with any generous and brave rescue or sacrifice. Now, to any spiritual estimate, the services of daily piety are as full of the charm and fascination and glory of self-forgetting devotion as any of these. Christ is nearer than wife or husband. The Father in heaven is more real, and infinitely holier and tenderer, than the human mother. All fellow-souls in moral misery or sin need help more urgently than the shipwrecked company. And so, if our piety is real, like Christ's piety, it must be just as self-oblivious, as hearty, as spontaneous and free, as that. And then it will leave a more unspeakable, glorious, infinite reward. (*Ibid.*) *Cheerfulness in work*:—"Are you not wearying for the heavenly rest?" said Whitefield to an old minister. "No, certainly not!" he replied.

"Why not?" was the surprised rejoinder. "Why, my good brother," said the aged saint, "if you were to send your servant into the fields to do a certain portion of work for you, and promised to give him rest and refreshment in the evening, what would you say if you found him languid and discontented in the middle of the day, and murmuring, 'Would to God it were evening'? Would you not bid him be up and doing, and finish his work, and then go home and enjoy the promised rest? Just so does God require of you and me, that, instead of looking for Saturday night, we do our day's work in the day." *The eleventh hour*:—I. The time mentioned may represent an advanced period of human life. II. Men are to be found in this period, inattentive to the concerns of true religion. III. They who are found inattentive in this period, are involved in peculiar perils. Hardness of heart, &c. IV. Divine grace sometimes displays itself, by making this period to be one of true and saving conversion. (*J. Parsons.*) *Conversion postponed to old age*:—Many men put off their conversion, and at twenty send religion afore them to thirty; then post it off to forty, and yet not pleased to overtake it, they promise it entertainment at threescore. At last death comes, and he allows not one hour. In youth men resolve to afford themselves the time of age to serve God; in age they shuffle it off to sickness; when sickness comes, care to dispose their goods, lothness to die, hope to escape, martyrs that good thought, and their resolution still keeps before them. If we have but the lease of a farm for one-and-twenty years, we make use of the time, and gather profit. But in this precious farm of time we are so bad husbands that our lease comes out before we are one penny worth of grace the richer by it. (*T. Adams.*)

Ver. 6. **Why stand ye here all the day idle?**—*Spiritual idleness*:—I. THE EVIL CENSURED. Spiritual idleness. Often accompanied with great secular activity, and a flaming profession. Consists in neglect—of life's mission; the soul's salvation and sanctification (Phil. ii. 12, 13); works for the spiritual benefit of others—seeking in order to save them that are lost (1 Cor. x. 24). This neglect is highly criminal. 1. As injurious to one's self. Deteriorates the moral nature. 2. As injurious to others. 3. As disobedience to the Divine summons, "Go work," &c. Christ came to do the Father's will, and summons us to follow Him. II. THE CONTINUANCE AND AGGRAVATION OF THE EVIL. "All the day idle," &c. Youth, manhood, age. The reproach increases with the passing months and years. 1. When so much work for yourself and others ought to have been done. 2. When others have been so long labouring. 3. When there has been so much time and opportunity—"eleventh hour"—"market place." 4. When the working day is drawing to a close. III. The EXCUSES offered for the evil. "Why stand ye?" asks the Master, and what are the usual replies?—1. We have not been invited by the minister, &c. Don't wait for such invitations—offer your services—"I *must* work," &c. 2. We lack the necessary qualifications, &c. 3. We lack opportunity, &c. 4. We give money, &c. This will not be accepted by the Master as a substitute for personal service. You cannot do *this* work by proxy. Work for Christ is personal, and cannot be delegated to others, &c. IV. The MOTIVES to abandon the evil. 1. The urgency of the work. 2. The activity of Satan and his emissaries. 3. The honour and pleasure of active service. Work in which the Son of Man was employed when on earth. No less happy than honourable. 4. The assurance of Divine help. May be difficulties you fear to meet, but God will strengthen and direct, &c. 5. The brevity of life's golden opportunity. Difficulty increases with delay. You will get accustomed to idleness and it will become chronic. Whether early or late in the day, begin *Now*. 6. The promise of reward. Present; future—in and for. "Whatsoever is right that shall ye receive." "They that turn," &c. (*Alfred Tucker.*) *Standing idle*:—The text contains—I. AN IMPLICATION—That there is work to be done. 1. Knowledge to acquire—of God, self, &c. 2. Blessing, to secure. Pardon, &c. 3. Duties to discharge. Notwithstanding, many are idle. II. AN EXPOSTULATION. Why stand ye who are active, rational, responsible, rewardable creatures? Why stand ye here idle? Here on a theatre of action. In this the day of your probation. In this state of uncertainty. Why stand ye? Standing not working. III. AN INQUIRY? "Why?" Some are idle because they have no work. Some do not like the master. Some do not love the work. Some imagine themselves unable to work. Some do not like the wages. Some no man hath hired. Does not the Bible, memory, and conscience supply instances in which He would have hired you, but you were unwilling to have your old Master and desert His work, &c. (*W. Atherton.*) *Idleness deteriorates the moral nature*:—

Here lies what was once a bar of iron, but the joint action of air and water has reduced it to a bar of rust. It has now no strength, and consequently no value. To how many varied and useful purposes it might have been put some years ago and in its work have found its strength, beauty, and preservation; but it is too late now; it will soon be blended with the earth upon which it passively lies, a striking emblem of the man who through sloth and love of ease refuses to face the hammer and anvil of active life and honest work; who flies from the purifying fire of life's adversities, and who will fight no battle for truth and the higher interests of his soul. (*Anon.*) *Lazy Christians*:—A lazy Christian shall always want four things, viz., comfort, content, confidence, and assurance. God hath made a separation between joy and idleness, between assurance and laziness, and therefore it is impossible for thee to bring these together. (*T. Brooks.*) A busy man is troubled but with one devil, but the idle man with a thousand. (*Anon.*) *Idleness a sin*:—Idleness is a sin, for it involves disobedience to Christ's command, "Go into My vineyard and work." It is a sin, for it shows an utter want of sympathy with the Master, "who went about doing good," and who expected His followers "to do good to all as they have opportunity." It is a sin, for it indicates a selfish love of ease; and a Divine woe is pronounced on all who are at "ease in Zion." It is a sin, for it reveals a callous heart, insensible to the woes of a lost world. Every idler in the church is a sinner, for to him that "knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Alas! how many sinners are found in Zion, and what must be their doom when the Master cometh to judge the unfaithful servants who have hid their talent in place of using it! (*W. Durant.*) *Busy about nothing*:—The bee and the butterfly are both busy creatures; there is an activity that ends in nothing; there are lives that store no honey. *Working and rusting*:—Two ploughshares were once made by the same blacksmith, in the same smithy, from the same kind of iron, and they were bought by the same farmer. He took them home; one he took into instant employment, but he left the other unemployed for twelve months in a barn, till the poor thing got covered with rust: at last the farmer had occasion for another ploughshare, so he drew it forth from its laziness and obscurity, and sent it into the field, where it met its old fellow-ploughshare. "Why," said the lazy one, "what has kept you so bright? I declare I am quite ashamed to be seen." "Ah!" said the bright ploughshare, "it is labour and exercise that has kept me bright. Your rest and idleness has been injurious to you; but when you have been driven a few times through the earth, you will lose your rust and become beautiful and bright too." (*Blind Amos.*) *Busy idleness*:—There is such a thing as laborious idleness. Busy? So was the shepherd on the Alps, mentioned by Dugald Stewart, who spent fifteen years of life learning to balance a pole on his chin: and the philosopher sagely remarks how much good, had they been directed to a noble object, this diligence and perseverance would have accomplished. Busy? So have I seen the miller's wheel, which went round and round: but idly, grinding no corn. Busy? So, in a way, was the Russian who, facing the winter's cold, nor regarding the cost of massive slabs brought at great labour from frozen lake and river, built him an icy palace, within whose glittering, translucent walls, wrapped in furs and shining in jewels, rank and beauty held their revelry, and the bowl and the laugh and the song went round. But with soft breath, and other music, and opening buds, spring returned; and then before the eyes that had gazed with wonder on the crystal walls of that fairy palace as they gleamed by night with a thousand lights, or flashed with the radiance of gems in the bright sunshine, it dissolved, nor left "a rack behind;" its pleasures, "vanity;" its expense, "vexation of spirit." Busy? So, in a way, are the children who, when the tide is at the ebb, with merry laughter and rosy cheeks and nimble hands build a castle of the moist sea sand—the thoughtless urchins, types of lovers of pleasure and of the world so intent on their work as not to see how the treacherous, silent tide has crept around them, not merely to sap and undermine, and with one rude blow of her billow demolish the work of their hands, but to cut off their retreat to the distant shore, and drown their frantic screams and cries for help in the roar of its remorseless waves. From a death-bed, where all he toiled and sinned and sorrowed for is slipping from his grasp, fading from his view, such will his life seem to the busiest worldling; he spends his strength for naught, and his labour for that which profiteth not. With an eye that pities because it foresees our miserable doom, God calls us from such busy trifling, from a life of laborious idleness, to a service which is as pleasant as it is profitable, as graceful as it is dutiful, saying, Work out your salvation—Work while

it is called to-day, seeing that the night cometh when no man can work. (*Dr Guthrie.*) *Standing idle:*—Have you never thought with extreme sadness of the many men and women upon our earth whose lives are useless? Have you never reflected upon the millions of people who waste in nothingness their thoughts, affections, energies, all their powers, which frivolity dissipates as the sand of the desert absorbs the water which is sent upon it from the sky? These beings pass onward, without even asking themselves toward what end they journey, or for what reason they were placed here below. (*Eugène Bersier.*) *Activity out of Christ vain:*—All activity out of Christ, all labour that is not labour in His Church, is in His sight a "standing idle." (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Proverbs on idleness:*—Evil thoughts intrude in an unemployed mind as naturally as worms are generated in a stagnant pool. No pains, no gains. No sweat, no sweet. No mill, no meal. An idle brain is the devil's workshop. He that would eat the kernel, must crack the nut. *Idleness unprofitable:*—It would be thought a hard government that should tax its people one-tenth part of their time, to be employed in its service; but idleness taxes many of us much more. Sloth, by bringing on disease, absolutely shortens life. Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labour wears; while the used key is always bright. How much more time than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that the sleeping fox catches no poultry, and there will be sleeping enough in the grave! (*Franklin.*) *Work for all in God's vineyard:*—A good minister, now in heaven, once preached to his congregation a powerful sermon, founded upon the words, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The sermon did good to many, among whom was a lady who went to the minister the next day, and said, "Doctor, I want a spade." We should be happy to put spades into the hands of all our idle friends. There are Sunday-school spades, Mission-room spades, Tract-distribution spades, Sick-visitation spades, &c., &c. Who will apply for them? *Idleness:*—Idleness was one of the sins of Sodom, and it is often the forerunner of temporal and eternal ruin. No evil is more common, though none is more dangerous. I. To whom the charge of idleness is applicable. 1. It will in a certain sense apply to all unconverted men, who with respect to the highest interests of life, may be said to be always idle. *a.* They are content to do nothing at all for God; nothing that He approves, nothing that He will accept. *b.* They do nothing for their own souls, any more than for the glory of God. *c.* They do nothing for their generation, according to the will of God. *d.* They do nothing to any good purpose, or that will turn to account another day. 2. It will apply in too many instances, even to Christians themselves, of whom there are but few who can be applauded for their diligence and fidelity. II. Point out the inexcusableness of such conduct. 1. The talents committed to our trust require to be occupied, and must be finally accounted for. 2. The want of a capacity to labour in the Lord's vineyard cannot be pleaded with success. 3. We are placed in a situation where our services are expected and required. 4. We have lost too much time already. (*B. Beddome.*) *Labourers: not loiterers.*—Jacob saw the angels, some ascending, others descending, but none standing still. God hath made Behemoth to play in the water, not so men; they must be doing, that will keep in with God. (*John Trapp.*) *The inexcusable idleness:*—I. Why? The vineyard is so spacious. II. The reward is so liberal. III. The Master is so kind. IV. The hour of working is so short. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) *Satan's work and wages:*—While the Lord of heaven is employing various means and instruments to engage labourers into His vineyard, Satan is going through the earth, with the pleasures of sin in one hand, and the allurements of the world in the other, to engage poor deluded souls into his thorny wilderness. Would you startle if we could now summon forward the Prince of Hell, and say, "Well, Devil, and what wilt thou give?" Listen. Hear that hoarse murmur from the pit: "I will find them work that they love. It shall please their senses, gratify their appetites, indulge their passions, and delight their grossly carnal hearts. Every one shall find the pleasure for which he lusts, his own besetting sin; the swine shall have husks and mire." "And what more?" "I will exempt them from the persecutions of religion, the contempt of the world, the reproach of the cross of Christ, from the irksome discharge of duty, and the gloomy services of piety." "Go on. What more?" "I will keep them in the fashion; find them abundance of associates: for wide is my gate, broad is my way, and many there are that enter therein." "But what will be their food?" "The chaff of worldly pleasure and deceitfulness of sin, producing disappointment and dissatisfaction." "What their drink?" "The gall of bitter reflections, tormenting

passions, reproaches of reason, and dread anticipations." "Where do they rest?" "Nowhere. Like a troubled sea, they cannot rest. They lie down in sorrow." "But what wages, Devil, wilt thou give?" "Darkness, outer-darkness, blackness of darkness." A bad master, hard disgraceful work, and tremendous wages! Why stand ye here all the day idle? Set to work. Have you sinned? now repent. Are you in the world? come out and be separate. Have you time? use it. Powers? employ them. A Bible? read it. A throne of grace? fall down before it. Is there a God? serve Him. A Saviour? believe in him. (*W. Atherton.*) *Divine sovereignty*:—Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? We shall divide God's gifts into five classes:—I. GIFTS TEMPORAL. What a difference in men personally; one is born like Saul, head and shoulders taller than the rest; another like Zaccheus. So in mental gifts; what a difference exists! The differences of men's conditions in this world. God is ruler and shall He not do as He will with His own. Bless God that thou hast more than others, and thank Him also that He has given thee less than others; for thou hast a higher burden. II. GIFTS SAVING. 1. The fallen angels not redeemed. 2. Note, again, God chose the Israelitish race and left the Gentiles for years in darkness. 3. Why is it that God has sent His word to us, while a multitude of people are still without it. 4. Why do some listen to the truth and others not. Salvation is of the Lord alone. III. GIFTS HONOURABLE. 1. One man hath the gift of knowledge, another hath little. 2. Office. 3. Utterance. IV. GIFTS OF USEFULNESS. V. GIFTS COMFORTABLE. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 16. **So the last shall be first, and the first last.**—*The elect Christians*:—It is not a question of calling, but of moving from second to first place, or falling back from first to second place. There is a disparity between those who are in the kingdom of heaven. This seen in Bible history. There is a difference between Abraham and Lot. Look at several passages of Scripture. In Exodus xx. 4, we read that Pharaoh's chosen captains were drowned in the Red Sea. This does not mean that they were favoured captains, but that they had distinguished themselves by their bravery (Judges xx. 15, 16). Of the 26,000 Benjaminites who drew the sword, there were 700 chosen men, left-handed. All the 26,000 men called to be soldiers, but there were 700 men who, in addition to the first calling, were called again as a chosen band, not independent of any fitness in themselves, but because there was fitness in them—they could sling a stone at a hair and not miss. (*G. F. Pentecost.*) *Nature's chosen are few*:—Before we go to the Scriptures let us look at some analogies around us. In the White Mountains there are many peaks, but there is one which towers above the others. It is the choice, the elect peak. There are many organists in the world, but here and there is one who has such mastery over the instrument that all who hear him recognize him as a choice organist. All the others are organists; but here we have the best, the choice players. There are many business-men, but now and then we see one who, by singleness of aim, by untiring devotion to his affairs, rises above all other business-men. He is the chosen one from among all. In the orchard are many apples. Some are full, rounded, beautiful in colour. These are the ones that find their way, by wonderful unanimity, to the top of the barrel at Washington Market; but the gnarled, worm-eaten, sour apple is an apple just as much as the pippin and bellflower. These latter are among apples the chosen ones. I think it will be found eventually that all Christians are the called ones, and that the elect are those who from among Christians are selected for the higher positions in the kingdom of grace. (*Ibid.*) *Order reversed*:—Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Christian Morals," bids himself look contentedly upon the scattered differences of things, and not expect equality in lustre, dignity, or perfection, in regions or persons here below, where large numbers must be content to stand like lacteus or nebulous stars, little taken notice of, or dim in their generations. All which, he goes on to say, may be contentedly allowable in the affairs and ends of this world, and in suspension unto what will be in the order of things hereafter, and the new system of mankind which will be in the world to come; when "the last may be the first, and the first the last; when Lazarus may sit above Cæsar, and the just obscure on earth shall shine like the sun in heaven, when personations shall cease, and histrionism of happiness be over; when reality shall rule, and all shall be as they shall be for ever." Divine is the voice, as divine the strain, which Dante hears and records in "Il Paradiso."

"But lo! of those
Who call, 'Christ, Christ,' there shall be many found,

In judgment, farther off from Him by far,
Than such to whom His name was never known."

Leslie, the painter, tells of his hearing the preference expressed by Rogers for seats in churches without pews, opposed by a gentleman who preferred pews, and said, "If there were seats only, I might find myself sitting by my coachman." Rogers replied, "And perhaps you may be glad to find yourself beside him in the next world." (*F. Jacox.*) *The reversal of human judgment*:—Such is the solemn sentence which Scripture has inscribed on the curtain which hangs down before the judgment seat. The secrets of the tribunal are guarded, and yet a finger points which seems to say, "Beyond, in this direction, behind this veil, things are different from what you will have looked for." Suppose, *e.g.*, any supernatural judge should appear in the world now, and it is evident that the scene he would create would be one to startle us; we should not soon be used to it; it would look strange; it would shock and appal; and that from no other cause than simply its reductions; that it presented characters stripped bare, denuded of what was irrelevant to goodness, and only with their moral substance left. The judge would take no cognisance of a rich imagination, power of language, poetical gifts, and the like, in themselves, as parts of goodness, any more than he would of riches and prosperity; and the moral residuum left would appear perhaps a bare result. The first look of Divine justice would strike us as injustice; it would be too pure a justice for us; we should be long in reconciling ourselves to it. Justice would appear, like the painter's gaunt skeleton of emblematic meaning, to be stalking through the world, smiting with attenuation luxuriating forms of virtue. Forms, changed from what we knew, would meet us, strange unaccustomed forms, and we should have to ask them who they were: "You were flourishing but a short while ago, what has happened to you now?" And the answer, if it spoke the truth, would be—"Nothing, except that now, much which lately counted as goodness, counts as such no longer; we are tried by a new moral measure, out of which we issue different men; gifts which have figured as goodness remain as gifts, but cease to be goodness." Thus would the large sweep made of human canonisations act like blight or volcanic fire upon some rich landscape, converting the luxury of nature into a dried-up scene of bare stems and scorched vegetation. (*J. B. Mozeley, D.D.*) *Calling and election*:—Noah preached the coming flood to the old world for a hundred years; but only eight souls were saved thereby. To the cities of the plain, Lot preached; but only three souls were chosen from them. Six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, passed through the Red Sea; but only two entered the promised land. Gideon went to fight the Midianites with thirty-two thousand men; but only three hundred were allowed to participate in the victory. These are types of the "many called, but few chosen." *Called . . . chosen*:—The expression is supposed to refer to the manner in which the ancients selected men for recruiting their armies. The honour of being chosen was esteemed the reward of superiority; and, among the Romans, was as follows:—The consuls summoned to the capital, or the Campus Martius, all citizens capable of bearing arms, between the ages of seventeen and forty-five. They drew up by tribes, and lots were drawn to determine in what order every tribe should present its soldiers. That which was the first order chose the first four citizens who were judged the most proper to serve in the war; and the six tribunes who commanded the first legion selected the one of these four whom they liked best. The tribunes of the second and third legions likewise made their choice one after another; and he who remained entered into the fourth legion. A new tribe presented other four soldiers, and the second legion chose four. The third and fourth legions had the same advantage in their turns. In this manner each tribe successively appointed four soldiers, till the legions were complete. They next proceeded to the creation of subaltern officers, whom the tribunes chose from among the soldiers of the greatest reputation. When the legions were thus completed, the citizens who had been *called*, but not *chosen*, returned to their respective employments, and served their country in other capacities. (*Townsend.*) I. That God in communicating His benefits to men, acts in a sovereign manner, making the last first, and the first last. II. That in bestowing His rewards on mankind, God does not render unto men according to the amount of the means they participate, but the use they make of them. III. That the bestowment of rewards on this principle is most expressive of the goodness and justice of God. (*Sketches.*) *Conversation between St. Anthony and the cobbler*:—We [Bishop Latimer] read a pretty story of St. Anthony, who, being in the wilderness, led there a

very hard and straight life, insomuch that none at that time did the like; to whom came a voice from heaven, saying, "Anthony, thou art not so perfect as is a cobbler that dwelleth at Alexandria." Anthony, hearing this, rose up forthwith, and took his staff, and went till he came to Alexandria, where he found the cobbler. The cobbler was astonished to see so reverend a father come to his house. Then Anthony said unto him, "Come, and tell me thy whole conversation, and how thou spendest thy time?" "Sir," said the cobbler, "as for me, good works have I none, for my life is but simple and slender. I am but a poor cobbler. In the morning, when I rise, I pray for the whole city wherein I dwell, especially for all such neighbours and poor friends as I have; after I set me at my labour, where I spend the whole day in getting my living; and I keep me from all falsehood, for I hate nothing so much as I do deceitfulness; wherefore, when I make to any man a promise, I keep it and perform it truly. And thus I spend my time poorly with my wife and children, whom I teach and instruct, as far as my wit will serve me, to fear and dread God. And this is the sum of my simple life." In this story you see how God loveth those that follow their vocation, and live uprightly, without any falsehood in their dealing. Anthony was a great holy man; yet this cobbler was as much esteemed before God as he.

Ver. 17. **And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way.**—*A Palm Sunday discourse*:—Year by year let us go up to Jerusalem on the Palm Sunday with Christ. 1. Some go up without any special interest. 2. Others are moved by curiosity. 3. There are those who hate Him and His servants. 4. Some who believe in Christ but fear the world. 5. Some are in dark despair thinking that the cause of religion is about to perish because of organized opposition. 6. Others, a faithful few, like the small group around the cross. (*M. Dix, D.D.*) *Christ coming to Jerusalem*:—What an approach! The cities are the strongholds of the world—Babylon—Nineveh—Tyre, the centre of commerce. To none of these could our God have come expecting a joyous reception. They were of the world. But He came to Jerusalem, the city of God, the centre of true religion; a beautiful city for situation, renowned for its great age and greater history. It was a consecrated city, above whose roofs arose, day by day, clouds of smoke from the morning and evening sacrifice; an awful city, in which God had, from time to time, appeared. It held for awhile the place of the throne of the living God! It is to this city Jesus approaches. Surely to Him the gates will open and He will be greeted with songs of joy. (*Ibid.*) *Going up to Jerusalem*:—Who shall hereafter "have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city" (Psa. xxiv. 3 and Rev. xxii. 14). Those whose conduct shows that they are going up to Jerusalem. This may be said to imply—I. A growth and an advancement in those things which are good. Those who "go up" to the heavenly Jerusalem gradually increase in holiness by a diligent use of the appointed means. II. Another evidence that we are "going up to Jerusalem" is love to God. III. If our faces are indeed turned to Jerusalem, like travellers who have a long journey to accomplish, we shall be most anxious to lay aside any unnecessary weight, and to overcome the corrupting influence of our besetting sins. We cannot be going up to Jerusalem if our affections are rooted in the earth; we must be conscious that our course is turned thitherward. Why this loitering by the way. Let us refresh our souls with spiritual food. Let the world offer what attractions it may, our purpose is firmly fixed "to go up to Jerusalem." (*J. H. Norton.*) *Jesus betrayed and condemned*:—I. The language of the text is the testimony of our great Prophet concerning His OWN SUFFERINGS. You see it is a prophecy; the event had not yet taken place. 1. His suffering was substitutional. 2. Acceptable. 3. Covenanted. II. THE HANDS EMPLOYED. 1. The ruthless traitor. 2. The infidel priesthood. 3. The far-famed literary men. III. THE END ACCOMPLISHED. "They shall condemn Him to death." (*J. Irons.*) How the faithfulness of Christ toward His disciples appears in the announcement of His impending sufferings. I. It is seen in the gradual manner in which He makes the fact known. From the first He had intimated that His path was one of suffering; but, while putting an end to their spurious hopes, He had never said anything to cast them down. II. He now set it before them in all its terrors. He dealt candidly with them. Return was still possible for them, though, from their former decision, He no longer asked them whether they would forsake Him. III. He placed before their view the promise awaiting them at the end, thus establishing and encouraging them by this blessed prospect. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) Why Christ saw His cross afar off. 1.

It was predetermined from the beginning, and He saw it everywhere throughout His course. 2. From the first He prepared for it, and experienced its bitterness in many preliminary trials. 3. It was the harbinger of His exaltation, and ever and anon He anticipated His coming glory. (*Ibid.*) *Communion with Jesus* :—I. THE PARTY—Jesus and His disciples. The great Head of the Church and His members. 1. Their interests were mutual. 2. They are a united company. 3. They were distinct from the world. 4. Are you of the party? II. THEIR UNION AND COMMUNION—Jesus took the twelve disciples apart. 1. We sometimes try to take Christ apart, it is better that Christ should take us. 2. This communion has love for its origin. 3. He would not have them associated with the world, He was about to touch on matters He wished His disciples to know. 4. He not only invites His Church apart as an act of love, but every grace of His Holy Spirit's implanting is then called into exercise. 5. He took them apart to talk about the atonement. III. Mark now THE TRAVELLING ITSELF—"going up to Jerusalem." Ours is not a stand-still religion. We have no continuing city. We are in company with Jesus. 1. Decision is implied. 2. Progress is implied. 3. There was expectation as they journeyed. 4. Jesus was going up to Jerusalem for the accomplishment of redemption; and we must go to the Jerusalem above in order to fully enjoy them. (*J. Irons.*) *Christ's sufferings and ours* :—What are all our sufferings to His? And yet we think ourselves undone if but touched, and in setting forth our calamities we add, we multiply, we rise in our discourse, like him in the poet, "I am thrice miserable, nay, ten, twenty, an hundred, a thousand times unhappy." And yet all our sufferings are but as the slivers and chips of that cross upon which Christ, nay, many Christians, have suffered. In the time of Adrian the emperor ten thousand martyrs are said to have been crucified in the Mount of Ararat, crowned with thorns, and thrust into the sides with sharp darts, after the example of the Lord's passion. (*John Trapp.*) *The resurrection of Christ* :—He wraps up the gall of the passion in the honey of the resurrection. (*Lapide.*) The saddest yet happiest event in human history:—Our Lord's last journey to Jerusalem. The prediction of the sufferings of Christ a great evidence (1) of His prophetical character; (2) of His willingness, as a Priest, to offer Himself a sacrifice for sin; (3) of His confident expectation of victory as a King. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The sufferings of Christ* :—As the precious stone called the carbuncle to look at is like a hot burning coal of fire, shining exceeding brightly, the which feeleth no fire, neither is it molten, changed, or mollified therewith; if thou shalt take it, and close it fast in a ring of lead, and cast it into the fire, thou shalt see the lead molten and consume before thy face, but the carbuncle remaining sound and perfect without blemish as before, for the fire worketh upon the lead, but upon the carbuncle it cannot work; even so Christ, our Saviour, being in the hot, scorching fire of His torments, suffered and died as He was man, but as He was God He neither suffered nor died. The fire of His afflictions wrought, then, upon His manhood, but His Divinity and Godhead continued perfect and utterly untouched. (*Cawdray.*) *Crucifixion of Christ* :—The cross was the perfect manifestation of (1) the guilt of the world; (2) the love of Christ; (3) His obedience; (4) the grace of God. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Christ's sufferings were foreseen* :—As astronomers know when none others think of it, that travelling through the heavens the vast shadow is progressing towards the sun which ere long shall clothe it and hide it, so Christ knew that the great darkness which was to overwhelm Him was approaching. (*Beecher.*) *Christ's resurrection* :—His resurrection was necessary to His being believed in as a Saviour. As Christ by His death paid down a satisfaction for sin, so it was necessary that it should be declared to the world by such arguments as might found a rational belief of it, so that men's unbelief should be rendered inexcusable. But how could the world believe that He fully had satisfied for sin so long as they saw death, the known wages of sin, maintain its full force and power over Him, holding Him like an obnoxious person in captivity? When a man is once imprisoned for debt none can conclude the debt either paid by him or forgiven to him but by the release of his person. Who could believe Christ to have been a God and a Saviour while He was hanging upon the tree? A dying, crucified God, a Saviour of the world who could not save Himself would have been exploded by the universal consent of reason as a horrible paradox and absurdity. (*R. South.*)

Vers. 20–28. **Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons.**—*Nearest to Christ* :—Christ does not put aside the granting of places at His right and left hand as not being within His province, but states the principles and

conditions on which He does make such a grant. Again, our Lord does not put aside the prayer of His apostles as if they were seeking an impossible thing. He does not say, "You are asking what cannot be." He does say, "There are men for whom it is prepared of My Father." He does not condemn the prayer as indicating a wrong state of mind. He did not rebuke their passion for reward. They should have the reward if they fulfilled the conditions. I. The principle, THAT SOME WILL BE NEARER CHRIST THAN OTHERS IN THAT HEAVENLY KINGDOM. Varied degrees of reward are prepared by God. They asked for earth; Christ answered for heaven. Heaven is a place. The corporeality of our future life is essential to the perfection of it. Christ will wear for ever a human frame. That involves locality, circumstances, external occupations. But if we stop there we have no true idea of the glory that makes the blessedness. For what is heaven? Likeness to God! Love, purity, fellowship with Him; the condition of the soul. Hence heaven can be no dead level. All will be like Jesus; this does not exclude infinite variety. Perfect bliss belongs to each; but the capacity to receive may differ. Does not the idea of endless progress involve that variety in degree. There are those for whom it is prepared of His Father, that they shall sit in special nearness to Him. II. These words rightly understood assert the truth, which, at first sight, our English rendering seems to make them contradict, viz., THAT CHRIST IS THE GIVER TO EACH OF THESE VARIOUS DEGREES OF GLORY AND BLESSEDNESS. "It is not mine to give, save to them for whom it is prepared." Then it is thine to give it to them. To deny this is to destroy all the foundations upon which our hopes rest. There is nothing within the compass of God's love to bestow of which Christ is not the Giver. We read that He is the Judge of the whole earth. He clothes in white robes. Christ is the bestower of the royalties of heaven. III. THESE GLORIOUS PLACES ARE NOT GIVEN TO MERE WISHING, NOR BY MERE ARBITRARY WILL, but a piece of favouritism. There are conditions which must precede such elevation. Some people imagine the desire enough. Our wishes are meant to impel us to the appropriate forms of energy, by which they can be realized. When a pauper becomes a millionaire by wishing that he were rich, when ignorance becomes learning by standing in a library and wishing that all the contents of the books were in its head, there will be some hope that the gates of heaven will fly open to your desire. Does your wish lead you to the conditions? Some of heaven's characteristics attract you. You wish to escape punishment for sin; you would like rest after toil; do you wish to be pure? The happiness draws you? does the holiness? Would it be joyful to be near Christ? IV. THESE GLORIOUS PLACES ARE GIVEN AS THE RESULT OF A DIVINE PREPARATION. The Divine Father and Son have unity of will and work in this respect. There is a twofold preparation. 1. That is the eternal counsel of the Divine love "prepared for you before the foundation of the world." 2. The realization of that counsel in time. His death and entrance into heaven made ready for us the eternal mansions. Faith in Christ alone, the measure of our faith, and growing Christ-likeness here will be the measure of our glory hereafter. (*Dr McLaren.*) *Nearness to Christ in heaven:*—As in the heavens there be planets that roll nearer and nearer the central sun, and others that circle further out from its rays, yet each keeps its course, and makes music as it moves, as well as planets whose broader disc can receive and reflect more of the light than the smaller sister spheres, and yet each blazes over its whole surface, and is full to its very rim with white light; so round that throne the spirits of the just made perfect shall circle in order and peace—every one blessed, every one perfect, every one like Christ to begin with, and becoming liker through every moment of the eternities. Each perfected soul looking in his brother's shall see there another phase of the one perfectness that blesses and adorns him too, and all taken together shall make up, in so far as finite creatures can make up, the reflection and manifestation of the fulness of Christ. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" is the law for the incompleteness of earth. "Having then gifts differing according to the glory that is given to us" will be the law for the perfection of the heavens. (*Ibid.*) *Nearness to Christ in heaven not mere favouritism:*—Nor can such a place be given by mere arbitrary will. Christ could not, if He would, take a man to His right hand whose heart was not the home of simple trust and thankful love, whose nature and desires were unprepared for that blessed world. It would be like taking one of those creatures—if there be such—that live on the planet whose orbit is furthest from the sun, accustomed to cold, organized for darkness, and carrying it to that great central blaze, with all its fierce flames and tongues of fiery gas that shoot up a thousand miles in a moment.

It would crumble and disappear before its blackness could be seen against the blaze. (*Ibid.*) *The Divine preparation of heaven for men*:—As one who precedes a mighty host, provides and prepares rest for their weariness, and food for their hunger, in some city on their line of march, and having made all things ready, is at the gates to welcome their travel-stained ranks when they arrive, and guide them to their repose; so He has gone before, our forerunner, to order all things for us there. It may be that unless Christ were in heaven, our brother as well as our Lord, it were no place for mortals It may be that we need to have His glorified bodily presence in order that it should be possible for human spirits to bear the light, and be at home with God. Be that as it may, this we know, that the Father prepares a place for us by the eternal counsel of His love, and by the all-sufficient work of Christ, by whom we have access to the Father. And as His work is the Father's preparation of the place for us by the Son, the issue of His work is the Father's preparation of us for the place, through the Son, by the Spirit. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." (*Ibid.*) *Divine rewards*:—Zebedee's two sons are following Christ, but following half unconsciously for a personal reward. Christ's answer is not for these seekers of office only, not for place-hunters in our day only, but for all men who would think of being Christians for a compensation, in whatever form we give that compensation shape. Christ's answer introduces the doctrine of Divine rewards. Is not one of the main reasons why Christian faith exercises such an imperfect power among men that they misapprehend the sort of advantage they may expect to get from it? I. THERE APPEAR TO BE THREE PRINCIPAL DESIRES WHICH DIRECT ATTENTION TO RELIGIOUS TRUTH—1. A want of personal comfort. 2. The want of moral guidance, or a rule to act by, and is of a much higher grade than the first. 3. The want of giving and loving—of giving to the Lord what the soul feels belongs to Him—affection and gratitude, &c. It is a spiritual aspiration. It does not stop to inquire about advantages. It is the desire of a harmonious and affectionate union with God in the reconciling and forgiving spirit of the Saviour. II. These three different wants SPRING UP FROM DIFFERENT PLACES OR FACULTIES IN OUR NATURE. 1. The first comes from a mixture of natural instinct and shrewdness—self-interest. 2. The second comes from the region of the conscience. It refers to a law, &c.—obedience as obedience—duty as duty; second only to the life of love. 3. The third originates in the soul—its love, trust, gratitude. This is the Christian religion. Out of these three fountains flow three sorts of religious life, as distinct from one another as their sources are. III. THE REWARDS GOD PROMISES TO THOSE THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM, DEPEND, IN EACH CASE, ON THE MOTIVE AND SPIRIT IN WHICH WE SERVE HIM. 1. Religion will never yield its true rewards to those who seek it *for the sake* of its rewards. 2. If sought to obtain relief from sorrow, &c., God may lead the soul on, through this half-selfish state, into serving Him for some more disinterested affection. But such will fail of any glorious reward. 3. God will reward every man "*according* to his works"—in the line of his works, in the kind of them—love for love, &c. (1) In this honourable quality man's Christian service is not disconnected from his best acts in other lines of life. Legitimate in Christianity. Its universal sentiment is love. All its apparatus is to educate us to that mark. This is the distinctive ministry which the Christian revelation brings: in Christ this is embodied. (2) The same principle must be applied to the desire of going to heaven as a motive to religious endeavour. (3) We come up at last to those acts of true religion which are done in the faith of the heart; and here we reach the highest view of the Divine rewards, simply because God has made these to be their own reward. They are rewards in kind. They are large just according to the spirituality of our lives, the zeal of our worship, the strength of our faith. They are interior, not visible. They are incidental, not sought. They are of nobleness rather than of happiness. He rewards us sometimes only by setting us to the performance of larger and harder tasks, &c. When he would give His greatest reward, He gives Himself, the Holy Spirit, in His Son. The brave and lofty hymn of Francis Xavier: "My God, I love Thee, not because," &c. Of our Christian religion the badge is a cross—even as self-forgetfulness is the spirit, love is the motive, disinterestedness is the principle, faith is the inmost spring. (*Bishop Huntingdon, D.D.*) *Can ye drink of My cup?*—I. CHRIST HAD A CUP AND A BAPTISM. 1. Christ had a cup. This cup contained the death which, as our Redeemer, He had to die. Its ingredients were, all that He suffered. The time during which He drank it—His lifetime. 2. Christ had a baptism. The baptism of the text was alluded to, when He said, "I have a baptism," &c. It anointed Him

and set Him apart to His priestly and kingly offices. II. BELIEVERS PARTAKE OF THE CUP AND THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST. 1. In many particulars, the cup and baptism of Christ were His own—and peculiar. 2. Yet the experience of believers sufficiently exhausts these words. Scripture testimony. The events of Providence. 3. The sufferings of believers, a cup. Because, punishment by the world. Because, death to the flesh. 4. The sufferings of believers a baptism. Because, they are purifying. Because, they are qualifying. 5. The sufferings of believers are the cup and the baptism of Christ. In many particulars—the same. They are inflicted on Christ—in believers. They are acknowledged by Christ. 6. That, which to Christ and His people is but a cup, is to the wicked an exhaustless ocean. III. THE OFFICES AND HONOURS OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM ARE DISTRIBUTED BY HIMSELF. 1. As the cup and baptism of Christ were succeeded by glory to Him, so they are to His people. 2. Some of the moral glory of heaven visible even amid the sufferings of earth. 3. The sufferings endured here prepare and fit for the high employments of heaven. 4. The fitness having been acquired, the dignities are given by Christ. He bestows that which He purchased. 5. This fulfils the promise, "He shall see of the travail of His soul," &c. IV. CHRIST GIVES THE HONOURS AND DIGNITIES OF HIS KINGDOM TO THOSE FOR WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN APPOINTED OF THE FATHER. 1. This brings out the place occupied by Christ in the arrangements of the plan of redemption. 2. It brings to light the original source of redemption. 3. It shows the perfect security of the believer. 4. It illustrates the order of God's procedure. 5. It furnishes a proof of the unchangeableness of God. Conclusion. 1. If you are believers, you shall drink of Christ's cup, and be baptized with His baptism. 2. But you shall not suffer till prepared—fitness for suffering provokes persecution. 3. Your sufferings shall be—(1) Limited—a cup. (2) Purifying—a baptism. (3) Joyous—Christ's. (4) Honourable—a crown. (*J. Stewart.*) *Elevation:*—Ambition is an instinct of our nature, and capable of good. The request of Zebedee was right, though no doubt mixed with ignorance. Jesus did not reprove her desire, but stated the stern conditions upon which such honours were to be attained. Court and pray for great things. 1. In your inner life and personal character. 2. Take a high estimate of the work you have to do for God in this world. 3. Do not think it wrong to strive for a high place in heaven. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Salome's petition for her two sons:*—I. It had reference to a glorious TEMPORAL KINGDOM. This request showed some faith in Jesus, for He had announced His death. We must not indulge dreams of worldly honour. II. The ANSWER which Jesus gave to this unseasonable request—1. Our Lord declared their ignorance. 2. As Jesus knew they meant the end without the means, He asked them about their fidelity. 3. They answered as men of courage without hesitation or delay. 4. The final answer Jesus gave to their ambitious prayer. 5. The highest place in heaven is most to love God. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Christ's answer to Salome's petition:*—While admitting the potency of the prayer of faith, it is not to be supposed that every petition which may be presented will be complied with:—1. God in His Providence ordinarily acts within fixed laws, and with these He rarely dispenses. A high place in the kingdom of the future will not be an arbitrary gift, but the result of the course pursued here. 2. The important thing for us is attention to our duty, and leave the rest to Providence. 3. No envious speculations can assist our progress heavenward. (*H. B. Moffat, M.A.*) *Ignorant requests:*—Ye know not (1) of what sort My kingdom is—viz., a spiritual and heavenly one, not carnal and earthly; (2) because ye are asking for the triumph before the victory; (3) because ye suppose that this kingdom is given by right of blood to those who seek it, whereas it is given only to those who deserve and strive. (*Lapide.*) *Right and wrong prayers:*—A prayer for things not lawful begs nothing but a denial. The saints have their prayers out, either in money or money's worth, provided they bring lawful petitions and honest hearts. (*John Trapp.*) Was there ever a more unseasonable request, than for them to be suitors for great places to Him, when He had but now told them He was going to be spit upon, scourged, condemned, crucified? Yet there was this good in it; they by it discovered a faith in Him, that notwithstanding all this He should be exalted and have a kingdom. But how carnal are our conceptions of spiritual and heavenly things, till we are taught by God a right notion of them! (*Matthew Pool.*) *Men sometimes know not what they ask:*—I. These two disciples sought the place of the two malefactors. II. They requested, so to speak, something which had only existence in their own imagination (worldly honours in the kingdom of Christ). III. They sought something which,

in its higher import, had already been given away—perhaps to themselves, perhaps to others—viz., special degrees of election. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Like Master, like servant:*—Christ, like a good and wise physician, first drank the draught Himself which He was preparing for His own. He underwent His passion and death, and so He became immortal and impassible; thus teaching His own how they might confidently drink the draught which produces soundness and life. (*St. Bernard.*) *The Church sphere:*—It shall not be so among you. The Church and the world have different spheres. As every other association or body, so the Church has its appropriate organization, corresponding to its nature. The plant would die if it were subject to the conditions of the crystal; the animal, if to those of the plant; man, if to those of the animal; and the Church, if to those of the world. Or rather, the plant has burst through the conditions of the crystal, and passed beyond it, &c.; and the kingdom of heaven through the conditions and forms of this world. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Ye know not what ye ask:*—There is a heathen story which tells that once a man asked for this gift—*not to die;* and it was granted to him by the Fates. He was to live on for ever. But he had forgotten to ask that his youth and and health and strength might last for ever also; and so he lived on till age and its infirmities and weakness were weighing him down, and his life grew to be a weariness and a burden to him. Existence (for it could hardly be called life) was one long torment to him; and then he wished to die. He wished to die, and could not. He had asked for a thing which he was totally unfit to enjoy, but he had to take the consequences of it when it was once given. It was a curse to him, not a blessing. *The law of rank and position in God's kingdom:*—The notion of rank in the world is like a pyramid; the higher you go up, the fewer are there who have to serve those above them, and who are served more than those underneath them. All who are under serve those who are above, until you come to the apex, and there stands some one who has to do no service, but whom all the others have to serve. Something like that is the notion of position—of social standing and rank. And if it be so in an intellectual way, even—to say nothing of mere bodily service—if any man works to a position that others shall all look up to him and that he may have to look up to nobody, he has just put himself precisely into the same condition as the people of whom our Lord speaks—as those who exercise dominion and authority, and really he thinks it a fine thing to be served. But it is not so in the kingdom of heaven. The figure there is entirely reversed. As you may see a pyramid reflected in the water, just so, in a reversed way altogether, is the thing to be found in the kingdom of God. It is in this way: the Son of Man lies at the inverted apex of the pyramid; He upholds, and serves, and ministers unto all, and they who would be high in His kingdom must go near to Him at the bottom, to uphold and minister to all that they may or can uphold and minister unto. There is no other law of precedence, no other law of rank and position in God's kingdom. And, mind, that is *the* kingdom. The other kingdom passes away—it is a transitory, ephemeral, passing, bad thing, and away it must go. It is only there on sufferance, because in the mind of God even that which is bad ministers to that which is good; and when the new kingdom is built the old kingdom shall pass away. But the man who seeks this rank of which I have spoken, must be honest to follow it. It will not do to say, "I want to be great, and therefore I will serve." A man will not get at it so. He may begin so, but he will soon find that that will not do. He must seek it for the truth's sake, for the love of his fellows, for the worship of God, for the delight in what is good. (*Geo. Macdonald, M.A.*) *Place-seeking parents:*—Mothers should be cautious about seeking places of honour for their sons. Doing this, they seldom know what they ask. They may be seeking the ruin of their children. It is not posts of honour that secure happiness or salvation. . . . As the purest and loveliest streams often flow in the retired grove, far from the thundering cataract or the stormy ocean, so is the sweet peace of the soul; it dwells oftenest far from the bustle of public life, and the storms and tempests of ambition. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Ambition insatiable:*—Ambition is like the sea which swallows all the rivers and is none the fuller; or like the grave whose insatiable maw for ever craves for the bodies of men. It is not like an amphora, which being full receives no more, but its fulness swells it till a still greater vacuum is formed. In all probability Napoleon never longed for a sceptre till he had gained a bâton, nor dreamed of being Emperor of Europe till he had gained the crown of France. Caligula, with the world at his feet, was mad with a longing for the moon, and could he have gained it, the imperial lunatic would have coveted the sun. It is in vain to feed a fire which grows the more vivacious the more it is supplied with fuel; he who lives to satisfy his ambition

has before him the labour of Sisyphus, who rolled up hill an ever rebounding stone, and the task of the daughters of Danaus, who are condemned for ever to attempt to fill a bottomless vessel with buckets full of holes. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 26–28. **And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.** —*True greatness*:—Greatness a word often used, and people's ideas of it differ much. Some regard it as consisting in wealth, social position, physical strength. Christ places it in service, springing from love in the heart. Man's true greatness must be in himself. 1. The importance of a true ideal of life. 2. This true ideal can be realized by every one of us. No life need be a failure. (*C. O. Bridgman, D.D.*) *Greatness measured by service*:—I. Greatness is to be measured by service. No man lives or dies to himself. Florence Nightingale moved other women most when she herself went to minister on battle fields. II. The greater men are in intellect and culture, the more imperative it is that they become leaders and helpers. If a man has power to do good and refuses, he is not guiltless. III. Those who thus labour for the good of their fellow-men are the greatest. Love is the greatest power on the earth. (*G. Anderson, D.D.*) *Basis of true greatness*:—1. Our Lord does not condemn the spirit of ambition, but simply aims to point out the basis of real greatness. He regarded His disciples, in a certain sense, as kings, but He would have them establish their regal right in a different manner from the princes of this world. 2. In how many scriptural promises do we find this principle recognized. They that turn many to righteousness "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." St. Paul says, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," &c. 3. Rank in the kingdom of heaven will be measured by humility. Condescension is the measure of exaltation. The way up to the glory of the Exalted One is through humble, self-denying love. (*R. W. Clark, D.D.*) *The greatness of being useful*:—Yet what has the patriot made himself but the servant of his countrymen? It was in order to the ministering to the well-being of thousands, that he threw himself into the breach, and challenged tyranny to the battle. It was for the sake of securing the rights of those who trod the same soil with himself, that he arose as the champion of the wretched and injured. The case is the same with the philosopher as with the patriot. Accordingly, he who labours in the mine of truth, and presents to the world the results of his investigations, furnishes his fellow-men with new principles on which to act in the business of life, and thus equips them for fresh enterprises, and instructs them how to add to the sum total of happiness. We need not exemplify this in particular instances. You are all aware how scientific research is turned to account in everyday life, and how the very lowest of our people enjoy, in one way or another, the fruits of discoveries which are due to the marvellous sagacity, and the repeated experiments, of those who rank foremost in the annals of philosophy. And thus it is evident that the man who is great in science, is great in the power of serving his fellow-men, and that it is this latter greatness which insures him their applauses. If his discoveries were of no benefit to the many; if they opened no means by which enjoyments might be multiplied, toil diminished, or danger averted; his name would be known only within a limited circle, and there would be nothing that approached to a general recognition of superiority. The individual again who gains renown as a statesman, who serves his country in the senate as the warrior in the field, is the minister to all classes, so that the very lowest have the profit of his toils. And in proportion as the service wore the aspect of selfishness, would the tribute of applause be diminished: we should be less and less disposed to allow, that, in making himself a servant, he had made himself great, if we had increasing cause to think that his main design was the serving himself. But there is no room for suspicions of this class, when the exhibition is that of a fine Christian philanthropy, leading a man to give his assiduity to the sick-beds of the poor, or the prisons of the criminal. Accordingly, when an individual is manifestly and strongly actuated by this philanthropy, there is an almost universal consent in awarding him the appellation of great: even those who would be amongst the last to imitate are amongst the first to applaud. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Pride destroys the best elements of character*:—The rebel against lawful authority cannot be truly great: the slave of his own passions cannot be truly great: the idolater of his own powers cannot be truly great. And the proud man is this rebel, this slave, this idolater; for pride spurns at the Divine dominion, gives vigour to depraved affections, and exaggerates all our powers. What, then, can be more accurate than that pride destroys the chief elements of which a great character is compounded, so that it must be to direct a

man in the way to eminence, to prescribe that he be "clothed with humility?" (*Ibid.*) *Christ our Redeemer because our servant:*—But if Christ thus made Himself servant to the human race, it is this very fact which is to draw to Him finally universal homage. Had He not been their servant, He could not have been their Redeemer; and, if not their Redeemer, then at His name would not every knee have bowed, "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Thus He illustrates His own precept: He became great through redeeming; but since He redeemed through making Himself the minister to a lost world, He became great through becoming a servant. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 28. **Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto.**—*A Divine mission:*—I. THE SON OF MAN. Humility combined with dignity. Man was the offender, man must suffer the penalty. Not a fictitious manhood, but real like our own. This ought to attract us to Him, for He is akin in nature and sympathy. II. HE CAME. The errand unique as the Person who undertook it. He came voluntarily on an errand of mercy. III. NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, BUT TO MINISTER. He had not a selfish thought in His soul. Does He want servants? Thousands of angels are His chariot. He served in the workshop, home, amongst His disciples. As the Son of Man in heaven He continues a kind of service to His people. IV. AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE. We have no lives to give. They are forfeited to Divine justice. His death was voluntary. Christ did not come into the world merely to be an example, or merely to reveal the Godhead. His sacrifice was substitutionary. V. A RANSOM. Every male person among the Jews belonged to God, and must be redeemed. The price was the ransom. Jesus redeems us from the curse of the law. VI. FOR MANY. The word "for" has a vicarious meaning. "He gave His life instead of many." 1. Man is not redeemed from the bondage of his sins without a price. No one goes free by the naked mercy of God. 2. That price must be a life. Not merely a character. The question has been asked, "Who receives the ransom?" Not Satan. Satan has no rights. It was paid to the Great Judge. This is a mystical way of speaking. The sufferings of Christ vindicate the law and render mercy possible. 3. What is the result of this? Man is redeemed. He is no longer a slave. Did Jesus Christ redeem you? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Saviour's character, life, and death:*—I. HIS CHARACTER. Christ Divine. This being premised we can bring forward two satisfactory reasons why He called Himself the Son of Man. 1. Because He would gradually develop Himself. 2. Because our concern with Him principally lies in His assuming human nature. II. HIS LIFE. "Came not to be ministered unto," &c. This fills us with astonishment, when we remember the place from which He descended. Our Saviour could derive nothing from external appendages. 1. Admire His condescension. 2. Resemble Him therein. III. HIS DEATH. 1. Consider Him as a ransom. I. It was intentional. 3. It was voluntary. 4. It regards the personal esteem He has for His people. 5. We see here where a poor burdened conscience can alone find relief. 6. Let the love of Christ strike your minds. 7. If He has ransomed you, you are not your own. (*W. Jay.*) *A ministering Christ:*—I. THE NEGATIVE OBJECT OF CHRIST'S COMING—"Not to be ministered unto." II. THE POSITIVE OBJECT OF HIS COMING—"To minister," &c. 1. The scenes of His private life. Christ a carpenter. 2. The scenes of His public life. Wearisome toils. LESSON—(1) Be clothed with humility; (2) Gratitude to Christ for His love; (3) Repentance. (*H. L. Nicholson, B.A.*) *Christ the servant and the Saviour of His people:*—I. THE SERVICE HE RENDERED TO MAN BY HIS LIFE. 1. He came not to be ministered unto as regards His external authority. He might have excited the admiration of the world by His outward show; but He was poor. 2. He came to minister as regarded instruction. II. THE BLESSING HE EFFECTED FOR MAN BY HIS DEATH. 1. The blessing procured. 2. The means by which this blessing was procured. "He gave His life," &c. 3. The number for whom this blessing was procured. (*J. Sibree.*) *True greatness the result of personal service:*—The patriot is great, but he has *served* his country. The philosopher by the force of his genius has enlarged the sphere of human knowledge, thus of the greatest use to mankind. The same true in religion. Christ was not introducing a strange precept when He said that the men who are the most eminent in life are the most literally the servants of the public. 1. The greatness thus derived from usefulness may be augmented or decreased by the meanest of those you employ. 2. The touching reference of our Lord to His own case. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christian humility:*—He is the most *lovely* professor, who is the most *lowly* professor. As incense smells the sweetest when beaten the smallest, so saints

look fairest when they lie lowest. Arrogance in the soul resembles the spleen in the body, which grows most, while other parts are decaying. God will not suffer such a weed to grow in His garden, without taking some course to root it up. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *Christ stooping to save*:—The mother, wan and pale with incessant vigils by the bedside of a sick child;—the fireman, maimed for life in bravely rescuing the inmates of a blazing house;—the 300 Spartans at Thermopylæ;—Howard, dying of fever caught in dungeons where he was fulfilling his noble purpose of succouring the oppressed and remembering the forgotten;—the Moravian missionaries, who voluntarily incarcerated themselves in an African leper-house (from which regress into the healthy world was impossible, and escape only to be effected through the gates of death), in order that they might preach the glad tidings to the lepers,—all these, and many other glorious instances of self-devotion, do but faintly shadow forth the love of Him who laid aside Divine glory, and humbled Himself to the death of the cross.

Vers. 29–34.—**And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by.**—*Jesus of Nazareth passing by*:—The time of this transaction was critical. He never was to come that way again. It was necessary for these blind men to be by the way while Jesus was passing. Had they been elsewhere they could not have received their sight. They caught the first sound of the approaching Saviour. Some men are too buried in their merchandize to know that He is passing. It is not enough to sit idly by the way side. These men made no demands but for mercy. 1. Their earnestness. They felt their need. 2. The difference between the unfeeling multitude and the compassionate Saviour. Put thine ear to the gospel and listen. "He calleth thee." (*E. Griffin, D.D.*) *Spiritual blindness*:—I. MEN ARE BLINDED BY REASON OF SIN. They do not see the truths of religion. II. IT IS PROPER IN THIS STATE OF BLINDNESS TO CALL UPON JESUS TO OPEN OUR EYES. If we ever see, it will be by the grace of God. God is the fountain of light, and those in darkness should seek Him. III. PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE IMPROVED. This was the first time that Jesus had been in Jericho, and it was the last time He would be there. He was passing *through* it on His way to Jerusalem. So He passes among us by His ordinances. While He is near we should seek Him. IV. WHEN PEOPLE REBUKE US, AND LAUGH AT US, IT SHOULD NOT DETER US FROM CALLING ON THE SAVIOUR. V. THE PERSEVERING CRY OF THOSE WHO SEEK THE SAVIOUR ARIGHT WILL NOT BE IN VAIN. VI. SINNERS MUST "RISE" AND COME TO JESUS. Cast away everything that hinders their coming. VII. FAITH IS THE ONLY CHANNEL THROUGH WHICH WE SHALL RECEIVE MERCY. VIII. THEY WHO ARE RESTORED TO SIGHT SHOULD FOLLOW JESUS. Wherever He leads—always—none else. He cannot lead astray. He can enlighten our goings through all our pilgrimage. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *The blind taught to see*:—Mr. MacGregor, in his recent "Voyage," gives a most interesting account of Mr. Mott's mission to the blind and lame at Beirut. He says, "Only in February last that poor blind fellow who sits on the form there was utterly ignorant. See how his delicate fingers run over the raised types of his Bible, and he reads aloud and blesses God in his heart for the precious news, and for those who gave him the avenue for truth to his heart. 'Jesus Christ will be the first person I shall ever see,' he says, 'for my eyes will be opened in heaven.' Thus even this man becomes a missionary. . . . At the annual examination of this school, one of the scholars said, 'I am a little blind boy. Once I could see; but then I fell asleep—a long, long sleep. I thought I should never wake. And I slept till a kind gentleman called Mr. Mott came and opened my eyes—not these eyes,' pointing to his sightless eyeballs, 'but *these*,' lifting up his tiny fingers—'*these* eyes; and oh! they see such sweet words of Jesus, and how He loved the blind.'" *Hearing of Christ*:—Happy it was for these two blind beggars that, though blind, they were not deaf. They had heard of Christ by the hearing of the ear, but that satisfied them not, unless their eyes also might see Him. They waylay, therefore, the Lord of Light, who gives them upon their suit both sight and light, irradiates both organ and object, cures them of both outward and inward ophthalmies at once. . . . Few such knowing blind beggars nowadays. They are commonly more blind in mind than body, loose and lawless vagrants; such as are neither of any church or commonwealth; but as the baser sort of people in Swethland, who do always break the Sabbath, saying, that it is only for gentlemen to sanctify it; or rather, as the poor Brazilians, who are said to be without any government, law, or religion. (*John Trapp.*) *Necessitous men*:—Here we have—I. Such persons making the best of their opportunities—Christ was passing by. II. One class of such fail-

ing to sympathise with another—the multitude rebuked. III. Founding their appeal on the right ground—mercy. IV. Presenting a right condition of will—"what will ye," as if all things were placed at the disposal of the right will. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Keep in the way of blessing* :—Be still in the King's highway, in the use of the means, for though the natural use of the means and God's saving grace have no connection, yet there is far less a connection betwixt that grace and the neglect of means. The poor beggar, that needs an alms from the king, goes to the king's highway, where he passes; and surely he is nearer to his purpose than if he should go to the top of a mountain where the king never comes; so, be you still in the use of means, in the Lord's way. (*Erskine.*) *A wise use of the means of salvation* :—Those that wait upon the Lord in the use of the means and ordinances, they hereby spread their sails, and are ready for the Spirit's motions, which bloweth where it listeth. There is more hope of these than of such who lie aground, neglecting the means of grace, which are both as sail and tackling. The two blind men could not open their own eyes; that was beyond their power, but they could get into the way where Jesus passed, and they could cry to Him for sight, who only could recover it. Those that are diligent in the use of means and ordinances, may sit in the way where Jesus passes by, who uses not to reject those that cry unto Him. (*Clarkson.*)

## CHAPTER XXI.

VERS. 1–11. **And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage.**—*Sixth Sunday in Lent* :—I. IT PRESENTS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE RELATION OF CHRIST TO THE RELIGIOUS FEELING OF MANKIND. We are religious beings. Our very nature is grained with sensibilities for the sacred and the Divine. This scene shows how it is affected by Christ. 1. He rouses it to activity. The multitude was deeply moved. Not merely patriotism or earthly emotion, but earnest spiritual feeling. From Jesus streamed all this awakening power. 2. He inspires it with gladness. There was holy rejoicing. There is a moral awakening which has no joy in it. The natural man is afraid of God. Jesus takes away these terrors. 3. He also encourages the expression of religious emotions and convictions. Christ would have His people speak their joys. II. AN EARNEST OF THE SAVIOUR'S GLORIOUS KINGHOOD. The symptoms of glorious consummation are visible in the scene before us. 1. We here see the world serving Him. He commands both men and beasts, and causes them to obey His will. 2. We see here the whole multitude of His disciples filled with joyous exultation. All sorrows were for the hour quite swallowed up in the abounding blessedness. 3. We here see the most unlikely prophecies touching His kinghood fulfilled to the very letter. 4. The sorrowful hopelessness of Christ's enemies when He begins to let His royal majesty forth. III. The text suggests IMPORTANT IDEAS TOUCHING CHRIST'S PERPETUAL COMING TO HIS CHURCH. 1. He comes with the illuminations of His Spirit. 2. He comes to His Church except when it is made impossible by the unbelief of men. 3. The way to enjoy Him in His Church is clearly indicated. We must welcome Him as the Son of God. IV. AS JESUS ENTERED INTO JERUSALEM, SO HE STRIVETH NOW FOR ENTRANCE INTO EVERY HEART. 1. He approaches all of us as He approached the holy city. He comes to us as a King, as the promised One. 2. But for His coming to be a blessing we must do as did the happy ones in the text. 3. Great is the blessedness of those who thus receive the Lord Jesus. V. THIS ENTRY OF THE SAVIOUR INTO THE HOLY CITY CALLS UP OUR PUBLIC ENTRY INTO THE SPIRITUAL CITY, OF WHICH JERUSALEM WAS A TYPE. Christ entered to be condemned; we to be absolved: He to die; we to live. 1. Like His yours is a triumphal entry. 2. Like His, however, your entry is not full triumph yet. 3. It needs to be marked with meekness and courage. 4. It shall soon be crowned with everlasting victory. (*J. A. Seiss.*) *The triumphal entry into Jerusalem* :—I. BY THUS RIDING THROUGH THE STREETS IN STATE CHRIST CLAIMED TO BE A KING. This claim had been kept in the background till now; but in the hour of deep humiliation He makes an open claim. He was a spiritual King, therefore He went not to the palace temporal, but to the palace spiritual; He rides to the temple. II. WHAT SORT OF A KING HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN IF HE HAD PLEASED, AND WHAT SORT OF A KING HE MIGHT BE NOW, IF HE WILLED IT. If Christ chose He might make His Church rich and

powerful, and religion magnificent; but He does not care for this world's glory. III. WHAT KIND OF A KING HE IS, AND WHAT KIND OF A KING HE CLAIMED TO BE. Different from other kingdoms. 1. It is a kingdom in which the disciples are courtiers. Here discipleship is the highest degree. 2. It is a kingdom in which the king's laws are none of them written upon paper; they are written upon the heart. 3. It was a kingdom in which riches were no part whatever of its glory. It was poverty's own temple. 4. It was a kingdom without armed force. 5. It was a strange kingdom because it was without any pomp. 6. He came to establish a kingdom without taxations. All its gifts are of love. 7. It was a kingdom in which all creatures were considered. 8. It was a kingdom of joy. IV. THE PRACTICAL OBJECTS OF THIS KINGDOM. 1. That the whole city was moved. Everybody had something to say about it. Some would say that "the whole thing was contemptible." Many say that the kingdom of Christ is ridiculous. They want more pomp. Others in Jerusalem were no doubt filled with curiosity. Some looked on with envy. Some were moved to rejoice. Christ is sure to make a stir. 2. That Christ went to the temple. He drives out selfishness, and purifies religion. 3. He held a grand levée, of all whom He had healed and blessed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Another royal procession*:—I. THAT THE LORD JESUS HAS EVEN NOW BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS DAYS OF SPECIAL MANIFESTATION IN HIS CHURCH. 1. They usually occur after the Lord has visited His beloved and quickened them. He came into Jerusalem after He had raised Lazarus from the dead. 2. When His disciples were obedient to Him. He told His disciples to go and they went. Disobedience hinders the advance of the gospel. 3. Another indication of glory-days will be found in the prompt and cheerful obedience which His disciples will make. 4. The glory of Christ is seen when He is publicly proclaimed as king. We must desire the blessings of the gospel to be widely made known and extended. 5. On such days, one part of the glory consists in many going forth to meet Christ. Pray that there may come a great wave of religious thought over the minds of people. 6. Another sign is prevailing enthusiasm. 7. There was inquiry. 8. His enemies were quiet. Such are the marks of the glorious days of Christ. II. THAT ON THESE GLORY-DAYS OF JESUS CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH LIKE HONOURS ARE PAID TO HIM NOW AS THEN. 1. He is at this time as loudly praised and as greatly rejoiced in among His people as He was then. 2. He received then as now homage from all kinds of people. 3. The little ones were conspicuous. III. CHRIST EXECUTES THE SAME DEEDS AS HE DID THEN. 1. Compassion for souls is prominent. He wept over the city. 2. Judgment. "Now they are hid from thine eyes." 3. He purged the temple. 4. He healed the sick who came to Him, in the temple. 5. His foes were all confounded. IV. When Christ came into Jerusalem, ALL WAS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERED. "Hosanna" was changed into "Crucify." When hearts are impressed with the gospel, we must not expect all to be steadfast to Christ. (*Ibid.*) *An exciting inquiry*:—"Who is this?" I. WHAT WILL STIR LONDON? A reigning Saviour riding in triumph. The shout of a king is not in the Church; the ancient glory has departed. The world cares little about the Church so long as Christ does not reign in her palaces. II. WE MUST BE ABLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION. "Be ready always to give an answer," &c. You must have a knowledge of Jesus Christ. The answer should be clear and distinct. (*Ibid.*) *True and counterfeit enthusiasm*:—I. To-day, as long ago, Jesus Christ is the true object of the enthusiasm of mankind. II. There may be outward devotion to Christ while the heart remains a stranger to His nature, His claims, and His love. What are our religious protestations worth? III. Beware of regarding emotional excitement as identical with religious feelings and states of mind and heart. The religion of some people exhausts itself in hallelujahs; they possess no constant principle. (*J. R. Bailey.*) *Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem*:—I. A SORROWING SAVIOUR AND A REJOICING MULTITUDE. II. A FIRM SAVIOUR AND A FICKLE MULTITUDE. Why was this multitude so fickle? 1. Because they had no true and deep understanding of what they were shouting about on Sunday. 2. Because an influence from a different quarter and of a different kind was brought to bear upon them on Friday. III. THE SAVIOUR ADVANCING TO THE MOST GLORIOUS DEED OF ALL HISTORY. The multitude advancing to the most atrocious deed of all history. 1. Here is a word of caution. 2. Here is a word of exhortation. (*W. Jones.*) *Entire consecration*:—I. THE LORD HAS NEED OF YOU. 1. Your prayers. 2. Your praises. 3. Your talents. 4. He may need your most cherished one, that which your heart holds fastest. II. NATURE'S REPLIES TO THIS CLAIM. 1. Unbelief denies the claim. 2. Weakness hesitates till the opportunity is past. 3. Simulation seems to do it, but does not. 4. Selfishness hugs her own. 5. How much affliction passes over a man before he

is willing to comply with the just demands of his Creator. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ's entry into the world*:—I. WHO COMES? No temporal deliverer. A Divine King. The Son of God. God the Son. Upon the doctrine of Christ's divinity depend the truth of His teaching, the perfection of His example, and the infinite value of His sacrifice. II. TO WHOM DOES HE COME? 1. To a world needing a Redeemer. 2. To humanity wanting a Ruler. 3. To individual souls seeking a king. To be "thy King," He must reign in thy heart, over thy thoughts and affections. The will must be surrendered to Him. III. IN WHAT MANNER DOES HE COME? 1. Meek. 2. Lowly. Twin graces are these. We need them. *Pride* was the principle of our ruin. Through *pride* Adam fell. Pride is a *false* imitation of God—the imitation of His independency; but He has said, "My glory will I not give to another." The two deepest movements of the human soul are desire and anger; meekness and lowliness are the correctives of both. IV. HOW OUGHT WE TO PREPARE TO RECEIVE HIM? We must go forth to meet Him—(1) by a holy desire and longing for His presence; (2) by putting away our sinful habits and desires; (3) by imitating His virtues; (4) by obeying His laws; (5) by praying for a loving, forgiving spirit. Blessed Jesus, reign within us; cast down every imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of Thyself, and bring every thought into captivity to Thy holy will. Reign within us, till Thou hast put every enemy, every movement of our corrupt nature or the remnants of it, under Thy feet. Reign within us by Thy grace here, and so transform us that we may become like unto Thee in Thy glory hereafter! (*W. H. Hutchings, M.A.*) *Popular attractions*:—Here is a multitude: (1) Attracted by marvellous intelligence; (2) Following the example of the few; (3) Rendering regal honour to the son of a carpenter; (4) Looking for material aggrandisement; (5) In a little while exchanging "Hosanna" for "Crucify Him." (*F. Wagstaff.*) *The lowly errand*:—I. This history as it regards our LORD. Christ really prophesied, and events proved His prophecy truth. There is accuracy of detail, most wonderful. There was miracle as well as prophecy; miracle wrought upon mind; poor men were made willing to give up their property at the bidding of strangers. A striking exhibition of power appropriate as striking. It taught the disciples that Christ's presence was not necessary to His guardianship, that He could act on their enemies as well from a distance as when near; that His knowledge and power extended to minute and mean things. II. THE CONDUCT OF THE DISCIPLES. They obeyed the command without hesitation. It seemed a wild errand; looked like robbery, improbable of result. We should do well to imitate their obedience; a readiness to fill the lower offices. We are active enough in great enterprises, but have no taste for the humbler duties. All employment for Christ is noble. III. THE CONDUCT OF THE OWNERS OF THE ASS AND THE COLT. We do not know the circumstances and character of these men. Whatever their acquaintance with Christ they acted as stewards of their property; not as proprietors. It will be a new era in the Church when to show that "the Lord hath need" of this or that thing shall suffice to secure its cheerful bestowment. It is thus with children and friends, "The Lord hath need of them." In a thousand ways God is saying that He has need of our time, talents, property. Let us yield cheerfully. 1. The vast honour given to humble individuals in that they were allowed to contribute to the progress of the Saviour when accomplishing an ancient prediction. We may all do something towards the sublime consummation for which the Church prays. 2. When He comes in triumph He will acknowledge the services rendered Him. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The Lord's need*:—He speaks as a man of need. He who could see all things and foretell all things confesses to His personal necessity. The head that carried all knowledge had not where to sleep, of its own right and title. And again in that very self-same sentence He used a word which throws the term need into striking contrast—Lord. Such strange mixture do we find in the talk of this Man. Lord and need in the same sentence. He does not give up His royalty because of His necessity, nor does His royalty and lordship save Him from need. And yet what need could He have who had but to express the wish and it was instantly complied with? It was a sweet necessity, it was the pain of that hunger which had wherewith to satisfy itself. (*Dr. Parker.*) *Fulfilment of prophecy*:—A prophecy may be said to be fulfilled four ways. I. When the self-same thing comes to pass which was literally delivered in the prophecy. II. When the thing allegorically signified is fulfilled. III. When as neither the thing literally nor allegorically meant, but some other like is done. IV. When as it is daily more and more fulfilled. (*John Boys.*) *Clothes to tread on*:—Plutarch mentions it as a circumstance of respect shown to Cato the Younger

upon a particular occasion by the soldiery, that they laid their garments for him to tread upon as he marched. (*C. Buckley.*) *The city moved:*—The silence and obscurity of Christ never troubles the world; He may be an underling, without any stir; but if He do but put forth Himself never so little to bear the least sway amongst men, now their blood is up, the whole city is moved. Neither is it otherwise in the private economy of the soul. O Saviour, while Thou dost, as it were, hide Thyself, and lie still in the heart, and takest all terms contentedly from us, we entertain Thee with no other than a friendly welcome; but when Thou once beginnest to ruffle with our corruptions, and to exercise Thy spiritual power in the subjugation of our vile affections, now all is in a secret uproar, all the angles of the heart are moved. (*Bishop Hall.*) *Christ a King:*—When Mr. Dawson was preaching in South Lambeth on the offices of Christ, he presented Him as prophet, and priest, and then as the King of Saints. He marshalled patriarchs, kings, prophets, and apostles, martyrs and confessors of every age and clime, to place the insignia of royalty upon the head of the King of Kings. The audience were wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, and, as if waiting to hear the anthem peal out the coronation hymn, the preacher commenced singing "All hail the power of Jesus' Name." The audience, rising as one man, sang the hymn as perhaps it was never sung before. (*Foster.*

Vers. 12–14. **And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold.**—*The purification of the temple:*—I. This act shows the mind of Jesus concerning the reverence which is due to the house of God. He regarded it not so much as the temple of the Jews as the temple of God; He revered it more than they did. Their reverence was formal, pompous, selfish; His was spiritual, looking with solemn eyes on the meaning of its name, and the holiness of its purpose. It was sacred to the holiest hopes of man. The place where human souls held communion with the Father cannot be common. II. The purification of the temple seems to be a striking intimation of the great purpose of His ministry, to purify God's worship everywhere, in the outward and inward temple, in the house, the heart, the life. III. We may behold in this act of our Saviour one of the primary expressions of the universal and impartial philanthropy of His gospel; that noble principle which, regardless of prejudice or artificial distinction, gathers in the whole family into one equal brotherhood, one worshipping assembly, under the roof of one undivided sanctuary. The desecrated portion was the court of the Gentiles. All is holy. The rights of Gentiles are to Jesus as sacred as those of the Jews. The temple was His Father's house. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *Thieves in the temple:*—What is that which we must labour to destroy? What weeds be those which we must endeavour to root out? We read here, that our Saviour did cast buyers and sellers out of the temple, terming them "thieves." For although to buy and sell be actions in themselves lawful and honest, yet the time and place, with other circumstances, may so change their quality, that he which buyeth shall be as one that robbeth, and he that selleth as one that stealeth. They bought and sold *in the temple;* this Christ condemneth. Yet behold what a beautiful colour they had set upon their wicked practices, to make them seem allowable before men! For of the judgment of God they made no account. It is written in the law (Deut. xiv. 23–26). Under the pretence of providing that, according to this law, men which dwelt far off might always, at their coming to the temple, have sacrifices there, and offerings in a readiness to present before the Lord; their covetous humour fed itself upon the people without all fear of God, without any reverence at all of His sanctuary. May they not justly be termed "thieves," who, pretending thus to serve the Lord in His sacrifices, robbed and spoiled Him in His saints? No doubt Jerusalem, had she known the things which belonged to her peace, would have blessed the hour wherein the Lord of the house came to ease that holy place of so intolerable burthens, to rid His temple of so noisome filth. (*Archbishop Sandys.*) *Den of thieves:*—An expression that was probably used by our Lord in allusion to the rocky caves and dens in the mountainous parts of Judæa, which were often the receptacles of thieves and robbers. (*C. Buckley.*) *The temple of God*—The relation we have by the Evangelist of the way in which the Lord came outwardly to His temple may suggest to us His coming to the temple of the human heart; for we are told the soul of every Christian is a temple. The stones of the temple on Mount Moriah were *common stones* till they were consecrated for God's house and service. So the talents, the capabilities, the powers, and, above all, the affections, become by conversion and regeneration a dwelling-place for Jesus. He

refines and purifies them, and the figure of the legal consecration becomes in the gospel scheme a real and vital holiness. Let us recollect that the sheep and oxen, the doves, and the tables of the money-changers, were all *in themselves* needful and right. It was bringing these things even into the outer court of the temple that defiled it. So it is with the temple of the heart. How does selfishness, how do selfish schemes gradually creep into Christian hearts—nay, how do they sometimes at last find a footing in the inmost shrine! The Christian whose heart has once been purged from his old sins is not in a position of absolute security because he is in Christ, but only if he abide in Christ, and is bringing forth really good fruit. The Lord's choicest earthly blessings misused become, if not idols, yet like the doves, not occupying the right place. And our Lord's action warns those who, on whatever pretext, use His outward visible Church for unholy purposes. (*R. Barclay.*) *Cherished evils:*—I recollect when in Pompeii I saw, in what two thousand years ago was a large and splendid house, a shrine or temple where the Lares and Penates were placed; and its shape and form are still in existence, in professedly Christian lands, under a Christian guise. Is there not sometimes something which has a resemblance to this in Christian hearts, or in Christian families—relics of the old nature, things not quite sanctioned by our conscience, dispositions of mind not quite in accordance with the mind that was in Christ Jesus, which have nevertheless been entertained until we are almost unconscious of our danger? (*Ibid.*) *Christ cleansing the temple:*—We have a similar record to this in each of the four Gospels. I. THE PLACE at which this event occurred. Jesus went into *the temple of God.* 1. The appliances and construction of the temple in our Lord's time indicated a process of development in the system of Judaism. 2. It was into the capacious court of the Gentiles that our Lord entered, and in which He found these desecrations. That the Jew should have done this, marked a want of reverence and a proper spiritual feeling with regard to God's worship that was most strange when contrasted with all the holy traditions of that sacred place. II. THE TIME AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS OCCURRENCE. The chronology of the first three Gospels differ considerably from that of the fourth. I have no hesitation in saying that this act was done twice—that it did occur at the beginning and at the end of His ministry. I can see a considerable difference in the circumstances at each period. We may interpret the first doing of this act, as recorded by John, as done almost exclusively, certainly pre-eminently, as Jesus the prophet—as a reformer, as one belonging to the old dispensation, and speaking in the spirit of it. But at the end of His ministry the act had a deeper significance and a wider meaning: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." That which is polluted and degenerate, let it pass away. Let a new age come. Let a new dispensation be established, and let all the nations of the earth be welcomed, &c. He did this second action more emphatically in His character as Messiah. In each separate act there was a deep significance, and both teach their peculiar lessons. III. Some of the GENERAL LESSONS of instruction which we may gather from them. (*T. Binney.*) *The cleansing of the temple:*—Jesus Christ (1) did not connive at abuses for the sake of securing popular favour; (2) did not allow abuses to be continued on the ground that the circumstances were temporary; He knew the temple would soon be destroyed; (3) showed that man's convenience was to be subordinated to God's right; (4) showed in this, as in all other cases, that the right *one* is morally stronger than the wicked many. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Varied worshippers:*—The temple itself is full of vacant worship. It resounds with rash vows and babbling voices. It is the house of God; but man has made it a nest of triflers, a fair of vanity, a den of thieves. Some come to it as reckless and irreverent as if they were stepping into a neighbour's house. Some come to it, and feel as if they had laid the Most High under obligation, because they bring a sheaf of corn or a pair of pigeons; whilst they never listen to God's word, nor strive after that obedience which is better than sacrifice. Some come and rattle over empty forms of devotions, as if they would be heard because of their much speaking. And some, in a fit of fervour, utter vows which they forget to pay; and, when reminded of their promise, they protest that there must be some mistake; they repudiate the vow, and say it was an error. (*Dr. J. Hamilton.*) *A worshipping spirit:*—It was said of Sir William Cecil, sometime Lord Treasurer of England, that when he went to bed he would throw off his gown and say, "Lie there, Lord Treasurer," as bidding adieu to all State affairs, that he might the more quietly repose himself: so when we go to any religious duty, we should say, "Lie by, world; lie by, all secular cares, all household affairs, all pleasures, all traffic, all thoughts of gain;

lie by all; adieu all!" *The blind and the lame;—physical infirmities typical of moral defects:*—It demands but little acquaintance with Holy Scripture to be aware that either of these two forms of bodily ailment is the common, as well as the obvious emblem of a corresponding moral defect (Isa. xlii. 7; ix. 2; xxxv. 6). To these two classes of cures Christ Himself refers as evidence of His Messiahship (Matt. xi. 4, 5). A subject is thus set before us in which we find our place without difficulty. We are reminded of our own great spiritual infirmities; of our need of His Almighty aid who poured the light of day on sightless eyes, and gave those ankle-bones strength which before were powerless in Israel. I. For surely the life of many of us—OUR OWN LIFE, IN TOO MANY RESPECTS, IS THE LIFE OF THE BLIND. We grope our way in self-reliance, and we often lose it. We stumble and fall. We feel after, and we find not; we reach forth, and we grasp not. 1. We read God's Holy Word, yet we see nothing, or very little, of the many wonders which it contains. The veil is upon our hearts while we read. 2. We look abroad on the Miracles of Love which surround our dwelling; we look within, on the mystery of Divine goodness in which we live and move and have our being; yet we recognize little or nothing of the hand of God either within or without us. II. Who, again, does not see in the HELPLESSNESS OF THE LAME A LIVELY TYPE OF HIS OWN CONDITION which, so far from "*running* in the way of God's commandments," knows not how to "*walk* with God" for a single hour? 1. Reluctant to begin what we know to be holy. 2. Unwilling to persevere in good courses begun. 3. Sluggish in spiritual growth. 4. Remiss in prayer, regarding it as a task instead of a recreation. (*J. W. Burgon, D.D.*)

Vers. 15, 16. **The children crying in the temple.**—*The blessedness of children's piety:*—It is upon the child that this sarcastic question still falls. Some hardly think the children can be converted. The Saviour's answer is splendid when He said, "Have you never read?" Never caught the inner sense, never read so as to understand, &c. I. CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF VERY DEEP PIETY. 1. They are capable of that early grace with which true religion usually begins—a deep repentance. 2. No one who has seen converted children will ever doubt their capacity for faith, in some respects greater than that of the adult. Their faith is more easy, vivid, effective. 3. When they come to love our Lord, they *do* love. 4. I have noticed in children other virtues—courage, patience, great understanding of the fear of God. II. CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF RENDERING, IN THE HANDS OF GOD, GOOD SERVICE. 1. They convey healing messages to those about them. The little maid who waited upon Naaman's wife. Often guide blind souls to the light. Often guide strong men to some great action. 2. They serve the Lord wonderfully by their prayers. III. THE CHILDREN'S PIETY AND THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE ARE PECULIARLY GLORIFYING TO GOD. 1. Nothing seems to me to glorify God so much as His condescension when He takes a little child and instructs it, and manifests Himself to the child. And what power is there in the conversion of a child. If you have any doubt try it yourself. 2. They glorify God because they do so rebuke His enemies. Who can see what some of us have seen in children, and not feel ashamed we have lived so long, and yet never yielded to the Redeemer's love? 3. They sometimes rebuke God's own people and so glorify Him. Those who have never made confession of faith, &c. Sunday-school teachers, you are engaged in a most blessed work—persevere. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Children and missions:*—It is not well to overlook the influence of children, or to neglect them in making our efforts for the universal diffusion of the gospel. Let us: I. ASCERTAIN WHAT IS REQUISITE IN CHILDREN IF THEY WOULD PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF JESUS. That they should have (1) a correct knowledge of the state of the heathen; (2) just views of the gospel as adapted to save them; (3) right conceptions of the value of immortal souls; (4) experimental knowledge of the love of Christ. II. WHAT CHILDREN MAY DO FOR CARRYING ON THE BLESSED CAUSE OF JESUS IN THE WORLD. They can—(1) contribute of their means; (2) collect from others; (3) pray for God's blessing to attend their efforts and give success; (4) some children might seek gifts and talents for missionary work. III. WHAT SHOULD INDUCE CHILDREN THUS TO FEEL AND WORK IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST? 1. Gratitude to God for His goodness to them. 2. God's command. 3. Their own happiness. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Christ's praise shouted by children in the temple:*—I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT. Christ here refers to a composition of David in which he exalts the excellence of God's power. In this verse He illustrates His power by giving an instance of it, that God makes the weakest of His creatures instruments who were able to subdue

the greatest powers of the world. 1. The sovereignty of God. 2. The sufficiency of God's strength. 3. The perfection of praise. II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH THE TEXT. Our Lord was making His last entry into Jerusalem. 1. A token of love. 2. A sign of hatred. (1) God is never more glorified than in the religion of the young. (2) All who acknowledge Christ are bound to promote this well-pleasing tribute to the glory of God. (*W. Harrison, M.A.*) *The children's Divine Friend:*—I. THE MEMORABLE EVENTS IN THE TEXT. 1. The Saviour's wonders. The wonders wrought by Christ were diversified in character, comprehensive in extent, and adapted to the circumstances of the times. The scene of the miracles is the temple of God. On the one part, He cast out (vers. 12, 13); and on the other, He healed (ver. 14). What could have been better timed than following up the miracle of majesty with that of mercy? 2. The children's praises. (1) The object of the praise, "The Son of David." (2) The character of the praise. (3) The parties engaged in rendering the praise. II. THE OFFENCE OCCASIONED. 1. The persons who were the subjects of this uneasiness. 2. The height to which their anger rose. 3. The way in which their displeasure was manifested. III. THE CONCISE BUT SATISFACTORY VINDICATION. IV. The ample INSTRUCTION derivable from the scenes and wonders that distinguish this eventful season. 1. They show the Saviour in the true dignity and glory of His character. 2. They show the glorious triumphs of the reign of grace, in the perfecting of the praise of babes. 3. Encouragement to parents to bring their children to Jesus and to His temple. (*J. Gray.*) *God glorified in little children:*—God is glorious in the smallest as in the greatest of His works; the least flower awakens admiration in an equal degree with suns. I. IT IS TO THE GLORY OF GOD THAT THERE IS SUCH A STATE AS THAT OF INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD. The infant mind is spread out to receive the impress of Christ. He has perfected praise in forming a period of human existence so capable of right impression. II. GOD GLORIFIES HIMSELF IN LITTLE CHILDREN BY OFTEN MAKING THEM POWERFUL INSTRUMENTS OF GOOD TO OTHERS. These will not defraud Him of praise. III. GOD AGAIN PERFECTS HIS PRAISE IN CHILDREN IN MAKING THEM CAPABLE OF RECEIVING AND REFLECTING THE IMAGE OF CHRIST. IV. IT IS TO THE PRAISE AND GLORY OF GOD THAT INFANTS AND CHILDREN ARE SO MUCH THE OBJECTS OF HIS CARE. V. But especially does God glorify Himself IN THE REMOVAL OF SO MANY LITTLE CHILDREN AT AN EARLY AGE. VI. But it is especially in the assurances that the souls of departed children are HAPPY IN HEAVEN, that God's name is to be glorified. (*W. H. Lewis, D.D.*) *Children glorify God by being useful to others:*—Often, too, have little ones been the messengers of strength and consolation to believers. In one of the darkest periods of the Reformation, when Luther, Melancthon, and others were assembled under great dejection of spirit, to consult upon what should be done, Melancthon retired from the council in the deepest depression of spirit, but in a few moments returned again with a countenance beaming with confidence and joy; and when all were surprised at the change, he told them that he had just seen a sight which assured him of success—he had seen some little children engaged in prayer for the Reformation, whom their mothers, who were assembled for the same purpose, had brought together, and he was assured such prayers would be heard of God. Courage in the needful hour, for the greatest work ever accomplished by uninspired men, was thus breathed into the soul through infants' prayers. (*Ibid.*) *Children in the temple praising the Redeemer:*—1. We see here that real piety is not confined to men of years or learning. 2. That religion in its main substance is adapted to the capacity of the young. 3. From the example before us we learn that great benefit may accrue to youth, from a stated attendance on Divine institutions. Public worship is as much an ordinance of God under the gospel, as was the Passover under the Law. The example of Jews bringing their children to the temple reproves the neglect of many Christians. 4. The young are under special obligations to acknowledge and praise the Redeemer. True religion will operate in pious affections and exercises of heart toward Christ. 5. That youthful piety is peculiarly pleasing to Christ. (*J. Lathrop, D.D.*) *Witnessing children:*—I. The children SEE, whilst others are blind. They see what scribe and priest, with all their learning, see not—the Son of David. Pride does not hinder their sight. There is fitness between the mind of youth and the truth as it is in Jesus. II. The children SING, although others are silent. III. The children receive the blessing which others lose. (*J. M. L.*) *Christ's encouragement and vindication of young disciples:*—I. THE CHILDREN'S ACCLAMATION. "Hosannah to the Son of David." This considered as the language (1) of faith and trust in Christ; (2) of desire and good will;

(3) of praise; (4) of triumphant joy. Remarks—1. Behold the power of God's grace on young people! 2. How lovely and delightful is it to see such effects of it upon them! 3. How should this awaken a concern for the youth of our day! II. THE OFFENCE TAKEN at these acclamations. 1. The persons who took the offence. 2. The matter of their offence. 3. The reasons of it. Remarks—1. Behold the necessity of a supernatural work upon the heart to bring it over to Christ! 2. How vile a part do they act, who go about to discountenance and destroy the good dispositions of young people toward Christ and religion. 3. Let not any young people be discouraged by what others may do or say, to turn them aside from Christ and His ways. III. OUR LORD'S VINDICATION OF THOSE YOUNG ONES in what they were doing. 1. He took notice of them. 2. The high account He made of what they did. 3. The reproof He gave to the chief priests and scribes for objecting against it. Inferences—1. That it should be our great concern to own and honour Christ. 2. That the earlier we begin to own and honour Him, the more God's praise is thereby advanced. 3. That He will own and honour the young ones, who are brought to own and honour Him. (*John Guyse.*) *Children's piety*:—How much better is it to see boys and girls showing a serious concern about Christ, about an interest in His favour and love, and in the benefits of His redemption, and about His honour and glory; and to see our sons and daughters preferring Him to all things else, and devoting themselves to His service; than to see them lavish away the sprightly parts of life in lightness and vanity, in rudeness and wickedness, and in thoughtless neglect, not to say contempt, of God and our Saviour, of religion, and everything that relates to their own real and eternal welfare! (*Ibid.*) *Praise and help from children*:—In describing his early persecutions in Moorfields, Whitefield says: "Several little boys and girls, who were fond of sitting round me on the pulpit while I preached, and handed to me people's notes—though they were often pelted with eggs, dirt, &c., thrown at me—never once gave way, but, on the contrary, every time I was struck, turned up their weeping eyes, and seemed to wish they could receive the blows for me. God made them, in their tender years, great and living martyrs for Him." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Little things do the perfecting*:—How frequently are small things those which perfect anything! For instance: it is the bloom of the plum which perfects it, the scent in the flower, the cut of the nostril, or the dimples in a countenance, the short strings in a harp, the delicate finishing touches in a picture. What perfects a fireside but the children links? what perfects a cathedral choir but the children's notes? and what perfects God's praise but the "mouth of babes and sucklings"? (*W. J. Bolton.*) *Children capable of deep repentance*:—I cannot help remembering when the Lord dealt with me as a child. If there was a child who knew the power of sin I did. Tenderly cared for, and kept from all sorts of evil company, yet there seemed in me as if the great deeps within my nature were broken up in vast masses of sin and rebellion against God. I have met with hundreds of persons every day in riper years who I am sure never felt the hundredth part of what I felt when I was as a child, under God's Spirit, feeling a hatred of myself because I had not lived to God and loved and served Him. I am sure I speak here what I do know, and testify what I have seen in scores of children, that their repentance has been true, thorough, deep, intelligent, and lasting, and they have known their way to the foot of the cross, and seen the great sacrifice, and have wept all the more to think they should have offended against love so infinite which redeemed them and made them free. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Children capable of a high degree of faith*:—For there seems to me to be something so chaste and beautiful, like the early dew glistening in the rising sun-light, about this blessed faith of the children. They may teach some of us how to believe in God. There is a story of a child who went to a prayer meeting summoned that they might pray for rain, and she took her umbrella with her. We pray, but we do not take our umbrellas. That is the very essence of faith—to expect a blessing and to be prepared for it. Children often in that way show to us that faith is not to be a show-thing, a pious thing to talk about, but a thing to act upon in ordinary concerns of everyday life. (*Ibid.*) *Courage in children*:—We don't always look for that in children, yet have they shown it. The martyr Laurence, who was burnt at Colchester, was so tortured in gaol that he had to be carried to the stake in a chair, and all the grown-up people, afraid that they might be burnt too, forsook him. But a child came up and said, "Lord, strengthen Thy servant." When one was burnt in Smithfield a boy was seen going home after the burning. Some one said, "Boy, why were you there?" He said, "Sir, I went to learn the way.' It may be said, "Oh, that was in the old days." But they are

children like ours. A friend once said to the widow of a martyr, "Will you not urge your boy to forsake his faith?" "I have had many children," she said, "but I never had one so well bestowed as this dear boy, though he is to be burnt to death." He cheered his elder companion, and stood back to back with him in the flames. They have taken their fair share of suffering in martyr days. (*Ibid.*) *Children understand the fear of God:*—It has been my pleasure lately to admit to the church a large number of little children, and I can say of each of them as I have talked with them—and I put many rather difficult questions to them about the things of God—and whenever the question has been vital, there has never been any hesitancy as to the answer. I had years ago a good brother who felt it necessary to put questions to young children which I did not like. He asked one child, "Have you given your heart to the Lord?" The little boy said, "Yes, sir." "Oh," my friend said, "you see his ignorance." I said, "Has the Lord given you a new heart?" "Yes, sir, the Lord Jesus gave me a new heart when I believed in Him, and I know it was a good one." My friend was shut up, and he did not ask any more questions of children for a great time. Perhaps what they know is truer wisdom sometimes than what the elders know. I read some time ago that the Jews permit children to read the Scriptures when they are five years old, but not the Talmud till they are fifteen. God help me to keep on reading the Scriptures and never get to the Talmud at all. Some will get so old that it is all Talmud with them—very little Bible. With the children there is no Talmud; they just keep to the smooth road. What they know is worth the knowing, whereas much that we know is worse than nothing, and it would be a great blessing if we forget it. Children can be quick in understanding in the fear of the Lord. (*Ibid.*) *Children are capable of great service:*—I heard of a little child whose father was wont to curse and swear, and when the father was indulging in some horrible language she went behind the door. The father said, "What are you doing there? Come out." Her eyes were red with weeping. "What are you crying for?" "Because, dear father, I could not bear to hear you talk like that." "Well, you shall never hear me talk like that again." (*Ibid.*) *A child's simple trust:*—A little girl, who had long nursed a sick sister, was getting worn out. One morning, as she trudged along to procure medicine, she thought how hard it was to be always waiting on the invalid when the other children were at play, and when she thought also how likely it was her sister would die, between weariness and grief she began to weep bitterly. But a sudden thought crossed her mind. The verse came to her memory, "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." Day and night henceforward she never wearied in her attendance on the invalid. Her cheerful countenance did more good than the medicines; and ere long she had her reward, for her sister recovered. *A boy's prayer:*—An American writer says, "A boy, thirteen years of age, who attended one of our mission Sunday schools, was hopefully converted. His father was a dissipated, wicked man, who kept a drinking saloon, and thus not only got drunk himself, but caused others to do so. This dear boy asked his Sunday-school teacher what he should do, for his father would make him wait on the customers, handing out the poison to them; and if he had not better leave home. His teacher told him not to leave home, but begin at once to pray for his father, and she would pray for him, and for his father too; and they both commenced to pray for that father. In a few weeks he left off drinking, and soon after left off selling, too, and went to to work earn an honest living; 'for,' said he, with tears running down his face, 'something has been the matter with my dear boy for some time; and the other day I heard a noise in the room where he sleeps; it was a kind of a mournful noise, and I listened; and don't you think he was praying for me! He prayed that I would quit selling—for I had quit drinking some time before; and I felt I was doing wrong, and I have quit it all; and the next time you have a meeting I am coming with my boy.'" *The weak made to perfect the praise of God:*—We do not wonder to see a man of strong constitution, who eats his bread heartily, and sleeps soundly, live; but for a crazy body, full of ailments and infirmities, to be so patched and shored up by the physician's art, that he stands to old age, this begets some wonder in the beholders. It may be thou art a poor trembling soul, thy faith is weak, and thy assaults from Satan strong, thy corruptions stirring and active, and thy mortifying strength little, so that in thy opinion they rather gain ground on thy grace than give ground to it; ever and anon thou art ready to think thou shalt be cast as a wreck upon the devil's shore: and yet to this day thy grace lives, though full of leaks; now is it not worth the

stopping aside to see this strange sight? A broken ship with masts and hull rent and torn, thus towed along by Almighty power, through an angry sea, and armadas of sins and devils, safely into His harbour. To see a poor dilling or rush candle in the face of the boisterous winds and not blown out: in a word, to see a weak stripling in grace held up in God's arms till he beats the devil craven: this God is doing in upholding thee; thou art one of these babes, out of whose mouth God is perfecting His praise, by ordaining such strength for thee, that thou, a babe in grace, shalt yet foil a giant in wrath and power. (*W. Gurnal.*)

Ver. 17. **And he lodged there.**—*The value of domestic happiness*:—Domestic life, like all other external goods, is not necessarily, and of itself, but only under certain conditions, in particular circumstances, a real advantage, and a source of true felicity. Only there where wisdom and virtue dwell, where intelligent well-meaning persons live together, only there dwell peace, satisfaction, and joy. Wherever domestic happiness is found, it shows us persons who are connected together by real, intrinsic love and friendship, who live entirely by each other, and who seek their happiness, their honour, and their force, in the mutual union of their hearts. Domestic happiness supposes a taste for truth, for nature, for graceful simplicity, for serene repose, as they are in contrast with error and art, studied and forced pleasures, and the more ostentatious and poignant diversions. 1. The comfort of domestic life is the most agreeable relief from the burden and heat of the day and its frequently tiresome business. 2. The happiness of domestic life is quiet, peaceful self-enjoyment; a self-enjoyment that is multiplied and ennobled by the intimate participation in all the concernments of this trusty society. 3. The happiness of domestic life is the delightful, free, and intimate association between harmonious and mutually loving souls. 4. The happiness of domestic life is inexhaustible. It renews itself daily, it multiplies itself without end. 5. The happiness of domestic life compensates the want of any other; but no other can compensate the want of that. 6. The enjoyment of domestic happiness is always not less edifying and useful than pleasant. 7. To the enjoyment of domestic happiness, no troublesome, no expensive preparatory provisions and arrangements are needful. 8. The enjoyment of it is never attended by satiety or disgust, by sorrow or remorse. 9. The happiness of domestic life is restricted to no class of men. It is attached neither to station, nor to opulence, nor to elevation and power; confined neither to the palace nor to the cottage. (*C. J. Zollikofer.*) *The delights of home*:—If you would enjoy pleasure, innocent, pure, daily-renewing, never disgracing, never cloying; delights worthy of the man and the Christian, seek them not at a distance from you, since they lie at home; seek them not in things which are not in your power; but in what is more your own; seek them in the happiness of domestic life. If you may venture to expect them anywhere, it is certainly *there* they must be found! (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 17–21. **And when He saw a fig-tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon.**—*The barren fig-tree*:—I. THE DESTRUCTION OF THIS TREE WAS NOT AN ACT OF INJUSTICE. People find it difficult to understand the propriety of punishing an inanimate object for defects which are only possible in higher existences. They argue that, since the fig-tree did not possess freewill, but was simply obeying the law of its kind, our Lord's act was capricious. But observe—1. The supposed force of this objection is due to our treating a metaphorical expression as if it were the language of reality. We speak of "doing justice" to a picture, when we mean justice to the artist who painted it. The picture itself cannot possibly be treated justly or unjustly, although we may form a true or a false estimate of its merits. Justice and injustice pre-suppose *rights* to be respected or violated; and rights belong only to a person. In the vegetable world there is no such thing as personality: and no such thing as "rights." To talk, therefore, of "injustice" in blasting or cutting down a tree, is good English if we are in the realms of poetry, but nonsense if in those of moral truth. The tree is there to be made the most of by man. No one has yet maintained that in using it to furnish our houses, or brighten our hearths, we sin against any law of natural justice. Surely, then, if by its sudden destruction the tree can do more, much more, than minister to our bodily comfort—if in its way it can be made to teach us a moral lesson of the first importance—there is no room for any question of injustice. What is merely material must always be subordinated to the moral and spiritual; and if a tree can be made, by its destruction, to illustrate a moral or spiritual truth, a high honour is put upon it, a noble work given it to do. II. THERE WAS NO UNUSUAL SEVERITY

IN THIS ACT. The truest mercy always sacrifices the lower to the higher. It is not more cruel to destroy a plant in order to teach a great moral truth, than to destroy a plant in order to eat it. If by its destruction the plant does our soul a service there is quite as good a reason for putting it to some sort of distress, in the process of destroying it, as there is if it is wanted to support our bodies. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Parabolic and prophetic elements in the destruction of the fig-tree*:—This incident is, from first to last, an acted parable. It would, perhaps, be truer to say, that it is an acted prophecy. In the East action was, and still is, often a more vivid and effective way of communicating truth than language. When a prophet of Israel sat in sackcloth, with dust on his head, by the side of the road along which the royal chariot would pass, his action was a much more powerful rebuke to the monarch for neglect of duty than a sermon would have been—even though it had an introduction, three arguments, and a conclusion. The East, as I have said, is traditionally the home of eloquent action; but in all countries and ages human action is a kind of human language, and it is often much more impressive than words which fall upon the ear. In our intercourse with each other, and in our worship of God, action expresses thought and feeling in a condensed way which often could only be put into very cumbrous and awkward language; and our Lord on this occasion was teaching—teaching in the main by action. He was acting a parable, and no objection can be urged against His action to which teaching by parable—that is to say, by putting forward an imaginary story as if it were literally true—is not always open. What, then, was the lesson which on this occasion He desired to teach? Was it simply the shame and guilt in every responsible creature of God's hand, of moral unfruitfulness? Did He cause the tree to wither because it was the symbol of nations and of men who do nothing for His glory and nothing for their fellows? That He does punish such unfruitfulness is certain; but this is not the lesson He would teach us here. The time of figs was not yet. To use figurative language, the tree did not sin by not producing figs at a time of the year when they could only have been produced in the open air by what we call a freak of nature, or, rather, in despite of her ordinary rules. The tree was a symbol of that which, in man, is worse sin than a merely fruitless life. It had leaves, you will observe, though it had no fruit. That was the distinction of this particular tree among its fellows ranged along the road, with their bare, leafless, unpromising branches. They held out hopes of nothing beyond what met the eye. This tree, with its abundant leaves, gave promise of fruit that might be well-nigh ripe; and thus it was a symbol of moral or of religious pretentiousness. Not simply as unfruitful, but because, being unfruitful, it was covered with leaves, it was a fitting symbol of that want of correspondence between profession and practice—between claims and reality—between the surface appearances of life and its real direction and purpose—which our Lord condemned so often and so sternly in the men of His time. And, as representing this, it was condemned too. (*Ibid.*) *Application of this acted parable*:—I. The fig-tree represented immediately, we cannot doubt, in our Lord's intention, THE ACTUAL STATE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. The heathen nations, judged from a Divine point of view, were barren enough. Israel was barren also, but then Israel was also pretentious and false. Israel was covered with leaves. The letter of the law—the memories, the sepulchres of the prophets—the ancient sacrifices—the accredited teachers—all were in high consideration. Israel was, to all appearance, profoundly religious. But the searching eye of our Lord found no fruit upon this tree beneath the leaves—no true soul-controlling belief even in the promises of the Messiah, of which they made so much—no true sense of their obligation and of their incapacity to please God. The tree by the roadside was a visible symbol of the moral condition of Israel as it presented itself to the eye of Christ, and there was no longer any reason for suspending the judgment which had been foretold in the Saviour's parable: "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." If humanity needed light, strength, peace, consolations, Israel could no longer give them. Israel was hereafter to be a blasted and withered tree on the wayside of history. II. The parable applies with equal force TO NATIONS OR TO CHURCHES IN CHRISTENDOM WHICH MAKE GREAT PRETENSIONS AND DO LITTLE OR NOTHING OF REAL VALUE TO MANKIND. For a time the tree waves its leaves in the wind. It lives on, sustained by the traditional habits and reverence of ages. Men admire the symbol of so many blessings—of so much activity and life. There is nothing to raise a question as to the true state of the case. But, at His own time, Christ passes along the highway—passes to inquire and to judge: some unforeseen calamity, some public anxiety, some shock to general confidence, lifts the leaves of

that tree and discovers its real fruitlessness. III. To EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN THIS PARABLE IS FULL OF WARNING. The religious activity of the human soul may be divided, roughly, into leaves and fruit—showy forms of religious activity and interest on the one side, and the direct produce of religious conviction on the other. It is much easier to grow leaves than to grow fruit; and many a man's life veils the absence of fruit by the abundance of leaves. To take an interest in religious questions and discussions is better than to be totally indifferent to them; but mere acquaintance with, and interest in, such proves nothing as to the condition of the conscience—the real tenor of the heart—the deepest movements of the inmost life—the soul's state before God, and its prospects for eternity. An anxious question for all is, whether the foliage of our Christian life is the covering of fruit beneath that is ripening for heaven, or only a thing of precocious and unnatural growth which has drained away the tree's best sap before its time, and made good fruit almost impossible. No show of leaves, no fervour of language, no glow of feeling, no splendour of outward achievements for Christ's cause and kingdom, will compensate, in His sight, for the absence of the fruits of the spirit. (*Ibid.*) *Promise and performance:* — This parable from history teaches us the worthlessness of religious promises that are never fulfilled, and the guilt of appearing to be fruit-bearers when the eye of God sees nothing but leaves. There is no sin in promises. Cherry-trees must issue their white and fragrant "promissory-notes" in May, or there would be no payment in delicious fruit at the end of the allotted sixty days. God makes precious promises to us; and a converted heart is only in the line of duty when it makes a solemn promise or covenant to the church and its head, Christ Jesus. There is no sin in a church-covenant honestly made. The sin is in breaking it. How full of leaves was the plausible fig-tree on the way to Bethany! How profuse of promises is many a young professor as he stands up laden with the foliage on which the dew-drops of hope are glistening! How much his pastor expects from him. He makes no reserve when he covenants to consecrate himself, all that he is, and all that he has, to the service of his Redeemer. For a time the glossy leaves of profession make a fair show. But when the novelty of the new position has worn off, and the times of reaction come, then the yoke begins to gall the conscience, and every religious duty becomes an irksome drudgery. The cross loses its charm; prayer loses its power; the Word of God ceases to attract; the very name of Jesus no longer possesses a charm; and church-membership has become a hateful mask, which its owner is ashamed to wear, and yet afraid to fling away. Before the world the fig-tree still bears leaves; but beneath them is utter barrenness. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Cursing of the fruitless fig-tree:*—I. The doom of things which do not meet the wants of the time. II. The terrific prospect of meeting a disappointed Christ. III. The perfect dominion of the spiritual over the material. IV. The vast possibilities of undoubting prayer. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The fig-tree cursed:*—I. THE FIG-TREE FLOURISHING. 1. Its nature, not a common thistle, from which men do not think to gather figs (Matt. vii. 16). But a fruit-bearing tree. 2. Its situation. By the wayside, provoking attention, and inviting inspection. Such human trees are often more anxious to be noticed than the really fruitful. 3. Its appearance. Covered with leaves. Therefore (ver. 19) fruit might be reasonably expected. It made a fair show and a bold promise. Do we in any wise resemble this tree? II. THE FIG-TREE EXAMINED. 1. The Lord was hungry—He needed fruit. He needs our fruitfulness. 2. It was seasonable as respects the tree. It outrivalled and surpassed the rest in forwardness—its time of figs had come. 3. It was carefully conducted; not a casual and distant glance. He knew without going, but went to show His care and awaken thought. III. THE FIG-TREE WITHERED. 1. Its leaves did not save it. Profession without reality there may be; but there will not long be reality without profession. 2. The Lord cursed it to show how hypocrisy deserves to be treated. By such the world is apt to be deceived, touching the nature of religion. Many have the form of godliness who deny the power. Their end is nigh. 3. Those who persevere in hypocrisy may be bereft of the power of producing fruit. Hypocritical and perfunctory habits destroy this power. Thus spiritual life withers away. Learn:—1. To be thankful that we are fruit-trees, not thistles. 2. To be anxious to be fruitful fruit-trees (Gal. v. 22; Eph. v. 9). 3. It is time for fruit directly the leaves begin to spring. With us NOW. (*J. C. Gray.*) *Self-forgetfulness of Christ:*—Our Lord's work lay chiefly in the city; thither, therefore, He repairs betimes, and forgot, for haste, to take His breakfast, as it may seem, for ere He came to the city He was hungry, though it was but a step

thither. A good man's heart is where his calling is: such an one, when he is visiting friends or so, is like a fish in the air; whereunto if it leap for recreation or necessity, yet it soon returns to its own element. (*John Trapp.*) *A fruitful profession:*—It is said of Rev. Dr. Franklin that he had a passion for fruitfulness. His signet-ring had, for a device, a fruit-bearing tree, with the motto from Psalm i. 3. And when near his end, being asked by his son and pastoral successor for some word of condensed wisdom to be treasured up as a remembrance and a prompter, he breathed into his ear the word, "Fruitful." *The hunger of Christ:*—Thou, that givest food to all things living, art Thyself hungry. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, kept not so poor a house but that Thou mightest have eaten something at Bethany. Whether Thy haste outran Thine appetite, or whether on purpose Thou forbearest repast, to give opportunity to Thine ensuing miracle, I neither ask nor resolve. This was not the first time that Thou wast hungry. As Thou wouldst be a man, so Thou wouldst suffer those infirmities that belong to humanity. Thou camest to be our High Priest; it was Thy act and intention, not only to intercede for Thy people, but to transfer unto Thyself, as their sins, so their weaknesses and complaints. But what shall we say to this Thine early hunger? The morning, as it is privileged from excess, so from need; the stomach is not wont to rise with the body. Surely, as Thy occasions were, no season was exempted from Thy want. Thou hadst spent the day before in the holy labour of Thy reformation: after a supperless departure, Thou spentest the night in prayer: no meal refreshed Thy toil. What do we think much, to forbear a morsel, or to break a sleep for Thee, who didst thus neglect Thyself for us? (*Bishop Hall.*) *Withering of the fruitless fig-tree:*—I. THE OCCURRENCE WHICH THE EVANGELIST DESCRIBES. 1. The Saviour's hunger. 2. The disappointment He met with. 3. The doom He pronounced. II. THE COMMENT MADE UPON IT BY THE DISCIPLES. "How soon is the fig-tree withered away," &c. 1. When this exclamation was uttered. 2. The feeling with which it was uttered. III. THE REPLY WHICH THIS REMARK CALLED FORTH FROM OUR LORD. 1. A wonderful assertion. "If ye have faith," &c. An encouraging promise. "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer," &c. (*Expository Outlines.*) *Profession:*—It is no good sign when all the sap goes up the leaves, and is spent that way; nor in a Christian, when all his grace shoots up into woods, a verbal goodness; no reality at all. (*Adams.*) *Profession:*—When the Interpreter had done, he takes them out into his garden again, and led them to a tree, whose inside was all rotten and gone, and yet it grew and had leaves. Then said Mercy, "What means this?" "This tree," said he, "whose outside is fair, and whose inside is rotten, is it to which many may be compared that are in the garden of God; who with their mouths speak high in behalf of God, but in deed will do nothing for Him; whose leaves are fair, but their heart good for nothing but to be tinder to the devil's tinder-box. (*Bunyan.*) *Profession:*—Our profession without practice is but hypocritical, making us resemble the stony ground which brought forth a green blade, but no fruit to due maturity; like the fig-tree, which, having leaves but no figs, was accursed; like the tree in the garden, which, cumbering the ground with its fruitless presence, was threatened to be cut down; like glow-worms, which have some lustre but no heat—seeing such professors shine with some light of knowledge, but without all warmth of Christian charity. (*Downame.*)

**Ver. 22. And all things whatsoever ye ask in prayer believing.**—*Faith in prayer:*—Alexander the Great had a famous but indigent philosopher in his court. This adept in science was once particularly straitened in his circumstances. To whom should he apply, but to his patron, the conqueror of the world. He no sooner made his request than it was granted. Alexander gave him a commission to receive of his treasury whatever he wanted. He immediately demanded, in his sovereign's name, ten thousand pounds. The treasurer, surprised at so large a demand, refused to comply; but waited upon the king, and told him of the request, remarking how unreasonable he thought the petition, and how exorbitant the sum. Alexander heard him with patience; but, as soon as he had ended his remonstrance, replied, "Let the money be instantly paid. I am delighted with this philosopher's way of thinking; he has done me a singular honour; by the largeness of his request he shows the high idea he has conceived both of my superior wealth and my royal munificence." We cannot honour God more than by believing what He says, and acting upon that faith in all our requests at His throne. *Prayer based on God's promise*:—prayer is the bow, the promise is the arrow; faith

is the hand which draws the bow, and sends the arrow with the heart's message to heaven. The bow without the arrow is of no use, and the arrow without the bow is of little worth, and both without the strength of the hand are to no purpose. Neither the promise without prayer, nor prayer without the promise, nor both without faith avail the Christian anything. What was said of the Israelites, "They could not enter in, because of unbelief," the same may be said of many of our prayers; they cannot enter heaven, because they are not put up in faith. (*Slater.*) *Literal answer to prayer:*—Some fifty years ago, one bitter January night, the inhabitants of the old town of Schleswig were thrown into the greatest distress and terror. A hostile army was marching down upon them, and new and fearful reports of the conduct of the lawless soldiery were hourly reaching the place. In one large, commodious cottage dwelt an aged woman with her widow daughter and a grandson. While all hearts quaked with fear, this saintly soul passed her time in crying out to God that He would "build a wall of defence round about them," quoting the words of an ancient hymn. Her grandson asked why she prayed for a thing so entirely impossible as that God should build a wall about their house, which should hide it; but she explained that her meaning only was that God should protect them in whatever way seemed to Him best. At midnight the dreaded tramp was heard, and the enemy came pouring in at every avenue, filling the houses to overflowing. But, while most fearful sounds were heard on every side, not even a knock came to their door; at which they were greatly surprised. The morning light cleared up the mystery; for, just beyond the house, the drifted snow had reared such a massive wall that it was impossible to get over it to them. "There!" said the good woman, triumphantly; "do you not see, my son, that God could raise up a wall around us?" *The influence of believing prayer has a good analogy in the daguerrotype:*—By means of this process the features of natural objects are thrown upon a sensitive sheet through a lens and leave their impression upon that sheet. So when the character of God is, by means of prayer, brought to bear upon the mind of the believer—the mind being rendered sensitive by the Holy Spirit—it impresses there the Divine image. In this manner the image of Christ is formed in the soul, the existence of which the Scriptures represent as inspiring the believer with the hope of glory. (*Walker.*) *The true theory of Christian prayer as the Object, the Medium, the Agent:*—This theory has its analogy in the worship of the Jewish economy, and in the worship of all religions. It is also in analogy with the general practice in petitioning or asking as between people and their rulers, children and parents, servants and masters. The principle involved in this doctrine of Christian worship has its illustrations in science. Let one suffice. An astronomer, for instance, has an impression that there is in a certain part of the heavens a star which he wants to discover. Now what is comprehended in his discovery of this star? The first necessary condition is the spirit of the science. This gives him the impression. By the influences of this spirit he has resort to the use of his glass. He relies on this as being sufficient for his purpose. He adjusts his glass between himself and the heavens. For days or weeks he may be in search of the star. At last his glass brings the object of his search to his sight. Observe the process of this discovery. Through the telescope, by the spirit of astronomy in him, he has found the star. Had he possessed the spirit without the glass, he could not have found the star; or had he possessed the glass without the spirit moving him to use it, he would not have found it. And observe, even with the spirit and the glass looking at the star, after its discovery, he sees not the star itself, but only its reflection through the glass. Thus no one prays without the spirit of prayer; and even with the spirit of prayer, he cannot come to God but through the Mediator, Jesus; and then as he comes through Jesus he only speaks to God through Him, and receives answers through Him. God and Christ without the Spirit are incomplete. The Spirit and Christ without God are insufficient. But God as the Object whom we seek, Christ as the Mediator through whom we seek, and the Spirit as the Agent by whom we seek, complete the scheme of prayer. (*J. Bate.*) *Object and nature of true prayer:*—I. The object of prayer. II. The nature of it. III. The obligations we are under to pray. IV. The great importance of faith in this holy exercise. Prayer is the unfeigned language of the heart. What we ask in prayer should be according to the Divine will. We must ask all in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ. (*John Townsend.*) *Believing prayer:*—The word *believing* is the key to any difficulty in accepting this declaration literally. We cannot believe whatever we please. It is only the Spirit of God who can enable a

man to believe that God will answer his prayer. Then He will grant the petition. Here it is necessary to notice that faith in Christ as your Saviour is one thing, while faith in the favourable answer of a particular prayer is another and distinct thing. You may have a firm faith in your Saviour, and yet not be able to "ask in faith, nothing wavering," when you offer up a particular petition, because you are not sure that it is according to the will of God. When God has absolutely promised any blessing, you ought to believe without doubting that the answer is certain. But we are wanted to pray in other cases when we have no specific promise to plead. "In all things make your requests known unto God." Your child may be dying; you pray for it; but have no specific promise that it will recover. Yet, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible," &c. But there is no promise that this kind of faith will be given. It may please God for the best of reasons to withhold it. Jesus Christ is God; He is King of Kings; He governs the universe. We must be in training with Him before we can be blessed. To this infinite spiritual Power and Presence we are invited to pray. By sense we perceive the visible world; by faith, the invisible. To our completeness faith is not less necessary than sight. It is even more necessary; for a blind man, by faith, may live a glorious life even on earth, where his bodily eyes are closed. And do we not all see in our dreams, when we are asleep, things far more beautiful than we ever see when we are awake? This is significant, surely. Every time we go to sleep we enter upon the confines of a spiritual world which our outward eyes cannot see. When we dream, we are consciously moving in a border-land, a wonder-land, where we see with other eyes than those of our visible bodies. So faith is a kind of spiritual vision. As Christians "we walk by faith, not by sight" merely. Moreover, faith is an inspiration and a power. It is mighty through God to the pulling down of our enemy's strongholds. Faith in God—faith in Christ as God—faith in the promises—faith in the efficacy of prayer—this it is that enables the joyful disciple to look down upon the distinctions which the world values most, as a full-grown man looks upon the painted toys of little children. Faith is not superstition. Faith in the invisible part of the Divine scheme, is the God-given function of every healthy soul. This implies confidence in God as the Hearer and Answerer of prayer—the God of truth whose promises not one word can fail. When He gives a petitioner faith in the success of His petition, then there can be no doubt but that He intends to answer. (*J. Aberigh-Mackay, M.A.*)

Ver. 28–32. **A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day.**—*Christian sonship and service:*—I. Christian sonship furnishes the best possible motives for Christian service. II. It furnishes the best possible facilities for Christian service. III. It makes Christian service imperative. (*A. H. Stoate.*) *A bad promise well broken; a good promise sacrificed:*—I. THOSE WHO OPENLY AND ABOVE BOARD REJECT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. I like a positive man, and not one half and half. If he turns he will be positive in the other direction. Break the infatuation now. Repent and go. II. Those who have been promising to become Christians, but all the time breaking their promises. When did you first promise? In sickness; in time of religious awakening. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Determined sinners have repented:*—Let it be recorded of you as was recorded of this young man in the text. He said: "I will not, but afterward he repented and went." Let me tell you, my brothers, that there have been men just as much set against religion as you are, and yet they surrendered to Christ. Do you know the story of John Bunyan, declaring that he would not go into the kingdom of God with an oath so horrid that even the abandoned people in the street tried to hush him up, and yet, in a little while dreaming a dream of heaven so sweet that the mere recital of it has enchanted all Christendom? Mr. Madden went to scoff at John Wesley while he preached, and the mere announcement of the text: "Prepare to meet thy God," converted him. Only a few months ago, in New York City, a man in indignation leaped with both feet upon the Bible, so did he hate it; yet in a few weeks after, he held that very Bible on his lap reading with tearful eyes the glorious promises. Some time ago, when we were worshipping in the Academy of Music, there came in three young men and three young ladies, evidently to make sport of the religious solemnities. In the early part of the services, they wrote notes, and laughed, and jeered. In the midst of the sermon, they bowed their heads. At the close of the services, all six rose up with tearful eyes, begging for the prayers of God's people. Oh, it is a mighty gospel, charged with the invitations and the condemnations of hell. (*Ibid.*) *Address to young men:*—I. What God

looks for in all of us—work. 1. Inward. 2. Outward. II. The danger of a fallacious promise is greater than the danger of a hasty refusal. The son who said, "I go, sir," was the one who went not. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The two sons:*—1. Our Lord does not intend to approve of the conduct of the first son in every respect, "I will not." True there was no hypocrisy about him; still he was disobedient with all his frankness. Some seem to imagine they will be forgiven for being sinners because they have never pretended to be saints. Is a man less the enemy of God because he is outspoken? 2. That our Lord does not approve of this son's conduct as a whole, as if it were the only proper way of meeting God's command. It was well that he repented; but would have been better if he had not refused. It is best to save the reflection of a wasted past. 3. Our Lord does not design to condemn the making of a promise to God when that is done sincerely and performed earnestly. I. THE NATURE OF THE COMMAND WHICH GOD MAKES ON EVERY ONE TO WHOM THE GOSPEL COMES. "Go work," &c. 1. The test of sincerity is in deeds. Words are valuable only as the expression of an inward spirit. Works are the manifestation of our love to God; not the means of procuring His love for us. 2. The peculiar nature of the work by which our love and life are to be manifested, "Go work in my vineyard." Cultivate all the fruits of the Spirit. 3. The promptitude of the obedience which is required—"to-day." 4. The tender nature of the appeal which God makes—"son." Sonship is not incompatible with service. It only transmutes that service into joy. II. THE DANGER OF MAKING AN INSINCERE CONFESSION OF GOD. To the chief priests and scribes our Lord said, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you." Their difficulties were subjective. The insincere state of soul makes it harder for priests to enter the kingdom of heaven than for harlots to repent of their sins. Besides self-complacency which is produced by insincerity, there is also a hardening influence connected with it. It dims the moral perceptions. III. IN THIS PARABLE CHRIST MEANT TO ENCOURAGE SINNERS OF THE VILEST DESCRIPTION TO REPENT AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. "The publicans and harlots enter the kingdom." "Let the wicked forsake his way," &c. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Swift tongue; slow foot:*—I. The first characteristic of the swift tongue and slow foot is UNBELIEF. "I go, sir." Notions constitute their religion; there is no operative faith. No mere notion will ever affect a character. II. Another characteristic of the swift tongue and slow foot is INDIFFERENCE. Truth must be interesting to us to be impressive. III. Another impediment is in THE MANIFOLDNESS OF INTELLECTUAL OBJECTS—wit, learning, and imagination may impede the man who says, "I go, sir." His attention may be diverted from the main object; he is wise, but not unto salvation. IV. Every man has one load to carry which retards him in his journey. One besetting sin. V. Religion will only become the law of life when it too becomes a ruling passion. "Oh, how love I Thy law," &c. This will unite our connections to our actions. (*E. Paxton Hood.*) *Occasional goodness:*—Some people seem to take out their religion once a week to give it an airing; or, it is like a ticket taken at a station, put into the pocket until the end of the journey. Visit Versailles, near Paris; all its magnificent fountains on the week day are dry and repulsive, grass-grown, weed-covered. Visit them on the Sabbath day (on which day I beg to say I have never seen them) and they are tossing all their glorious waters high in the air; every Neptune, triton, or nymph flashing forth in the splendour of the magnificent water shower—a fair sad picture of Sabbath religion. How different from the flowing river, always pouring its musical, fertile, and irrigating stream! Some faiths are technical, temporary, and occasional; they are like the waterworks, or the fountain on a fête day; then the bolts are turned, and the fountains cease to play. On certain great occasions, or in certain public forms, we are saying, "I go, sir," and the largest portion of other times is showing that *we go not.* We enter not, because of unbelief. (*Ibid.*) *A hasty refusal and a wise retractation:*—I. THE IMPORTANT COMMAND ISSUED. The nature of the work to which the gospel calls. It is extensive, important, arduous, delightful, profitable. It may be divided into—1. That which respects God. 2. That which regards ourselves. 3. That which concerns others. II. THE HASTY REFUSAL GIVEN. "I will not." 1. The natural aversion of the heart. 2. The sinful love of ease. 3. Their occupation in other pursuits. III. THE WISE RETRACTATION MADE. 1. The change stated (1) Its nature, "He repented." (2) Its fruit, "And went." (3) Its period, "Afterward." 2. The wisdom it evinces. It is wise to retract: refusal is (1) Against your best interests. (2) Betrays the greatest ingratitude to God. (3) Issues in eternal ruin. Address—1. Those who have complied with the command. 2. Those who are refusing. 3. Those who have complied only in profession.

(*E. Temple*). *Truth to rule the life must awaken personal interest*:—All truth is true, but what if it be uninteresting? it becomes unimpressive and useless. Truth we apprehend to be necessary to our well-being; what a difference if I should strike a man on the shoulder, and say, "The three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles;" or if I should say to him, "Your house is on fire!" "Your child has just been run over and killed!" Truth is truth; but if men are not interested in it, it will not influence the life. What a difference there is between furniture in the lumber-room, or auctioneer's shop, and furniture in the household room! It is not enough that we apprehend truth to be good and valuable, if it do not influence the will and the affections. (*Ibid.*) *Man organized with a principle of instantaneity*:—We have received, happily, a constitution which is adapted to the exigencies of human life. Men's minds do not act as printer's types do, every letter being selected, and every sentence being spelt out, and, when it is stamped, being stamped complete. Men, on the other hand, are so organized that they have in every part of their nature an element of what may be called *instantaneity*—the instantaneous effusion of feeling; the immediate perception of what is best or not best; a recognition of what is good or what is bad, what is right or what is wrong, what is safe or what is dangerous—instantaneousness of purpose. This element or principle of instantaneity of course varies. The dull and lethargic are slow; the intermediate are faster than this extreme, and less rapid than the other extreme; and the more finely organized, the higher, natures have it so that it flashes and plays without any perceptible pause between the impulses and the result. But all have it; without it life would be impossible. When men walk the very body has it. If a man should be obliged, as one that is just getting out from an attack of inflammatory rheumatism, or as one who is in the last stages of lumbago (and I speak feelingly), to pick his way as he walks, and think, "That brick is set a little sidewise," and to calculate and say, "How many inches must I lift my foot, to step over it?" how long do you think it would take him to walk from Brooklyn to New York? Going and coming back would consume almost the whole day, and the errands of life would be neglected. But a man in health is not obliged to do this. The foot itself does the calculating. The foot sees without your thinking or seeing. It rises and lowers of its own accord. You instinctively avoid the slough. You leap the little gulfs. You know the best way to accommodate your whole body to the ten thousand varying conditions of matter. The law of gravitation, of light, of heat, of magnetism, of liquidity or solidity, of things sharp or blunt—all these the body, without any care on your part, attends to. No man walks into a mortar-bed. No man stumbles over a sand-heap. Men jump, not on iron fences, but on feather-beds; and having jumped, they never get up and say, "Ah! what if we had not thought of that! How lucky it was!" Suppose a man were obliged, for all the operations of the body, to have a little monitor in his mind that should be on the look-out for him, and he should say, "If I lift my hand so and so, or do so and so with it, I shall have rheumatism in the shoulder, and therefore I won't do it?" What if such calculation as that had to be made before every movement of the body? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The benefit of momentary illumination*:—When, after long, long days of sailing during which no reckoning has been taken by the lost mariner, there opens, for half an hour, a rift in the cloud, he gets a view of the sun, and instantly he takes an observation; and then the cloud shuts again. Ah! but he has had an observation. The days are dark, and the storm continues; but he has had an observation, and that is of great advantage. But how much better it would have been if the storm had cleared away and given him a calm sea and an unobscured sky! Yet a momentary observation was better than nothing. (*Ibid.*) *Culture the faint impulse to a nobler life*:—Therefore I say to every man in my presence: Do not neglect the impulses to a nobler life. Do not put them away from you. Do not prove dishonest and tricky with any of those movements in yourself which indicate that the germ of Divine life is in you. "A child is drowned! a child is drowned!" this is the cry that goes through the whole village; and the mother, well-nigh bereft of reason, dashes wildly out as they are bearing the limp, helpless body, with long streaming hair, by her door. The physician is sped for, and the neighbours are there. "She's dead! she's dead! she's dead!" cries the mother, "she's dead! she's dead! she's dead! My only child! my only child! my only child!" They would comfort her, and they say, "Oh, do not be so despondent—do not be so despondent." "Dead! dead! Those eyes will never see me again. She's dead! she's dead!" And still the workers will not give over. But

at last they say, "Yes, she *is* dead." Then, with a strange fantasy of opposition, the mother cries again, "She is *not* dead; she *cannot* be dead; she *shall not* be dead." And she lays hands upon her, and says, "I *know* she is not dead." And she gazes in anguish, until a little quiver is seen upon the lip, "Oh, my God! she is *not* dead." The eyes do not see, the ears do not hear, the hands do not move, the heart cannot be felt; but there is that little quiver of the lip. "There's life there! there's life there! there's life there!" Yes, there *is* life there; and now they come again, and remedies are applied, and the still form quickens, and the mother's faith is rewarded, and she takes the living child back to her bosom. O thou that hast in thee but the quiver of the lip, but the trembling of the eye, but the faintest pulsation of the heart, God, thine Everlasting Father, beholds it; and He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till He bring forth judgment unto victory. There is victory for you; there is hope for you; there is salvation for you. Oh, despise not the striving of the Spirit. Begin, accept, hold fast, and thou shalt be saved. (*Ibid.*) *Say well and do well*:—Work of God in world not done yet. His vineyard still needs digging and tending, pruning and cultivating. I. EVERY MAN HAS A MISSION FROM GOD. Cannot discharge himself of responsibility by openly professing not to obey. God's claim proportionate to our ability and opportunity. II. THIS MISSION IS "WORK." God says, "Come," before He says, "Go;" "Love Me," before "Work for Me." He seeks not enforced toil of slaves, but cheerful obedience of sons. God's vineyard is not a playground in which to take our ease. III. THE SCENE OF THIS "WORK" IS GOD'S VINEYARD. We are to make our own lives, and those of our fellows, as *faithful* as we can. For what spiritual sphere then does this figure stand? 1. Our own hearts. 2. Our own households. 3. Scenes of daily life. 4. Church and its institutions. Wherever you *can* labour for God, that is the part of the vineyard to which He calls you. And *whatever* you can do for Him, that is the work He bids you do. IV. THE "WORK" IS PRESSING AND URGENT—to be done "to-day." V. HOW MEN TREAT THE COMMAND. 1. Some profess to obey, but really disobey. Still call themselves Christians. Would shrink from renouncing their profession. Not hypocrites. When they said they would go, they meant it. But imperceptibly religion has dwindled down with them from its grand and beautiful reality to a mere soul-saving apparatus. 2. Others refuse at first, but afterwards obey. No justification here of first refusal. The son who repented and went is approved, not wholly, but by contrast with his brother. Nor could even he do all his father bade. For already the sun had climbed high into the heavens, and part of the precious day was gone. We cannot recall misused past. Waste no longer the golden hours. (*J. R. Bailey.*) *Work for God*:—We are all ready to say that work for God is a noble thing. What we need is to see that we ourselves may all do work for God if we try. There are some who complain that they can do nothing. "I am wearing away my life in business; I have to toil for my family; my life is frittered away in such trifling every-day tasks. I, at least, shall have nothing to show in the end for my life." Nay, but that very commonplace work of yours is work for God. It must be done; you have to do it; and, therefore, God Himself, who placed you where you are, gave you that work to do. I. OFFER EACH DAY'S WORK TO GOD. Ask Him to help you to do it well and diligently, because it is His. Make your daily act of self-dedication. II. BE ON THE WATCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES. Make it your aim and desire to be gathering with God, rooting up evil where you can, fostering the growth of good where possible; shedding the light around you which may win souls to safety. III. BE CONTENT TO DO LITTLE THINGS WELL. *Your* work for God may consist wholly in very little things. The poor lone woman whose home was on the cliff in the dangerous coast, knew of but one good thing she could do. She could keep her little candle burning in her window to warn off those who came near the danger. It was but a little thing; it may have cheered a few, it may even have saved one or two. Who doubts but that her little loving effort was a glorious brightness in the Master's sight? (*R. H. Parr, M.A.*) *Promptness in work*:—We should aim at being too active to stagnate, too busy to freeze. We should endeavour to be like Cromwell, who not only struck while the iron was hot, but made it hot by striking—like the missionary who said, "If there be happiness on earth, it is in labouring in the service of Christ—like the blessed Redeemer Himself, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God. The vineyard must be cultivated; and the command is that we enter it and work. (*Christian Treasury.*) *He repented: change of mind for the better unusual*:—There are but few who turn and do their duty after having once refused. Men will be as big as their words, though they die for it, lest they should be accounted inconsistent.

These are niggardly of their reputation, but prodigal of their souls. (*John Trapp.*) *The two sons; a contrast:*—I. THE RUDE BUT OBEDIENT SON: 1. What he said, "I will not." This very rude, very unfilial. A reasonable request unreasonably rejected. 2. What he did, "repented." Thought of his *father's* kindness, and *his* duty. Did not go and tell his father he was sorry for what he had said, but by his conduct proved his sorrow. This is true repentance. II. THE POLITE BUT DISOBEDIENT SON. 1. What *he* said, "I go, sir." This right, pleasing to the father, becoming in a son. 2. What *he* did, "went not." His obedience mere profession and words, not real. "Leaves," but not fruit. Learn: Many, like the *rude* son, have said they would not serve God, but afterwards have repented. *You* have *said* the former; have you *done* the latter? Many, like the *polite* son, have shown the promise of goodness that you have never kept. Will you keep it now, by working *to-day* in the vineyard? (*The Hive.*) *Profession and practice:*—I. Dissect the characters here contrasted. The second well-meaning, good-intentioned, emotional, shallow, flippant, great in promising. The first, rude, dissolute, hardened, profligate. II. Review their conduct. The second saying, not doing; the father's disappointment; men by action seem to say, "I go," but remain where they are. The first became thoughtful, wondered that such a son as he should be asked by the father to do anything: "repented and went." III. Enforce the inquiry. Obeying God lies in *doing* His will, not in mere empty promises of amendment. (*Anon.*) *The parable of the two sons:*—I. AS HOLDING FORTH THE COMMAND OF GOD TO HIS CREATURES. His command is distinguished by three characters. 1. It is affectionate, "My son." 2. It is practical, "Work." 3. It is urgent, "To-day." II. THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS REGARDED. 1. One proves better than he promises. 2. One promises better than he proves. Are you saying, "I will not"? What nonsense, what madness! Are you saying, "I go, sir." Beware of insincerity. (*W. Jay.*) I. THE MANNER OF THE ADDRESS. 1. It denotes authority. 2. It is the voice of affection. II. THE GENERAL REQUISITION WHICH IS MADE—"Go work." 1. There are difficulties which must be conquered. 2. There are duties which must be performed. 3. The great design of heaven cannot be accomplished without labour. III. THE SCENE ALLOTTED FOR LABOUR. 1. You are to be regulated in all your labours by your Father's revealed will. 2. Cultivation is suggested by the text. IV. THE PROMPTITUDE OF ATTENTION IS REQUIRED. 1. Go work to-day. 2. To-morrow may be too late. 3. The responsibility which is attached to the use of present advantages. 4. There is a great danger of losing religious impressions. 5. What effect has the command in the text produced upon you? 6. Encouragement to labour. 7. You will not be left to yourselves. (*R. Winter, D.D.*) *The two sons:*—I. WHO PROMISED NOT, AND WENT? Did not promise, but rudely refused. This wrong. He repented. How many refuse who never repent! To be inconsistent with rash vows and wicked resolutions is the highest consistency—what many call consistency is often only stubbornness and hardness of heart. What induced this repentance? The great goodness of his father; his own ingratitude; the importance of the work. Have we ever thought of these things? Without repenting. II. WHO PROMISED, AND WENT NOT. Very ready with words—right words too. Spoken to obtain present rest—to put the father off, &c. How many patronize religion, and speak fair! How many intend to be religious! How long and how often have we promised thus! Do we ever intend to keep our word? When? III. WHO OBEYED. The first. To one of the two classes represented by these sons we very likely belong. We have all been called to work. We have met the call either by a bold refusal, or by a fair promise. How have we ended? May God give us grace to do His will. (*J. C. Gray.*) *Our work:*—I. THE VINEYARD. 1. This vineyard is the property of God. 2. The cultivation of this vineyard is committed to the Church. 3. The Church has neglected her duty in reference to this vineyard. II. THE WORK. III. THE WORKMEN. Their qualifications: 1. Ardent piety. 2. Fixed religious principles. 3. Accurate information. 4. A liberal spirit. 5. Prayer. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*) *The two sons:*—1. The argument of the appeal lay upon the sonship. 2. A call to grace is a call to work. 3. There is the instantaneousness of the obedience, "To-day." The reception, "I will not." Why that son will not work in his father's vineyard. 1. He did not really know or love his father. 2. He liked the imaginary independence which he felt in being his own master outside. 3. Doubtless the labour inside contrasted unfavourably in his mind with the gaiety outside. 4. The urgency of the demand little suited his desultory and procrastinating mind. 5. Perhaps some foolish windings of entangled thought had got into his mind, "I can't command my will." But he

changed and went. His Father's will was still echoing in his heart. The vineyard appeared in happier aspect. His sentiments towards His Father changed. When he went he probably proved himself a better worker than if he went at first. This parable teaches—1. That there is a free will in you for which you are responsible. 2. God's patience is perfectly marvellous. 3. The garden of the Lord, His Church, is ready for you. 4. God and angels are working there. 5. Many are now working there in liberty and gladness who once said, "I will not." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*

*The moral nature injured by the stimulation of unfulfilled impulse:*—Then what was the matter with them? Why did they act so? It was because they were under the influence of an exterior pressure. While there was a mind interpreting there the truth to them, they accepted it; but, the moment that influence ceased to be exerted upon them, they fell back into themselves. There was no root of that thing in them. At the first opportunity, all their under-nature worked again, just as it had worked before. That is the reason why so many persons listen, resolve, feebly try, and fail miserably. So that I sometimes think going to church hurts people. I know that going to church hurts some people. There are persons who go into church, and are stimulated and lifted up, and then they go out again, and fall back into their own old nature, and act just as if they had not been stimulated; and they go in again, and are stimulated and lifted up again, and then they go out, and fall back again. Their nature accommodates itself to the different circumstances, and they get used to them. Being lifted up and lowered, lifted up and lowered, the operative capacity of their sensibilities is lost out, and they get into a sort of medium condition, in which they remain all the rest of their lives, no longer competent to carry out any generous impulse which they may have. A moral enamel comes over them; so that, though they feel somewhat, there is a disconnection between feeling and willing—between feeling as a moral emotion, and willing organized as a power of action—between transient feeling and the embodiment of feeling into character, which is the great end and drift of education in human life. This power of turning a momentary emotion to a permanent benefit they have lost; and when they have lost that, they have lost all nerve. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

*Aids to weak impulses:*—Where persons have good impulses, but are feeble in carrying them out, we see the wisdom of the Divine ordination of business, of society, of the family, and of the Church; for there are persons who are like pea-vines that need to be staked, in order that they may stand up. They have not strength enough to support themselves. If they had not something to lean upon they would be beaten to the ground by every rain. Many and many a feeble nature has power to stand in alliance with a stronger nature, and to climb on a stronger nature, and so to be saved instead of being lost. Even the household does that for the individual which he could not do for himself. So it comes to pass that persons are not only virtuous, but high-minded when at home, who, when public duty takes them to Washington or Albany, sink into the mire. About nine men in every ten cannot afford to leave home. Their coarseness, their temper, their passions, which at home are restrained by duty, by love, by various influences, spring forth when they are abroad. The restraints from vice and the inspiration of excellence being taken away, having no root in themselves, they fall. (*Ibid.*)

*Impulsive goodness may conceal craft:*—When a farmer wants to catch wild turkeys, building his pen in the woods, and digging his trench, he strews corn along. He must be a miser who would grudge enough corn to catch a dozen turkeys; and crafty men must be mean and selfish indeed if they cannot spare enough disinterestedness to catch you with. And so they bait themselves with good nature, with jollity, and with wit; and people say of them, oftentimes, "Now that man has a great deal that is good about him." Yes, it is *about* him. There are men of whom it is said, "Oh, well, a man had better look out for him in the end, but still he has very good qualities." He is a pleasant fellow; but under all his pleasantness there is craft. I have seen mosquitoes. They are very delicately organized creatures. They have beautiful wings, looked at through the microscope; they sing a very sweet tenor; and if you notice how they sit down on you nothing is more graceful. Lighting, they hush their song; and it is not until they have found the right place that they commence sucking your blood. And there are men in the world that are just like them. Blood is what they want. That is the reason of their gauzy flight and their singing about you. Since it is blood they want they take the way to get it. (*Ibid.*)

*A resurrection of dead resolutions:*—If men are afraid to go by graveyards, for fear that here and there some sheeted ghost will peer over the wall and chatter at them, what would they

think if, out of every sepulchre, there should come up a peering, gibbering ghost, and the yard should be full of pallid spectres? Who would go past it under such circumstances? And if God Almighty should give resurrection to all the times in which you have most solemnly entertained and enfranchised noble resolutions, and then buried them ignominiously; if He should call up to your memory all the virtues, all the soul-fruits, which have been drawn out of you by the Sun of Righteousness, and which you have trampled under foot, who of you could stand in your own presence, or in the presence of any congregation. (*Ibid.*) *The two sons*:—I. THE CASE WHICH IS HERE PRESENTED. 1. An important command. (1) What is required—work. (2) The sphere of labour. (3) The period specified. 2. The manner in which it was treated. (1) A rude refusal, followed by an agreeable change. (2) A ready and respectful assent, but the promise so promptly made was shamefully broken. II. THE APPLICATION WHICH IS HERE MADE. 1. The question proposed, "Whether of them twain," &c. Far preferable to be a late penitent than a confirmed formalist. 2. The startling truth declared, "Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you." How fearless and faithful his address. 3. The solemn charge substantiated, "For John came unto you in the way of righteousness," &c. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The parable of the two sons*:—I. SHOW YOU WHENCE IT IS THAT SOME PERSONS DO MAKE PRESENT PROMISES TOUCHING FUTURE FAITH AND HOLINESS. They make these present promises from these common convictions and illuminations of the Word and Spirit of God. 1. These may be convinced by the law of God that sin is a great evil. 2. They may see that if they die in this condition they are undone for ever. 3. They may make these promises from the nature of an accusing conscience. 4. They may be the effect of sin, affliction, or judgment. II. WHY DO THESE PROMISES SELDOM END IN REAL PERFORMANCES? 1. It is from the grand agent that stirs them up to make these promises, which is the devil. Satan cares not what promises sinners make to become good, if he can hinder them from closing in with Christ at present. 2. Present promises and resolutions touching future faith seldom end in real performance. (1) Because it is they design to be wicked at the present. (2) Because they have but a partial work upon their hearts, their hearts are divided, though their judgments be enlightened their wills are not bowed. (3) Because they are made in opposition to the Divine command, "To-day." God will not assist a man to perform such promises that are made in contempt of His authority. (4) Because such promises are made only in the strength of the creatures. (*B. Keach.*) *Immediate obedience wise*:—Because moral indisposition to close with Christ may be more increased to-morrow than it is to-day; sin is of a hardening nature; if a man, as soon as taken sick, looks out for, or sends for a physician, there may be more hopes he may be cured, than if he should neglect any means until this distemper hath got greater power, and his natural strength is wasted. It is easier to break a colt and bring him to the saddle, than it is an old horse that runs wild in the wilderness; a young plant is sooner plucked up than an old tree. To speak after the manner of men, all know that these things are so, though it is true God can as soon subject the rebellious will of an old sinner as one that is young; yet since this is the Lord's time, viz., even to-day, from what I have said, you may learn wisdom. (*Ibid.*) *Christian diligence*:—An eminent divine was suffering under chronic disease, and consulted three physicians. They declared, on being questioned by the sick man, that his disease would be followed by death in a shorter or longer time, according to the manner in which he lived; but they unanimously advised him to give up his office, because, in his situation, mental agitation would be fatal to him. "If," inquired the divine, "I give myself up to repose, how long, gentlemen, will you guarantee my life?" "Probably six years," answered the doctors. "And if I continue in office?" "Three years at most." "Your servant, gentlemen," he replied, "I should prefer living two or three years in doing some good, to living six years in idleness." *Work for Jesus*:—I. The character under which it calls us. II. The service to which the Lord calls us, "Go *work*." III. The time, "*To-day*." IV. The place where the Lord calls us to work, "In *my* vineyard." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Lost opportunities*:—A dying soldier, who had enlisted as a Christian, but had for three years, though a man of uprightness and integrity, done nothing to make known the name of Christ, said, "I die as a Christian; and I die contented; but oh, if I could have died as a Christian worker!" "I am peaceful and assured in view of death," he said again, "but I am not joyful and glad; those three lost years keep coming back upon me." Then, lying a moment quiet with closed eyes, he added, "Chaplain,

do you suppose we shall be able to forget anything after death? If so, I should like to forget those three years!" *Opportunities neglected*:—A prisoner is under sentence of death. The fatal hour of execution is concealed from him, but he is told that if before it strikes he petitions the governor, his life will be spared. He says, "I'll send to-morrow," and when to-morrow comes he says again, "Oh, there's time enough yet; I'll wait a little longer." Suddenly his dungeon doors open, and behold the sheriff and the executioners! "Oh, wait, and I'll sign the petition." "No," they say, "the clock has struck; it's too late—you must die." The opportunity has been lost. "You are almost through this world," said a chaplain to a soldier, once a Sabbath scholar, who was in the last stages of disease. "Am I?" said he. "Yes, and I hope you are ready for the next." "No, I am not—not ready, not ready." "Well, my dear friend, Jesus is all ready, and waiting right here. Come, now. Shall I pray?" "Oh, no, no; it is too late, too late! I ought to have come long ago." And then he told the chaplain, as calmly as he could, of the time when he was "almost a Christian," and decided to let it pass till another winter. "That was the time, I might have come then, why didn't I? why didn't I?" and, pulling the blanket over his face, he sobbed aloud. It was in vain that the visitor sought to reason him out of his horrid despair, he only motioned him away, crying, "Don't talk to me any more—it's too late, I can't bear it." *General drift of the parable*:—As a whole, this parable shows us how God is served by men, and shows us especially that though there are greater and less degrees of disobedience and impenitence, there is no such thing as consistent uniform obedience. The best that God gets from earth is the obedience of repentance. Men must still, each for himself, try their own way, and only when this is found to be quite foolish and hurtful and hopeless, do they try God's way. No one can take God's word for it that such and such are the things to be done; such and such others to be avoided. We must for ourselves know good and evil, we must be as gods making choice between the good that sin brings and its evil, and if then God's judgment about sin tallies with our own we accept it. Such a thing as simple, perpetual acceptance of God's commands from first to last is not to be found; and repentance, though certainly to be rejoiced over, is, after all, only the second-best thing. Apology, however sincere, is at all times a very poor substitute for conduct that needs none. And yet you will often see that a man considers that a graceful apology, whether to God or men, more than repairs the wrong he has done. It is, no doubt, right to be convinced we have been wrong; it is right to turn in to God's vineyard, even though it be after refusing to do so; but that complacency should mingle with our repentance is surely a triumph of duplicity. To make our very confession of total unprofitableness matter of self-gratulation is surely the extreme of even religious self-deception. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *The necessity of work*:—The vineyard yields us spontaneous fruit. Man must work, and he must work in the line of God's laws—observing the demands of the plant, supplying the conditions of atmosphere and soil—or else no rich vintage will gladden the hills or reward his toil. And so in the culture of the soul. It is not through rest, but through action—not in seclusion, but by brave labour out in the open field, under the noontide and under the dew—that its powers are to be developed and its highest possibilities attained. You must not suppose, however, that in insisting upon the great truth that the proper issue and the proof of a real Christianity are in action and work, in the doing by each one of us of his Father's business in the world, I would put dishonour upon the subjective side of the religious life. This, too, with its seasons of retirement, of quiet meditation, of self-recollection, of communion with God who is the Fountain of all power, is necessary. Nay, more than this: it is the condition precedent and absolutely essential to the highest life and best action of the soul. It is here in the life of the soul as in the life of the material universe. Nature has her seasons of apparent rest when she gathers her energies in secret chambers and in silent ways. But these gathered energies only reveal their value and reach their proper end when they pass out into action and clothe the world with bloom and fruit and beauty for the use and service of men. And this great truth, like every other great moral and spiritual truth, finds illustration in the life of Christ. He retires again and again from the multitude to the secret oratories of the desert and the mountain-top. But the full meaning and purpose of His retirement are made manifest when He comes forth again, with all His spiritual energies refreshed, to labour and suffer more devotedly for men, and so to do His Father's work in the world. The danger against which I would warn you is the belief that Christianity is simply a doctrine or a sentiment. It is these;

but above all it is, as the fruition of these, a life and a work. What the world needs to-day, but what, alas! our saintliness not seldom fails to give, is this living, loving, labouring piety. What in this hour our religion lacks especially is red blood. It wants, in place of its too often sickly complexion—the paleness, as it were, of the cloisters—the rich tan of a vigorous health, which comes only from brave and devoted labour under all the changing skies. And so the command comes to you and to me, "Son, daughter, go out and work." It bids us leave our shaded hermit-caves in the valley, come down from our high peaks of mere religious sentiment or rhapsody, and go, each one of us, to his own proper field along the hot and stony hillsides of our life, toiling there with energy and patience and devotion until the whole landscape shall hang thick with the burdened vines. (*W. Rudder, D.D.*) *God's vineyard everywhere*:—Am I wrong in saying that when this command reaches us, the common interpretation of it is that we are thus bidden to enter upon distinctly religious exercises and observances, and that the command goes no further? Church, prayers, sacraments, spiritual exercises—these cover and limit the vineyard of God. And then the assumption is that as this enclosure is God's vineyard, so, on the other hand, the so-called world and the life in the world are each man's personal property, to do with as seems to him best. When, *e.g.*, you go to-morrow from the services of to-day, or from the devotions of your closets, to your evils or to your pleasures, you leave one territory and enter upon another. But there is no such separation or distinction in the command. God, be assured, does not limit His vineyard by the boundaries of Church or sacrament or prayer. He sends out His voice into the very thick of the crowd to-morrow, and that voice follows you wherever you may be, in the street or the office or the study, in the counting-house or the workshop, on the large and public arena or in any narrowest corner where some poor woman endures and labours patiently for love and God's dear sake. Here is my vineyard; here work out your salvation; here, amid these seemingly most unfavourable conditions, gather sweetness and beauty, strength and glory into your souls; here prove yourselves true sons and daughters of God, and know that in all your ways, the hardest and darkest, your steps are directed by a Father's care, and over all is His unsleeping love. How this truth brightens and ennobles all our life—lightening labour and sorrow by love and the consciousness of being loved, and changing the meanest drudgeries to worship and praise! (*Ibid.*) *To-day*:—"To-day!" It is our privilege, our opportunity, our responsibility. "To-day!" It is the flower of all the past, it contains within itself all the possibilities of the future. And this priceless treasure is in the hands of every one of us, the poorest and the humblest. But, "to-morrow!" It stands behind the curtain of the midnight, under the seal of all the stars. The richest man in all this rich England, who owns vast landed estates, who owns rich ships coming homeward across all the tossing seas, owns not one second of to-morrow. (*Ibid.*) *Religious profession*:—The second son gives his answer in the one word "I," as if he meant, "Oh! you need have no doubt about me. I am ready. I am at your service. My brother is a shameless fellow, but as for me you have only to command me." This son takes it for granted he is the dutiful son; he puts no pressure on himself to secure obedience; he is conscious of no necessity to guard against temptations to forgetfulness, indolence, selfishness. He takes for granted that no deficiency will be found in him, and his complacency is his ruin. We all know this kind of man: the tradesman to whom you give elaborate instructions, and who assures you he will send an article precisely to your mind, but actually sends you what is quite useless for your purposes; the friend who bids you leave the matter to him, but who has no sooner turned the corner of the street than he meets some one whose conversation puts you and your affairs quite out of his mind. If promising had been all that was wanted no community could have been more godly than Jerusalem. These priests and elders spent their lives in professing to be God's people. Their day was filled with religious services. They had no secular business at all; they were identified with religion; their whole life was a proclamation that they were God's servants, and a profession of their willingness to obey And yet they failed to do the one thing they were there to do—to prepare for and receive the Messiah. Their whole profession collapsed like a burst bubble; they were proved to be shams, to be dealing in mere words with no idea of realities. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *Ready to promise, but slow to perform*:—Hypocrites purpose oft, and promise fair to do better, but drive off and fail in the performance; their morning cloud is soon dispersed, their early dew is quickly dried up, their heartless essays come to nothing. The philo-

sopher liked not such as are always about to live better, but never begin. A divine complains that the goodness of many is like the softness of a plum, soon crushed; but their wickedness is like the stone in the plum, hard and inflexible. (*John Trapp.*) *Doing God's will:*—This is plain; for what was the will of the father, but that they should do the work He had set them to do? This the latter did not. The father's will was not only that the son should give him a cap and a knee and compliment him, but that he should go to work in the vineyard. It is the least part of God's will that men should give Him good words, be a little complimental and ceremonious toward Him; but that they should repent and believe and obey His Gospel. This some publicans and harlots did; the generality of the Pharisees refused. It is a hard thing to convince a moral, righteous, civil man, that he lacks anything to salvation; and hence it is that profane persons many times repent, believe, and are saved, when others perish in their impenitency and unbelief because they think they have no need of repentance, or any further righteousness than they are possessed of. (*Matthew Pool.*) *Go, work to-day:*—Work and give, for the night cometh:—A missionary in the West Indies having called on the people for a little help in spreading the gospel, a negro came forward, and putting his hand in one pocket pulled out some silver, saying, "That for me, massa;" and another parcel from another pocket, "That's for my wife, massa;" and another still, making in all upwards of twelve dollars, "That's for my child, massa." When asked if he was not giving too much, he said, "God's work must be done, massa, and I may be dead." Let us do and let us give what we can. God's work must be done, and we may be dead! *Well-wishing not well-doing:*—The second son appears the more amiable at first than the other, though he was worse. The first son seems to have been one of those men who are rough externally, with a good heart inwardly, who speak rudely, but make it up in activity afterwards. Their tongue is hard, hasty, perverse; but their heart rebukes the hardness of the tongue, and rises up to repair by kindness the rude utterance. The second son was one of those compliant creatures who promise everything and perform nothing. They are subjects of universal impressibility. They feel the slightest influence, and yield to it a certain way, but only in a certain degree, and that this side of any profit. They never convert impressions to ideas. They never ripen impulses to purposes. They never change emotions to principles, nor principles to fixed habits. They cry easily, they love easily, they give up easily, they fall back easily, but like an aspen leaf that is moving the whole day, they are at the same place at night as in the morning. They quiver but do not change, and for ever moving, and for ever stationary. A large class of men, in every community, are drawn to the church who are of this kind, and may be called well-wishers *to* religion, but not well-doers *in* religion. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) *Wishing and willing:*—To *wish* and to *will* are very different things. There are a thousand men who wish, where there is one who wills. *Wishing* is but a faint state of desire. *Willing* is a state of the reason, and of the affections, and of the will, in activity, to secure what one desires. A man may wish and yet reject all the steps and instruments by which that wish can be carried into effect. No man wills until he has made up his mind not only to have the end, but to have all the steps intermediately by which that end is to be secured. *Doing* requires concentration of purpose. Doing has both hands and feet, and uses them. Wishing has neither, or else, having them, puts neither of them to use. (*Ibid.*) *A mist of well-wishing:*—As a cloud of silvery mist drops down over a ship and shuts it in, so that it cannot go any further, but casts anchor and waits, so conscience, when it begins to be troublous, is shut down in the midst of this silvery mist of well-wishing. So that a well-wisher is one of those persons who bid fair to wear out the influence of appeals of the gospel in the sanctuary. His temperament is one that lasts better and longer than any other. (*Ibid.*) *Self-conceit in morals:*—The corruptions of the passions are more likely to be healed than is spiritual conceit. The passage teaches, not the safety of passional corruption, but the danger of self-righteousness. A man in the almost hopeless state of passional corruption may recover; but for the recovery of a man that is in the hopeless state of spiritual corruption and conceit, there is scarcely a chance. The value and excellence of the photographer's plate which is hidden within the camera does not consist in what it is, but upon its susceptibility when the object-glass of the camera is open to that light which streams upon it. If it is unprepared, and is like the common glass, all beauty might sit before it, and no change would be produced by the streaming of light. The glass might be as good in the first case as in the

second, with the exception that, when it is prepared, the photographer's glass reveals the impression of beauty made upon it by the light. The criterion of hopefulness in a man, then, is not that he has gone so high in moral excellence. A man's hopefulness consists in the fact that eternal life is the *gift* of God. It consists in the mixing, as it were, the Divine nature with ours, and the breathing into us of the spirit of God's love. The criterion of hopefulness is the openness of a man's soul to the Divine influence, and its susceptibility under the Divine shining. (*Ibid.*) *Basilar and coronal corruption*:—Corruptions through the passions; or through the moral sentiments. At the recent great flood at Albany, where those warehouses were undermined and thrown down, one man was in the base and the other in the attic. The man at the base, being right where the danger was, saw the pressure and the wearing, and heard the grinding. He saw brick after brick, and stone after stone ground out by the sawing ice. And seeing and knowing these things, as the danger came on he could flee; but the man in his office in the attic neither saw the danger nor believed that there was any danger, and went on summing up his profits, and laying out his plans. Which of these men had the best chance of escape, the man at the bottom who saw the danger, or the man at the top who saw nothing and heard nothing? (*Ibid.*) *Our most real danger*:—Do not think that your danger lies in outbreaking sin. In some cases the danger lies there; but in some cases the danger lies in an intense spiritual conceit; in an arrogant morality, in an overweening estimate of your own goodness and safety. You do not feel that you need a physician, and therefore you will die in your sins. You do not feel that you need a Deliverer, and therefore Christ is nothing to you. You are not conscious that you need bread, and therefore the bread of life is not brought to you. You say, "I am not blind—I see; I am not naked—I am clothed; I am not hungry—I am fed;" and yet you are blind, and naked, and hungry; and so you will perish, though there is salvation proffered to such as you are. (*Ibid.*) *Obedience forced and natural*:—Compel yourself to all duties now, and soon you will like the duties that are now distasteful. The man that is drawn out of the water half-drowned can only be restored by artificial respiration, but if this is persevered in the natural breathing at last begins, and the functions of healthy unforced respiration supercedes the artificial means. And thus God educates us to ease and naturalness in all duty. Under cover of the outward conduct the new spirit grows and grows to such strength, that at last it maintains the outward conduct as its natural fruit. (*Marcus Dods.*) *Small value of promises*:—Says Socrates to his friends, in the Phædo, "If you take care of yourselves everything will go well with you, whether you make me any promises about the matter or not; but if hereafter you shall neglect, and be unwilling to govern yourselves by the rules I have laid down, though you make me ever so many promises, you will be never the better for them." *Doing is obedience*:—The question is, What have you *done*? The passer-by, who saw the one son stripped and hard at work under the sun among the vines, while the other lounged whimperingly on the road, telling people what an admirable man his father was, and what a pleasure it was to work for him, and how much he hoped the vintage would be abundant—I say, the passer-by would not have the slightest difficulty in forming a judgment of the two sons. Do not believe in your purpose to serve God better until you do serve Him better. Give no credit to yourself for anything which is not actually accomplished. (*Marcus Dods.*) *Two sons*:—It is important to observe the historical connections of our Lord's teachings, because all His words had immediate applications, and through, and by means of the first references, the deeper and the more general are found. This parable was spoken during the last visit to Jerusalem, when Scribes and Pharisees were seeking to find accusation against Him. He baffled them, and even humiliated them by putting searching questions to them. Here the son who refused and repented represents the Publican class; and the son who promised and neglected represents the Pharisee class. Whatever men's professions may be, the test of what they will do presently comes to them. Profession alone is without moral value; profession may indeed put a man at disadvantage in entering God's kingdom. The openly ungodly man may be more readily humbled than the man who is fenced about with self-righteousness. The general truth suggested may be thus stated: I. This is a world of change. That seems to be a sad thing. It really is a most hopeful, a most merciful thing. The unchangeable will never do for us while we are sinners. II. We may change for the worse, as one of these sons did. Illustrate from David, Judas, Demas, &c. III. We may change for the better, as the other son did. Very sad is young manhood stained with vice; but there may be a change. Very sad is

manhood disgraced with self-indulgence; but there may be a change. The most wilful may repent and obey. There is no security in mere profession. There is no hopelessness in present refusal. We can turn, repent, and live. This, for us, Almighty Grace can do. (*R. Tuck.*)

Vers. 33-41. **There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard.**—*The wicked husbandmen*:—I. A REPRESENTATION OF THE JEWISH CHURCH AS REGARDS ITS PRIVILEGES AND OBLIGATIONS. "There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, &c. 1. The comparison employed. Palestine abounded in vineyards. This was planted; there was not one on the spot previously. He had to expend capital to bring it under cultivation. 2. The engagement entered into—"Let it out to husbandmen." 3. The returns anticipated—"Receive the fruits of it." II. THEIR UNPRINCIPLED DISPOSITION AND THE MONSTROUS BRUTALITY THEY MANIFESTED. 1. The messengers sent to them, and the manner in which they were treated. 2. The crowning act of clemency on the one hand, and of cruelty on the other. III. THE AWFUL RETRIBUTION WITH WHICH THEIR ABOMINABLE CONDUCT WAS AT LENGTH VISITED. 1. A striking prediction quoted—"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures," &c. 2. The important inference declared—"Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you," &c. 3. A solemn warning uttered—"And whosoever shall fall on this stone," &c. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The wicked husbandmen*:—1. The greatest privilege a man can enjoy is to have the kingdom of God entrusted to him. 2 The greatest sin a man can commit is to reject Christ. 3. The darkest doom is that of those who are guilty of this greatest sin. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The wicked husbandmen*:—I. THEIR MERCIES. 1. They were in the vineyard—Israel—and in no heathen land. No small mercy that we live in a Christian country. 2. They were husbandmen—men of office and influence, entrusted with an honourable work under a wise and good master. A great mercy to be not only in the vineyard, but called to work for God there. 3. They were paid for their work. 4. Though unfaithful, they had been long borne with. Divine forbearance a great mercy. 5. Special messengers were sent to them from time to time to stimulate and encourage them, &c. II. THEIR CONDUCT. 1. They neglected their work. 2. They missed the purport of their office, which was spiritual. 3. They had killed the messengers. 4. At last they filled up the measure of their iniquity by killing the heir. Being servants, they had come to regard themselves as the owners and lords of God's heritage. Under their husbandry the vineyard had become a scene of moral ruin. III. THEIR PUNISHMENT. 1. God, though merciful, was not unobservant of their conduct. 2. He had often inflicted minor and temporal punishments on themselves and the nation. 3. Now they were to be wholly extinguished. 4. The punishment was unexpected; they despised its cause. 5. It was complete. They lost their place and nation, and were scattered abroad. Learn—1. To consider and value God's mercies (Psa. cvi. 12-14; Romans xii. 1). 2. To study our reception and use of them. 3. To reflect specially on the greatest of all (2 Cor. ix. 15). 4. To remember that we too must give account. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The Son of God must be reverenced*:—What is said of Israel may be said of men in all ages—"It might have been presumed that they would treat kindly the Son of God." From (1) the divinity and glory of His nature; (2) the perfect excellence of His character as a man; (3) the reasonableness of His claims; (4) the condescending kindness of His intentions; (5) His known ability to save; (6) His ability to destroy as well as to save; (7) their necessities. Conclusion—1. The sinner's final ruin is unnecessary. 2. His ruin will be self-induced. 3. Wanton. (*D. A. Clark, A.M.*) *The figure of letting out the vineyard*:—I. Show what "letting out" doth imply or denote. 1. Negatively. This letting the vineyard doth not denote that any people have a lease sealed to them of their church state, church ordinances, and church privileges: no, all are but tenants at will. We hold all our spiritual privileges at the will and pleasure of the Lord of hosts, who may give us warning and turn us out of all when He pleaseth. And it doth not imply that any people buy and pay for any spiritual blessings and good things which they possess; no, we have all freely, church and church privileges, the gospel, ordinances, and promises, without money and without price. We have no rent, no tribute to pay, but the tribute of praise, thanksgiving, and fruitfulness unto God. 2. Negatively. *a.* Letting denotes God's entrusting a people with the great blessing of the legal Church. *b.* Letting implies that a Church, the Word of God, and ordinances, are not man's own proper or natural right or inheritance. We are

but stewards entrusted with these things. *c.* Letting out to husbandmen signifies a mighty trust is committed to such. *d.* Letting out implies that if men do not bring forth unto God that holy fruit which He expecteth, they must be called to an account for it. II. To whom may the Church or vineyard of Christ be said to be let? 1. Principally to the pastors, teachers, and such who are, or ought to be, helps of government. 2. In some sense it may be said to be let also to every member; for every member is a hired servant of Christ, and all have their proper work appointed by Him. 3. In a remote sense it is let to all that accept the invitations of the gospel. III. What fruit is it that God expecteth? 1. The fruit of faith and conversion. 2. The fruit of good works. 3. Fruits good in quality and quantity. 4. Fruit according to the cost and pains God hath been at. 5. Fruit according to the time of the vineyard being planted. 6. Fruit in due season. 7. Fruit according to gifts and grace received. 8. Fruit according to the places and stations wherein God hath set us. (*Benj. Keach.*)

Ver. 42. **The stone which the builders rejected.**—*Redemption a marvellous work:*—I. It is God's work. 1. Contrary to intentions or acts of the builders. 2. No one else competent to perform it. II. It is a marvellous work. 1. From extent of agency employed. 2. Divine attributes displayed. 3. Demerit of its objects. 4. Number and extent of its benefits—(*a*) wrath removed; (*b*) reconciliation and peace; (*c*) access to God; (*d*) adoption; (*e*) sanctified nature; (*f*) eternal life. Learn—(1) this work challenges our trust; (2) requires thought; (3) Demands unceasing praise. (*Preacher's Portfolio.*) *It will grind him to powder:—Penalty of unbelief:*—I remember, away up in a lonely Highland valley, where beneath a tall black cliff, all weather-worn and cracked and seamed, there lies at the foot, resting on the green sward that creeps round its base, a huge rock that has fallen from the face of the precipice. A shepherd was passing beneath it, and suddenly, when the finger of God's will touched it, and rent it from its bed in the everlasting rock, it came down, leaping and bounding from pinnacle to pinnacle, and it fell; and the man who was beneath it is there now! "It will grind him to powder." . . . Therefore I say to you, since all that stand against Him shall become "as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor," and be swept utterly away, make Him the foundation on which you build, and when the storm sweeps away every refuge of lies you will be safe and serene, builded upon the Rock of Ages. (*Dr. McLaren.*) *Judgment and mercy:*—I. The greatest JUDGMENT which can ever befall a people is taking the kingdom of God from them. The kingdom of God was taken by the Jews themselves for some peculiar and temporal blessings which those who enjoyed it had above all other people. It was taken by our Saviour for a clearer manifestation of the will of God to the world, and the consequence of that in the hearts of good men, and all the spiritual blessings which do attend it. So that the taking away the kingdom of God from them must needs be the heaviest judgment which could befall a people, since it implies in it the taking away all the greatest temporal and spiritual blessings. Jews make the kingdom of God to consist (1) in a deliverance of them from their enemies; (2) in the flourishing of their state, or that polity which God established among them; (3) in the solemn worship of Him at the temple. All these were taken away. Take the kingdom of God in the sense our Saviour meant—the power of the gospel—and the judgment is yet more evident. 1. It is acknowledged by the Jews themselves that these great calamities have happened to them for some extraordinary sins. 2. The sin ought to be looked on as so much greater by how much heavier and longer this punishment hath been than any inflicted on them before. 3. The Jews have not suffered these calamities for the same sins for which they suffered before. 4. It must be some sin which their fathers committed, and which continues yet unrepented of by them to this day. There were these remarkable forerunners of desolation in the Jewish state which I am afraid we are too much concerned in. 1. A strange degeneracy of all sorts of men from the virtues of their ancestors. 2. A general stupidity and inapprehensiveness of common danger. 3. An atheistical contempt of religion. 4. Spiritual pride. II. The greatest MERCY that can ever be vouchsafed to a nation is God's giving His kingdom to it. (*Bishop Stillingfleet.*) *The head stone of the corner:*—The Jews were the first builders to whom God gave the privilege to build His Church. Three things the corner-stone is to the builder's work—1. The structure ranges up to the corner-stone. All else is below, that it may be high; all ministers to it. Abase yourself that Christ may be exalted. 2. The whole fabric holds up the head of the corner to the view of men that it may be admired.

Take care that the aspect which your religion wears to every man is not yourself, but Christ. 3. Let Christ, as the stone does the corner, bind everything. He is the one cementing all that is true. Whatever is in Christ, though it be repugnant to your feelings, do not send it away from you. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The stone of stumbling*:—The two clauses of the text figuratively point to two different classes of operation—in the one case the stone is represented as passive, lying quiet; in the other, it has got motion. In the one case, it is a self-inflicted, remedial injury; in the other, it is total and judicial. I. EVERY MAN HAS SOME KIND OF CONNECTION WITH CHRIST. The gospel must influence every man somehow; it is an element in our present civilization. Christ does something to every one of us. He is either the rock on which I build or a stone of stumbling. II. THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE OF REJECTION OF HIM IS LOSS AND MAIMING—"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken." The positive harm. No man ever yet passively rejected Christ; there is always a slight struggle with right before living away. So that every man who rejects Christ wounds his own conscience, hardens his own heart, makes himself a worse man. By the natural result of his unbelief his nature "shall be broken." I need not dwell on the negative evil results of unbelief; we fail to possess the great love of God by which only we are made what we ought to be. Not only by the act of rejection of Christ do we maim ourselves, but also all attempts of opposition to the gospel as a system stand self-convicted—"Whosoever falls on this stone shall be broken." III. THE ULTIMATE ISSUE OF UNBELIEF IS IRREMEDIABLE DESTRUCTION WHEN CHRIST BEGINS TO MOVE. The former clause has spoken about the passive operation of unbelief whilst the gospel is being preached; this about the active agency of Christ, "It shall grind him to powder." (*A. McLaren, D.D.*)

Vers. 45, 46. **They feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet.**—*The adaptation of the gospel to the circumstances of the poor*:—"The multitude" were pleased with Christ and took Him for a prophet. The pleasure which our text indicates may be referred to wrong motives; they were glad to see others humbled and rebuked. We often repine at the superiority of those above us, and are gratified when any wound is inflicted on their vanity. Not that Christ desired by artful means to gain the favour of the inferior orders. Often in theological controversy men applaud not from love of the truth, but because some one has been repulsed. We take the supposition that the pleasure of the multitude, in part at least, was produced by the general tenor of Christ's preaching, and not by a triumphant exposure of the sins of their rulers. Let us examine into the causes from which it came to pass that discourses which were distasteful to the great amongst the Jews found acceptance with the multitude. No doubt reasons could be derived from the peculiar circumstances of the Jewish nation; their expectation of a temporal prince, which was stronger in the higher classes than in the lower. Had the lower classes been left to themselves, it is probable that the Christ who healed their sick would have been accepted. But this is true of our own day—the multitudes, as distinguished from others, have an interest in hearing the gospel. It gains a hold on them which makes them "take Christ for a prophet." Here it is that the Almighty has introduced one of those counterpoises which cause good and evil to be distributed with considerable equality notwithstanding the marked difference in human conditions. Wealth and learning are great advantages viewed in reference to the present life; but in regard to the other life the circumstances of their life facilitate their eternal good. The poor man has little to attach him to earth; the rich is surrounded by things that fascinate him, also there are prejudices against the gospel peculiar to the rich which the illiterate cannot share. The gospel sets the poor amongst princes; the rich and great cling to artificial distinctions. The poverty of Christ was an offence to the rich; it was an attraction to the poor. The gospel cannot reach the heart without supernatural power of the Holy Spirit; but if we take the doctrines of Christianity—the mediatorial work—imputation of righteousness—we might contend that the common people are in a better position than others to admit them. In the outcasts of society there is not found that haughty self-reliance; the gospel is more welcome to them. The Bible seems to have been composed with express reference to the poor. But we must not overlook the fact that those who took Christ for a prophet finally rejected and crucified Him. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

## CHAPTER XXII.

VERS. 1-10. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son.**—*Making light of gospel invitations.*—I. WHEN OR HOW MEN SLIGHT THE INVITATIONS OF THE GOSPEL. 1. When they neglect the Word of God, which is full of them, and which authoritatively announces them to the world. 2. When they absent themselves from the sanctuary, when they are proclaimed by God's own ambassadors. 3. When they fail to give heed to the Divine message, when it is personally and solemnly addressed to them. 4. When Sabbath after Sabbath they refuse to accept the invitation to come to the feast of love spread for them. No greater slight can be conceived when we consider—(1) who gives the invitation; (2) the character and condition of those to whom it is made; (3) the honour and infinite good involved in the invitation. II. THE DANGER OF SLIGHTING THESE INVITATIONS. 1. It cannot fail to provoke the anger of God. "The king was wrath." 2. It inevitably forfeits all the blessings of Christ's meditation and sacrifice. 3. It shuts the door of mercy against the sinner. (*J. M. Sherwood, D.D.*) *The marriage of the king's son:*—I. A MONARCH'S CELEBRATION OF AN INTERESTING EVENT. 1. The king here referred to is evidently the Most High. The human kingship is really but a lower form of the heavenly. 2. The king had a son who had taken to himself a bride. 3. On the occasion of his marriage a splendid banquet was provided. Royal feasts are sumptuous and abundant. II. THE MUNIFICENCE DESPISED BY HIS UNGRATEFUL SUBJECTS. 1. The invitation he sent, and the way in which it was responded to. 2. The causes of their rejecting so kind an offer. (1) Indisposition. "They would not come." (2) Love of the world. "One to his farm," &c. (3) Open malignity. 3. The consequences that ensued. III. THE ROYAL BOUNTY AT LENGTH APPRECIATED. 1. The messengers were entrusted with a fresh commission to a totally different class. 2. The response which their message received. IV. THE ASSEMBLED COMPANY INSPECTED, AND THE CONSEQUENCES THAT ENSUED. 1. The spectacle which was beheld: "He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." 2. The question proposed. 3. The doom pronounced. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The royal marriage feast:*—Four different ways of treating God's invitations in the gospel are here set before us. 1. We have it complacently ignored by those who went their ways to their farms and to their merchandise. 2. We have the gospel offer violently rejected. There is still a violent rejection of the gospel by open infidels. 3. The inconsistency and insolence of the man who professed to accept the invitation, and yet failed to comply with the conditions on which alone true acceptance of it was possible. He pushed into the festive hall without having on a wedding garment. 4. We have the gospel invitation sincerely and heartily accepted. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The parable of the wedding feast:*—I. A magnificent banquet with A GRAND OBJECT IN VIEW. The person is Divine. The occasion a subject of delight to us personally; it is a marriage with our nature; not with angels. The royal descent of the Bridegroom. His character; His achievements. II. Here is a GRACIOUS METHOD of accomplishing the design. 1. A feast for joy. 2. A feast for fulness. 3. A feast for fellowship. 4. All the expense lies with Him. 5. How honourable is the gospel to those who receive it. A monarch's entertainment. III. THE SERIOUS HINDRANCE. 1. They were disloyal. 2. They slighted the king. IV. THE GRACIOUS REJOINDER. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *As dangerous to slight the gospel as to reject it:*—If I were in a boat on the river in the rapids, it would not be necessary, to insure my destruction, that I should enter into violent controversy with those who would urge me from the shore, to take heed and come to land: all I should have to do would be to shut my ears to their entreaty, and leave myself alone; the current would do the rest. Neglect of the gospel is thus just as perilous as the open rejection of it. Indeed, half the evils of our daily life in temporal things are caused by neglect; and countless are the souls who are lost for this same cause. Leave your farm for a little, then; let your merchandise alone for a season; settle first, and before all things else, what you will do with this invitation which God has given you to the gospel banquet: then, that accepted, your farm will become to you a section of God's vineyard, and your business will be a means of glorifying Him. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The wedding of the prince:*—I. THE FALSE HOPE INDULGED. The man without the wedding garment represents the person who believes that he is reconciled to God, who has not God's righteousness. This hope may be designated—1. A self-righteous hope. 2. An impenitent hope. II. THE SOUL STRIPPED OF ITS HOPE AND ITS PRETENSIONS. 1. Here is the dumbness of true conviction.

No excuse. 2. The speechlessness of amazement. Amazed that all his efforts are of no avail. 3. The dumbness of awe and terror. He has met his Maker. 4. The speechlessness expresses despair. Learn: 1. The first duty of every one is to determine what is a suitable preparation for heaven. 2. Sincere ignorance will save no man. 3. Now is the time for self-scrutiny. (*E. N. Kirk, D.D.*) *The king punishing his barbarous subjects*:—1. From the whole of our Saviour's parables and predictions relative to the Jews, we may infer both His prophetic wisdom and singular humanity. 2. That the Jews were under a peculiar economy of Divine providence, and were more directly, immediately, and judicially rewarded with national prosperity, or punished with national calamity and ruin, in proportion to their piety and virtue, or impiety and wickedness, than any other nation. 3. That the spirit of pride, malice, and revenge, with which the Jews were possessed and instigated to their own destruction, is the worst that can possess the human breast, most injurious to society and pernicious to them who are actuated by it. 4. That we ought to congratulate ourselves, and be thankful to the providence of God that we live in an age and nation wherein this malignant spirit, which has been seen to prevail so much, and produce such terrible effects, not only amongst Jews, but Christians also, is happily abated, though not entirely extinguished. (*S. Brown.*) *Gospel feast*:—Doctrine—the gospel is a large feast, stored with all kinds of spiritual provision in it. Consider—1. Wherein the resemblance of the gospel to a feast appears. 2. In what respect it is a large feast. 3. What things we have need of against this feast. 4. What is the bill of fare? 5. What excellent properties there are in the provisions of the great supper. 6. What suitableness from God appears in them to the case of man. 7. Why it is a feast with all things in it. 8. What hindrances do make it to many ineffectual. (*Joseph Hussey.*) *Gospel invitation*:—Doctrine—that God makes an invitation to sinners in the preaching of the gospel to come in to this feast. (1) It was a gracious; (2) a free; (3) a sovereign; (4) a clear; (5) a commanding; (6) an open; (7) a large and comprehensive; (8) a pressing and earnest; (9) a seasonable; (10) an effectual and saving invitation. (*Ibid.*) *Causes of refusal to accept Christ*:—1. Worldly cares, incumbrances, secular business, or the concernments of this life, in providing earthly things. 2. The riches, or love of wealth, or earthly honour. 3. But it appears that sensual satisfaction, or the inordinate love of pleasures, is that which hath the greatest power over men, and which drowns and swallows up the spirit and soul of mortals: for this sort says, "they cannot come." (*Benjamin Keach.*) *The gospel banquet*:—History tells of a banquet given by Henry VIII. to the French ambassadors. The best cooks in all the land were engaged. Privateers went through all the country to gather all the costliest viands, and when the day arrived the guests were kept hunting in the park so that their appetites might be keen, and then, at the right moment, to the sound of the trumpeters, they entered the hall, and sat down to the table, agleam with imperial plate and ablush with the costliest wines, with gold candles with a hundred tapers as large as torches. But I have to tell you to-day of a more wonderful entertainment. The Lord Jesus Christ is the banqueter; the angels of God are the cup-bearers; pardon, and peace, and life, and heaven are the viands; palaces hung with gardens of eternal beauty are the banqueting place; the chalices of God are the plates; and I am one of His servants, and I come out with the invitation to all the people—a written invitation to every man, woman, and child in all this audience. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Making light of the gospel call*:—A celebrated preacher of the seventeenth century in a sermon to a crowded audience, described the terrors of the Last Judgment with such eloquence, pathos, and force of action, that some of his audience not only burst into tears, but sent forth piercing cries, as if the Judge Himself had been present, and was about to pass upon them their final sentence. In the height of this commotion the preacher called upon them to dry their tears and cease their cries, as he was about to add something still more awful and astonishing than anything he had yet brought before them. Silence being obtained, he, with an agitated countenance and solemn voice, addressed them thus: "In one quarter of an hour from this time the emotions which you have just now exhibited will be stifled; the remembrance of the fearful truths which excited them will vanish; you will return to your carnal occupations, or sinful pleasures, with your usual avidity, and you will treat all you have heard 'as a tale that is told!'" (*Cheever.*) *God's anger against those who refuse the gospel invitation*:—Another proof of the earnestness of God in His invitation is His wrath against the murderers who had refused it. You are not much offended at one who refuses an invitation you have given in jest, or, for form's sake,

half hoping it would not be accepted. God is angry because you have treated in jest and made light of what has been most earnest to Him; because you have crossed Him in the sincerest purpose to bless you; because after He has at the greatest expense, not only of wealth and exertion, but of life, provided what He knows you need, you act towards Him as if He had done nothing that deserves the least consideration. This acceptance or rejection of God's offers that we come and talk over, often as if the whole matter were in our hands, and we might deal with it as we arrange for a journey or an evening's amusement, is to God the most earnest matter. If God is in earnest about anything, it is about this; if the whole force of His nature concentrates on any one matter it is on this; if anywhere the amplitude and intensity of Divine earnestness, to which the most impassioned human earnestness is as the idle vacant sighing of the summer air, if these are anywhere in action, it is in the tenderness and sincerity with which He invites you to Himself. . . . To save sinners from destruction is His grand purpose, and success in other parts of His government does not repay Him for failure here. And to make light of such an earnestness as this, an earnestness so wise, so called for, so loving, pure, and long-suffering, so Divine, is terrible indeed. To *have been* the object of such earnest love, to have had all the Divine attributes and resources set in motion to secure my eternal bliss, and to know myself capable of making light of such earnestness as this, is surely to be in the most forlorn and abject condition that any creature can reach. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *The gospel feast*:—I. THE NATURE OF GOSPEL BLESSINGS. 1. They are of God's own providing. 2. They are rich and valuable as well as Divine. 3. These blessings are suitable. 4. They are abundant. II. THE INVITATION GIVEN TO PARTAKE OF THESE BLESSINGS. 1. A feast so rich is designed for numerous guests. 2. The gospel is made known to mankind. 3. This invitation is free and gracious. 4. It is earnest and authoritative. III. THE RECEPTION WHICH THE INVITATION MEETS WITH, AND THE FOLLY, GUILT, AND DANGER OF REJECTING IT. 1. The Jews to whom it was first sent refused to come. 2. Some make light of the gospel from the love of worldly pleasures. 3. That the generality of those who hear it make light of it is evident from their conduct. 4. The folly to prefer the world to God who is the Supreme Good. 5. The guilt of to-day is in proportion to the freeness and suitableness of the blessings offered. 6. The blessings of the gospel are as necessary to your present as to your future happiness. (*R. Fletcher.*) *The marriage*:—I. THE HISTORY OF THE MARRIAGE. 1. The marriage purposed. 2. The preliminary arrangements. 3. The servants sent out. 4. The message. 5. The advent of the king. 6. The inspection. II. TURN TO REVELATION XIX. In ver. 7 it is no longer a purpose, but an accomplishment. The marriage of the Lamb is come. In the parable we saw "all things are ready," and the wedding garment was offered without money. Now in the Revelation we read, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen," &c. In the parable the servants were told to go and invite men (ver. 9). Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. The King came to see the guests (ver. 11). "His eyes were as a flame of fire." (*Capel Molyneux, B.A.*) *The marriage of the king's son*:—I. THE GLORIOUS BANQUET. 1. The giver of it. The great king. He had provided a banquet of beauty and wisdom in creation for the mind of man—of goodness in providence for the physical need of man. These did not supply the whole of man's need. Hence this feast of redeeming love. In giving it He was moved by love, wisdom, grace. 2. The occasion of it. 3. The chief parties in it. The Divine Father. The equally Divine Son, our Saviour. The Bride, the Church—all who, being penitent, truly believe. 4. The hallowed joy that marked it. The Church rejoicing in the love and grace of the heavenly Bridegroom. 5. The sanctified provisions of it—mercy, love, &c., &c.; abundant, suitable, seasonable, &c. II. THE WIDE INVITATION. 1. Proclaimed by many tongues. 2. Urged on all people. 3. Enforced by many arguments. 4. Accompanied with gifts. A dress for each to wear offered. A new heart, &c. III. THE PERSONAL INSPECTION. 1. A royal inspection. 2. A general inspection. 3. A discriminating inspection. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The marriage of Christ to His Church*:—I. HOW THIS UNION TAKES PLACE. 1. The first mover is Christ Himself; but by His sweet constraints we begin to love Him. 2. In the presence of witnesses the covenant of marriage must be ratified. Angels and the Church look on when Christ confesses you to be His. II. THE CONSEQUENCE. 1. Into Christ you have merged your property, right, name, being, and all. 2. They do wrong who weaken the bonds, chill the feelings, or lower the rule of married life. 3. As Christ has done

so much for you, you must be faithful to Him. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The royal banquet*:—I. INVITATIONS OF GOSPEL REPEATEDLY GIVEN. God calls (1) in every stage of life; (2) by many voices. II. PROVISIONS OF GOSPEL FULLY COMPLETED. (1) Various; (2) abundant. III. PROFFERS OF GOSPEL BASELY REJECTED BY—(1) The proud; (2) the worldly. IV. MESSENGERS OF GOSPEL CRUELLY TREATED. (1) Unlawful seizure; (2) cruel treatment; (3) unnatural murder. V. REJECTORS OF GOSPEL JUSTLY PUNISHED. They—(1) Excite God's anger; (2) provoke His vengeance; (3) incur His punishment. VI. PROCLAMATION OF GOSPEL UNIVERSALLY COMMANDED. There are—(1) No bounds fixed—highways; (2) no conditions. VII. SUCCESS OF GOSPEL ULTIMATELY CERTAIN. VIII. PROFESSORS OF GOSPEL WILL BE PERSONALLY EXAMINED. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Guests for the wedding-feast*:—Our Lord Jesus has espoused His Church, and there must be a feast at the wedding. A feast would be a failure if none came to it, and therefore the present need is that the wedding be "furnished with guests." I. THE FIRST INVITATION WAS A FAILURE. This is seen in Jewish history. Among Gentiles, those to whom the gospel invitation specially comes are, as a rule, unwilling to accept it. Up to this hour, children of godly parents, and hearers of the word, many of them refuse the invitation for reasons of their own. The invitation was refused—(1) Not because it involved suffering, for it was a wedding-feast to which they were bidden; (2) nor because there were no adequate preparations—"The wedding is ready"; (3) nor because the invitations were not delivered, or were misunderstood—they "were bidden"; (4) but because they were not fit for the high joy; (*a*) they were not loyal to their king; (*b*) they were not attached to his royal son; (*c*) they were not pleased with his noble marriage; (*d*) they were wrapt up in self-interest; (*e*) they were cruel to well-intentioned messengers; (5) therefore they were punished with fire and sword. But love must reign; mercy must be glorious; Christ must reveal His grace; otherwise He has no joy of His union with mankind. Therefore—II. THE COMMISSON WAS ENLARGED. 1. Disappointment must arouse activity and enterprise—"Go ye." 2. Disappointment suggests change of sphere—"Into the highways." 3. A keen invitation is to be tried—"As many as ye shall find, bid." 4. A keen outlook is to be kept—"As many as ye shall find." 5. Publicity is to be courted—"Went out into the highways." 6. Small numbers, ones and twos, are to be pressed in. III. THE NEW MISSION WAS FULFILLED. 1. The former servants who had escaped death went out again. 2. Other servants, who had not gone at first, entered zealously into the joyful but needful service. 3. They went in many directions—"Into the highways." 4. They went out at once. Not an hour could be left unused. 5. They pointed all they met to one centre. 6. They welcomed all sorts of characters—"As many as they found." 7. They found them willing to come. He who sent the messengers inclined the guests; none seem to have refused. IV. THE GREAT DESIGN WAS ACCOMPLISHED. 1. The king's bounty was displayed before the world. 2. His provision was used. Think of grace and pardon unused. 3. The happiness of men was promoted; they feasted to the full. 4. The grateful praise was evoked. All the guests were joyful in their king, as they feasted at his table. 5. The marriage was graced. 6. The slight put upon the king's son by the churls who refused to come was more than removed. 7. The quality of the guests most fully displayed the wisdom, grace, and condescension of the Host. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 5. **But they made light of it.**—*Making light of Christ*:—I. WHAT IT IS THAT THE SINNERS MAKE LIGHT OF. 1. Of the messenger who brings them the news that the marriage supper is prepared. 2. These people despise the feast. 3. They make light of the King's Son. 4. They make light also of the King. 5. Thou art making light of the great solemnities of eternity. II. HOW IS IT THAT MEN MAKE LIGHT OF IT? 1. When men go to hear and yet do not attend. 2. When they attend to something else with it. 3. Who makes a profession of religion, but does not live up to it. III. WHY THEY MAKE LIGHT OF IT. 1. Because ignorant. 2. Because of pride. 3. Because they did not believe the messenger. 4. Because they were so worldly. 5. Because altogether thoughtless. 6. Out of sheer presumption. 7. Because of the commonness of the gospel. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Indifference to the gospel invitation*:—I. THE CAUSES. 1. Ignorance. 2. Insensibility. 3. Indisposition. 4. Worldly-mindedness. 5. All these excuses were derived from things that were lawful in themselves. II. Substantiate THE PROOFS. Must not bring such a charge without the clearest evidence; that you make light of the gospel proved—1. From your thoughts. 2. From your words. 3. From your

actions. 4. From your anxieties. III. EXPOSE THIS EVIL. 1. Consider the conduct of other beings. The devil, angels, saints do not make light of it. 2. Consider the truth of the subject. 3. The importance of the subject. 4. The guilt you contract. IV. REJOICE IN THE CURE OF THIS INDIFFERENCE. (*W. Jay.*) *Trifling with the gospel:*—I. WITH WHOM DO THEY TRIFLE? II. WITH WHAT DO MEN TRIFLE? 1. With the soul. 2. With Jesus Christ. 3. With eternity. IV. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES DO MEN THUS DARE TO TRIFLE? 1. While you thus trifle all beside you are in earnest. 2. While you thus trifle opportunities are passing away. (*T. Raffles, D.D.*) *Levity: Subjects often made light of:*—I. Life, with the faculties and powers we possess. II. Time, with the opportunities which it offers. III. Duty, with self-denial which it involves. IV. Sin, with the misery which it entails. V. Salvation, with the joys which it brings. VI. Death, with the uncertainty which attends it. VII. Judgment, with the solemnity that surrounds it. (*Seeds and Saplings.*) *Making light of salvation:*—I. Men are apt to remember and affectionately think of things they highly esteem; but as for those which they disregard, they can easily forget them, and live daily without a single thought of them. II. The things that men value will be the theme of frequent conversation. III. Things only talked about, and not reduced to practice, are made light of. IV. We take pains and labour to secure the things we value. V. Things that men highly esteem deeply and tenderly affect them. VI. Our estimate of things may be discovered by the diligence and earnestness of our endeavours after them. VII. That which we highly value we think it impossible to buy too dearly. VIII. Those things we highly value we shall help our friends to obtain. 1. Those who make light of the Saviour, make light of Him who did not make light of them. 2. They make light of matters of the greatest excellency and importance. 3. Consider whose salvation it is you make light of—your own. 4. This sin is aggravated by professing to believe that gospel you make light of. 5. Consider what things those are which you prefer to the neglect of these. 6. Making light of Christ and salvation is a certain evidence of no interest in them. 7. The time is hastening when none will make light of these things. (*President Davies.*) *Levity:*—1. They made light of their advantages. 2. They made light of their opportunities. 3. They made light of human life. 4. They made light of duty. 5. They made light of sin. 6. They made light of the gospel. (*Dean Vaughan.*)

**Vers. 11–13. He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.**—I. THE INVITATION ITSELF is in vers. 3, 4. There is a double call. God will not take the first repulse, but will try again before He will quit a people. More particularly the first call was by the prophets, the second by the apostles. All things are ready, if we are ready. II. THE SUCCESS OF THIS INVITATION or offer of grace. Some slighted it, others rejected it with malice. Excusing is refusing. III. THE ISSUE (ver. 7). "When the king heard thereof," &c. Contempt of the gospel, joined with persecution of the preachers of it, bringeth utter ruin and devastation. The next part of the parable (ver. 9, 10). I. THE CHARGE TO INVITE. II. THE SERVANTS' OBEDIENCE AND THEIR SUCCESS. A people may want God, but God cannot want a people to serve Him. All that give their names to God are not found; there is a mixture of good and bad. So sometimes the church is full, but heaven never the fuller; for though they receive the gospel, they do not receive it in full power and efficacy. III. YOU HAVE THE CARRIAGE OF THE KING TOWARDS THE HYPOCRITICAL GUESTS. I. THE DISCOVERY. All that receive the gospel must look to have their sincerity tried, for the King will visit and observe the guests (ver. 14). The meaning is, that in the throng and multitude of converts, if there be but one that is insincere, God can espy him, and find him out. Repentance and reformation of life is the new garment of the soul; that only will become the gospel feast. II. THE EXPOSTULATION. God loveth to make the sinner convinced and condemned in his own conscience, that He may be clear when He judgeth, and justified in all His proceedings with Him. The man was speechless. They that embrace the gospel and live in an unmortified and impenitent manner can have nothing to plead by way of excuse. III. THE DOOM AND SENTENCE (ver. 13). Conscience in hell will have a special kind of accusing, and self-tormenting in our reflecting on the refusal of the remedy. Christ will pronounce a heavier doom if we obey not the gospel, to which we profess to submit. It is dangerous to come to God's feast without a wedding garment. I. WHAT IS GOD'S FEAST? In the gospel all kinds of comforts and spiritual gifts and graces are ready prepared, and freely offered to us. God hath made excellent provision for the entertainment of His own family. This

feast serveth for two uses. 1. For the honour of God, to show His magnificence and royalty, and the glory of His exceeding great grace and mercy in Jesus Christ (as Esther i. 3, 4), the choicest blessings. Love is gone to the utmost; beyond God there is nothing; God reconciled and God enjoyed are the chiefest blessings we can enjoy. 2. For the comfort and refreshment of sinful man. There is in it all we can expect in a feast. (1) Ample satisfaction to every soul that is spiritually hungry and thirsty (Psa. xxxvi. 8; xxii. 26). There is no defect or want in God's feast. But many prefer husks before the fatted calf. Swinish pleasures before these chaste delights. These besot the heart awhile, but they cannot satisfy it. (2) Joy, pleasure, delight. What will cheer the heart and conscience? The pardon of sin is the true reviving thing (Matt. ix. 2). (3) God useth us as friends. We may sit down at His table. But what an honour it is to sit down at the feast of the King of Kings! It is a token of our reconciliation with Him, for eating together is an act of friendship. II. WHAT IS COMING TO THIS FEAST? It is to profess ourselves Christians, and using the ordinances which belong thereunto. III. WHAT IS THE WEDDING GARMENT? It is usual in Scripture to set forth sin by nakedness, and grace by a garment (Rev. iii. 17, 18). Graces are a beautiful ornament to the soul as garments are to the body. It is such a garment as becometh the solemnity of the marriage-feast of the king's son; the wedding garment is that new array which becometh such a solemnity. As it is a royal feast, it must be something more than ordinary excellency that is required of us; a spiritual feast, a spiritual excellency. Therefore the wedding garment is holiness, habitual and actual, which is the glory of God, and the beauty of God and His people (Rev. xix. 8). I must now represent the danger of entering upon the profession of the gospel, or coming to this feast without such a wedding garment. IV. THE ODIOUSNESS OF THE SIN IN THESE CONSIDERATIONS. 1. Your profession is partial; there is a twofold profession in word and deed. In word when we own Christ, in whom we have believed: in deed, when we walk answerably. 2. One part of the profession condemneth the other; if we own a God and do not live answerably our belief condemneth our practice (Tit. i. 16). So while they own Christ they do but mock Him; they profess to honour Christ by coming to His feast, but they dishonour Him and affront Him while they come in their own and ordinary apparel. The ungodly lives of Christians are a reproach to Christianity. You should adorn, but you disgrace the gospel (Tit. ii. 10). Religion as visibly acted and expressed by you should be found a beautiful thing. 3. One part of your profession is abused to corrupt and destroy the other; and the Christian name is only taken on to patronize unchristian practices (Jude iv.). They come to the gospel feast that they may the more securely live in their sins. V. THE CERTAINTY OF DISCOVERY. 1. When you come as guests to the marriage-feast your business lieth not with men, but with God. The king cometh to see the guests. You may have a garment to cover you before men, but not before God. But when the Lord looketh to the guests, He is the party with whom you have to do. How will you do to escape His eye and search? (Gal. vi. 7). 2. God loveth to uncase hypocrites (Prov. xxvi. 26). His anger is more kindled against them because they profess such a nearness to Him. 3. Hypocrisy is hateful to God in anything, but especially in coming to the gospel feast. For that is a kind of daring of God, or a putting it to the trial whether He will discover you or no. 4. There are certain times when God cometh in a more especial manner to discover those that are unsound in the profession of the gospel. God doth always see their hearts, but there are certain seasons when they shall know that He seeth them. 1. By trying judgments. When the tree is shaken the rotten apples fall. 2. Sometimes by offences (1 Cor. ii. 19). 3. At death a man should always be provided for that hour. We carry nothing out of the world but a winding-sheet and a wedding garment—the one for the soul, the other for the body. 4. In the Day of Judgment. When all the world is arraigned before Christ, and He distinguisheth the sheep from the goats, then will He expostulate with you. Where is your wedding garment? 5. The doom and punishment. (1) They are not permitted to taste of the feast. God denieth them grace, and so they have but an empty ordinance. (2) They incur eternal wrath (Matt. xxiv. 51); they are excluded the feast, and cast into the dungeon. *Use.* To persuade us to get this wedding garment. I. Then you are welcome and acceptable to God. You are not intruders, but welcome guests. II. Then you may be bold, and will not be dashed out of countenance. III. This showeth you were real friends to the Bridegroom, that you mean to honour Him with such a conversation as floweth from faith and love to Christ (Gal. v. 6). IV. Nothing doth more concern you than that you

should not be Christians in vain, and profess Christ to your loss. What remaineth, then, but that we look after the wedding garment. I. Determine what it is. An holy conversation coming out of a renewed heart is this wedding garment (Matt. xii. 34). II. Get this wedding garment out of the King's wardrobe. God delights in the graces of His own Spirit. No man is born clothed; we have it from God. III. Wear your wedding garment. Not only get grace, but exercise it in all duties towards God and man (Rev. xvi. 15). IV. Keep your garments undefiled, and unspotted from the world (Rev. iii. 4). V. Wash your garments often in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. vii. 14). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The wedding garment*:—We must consider what we are to understand. I. By the wedding garment. It is the costume or spiritual dress necessary for the enjoyment of heaven—holiness often described as a garment (Job xxix. 14; Isa. lxi. 10; Psa. xlv. 13; Rev. iii. 18; vii. 9). II. The solemn scrutiny. 1. Was Divine. 2. Was personal. Religion is a personal concern. III. The awful detection. We may form three conjectures as to this robeless character. 1. It might have resulted from carelessness. He did not attend to the requirements of the king, &c. How many like him, &c. 2. From procrastination. How many such are always in God's house. 3. From proud and wicked preference. Perhaps thought it not essential; had other views; would trust in the mercy of the king, or his own beautiful habiliments. How many of this class are there! IV. The awful investigation. 1. It was public. Before all the guests. The enemies of Christ will be publicly confounded at the last day; clothed with shame and contempt. 2. It was reasonable. It gave an opportunity for the exhibition of righteousness. God will allow the sinner to plead. 3. It was overwhelming. He had no reason to assign, hence he was confounded. V. The dreadful punishment. 1. The removal. 2. The sentence. 3. The misery. *Application.* 1. Now, all that is necessary for heaven may be obtained, and that by all. 2. Let professors examine themselves, &c. 3. Let sinners be entreated. Listen to the voice of the gospel and live. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *The wedding garment*:—I. At this feast there was but one condition of acceptance—the wearing of a particular garment. Faith in Christ. 1. The wedding garment had no merit in itself: faith has no intrinsic worth. 2. It was all-important because commanded by the king: the fact that faith, as the instrument of justification, is ordained of God endows it with importance. 3. It was no arbitrary symbol. 4. It was highly significant. II. There was one who failed to comply with this condition. Of whom is he the type? 1. He was in the guest-chamber. 2. He desired to eat of the feast. 3. He remained in the guest-chamber until the king came. 4. He may have been highly esteemed by the rest. III. The probable reasons of his non-compliance. Pride, self-deception, pride of intellect. (*R. Griffin.*) *The hypocrite self-condemned*:—The guest referred to was speechless because—I. He could not plead ignorance of the will of the king who had invited him to the feast. II. He could not plead that in his case the wedding garment was not necessary. III. He could not plead that a wedding garment was not placed within his reach. IV. He had despised the wedding garment. V. He was overwhelmed with a sense of guilt. Learn the worthlessness of mere profession, and the necessity of being prepared for coming judgment. (*Studies.*) *The wedding garment*:—Between this man and the other guests there are some points of resemblance, and some of difference. Let us trace—I. The points of resemblance. 1. He was an invited guest. We are all called to the great feast. 2. He was a needy guest. All equally needy. 3. He was an expectant guest. II. The points of difference. 1. They differed in their appearances. 2. They not only differed in appearances, but in their principles, in their states, in their conduct. He had neglected to observe the conditions on which admission was granted, &c. III. The causes of the difference. Perhaps it was carelessness, pride, mind pre-occupied, &c. IV. The consequences to which it led. 1. Detection. 2. Overwhelming confusion. 3. Destruction. (*A. Weston.*) *The wedding garment*:—I. The scrutiny of the king. 1. The manner of his discovery. He was not discovered till the king came in. Though the Lord knoweth them that are His, they that are His do not always know each other. 2. The language of the address, "Friend," &c. God's judgments proceed upon our self-assumed character. The man was not obliged to accept the king's invitation. "Not having a wedding garment." This was the affront. II. The confusion of the criminal. "He was speechless." There was no excuse. Conscious guilt struck him dumb. Before the bar of God man will not be able to plead—the soul's inborn sin. He could not plead inability to procure the garment. (*D. Moore,*

*M.A.*) *The wedding garment:*—I. THE POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THIS MAN AND THE OTHER GUESTS. 1. He was an invited guest. 2. He was a needy guest. 3. He was an expecting guest. II. THE POINT OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MAN HERE SPOKEN OF AND THE OTHER GUESTS. The wedding garment is, in short, a wedding spirit. III. TO WHAT CAUSES MUST WE TRACE THIS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND THEM. It must be traced to himself. 1. Perhaps carelessness, mere inconsideration, led to his refusal. 2. It may have been pride. 3. There was great irreverence in his conduct. IV. THE CONSEQUENCES TO WHICH IT LED. 1. Detection. 2. Confusion. 3. Destruction. (*C. Bradley.*) *The dreadful consequence of being found at last without the wedding garment:*—I. THE DISCOVERY. II. THE TRIAL. III. THE CONDEMNATION OF THIS MAN. (*T. Drummond.*) *The rejected guest:*—1. The folly of the human heart as seen in the way in which men attempt to impose upon God. 2. Though only *one* rejected, the guests admitted far less numerous than those invited. 3. It was the man's own fault that he had not the wedding garment. 4. The wedding garment is something more than outward conduct, for it escaped human observation. It was something which the king could alone discover. (*C. J. P. Eyre, M.A.*) *Speechless:*—1. You cannot say that the gospel plan is unworthy of your acceptance as a rational and immortal being. 2. You will be speechless because you cannot plead ignorance of the plan of salvation. 3. You cannot plead as an excuse for your wickedness the necessity of an irreligious life from the decrees of God. (*A. Gilmour.*) *The garment of life:*—Old stories and strange chronicles of other days come into the thoughts as we listen to the words of Christ. For instance, they tell us of one who sat, day after day, in her fair house, past which a strong river flowed toward the sea, and she ever wove and wove, and never looked up, nor heeded aught beyond that task; till, on one fatal day, there came by a vision of the pride and beauty of this world: then she looked up, and left her work, and was lost, and undone. And so may it be in many a life: there is work for us to do, and do it we must; here is a garment to be woven, and God has told us what is coming, and has set us at the task, here beside the great river of time, which shall become for each, ere long, the river of death. What are we at? Are our hearts in the task? Or are the eyes wandering, and is the thing like to be left for ever undone? (*Morgan Dix, D.D.*) *The wedding garment is essentially a habit of holiness and righteousness:*—It differs, specifically, from those vanities in which we take so much delight, in the following respects: 1. It is a clothing of humility; no robe of pride to dress up the sinner. 2. It truly corresponds to what the wearer is; no masquerade dress disguising the idle reveller or the stealthy conspirator. 3. It is a habit of the inner as well as of the outer man. A dress of the soul, the everyday costume of the devout and religious spirit, the inner habit which goes together with the outer, orderly, and sober life. (*Ibid.*) *The wedding garment: the maker and the materials:*—I. THE MAKER. It must be woven by our own hands, if ever woven at all. No such thing as getting it made for you. Every man is his own artisan: there are no workshops, and no workmen, here or elsewhere, to fit for heaven the souls of those who will not make themselves ready. We can buy, according to our means, sufficient, or more than sufficient, of lavish or gorgeous apparel, for this world and this life; but not one thread or one finger's breadth of that which we need for the life to come. II. THE MATERIALS. These are from God. They are the redeeming work of Christ, His perfect righteousness, and absolute holiness, His merits, the benefits of His cross and passion, His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension. To weave these materials into a garment, skilled and industrious fingers are needed: faith, hope, love. We must weave a true Christian habit by Christian acts; we must take what the Lord has done for us, and of it we must work a holy life; we must become like Him. III. WE SHALL HAVE HIS HELP IF WE WORK HARD. If we do our best, God will supply all the defects in our work, and make it good; sufficient for every need. Such garment as the child of God tries to make, in accordance with God's will, may need much altering and setting right; it shall need to be shaped, and washed, and made white, till it become that radiant dress which the King shall see with pleasure. (*Ibid.*) *The wedding garment a festive robe:*—The garment must, surely, from the very nature of the image, have been intended to signify something public and visible, in which each wearer harmonises with all, and all with the spirit of the peculiar scene into which they are introduced, and to which the dress is appropriate. I would say, then, that by this remarkable symbol our Lord did not intend merely the inward principle of faith exclusively considered, nor yet merely the mysterious imputation of righteousness through

identification with Christ (though these are, no doubt, necessary conditions and first steps to its possession); for apparel is, of all things, the most manifest and visible, and the wedding apparel is especially the apparel of joy. This festal garment of heaven, then, which each man must bring with him into the high presence of God, seems to be no other than that celestial temper which manifests itself by the infallible indications of a holy joy—that spiritual sympathy with the things of the spiritual world, which exhibits itself in cordial, irrepressible demonstration of the blessedness within; holy happiness, public and expressed; the "joy in the Holy Ghost"—no longer a secret, timid, half-uttered delight, but sparkling in the eye, and fearless in the voice; the "life" no longer "hid with Christ in God," but "apparent with Him in glory." I repeat it: inward, spiritual happiness, developed by the presence of God, and the consciousness of heaven, into visible manifestation—this is the wedding garment which Christ beholds and approves in the saved. (*W. Archer Butler, M.A.*) *Grace a garment:*—'Tis usual in Scripture to set forth sin by nakedness, and grace by a garment. Graces are a beautiful ornament to the soul as garments are to the body. (*T. Manton.*) *False pretences in religion:*—I. THE ORIGINAL AND GROUND OF THIS FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION, of having on the wedding garment. The constant and prevailing temper or disposition of any man's spirit, can no way be set forth more expressively than under the similitude of bodily garments, so investing the person as to be his proper and distinguishing attire. II. USEFUL AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS. 1. How absolutely and indispensably God expects and requires, that every man who hopes to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, should have his mind endued, and as it were clothed, with those habitual virtuous qualifications, which can no otherwise be acquired than by righteous practice. 2. There is such a thing as a false or ill-grounded hope; there are deceitful expectations, which may betray men into perdition. 3. The judgment of God will be according to right, in the sense that we understand just and right; in the sense, that even the wickedest of men shall not be able to deny, is according to righteousness and justice. The man convicted was speechless. 4. The reality of the concern God has for the salvation of men. 5. A very moving admonition, how dreadful at last will be the state of those whom the great goodness and long-suffering of God have not been able to bring to repentance, and to effectual amendment of life and manners. (*S. Clarke.*) *Personal dealings with individuals:*—The professors of the gospel will be personally examined. 1. There is a personal visit, "When the king came." 2. There is a personal scrutiny, "He saw a man." 3. There is a personal interrogation, "Friend, how camest thou in?" 4. There is a personal conviction, "He was speechless." 5. There is a personal bondage, "Bind him." 6. There is a personal exclusion, "Cast him into outer darkness." 7. There is a personal torment, "Weeping and gnashing of teeth." (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *Providing festal garments:*—The framework of the parable probably pre-supposes the Oriental custom of providing garments for the guests who were invited to a royal feast. Wardrobes filled with many thousand garments formed part of the wealth of every Eastern prince (chap. vi. 19; James v. 2), and it was part of his glory, as in the case of the assembly which Jehu held for the worshippers of Baal (2 Kings x. 22), to bring them out for use on state occasions. On this assumption, the act of the man who was found "not having a wedding garment" was one of wilful insult. He came in the "filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6), of his old life, instead of putting on the "white linen" meet for a kingly feast (Eccles. ix. 8; Rev. iii. 4, 5), which had been freely offered him. (*Dean Plumptre.*) *The wedding garment given:*—A coloured minister was once discoursing on salvation, which he illustrated as follows:—"Suppose," said he, "any of you wanted a coat, and should go to a white gentleman to purchase one. Well, he has one that exactly fits you, and in all respects is just what you need. You ask the price; but, when told, find that you have not enough money, and shake your head—'No, massa; I am too poor; must go without,'—and turn away. But he says, 'I know you cannot pay me; I have concluded to give it you. Will you have it?' What would you do in that case? Would you stop to hem and haw, and say, 'Oh! he's just laughing at me; he don't mean it?' No such thing. There is not one of you who would not take the coat, and say, 'Yes, massa, and thank you, too.' Now, my dear friends, God's salvation is offered to you as freely as that. Why won't you take it as freely? You are lost, undone sinners, and feel that you need a covering from His wrath. If you could keep His holy law blameless, you might purchase it by good works; but ah! you are full of sin. Prayers and tears are worthless. You are poor indeed, and if

this is all your dependence I don't wonder that you are turning off in despair. But stop! look here! God speaks now, and offers you the perfect robe of Christ's righteousness that will cover all your sins, and fit all your wants, and He says that you may have it without money and without price." (*American Paper.*) *Highways and hedges:*—We might do better if we went further afield. Our invitations to Christ, which fall so feebly on the ears of those who regularly hear us, would be welcomed by those to whom we never deliver them. We are fools to waste time in the shallows of our churches and chapels, when the deep outside teems with waiting fishes. We need fresh hearers: the newer the news to any man, the more likely is he to regard it as good news. Music-hall work, out-door preaching, house-to-house visitation have virgin soil to deal with, and there is none like it. Invite the oft-invited—certainly; but do not forget that those who have never been invited as yet cannot have been hardened by refusals. Beggars in the highways had never been bidden to a marriage-feast before; and so, when they were surprised with an invitation, they raised no questions, but gladly hastened to the banquet. *Lack of the wedding garment:*—Is there any common way of dealing with God's invitation than that which this man adopted? He had no deep love for his king, no grateful and humbling sense of his kindness, no perception of what was due to him; but with the blundering stupidity of godlessness, thought selfishness would carry him through, and ran right upon his doom. What is commoner than this self-complacency, this utter blindness to the fact that God is holy, and that holiness must therefore be the rule everywhere; what is commoner than the feeling that we are well enough, that we shall somehow pass muster, that as we mean to take our places among the heavenly guests we shall surely not be rejected? How hard it is for any of us fully to grasp the radical nature of the inward change that is required if we are to be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Conformity to God, ability to rejoice with God and in God, humble and devoted reverence, a real willingness to do honour to the King's Son—these are great attainments; but these constitute our wedding garment, without which we cannot remain in His presence nor abide His searching gaze. It is the heart that you bear towards Him that will determine your destiny. No mere appearance of accepting His invitation, no associating of yourself with those who love Him, no outward entrance into His presence, no making use of the right language is anything to the purpose. What is wanted is a profound sympathy with God, a real delight in what is holy, a radical acceptance of His will—in other words, and as the most untutored conscience might see, what is wanted is a state of mind in you which God can delight in, and approve of, and hold fellowship with. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *Refusal of the wedding garment:*—Had the man any means of obtaining a dress more in keeping with the occasion? Was he not perhaps so poor that he could afford no preparation of any kind? Had this been so, it would have been pleaded in excuse. But no doubt the parable supposes that the not unusual custom of providing for the guests the needed garment had been adopted; a provision which this guest had despised and refused; he had pushed past the officious servants who would have clothed him. It is this that constituted the man's audacity and guilt. Similar audacity in entering the king's presence without putting on the robe sent by the king for that purpose, has been known to cost a prime minister his life. A traveller who was invited, with the ambassadors he accompanied, to the table of the Persian king, says: "We were told by the officer that we, according to their usage, must hang the splendid vests that were sent us from the king over our dresses, and so appear in his presence. The ambassadors at first refused, but the officer urged it so earnestly, alleging, as also did others, that the omission would greatly displease the king, since all other envoys observed such a custom, that at last they consented, and hanged, as did we also, the splendid vests over their shoulders." So at this marriage, dresses had been provided by the king. The guests who had been picked off the streets were not told to go home and do the best they could for their dress, but in the palace, in the vestibule of the banquet-hall, each man was arrayed in the dress the king wished to see worn. Possibly the man who declined the offered garment had a dress of his own he grudged to cover. Possibly he thought he was as well dressed as need be. He would stroll in superciliously as a patron or spectator, thinking it very fit for those poor, coarse-clothed and dirty people to make use of the king's wardrobe, but conscious of no speck or uncleanliness in his own raiment that should cause him to make any alteration of it. (*Ibid.*) *The wedding garment:*—I. The multitude of guests. II. The unfitted one. III. The merciless end. *Piety outwardly manifested:*—All organized beings are sus-

tained by an inner economy of life, which is made manifest by an outer life. There is in us an inner life of thoughts, opinions, beliefs, emotions, and desires. These should be brought in conformity with the mind and Spirit of Christ. They correspond with the root of the tree, or with the seed which you hide and bury in the ground. Now, you are not satisfied with the root and the sap of the tree, or the germ power in the seed that you have hid in the earth. These hidden, buried, and unrevealed powers do not suffice. You want them to come forth and put on their gay garments, that your eye may be delighted and gladdened by their beauty. And you cut down the tree, you plough up the seed, if it puts on no wedding garment of blossom and fruit. So, say not my faith is right, my opinions are correct, my emotions are warm; for God wants more than these. He looks for fruit, for the beautiful wedding garment of a pure, sweet, loving, unselfish, and Christ-like life. The outward beauty, it is true, grows out of the hidden life. It is not put on. The beauty of the lily is not put on the flower, as a man puts on his coat. It grows out of the lily-like nature of the flower. Many put on the manners of the Christian; but when they are only put on they drop off and expose the nakedness of the wearer when temptation comes, or when there is no end to be answered by keeping them on. Let us train ourselves, day by day, into the habit and feeling of the Christian spirit and temper, so that acts of Christian love, nobleness, and self-denial may grow out of us, as the beautiful form and colour grow out of the lily, and the sweet fragrance out of the rose. (*R. Davey.*) *The wedding garment:*—1. An enemy at the feast. 2. The king at the feast. 3. The judge at the feast. 4. The criminal at the feast. 5. The executioner. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Speechless at the judgment:*—There is no speechlessness at present, when we ply men with questions as to their being unprepared for eternity: they have all some specious excuse to plead, or some empty promise to make. But there will be no death-like silence hereafter, throughout the company of those who come up from the grave unclothed for eternity. Every particular of their lives will have crowded in upon the memory, and the consciousness of what they might have been will repress all murmuring at what they are. I have read the singular account of some who have been recovered from apparent death by drowning, and they say, that, as life went away, every action, every occurrence from infancy upwards, presented itself to the mind with overpowering vividness, so that the close was as it were the resurrection of their existence; they seemed to themselves to have lived the whole of life over again, in those fearful moments when they were grappling with death, so energetically and with so marvellous an accuracy did long-forgotten things pass before them, and the picture of their every day, and every week, and every hour, paint itself on the mental retina. And if there is to come at last this resuscitation of memory, oh! we cannot wonder at the speechlessness of those who are condemned at the judgment. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) "*Called, but not chosen*":—What of necessity must be the character of that man who has put on that robe? 1. He must be a humble man. 2. He may walk into the feast boldly in his confidence. 3. He must be joyous. It is a feast. 4. He must be loving. It is a feast to commemorate love. 5. The Christ that is on him will be the Christ that is in him. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*)

Vers. 15–22. **Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?** — *The duty of an entire surrender to God:*—I. WHAT THOSE THINGS ARE WHICH WE SHOULD RENDER UNTO GOD. 1. Our time. Especially youth; and particularly the Sabbath. 2. Our substance. 3. Our children. 4. Our hearts. 5. Our whole selves. 6. The blessed fruits, and all the glory of His own grace, should, by the Christian, be rendered back to God. II. HOW THIS IS TO BE PERFORMED. That it may be an acceptable service we must do it—1. If hitherto neglected, without delay. 2. Freely, and without reluctance. 3. Thankfully, and without murmuring. 4. Humbly, and without ostentation. 5. Wholly, and without reserve. 6. For perpetuity, and without drawback. 7. In the whole of this, we should have an eye to Christ. He is the medium of all communication from God, and conveyance to Him. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity:*—This narrative—I. IN REFERENCE TO WHAT IS IN MAN. 1. Here was a profession of great piety and holiness, conjoined with very inexcusable hatred. The Pharisees were the most pretentious religionists of the day; this no proof of genuine piety. They could not refute Christ, but hated Him. 2. We observe here also a very base design. They "took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk." 3. We observe here a very iniquitous co-partnership. The Pharisees and Herodians were radical enemies. 4. We observe here also a glib, obsequious, but treacherous and lying

flattery: "Master, we know that Thou art true." Their design was to throw Him off His guard. 5. Observe the devilish cunning of the plot. "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, &c." They professed honest doubt in order to fasten Him on the horns of a dilemma. II. WITH REFERENCE TO WHAT WAS IN CHRIST. 1. We are here shown that Christ was a very dignified man. He was poor; but imposing majesty went along with His humble simplicity. 2. We are here shown that our Saviour had the reputation of a truthful man. 3. He was also a man of acknowledged intelligence. 4. He was, moreover, a man of honest faithfulness. But the subsequent parts of the narrative attest still higher qualities in our blessed Lord. (1) With all the dissimulation of these men Jesus saw through the mask, and all their secret thoughts were open to Him. He "perceived their nakedness." (2) He found an easy way out of the net from which human trickery believed it impossible for Him to escape. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *God and Cæsar*:—I. THE GOSPEL OUGHT TO PENETRATE EVERYTHING. Human life in its most widely sundered spheres must submit to its action. That being said, I affirm—II. THAT RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ARE PROFOUNDLY DISTINCT. This will appear if we consider—1. The nature of the dominion they exercise. The dominion of the State is that of the present life, and of purely temporal interests. It must guarantee to each citizen the free enjoyment of his rights and liberties. Its supreme ideal is justice. On this side it meets morals. There is a social morality which should not be considered as doing violence to the individual conscience, but which may claim submission from all, and sacrifice, if necessary. They are mistaken, therefore, who make of civil society a mere community of interests. It knows, and can form, the citizen; it ought not to have possession of the man. It must stop at the threshold of religious conscience. 2. Nor is it only by the sphere in which their authority is to be felt that the Church and the State differ; it is still more by the nature of the means which they employ. The arm of the State is *force*; the arm of the Church is the *Word* (2 Cor. x. 4). 3. Differing thus, the Church and civil society should in their inevitable relations conserve, each for itself, their independence with zealous care. This independence may be compromised in two ways: by the theocracy which submits the State to the Church, and by the opposite systems, which submit the Church to the State. In the eyes of many representatives of modern democracy, a religious society should be considered as any other society would be. It is to be governed by the rule of the majority of its members. But Christianity is a revealed fact, and does not depend on the chances of majorities. The Church should not be associated with any political party; it suffers in such alliance. An analogy will illustrate my thought: Every modern nation has two fundamental institutions—the army and the school. Now, that is no wise head which does not understand that neither the one nor the other of these should be open to discussion concerning politics. An army in which the generals became judges would surrender the nation to all sorts of dangers and assaults; schools, in which masters introduced the burning questions which divide us, would become a thorough raid on the liberty of families. In demanding that our soldiers and professors shall not intermingle political debates with their duties, no one understands that they are required to abdicate their independence, their patriotism, and their dignity as citizens. Need I say that the Church is a sphere infinitely superior to the school and the army, and that it is folly to allow party passions and hatreds to penetrate it? The Church places us face to face with eternity; she does not look at questions from the standpoint of the day or the hour, but rules over time and our passing differences. The mere earthly life becomes enslaving—and when has it been more so than to-day?—the more necessary it is that, from above it, we should affirm the grand invisible realities which do not pass away. The absolute, which is only another aspect of the eternal—that is the thing which the Church should proclaim. She must see questions in their relation to God. The domain of politics, on the contrary, is relative, and often even less than that. Politics takes men as they are, and circumstances as they are. I do not ask that religion should remain silent before the immoralities of politics; quite the contrary. I wish that, in order to denounce them with the greater force, she should not descend into the political arena; for, if she is suspected of speaking, not in the name of conscience, but in the name of party, she becomes nothing more than one voice more amid the discordant clamours of the day. Let us take a celebrated example, to which it behoves us always to recur. There is not one of us who has not admired the conduct of John the Baptist at Herod's court, and the firm courage with which he said to the blameworthy king, "It is not lawful for thee to have

her." But let John the Baptist, in place of being the prophet of conscience, become a popular judge, and all his authority crumbles: for, behind his denunciation, you discern a political end and the triumph of a party. Well, then, I cannot cease saying to those whose honour and privilege it is to represent the Church, "Never compromise it in struggles to which it should remain a stranger. Its grandeur and its force are in being the voice of eternal right, and of justice toward all." (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *Money morally stamped:*—The destination of money. How might a man moralize over a large heap of gold pieces, before they go forth from the mint to have their purity soiled by the rough usage of human hands. How many of you, he might say, are going to be the currency of selfishness, to be coined over by the chill spirit of avarice, and to have the symbol which the mint has left upon you effaced by the figure of Mammon, and the miserly mottoes that will be graved upon you when you become the instruments and objects of selfish greed? Some of them, the prophetic eye might see, were going to be spent for intemperate indulgence, to be offered on the altar of Bacchus, and so morally to be recoined with his reeling figure bloated upon it, and that awful text from his gospel, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Others, it might be seen, were on their way to the hot prizes of the gaming-table, the innermost sanctuary of the pit, where feverish eyes should be fastened upon them, and desperate hearts stake their last treasure for them, and where they seem almost visibly to gleam with the fiery portrait of Satan, his chosen medallions, that burn every hand unlucky enough to win. Others go to purchase learning and culture, and the recorded thoughts of genius, and upon them the image and superscription of Apollo and Minerva are outlined. Some, again, will wear the forms of the Graces or the Muses, inlaid into their substance by the human tastes that make them serve as ministers. If the eye could foresee what ones would go on missions of mercy, would strengthen the interests of truth, would put wings on good ideas, would endow beneficent institutions with new power, would carry sympathy and help to the bed of some poor sufferer, kindle a fire upon the desolate hearth, spread a meal upon the table of destitution, clothe a pallid and shivering child, or give it some training of mind or heart—those, a man might say, are the Christian coins. It should seem that they ought to gleam more brightly among the heaps where they lie. The form of Christ is really stamped upon that silver and gold, and His superscription, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," enwreathes His image with immortal truth. Those are the dollars that look precious in the sight of heaven. The touch of benevolence transmutes them into eternal possessions. Who would not wish to own them? Who, when the hour of death comes, would not prefer to have spent such coin? What pleasure or profit would then look so bright, or give such comfort as the retrospect of these golden benefactors of the world! (*T. Starr King.*) *The conscience exempt from civil rule:*—When certain persons attempted to persuade Stephen, King of Poland, to constrain some of his subjects, who were of a different religion, to embrace his, he said to them, "I am king of men, and not of consciences. The dominion of conscience belongs exclusively to God." *The citizen's twofold stewardship:*—Christ is not here defining two duties which stand in contrast or antithesis to each other. He is defining one duty, in its just relation to another and a higher duty out of which it grows. Recall the occasion of His words. Some one has brought to Him a penny, and asks Him whether it is lawful for a Jew to pay tribute to a Roman ruler. Says Christ in effect, "My brother, the penny itself has settled that question. It has, stamped upon it, an image or medallion which is Cæsar's likeness. It is current here because this is Cæsar's country; and you use it, whether you choose to own the fact or no, because you are Cæsar's subject. Give Cæsar, therefore, his due. Pay your taxes, obey the laws, honour the civil authorities; but that you may do so, begin by paying your taxes to God. The penny bears an image; so do you. The penny is from the mint of the emperor; you are from the mint of God. The use of the penny is determined by its likeness. So, too, your use is determined by your likeness. Every faculty in you, every gift, every grace and charm and power which is most characteristic and distinctive, is the stamp of the Divine. You are God's child. You bear His image. Render to Him your supreme and unceasing tribute; and in doing that, all other and minor questions will settle themselves. 'Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' do I say? Yes. But render them because, and in the inspiration, of that higher duty which bids you render unto God the things that are God's!" (*Bishop H. C. Potter.*) *The coinage of love and service for God and man:*—With many of us the stewardship of money is not our chiefest

stewardship: of such a coinage we have little or nothing to put in circulation. Still, though we may not be able to circulate the currency that buys and sells, it is ours to circulate the far mightier currency that cheers and inspires and consoles. The world to-day is waiting for something besides money. It is waiting for love and thought and personal interest and painstaking. Whether, therefore, you are a capitalist or a clerk, a student or a teacher, a professional man or a woman living in the retirement of your kindred and home, take your slumbering sympathy (I will not believe that God has not implanted it within you!) and coin that into love and service for your kind. On your brow rests the stamp of Him whose coinage and currency you are. There are lost pieces of silver, aye and of gold, which also bear His image. They have long ago been missing from the Father's treasury, and are trampled under foot of man and beast alike. But, if you can find them in the mire, if you will wash them with your tears, and burnish them back to brightness and beauty by your patient and loving touch, you will find on them the image of Him who made them, and the superscription of His immortal kingdom. Light the candle of your love, then, and sweep diligently till you find them. Think of some one, to-day, whose life is lonely, whose youth is gone, whose lot is hard and cheerless and unlovely, and try to lift them up, at least for the hour, into the atmosphere of a warmer and more beneficent brotherhood. (*Ibid.*) *The claims of God and man*:—I. Notice the CLAIMS OF CÆSAR, OR CIVIL GOVERNMENTS. The just claims of civil governments are limited to civil exactions, in opposition to religious or sacred claims. Civil governments rightly demand—1. Homage and subjection (Rom. xiii. 1, &c.; 1 Peter ii. 13, &c.). 2. Obedience, and tribute, or taxes. Christ did this (Matt. xvii. 27; Titus iii. 1). 3. Thanksgiving and prayer to God on their behalf (1 Tim. ii. 17, &c.). There are the claims of Cæsar and civil governments. But civil governments may demand more than their rights; if they do so, they will be either in matters civil or ecclesiastical; if they levy unjust civil exactions, then, as citizens, they may be peacefully, yet firmly, resisted. This has been repeatedly done. By the three Hebrews, Daniel, Peter, and the apostles (Acts iv. 18). II. THE CLAIMS OF GOD. We are to render to God—1. Religious belief and homage. 2. Religious awe and fear. "Fear before Him all the earth" (Psa. xcvi. 4, 9). 3. Praise and thanksgiving. 4. Our highest love and delight. 5. Universal obedience. Learn—1. That the Christian religion is favourable to order and obedience, but it limits the authority of the State to civil concerns. 2. It distinctly exhibits true liberty of conscience. Should not this be dear and sacred to every good man, especially when sanctioned by the spirit of our text?" (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Our duties as subjects*:—I. THAT THEY SHOULD HONOURABLY AND FULLY PAY ALL TAXES which are imposed upon them. The advantages of civil government are costly, and means must be provided by the individuals of the nation. We must not defraud the government, or a neighbour, who will have to make good our default. II. THAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD ACQUIESCE IN THAT FORM OF GOVERNMENT UNDER WHICH THEY LIVE, WHATEVER BE ITS CHARACTER AND ORIGIN. A nation has the right to secure its independence of a foreign nation; a nation has the right to amend its institutions; but the duty alleged is that of individuals. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." This is God's will. But if human government has its rights, God has His rights. As human governments depend on the authority of God, they must be subordinate to it. His rights are supreme, and the rights of the human government terminate where the rights of God begin. The contrast in "the things which are Cæsar's." 1. It is the right of God to demand our worship. 2. General obedience to His laws. 3. That we should maintain that truth which He has revealed, by which He is glorified, and the world is to be blessed. How small a portion all this is of what we owe to God. Admire this feature of the law of Christ, which secures the order of states. Let us be good subjects. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Cæsar's dues*:—I. We owe them honour *inward*, by a reverent conceit. II. And *outward*, by an honourable testimony of the virtues in them, and the good we receive by them. And sure I am this we owe, "Not to speak evil of them that are in authority," and if there were some infirmity, not to blaze, but to conceal and cover it, for that the Apostle maketh a part of honour (1 Cor. xii. 23). III. We owe them our prayers, and daily devout remembrances; "for all," saith St. Paul, "but, by special prerogative, for princes." IV. We owe them the service of our bodies, which if we refuse to come in person to do, the angel of the Lord will curse us, as he did Meroz (Judges v. 23). (*Bishop Andrewes.*) *Rights of Cæsar and rights of God*:—I. Some particular rights and privileges belong to Cæsars, or sovereign princes: 1. Honour to

their persons. 2. Obedience to their laws. 3. Tribute. II. Some peculiar rights and prerogatives belong to God only. 1. All religious worship. 2. Due reverence and regard to all sacred things, such as (*a*) ministers; (*b*) God's house; (*c*) the Lord's Day; (*d*) Tenth part of our substance. III. The duty of all Christians with reference to both, and that is, to render the respective rights and dues to each. (*Matthew Hole.*)

Vers. 23-33. **For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.**—*The joys of heaven*:—The Gauls, an ancient people of France, after they had once tasted of the sweet wine of the grapes that grew in Italy, inquired after that country where such pleasant liquor was, and understanding of it, they made towards that place, and never rested till they came thither where such pleasant things grew. Could we only realize something of the joys of heaven, should we not more earnestly set ourselves to find the way? This thought often sustained Christian martyrs in their sufferings. *The angelic life*:—We must all of us develop one way or the other; manhood here is but the corn in the ear. I. IN WHAT RESPECTS ARE THESE SAINTS WHO HAVE PASSED THE STREAM OF DEATH LIKE UNTO THE ANGELS. 1. The saints of God are like unto the angels as to the qualities of their persons. Sex is obliterated not in mental characteristics, but in bodily frame. Alike in their immortality they cannot die. Like the angels in the maturity of their being, the body is raised in glory. Resemble the angels in beauty, and equal them in strength. What a blessed personality will be yours when the present age is past. 2. There will be likeness between the angels and glorified saints in the matter of character. No inbred sin. Purity and perfection. 3. The souls of the blessed are like to angels as to their occupation. Adoration; wondering study; gazing upon God; untiring service—these their occupations. 4. We shall be like the angels in heavenliness. Here we want externals; eat and drink: there no desires of an earthly kind. 5. Like the angels as to our happiness. II. THE ANGELIC LIFE ON EARTH. We may be like angels here below. 1. Be it ours, as it was theirs, to declare the word of God. 2. For fighting a good fight. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. 3. In setting free those who are the prisoners of hope. The angel came to Peter in prison. 4. In ministering comfort to those who are saved. An angel said to Paul, "Fear not." 5. In watching our souls. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Ignorance of Holy Scripture the source of error in religion*:—I. TO ESTABLISH THE FACT THAT IGNORANCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IS THE SOURCE OF ERROR IN RELIGION. Holy Scripture is the truth from which error is the deviation. The Sadducees erred because they knew them not: they denied the resurrection of the dead. They substituted tradition for them: hence their error. II. THAT MISREPRESENTATION OF SCRIPTURE LEADS TO SINFUL CONSEQUENCES. "Destroy the temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Upon this false witnesses accused Christ. See how the misinterpretation of Christ's words led to sin. Education that falls short of "knowing the Scriptures" will end in error. (*C. Cator, M.A.*) *A resurrection emblem*:—The churchyard at Oberhofen, Switzerland) was beautiful, and the simplicity of the little remembrance-posts set upon the graves very pleasant. One who had been too poor to put up an engraved brass plate, or even a painted board, had written with ink on paper the birth and death of the being whose remains were below, and this had been fastened to a board, and mounted on the top of a stick at the head of the grave, the paper being protected by a little edge and roof. Such was the simple remembrance, but Nature had added her pathos, for under the shelter by the writing a caterpillar had fastened itself, and passed into its death-like state of chrysalis, and having ultimately assumed its final state, it had winged its way from the spot, and had left the corpse-like relics behind. How old and how beautiful is this figure of the resurrection! Surely it can never appear before our eyes without touching the thoughts. (*Life of Faraday.*) *Creation is more inexplicable than resurrection*:—For it is not the same thing to rekindle an extinguished lamp, as to show fire that has never yet appeared. It is not the same thing to raise up again a house that has fallen down, and to produce one which has never had an existence. (*Chrysostom.*) *The intermediate state*:—I. The soul of man subsists after death, and hath some place of abode allotted to it at the resurrection. II. This intermediate state is, in all probability, not a state of insensibility to the souls of the righteous; but of thought and self-consciousness, and consequently of content and of happiness, in a certain degree. (*John Jortin.*) *Things said not to be in heaven, which yet are in heaven*:—There are many things said not to be in heaven, and yet, in another sense, said to be there. There is no

temple in heaven; but the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple thereof. There is no sea in heaven; but there is a glassy sea proceeding from before the throne, not a tumultuous angry sea, but a translucent one whose kindly waves are gently flowing. There is no night in heaven, but there are stars there: for they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven; and one star differeth from another star in glory. So there is no marriage in heaven, and yet heaven is one marriage, and its happiness is represented by a marriage festival, God Himself being the universal husband, and all the redeemed being to Him as one endeared wife. So we may be very sure that it marriage, as it exists here, be not the pattern of things to come, it is the parable of things to come. We may be very sure of this, that if relationships on earth shall not be entanglements hereafter, yet that whatever we enjoy now we shall enjoy then in a transfigured way; we may be very sure that in a world where there is no death, and therefore where there needs to be no birth, there shall be those varieties of life for which birth here provides. No death, therefore no birth, therefore not the ordinary terrestrial necessity for marriage as it exists around us. But marriage is an intimate delightful companionship; and shall the joy of companionship fail for ever? Nay; has not the one Lord—if we think deeply, and purify our thoughts from sensual relation—has not the one Lord a married nature? Can we think of Him otherwise than as having in Himself the perpetual joy of companionship, and, with a motherly heart and a fatherly heart blended in the one great heart of supreme love, giving forth to us, as the expression of His maternity and His fatherhood, His Son—the Lord Jesus Christ—so womanly in His tenderness, so manly in His strength. (*T. T. Lynch.*) *Voices from heaven:*—I was reading the other day that, on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, the wives of fishermen whose husbands have gone out on the deep are in the habit, at eventide, of going down to the sea-shore, and singing, as female voices only can, the first stanza of a beautiful hymn. After they have sung it, they listen till they hear, borne by the wind across the desert-sea, the second stanza, sung by their gallant husbands, as they are tossed by the gale upon the waves; and both are happy. Perhaps if we could listen, we, too, might hear on this desert-world of ours some sound, some whisper, borne from afar, to remind us that there is a heaven and a home; and, when we sing the hymn upon the shores of earth, perhaps we shall hear its sweet echo breaking in music upon the sands of time, and cheering the hearts of them that are pilgrims and strangers, and look for a city that hath foundations. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *As the angels:*—The blessed in heaven after the resurrection shall be like the angels, not by nature; but (1) by purity; (2) by spiritual life, for they live by spiritual not corporeal food: (3) by incorruption and immortality; (4) by happiness and glory, in which, like the angels, they will continue for all eternity. (*Lapide.*) *The functions of man's animal nature not operative in heaven:*—Well, how is that? He did not say. He likened them to the angels, but did not tell us how the angels were. It was rather negative. He declared that one potential, universal part of the economy of human life, with all its incidents and concomitants, stopped at the grave. This is the part of man out of which multitudinous history, good and bad, is derived. But useful as it is, it ceases and does not go on into the other life; and it seems very natural, since man is a double being, born for this lower life, in transition and formation for a life to come, that a portion of the powers or faculties which fit him especially for this lower life, when they shall have performed their function, will, as it were, like the calyx of a flower, wither and fall back, and that into the other life we shall carry only those parts of our nature which are highest and noblest, and which have relation to the spiritual rather than to the physical. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Heaven vaguely revealed yet a comfort to the human heart:*—I have sat on the summit of Mount Holyoke, and looked out over the Connecticut valley, and seen as entrancing views as ever comforted the heart of man, poet though he might be; and yet, if you had asked me, "What is in that field?" I could not have told you whether it was wheat, or rye, or grass, or corn. If you had asked me, "What is that village?" I could not have told you. I could just see a white glimmer among the green trees, but that was all. If you had asked me, "Who are those men working yonder?" or "What are they doing?" I could not have told you. I could see men that seemed to be about the size of ants crawling over the surface of the ground; but whether they were mowing, or hoeing, or walking, or running, I could not tell. The whole picture lay before me, magnificent, and quickened every spring of fancy, and comforted my heart; but I could not give much idea of its horticulture, or agriculture, or anything that went to make up the interior of its life. (*Ibid.*) *God's*

*power a guarantee for the care of men who have departed this life*:—The argument Christ uses so convincingly is really this, and it is very simple: God said, "I am the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"—not I was, but I am—meaning, that these had been dear to Him, and still were. Now, if these were God's children, and God loved them, why should they die? All "live unto Him," says Christ—as He pleases, and as long as He pleases. If he speaks of your fathers as caring for their life, why should you think them dead? They lived from Him, and they lived for Him, and therefore they live still. If they lived from Him, and no power could take their life away without His permission; if they lived for Him in such a sense that they were endeared to Him—why should they die? Would we let any one dear to us die, if we had an absolute control over life, as God has? Leave the thought of persons, and take the baser case of money. If a man keeps his money upon his table, and has a sufficient watch over his house, why do we feel sure that the bags of money are safe? Because we know that, being in his power, he not only is not likely to throw them out of the window—he loves them too well for that—but that, having power also to keep them from the thief, his love answers for their security. If he could not keep them, it is likely enough that they would be lost, for there are other people that desire to have them. The fact of his having them would be no obstacle to their having them, if only they could lay hands on them. But if, in the case of money, where a man has power to keep it, he certainly will, what shall we say of the soul—the soul on which God has bestowed His Fatherly care? If no one—no devouring lion—can pluck Abraham out of God's hand, will God throw him away and say He cares for him no longer? If no one could destroy the lives of these fathers but God, was He likely to do it? (*T. T. Lynch.*)

Vers. 30-40. **Master, which is the great commandment in the law?**—*How may we attain to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds?*—I. WHAT IS IT TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL THE HEART, SOUL, AND MIND? 1. What is love? It is not a carnal love. It is not a natural love. It is not a merely moral love. 2. What is love to God? Metaphors to illustrate what it is to love God. (1) The soul's love to God may be a little shadowed forth by the love of the iron to the loadstone. (2) Our love to God is like the love of the flower of the sun to the sun. (3) Our love to God is like the love of the turtle to her mate. (4) Our love to God should be like, though exceed, Jacob's love to Benjamin. We must not love God only with the heart, but with the whole heart. The whole heart is opposed either to a divided and dispersed heart, or to a remiss and a sluggish heart. As the whole heart is opposed to a remiss and sluggish heart, the meaning is this—the care of our heart should be set upon nothing so much as upon the loving and pleasing God. II. IT IS OUR INDISPENSABLE DUTY THUS TO LOVE GOD. To love God is our great natural duty. Man would more naturally love God than himself, were it not for sin. Christ's reason in the following verse—"This is the first and the great commandment." Not that any command of God is small. The commands in Scripture are like the stars in the firmament, which though to ignorant persons they are but like twinkling candles, yet are greater than the whole earth; so these commands, that careless persons overlook as inconsiderable, are such as without respect unto them there is no salvation. But this upon a manifold account is "the great command." 1. In respect of the object. 2. In respect of order and dignity. 3. In respect of obligation. 4. In respect of the matter of it. 5. In respect of the largeness of it. 6. In respect of its capacity. 7. In respect of the difficulties of it. 8. In respect of the end. 9. In respect of the lastingness of it. III. WHAT ABILITIES ARE REQUISITE TO THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY, AND HOW WE MAY ATTAIN THOSE ABILITIES? As the only efficient cause of our loving God is God Himself, so the only procuring cause of our loving God is Jesus Christ, that Son of the Father's love, who by His Spirit implants and actuates this grace of love, which He hath merited for us (Col. i. 20). Impediments of our love to God. 1. Self-love. 2. Love of the world. 3. Spiritual sloth and carelessness of spirit. 4. The love of any sin whatsoever. 5 Inordinate love of things lawful. Means to attain love to God. 1. Directing by spiritual knowledge. (1) The knowledge of spiritual things. (2) The knowledge of ordinary things in a spiritual manner, so as to make the knowledge of natural things serve heavenly designs. 2. Promoting means are various. (1) Self-denial. (2) Contempt of the world. (3) Observation of God's benefits to us. (4) Watchfulness over our own hearts. (5) Prayer. (6) Meditation. (7) Choice of friends. (8) Thanksgiving. 3. Sustaining and conserving mean. (1) Faith, whereby we are persuaded that what God hath spoken

is true and good. (2) Hope, whereby we expect a future good. (3) Patience. 1. Directing. (1) Prize the word. (2) Set immediately upon the practice of those things which you shall be convinced to be your duty. 2. Exemplary means. (1) Men. (2) Angels. (3) Christ. IV. HOW TO IMPROVE AND AUGMENT ALL OUR POSSIBLE ABILITIES TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART, SOUL, MIND, AND STRENGTH. Degrees of love. 1. The first degree is to love God for those good things which we do or hope to receive from Him. 2. The second step of our love to God is to love God for Himself, because He is the most excellent good. 3. The third step is to love nothing but for God's sake, in Him, and for Him, and to Him. 4. The fourth step of our love to God is for our highest love of everything to be hatred in comparison of our love to God. 5. The most eminent degree of our love to God is ecstasy and ravishment. Properties of love to God. 1. To begin with the properties of our love to God. (1) This Divine love is not at all in the unregenerate, unless only in show and imitation. (2) This Divine love is far from perfection. (3) Our love to God shall never be abolished. (4) This Divine love is so unknown to the world, that when they behold the effects and flames of it in those that love God in an extraordinary manner, they are ready to explode it as mere vanity, folly, madness, ostentation, and hypocrisy. 2. The absolute properties of love to God are among many, some of them such as these. (1) It is the most ingenious of all graces. (2) Love to God is the most bold, strong, constant, and daring grace of all the graces of the Spirit of God. (3) Love to God is the only self-emptying and satisfying grace. (4) The love of God makes us anxiously weary of life itself. 3. This much of the positive properties; the transcendent properties of our love to God are—(1) Love to God is the great general directing grace containing all other particular graces in it and most intimately goes through the acts of all of them (1. Cor. xiii). (2) It is in a singular manner infinite. Effects of love to God:—They relate either to God Himself or to ourselves, or they are mutual. 1. Effects that relate to God are such as these—(1) Hatred of and flight from all that is evil. (2) The fear of God. (3) Obedience to the commands of God, and to those commands which would never be obeyed but out of love to God (1. John v. 3). (4) Resignation of ourselves to God. (5) Adhesion and cleaving unto God, in every case and every condition. (6) Tears and sighs through desires and joys. 2. The only effect I shall name as to us is a seeking of heaven and things above, with contempt of the world and all worldly excellences. 3. Mutual effects are these—(1) Union with God. (2) Communion with God. (3) Familiar love-visits. (4) A putting a love-interpretation upon all things. *Concomitants*:—1. Devotion, which is an absolute delivering up of ourselves to God's worship and service, so as by no flatteries or dangers to be diverted. 2. The other concomitant is zeal, which is the most intense degree of desire and endeavour to please and honour God—(1) In the exercise of zeal against sin observe this rule—whatever act of zeal you express towards others, double the first upon yourselves. (2) For zeal about duties—in every duty you take in hand, endeavour to do it above your strength. V. I PROPOSE TO URGE SOME PERSUASIONS TO BE GRACIOUSLY AMBITIOUS OF SUCH QUALIFICATIONS, AND AS GRACIOUSLY DILIGENT IN SUCH EXERCISES. 1. God is our great Benefactor. 2. Love to God ennobles all other graces. 3. Love to God rectifieth all other loves, and brings them in due bounds. 4. Our love to God doth more sensibly quiet our hearts, than God's love to us. (*S. Annesley, D.D.*) *Love the fulfilling of the law*:—I. Look to the testimony of the Bible and see whether I am right in saying that THE GREAT CONTROLLING INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IS TO BE LOVE TO GOD AND MAN. Christian people spend much time watching their motives and actions that they have little or no time to attend to anything else. There is but one thing required of man, and that is, that he shall have *love*. If you take care of that, everything else will take care of itself. As in a watch there is a spring, which, if you coil it up, will of itself keep all the wheels in motion, so there is in the human soul a spring which, if you wind it up, will uncoil itself, and carry forward everything related to your duties and conduct in this world. II. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS LOVE. God has made in the human soul a threefold provision for the exercise of affection: maternal love, personal affection, benevolence to men irrespective of character. To these forms of affection I must add a capacity for a higher love, by which we are able to develop out of ourselves a true love for that which is invisible and perfect—the ideal religious love. This is given us that we may find our way up to God, whom we have not seen, with love and trust. III. WHAT IS THE CONDITION IN WHICH THIS STATE OF MIND IS TO EXIST? We are conscious that our feelings exist in a two-fold way—first as impulses, and second as dispositions. The

former are occasional, the latter are permanent. Love must be a disposition, our natural equilibrium and rest. Some men are habitually in a state of industry; they are idle sometimes, but idleness with them is special, the exception. Industry is their abiding state. Love must be our abiding condition. IV. I am to ask your attention to THE RELATIONS OF THIS DISPOSITION OF LOVE TO THE WORK OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL AND IN THE WORLD. This disposition of love is the atmosphere in which all other qualities ripen, and in which only they are perfect. Those duties impelled by fear are usually caustic, those impelled by conscience are usually hard; but those which spring from love are always easy. We shall never be able to treat our fellow-men aright without the disposition of love; to correct their faults; without love we cannot correctly present Christianity to the world. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The law of the heart:*—We all know the physical phenomenon called attraction, that is to say, the still unexplained cause by which the molecules of matter draw one another. Science tells us that it is a general property of matter, that it exists in all bodies whether at rest or in movement and whatever their nature; that it acts irrespective of distance as well as in all substances; when it is operating amongst the stars, it is called universal gravitation; when it is manifested on the surface of our globe, it is called weight. All those who have known nature since the remotest periods, have known it. Newton was the first to give to this law the formula which we all learned by heart in our youth, and all ulterior observations have only verified it. This law of Newton then is only a sublime analogy of the law of love which, in the moral order, should bind together all thinking beings; and as there is not an atom of matter which can loosen itself from physical attraction, so there is not a moral being who can loosen himself from the law of love. "Thou shalt love." I. Let us face the objections that confront us. It is denied that the heart can have a law; it is said that the proper characteristic of the affections is to be free from every commandment. There is in every man a domain where nature reigns supreme. It is, however, the end of education to diminish in man the too powerful part of instinct and necessity, in order to develop that of intelligence and will. Instinct says when we suffer an injury, "Revenge thyself." Social education keeps back the arm. The heart can be modified by the will. Christianity has commanded affections such as nature never had inspired. In Saul of Tarsus it overcame all the hatreds of his race. It is true that we can learn to love; the heart can overcome nature. Whence this love in a dead heart? God alone can inspire it. II. When this love which comes from faith shall have been thus created in your hearts, it will be possible for you to love humanity, not only in vague enthusiasm of a general philosophy, but in that particular attachment which sees in each of its members a being created in the image of God. 1. To love humanity we must believe in humanity. The Christian sees under the most repulsive being the ideal which can one day be born of God in him. 2. Learn to see in him not that which is antagonistic to you, but all that is possible to be good, noble, and true. In the most benighted soul there remains some Divine spark. 3. Guard against those unjust prejudices, those harsh antipathies, which obscure the sight and hinder us from seeing, in their true features, those whom we meet with on our way. 4. Love in order to learn to love—"To him that hath shall be given." If disorderly passions have their bewilderments, if they drag down an incline that is never reascended by the souls that yield to them, do you not believe that it will be the same with the noblest, the holiest, the best of loves? Will it not have its enthusiasms, its irrepressible outbursts, which will fill the soul to a point that it will desire no other life, because that it would find there nothing but coldness and weariness? Those holy souls that reproduce upon earth something of the life of Christ, and make to circulate in the present world the current of a warm love, were at their beginning lukewarm and cold as you and your soul; they have known all the discouragements, all the repugnances, all the disgusts that you complain of. But they gave themselves first to God and afterwards to man; they loved, and love became their dominant passion; something of heaven has begun for them here below: henceforth all inferior ends will appear to them barren and unattractive; they have already found, they will soon possess in its infinite fulness, the eternal life of which love is the law. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) "*The second is like unto it*":—In the present day there are three classes of men who are disposed to confine the idea of duty to our relations with our fellow-men; either because they absolutely deny the existence of God, or because they think that nothing can be known about Him, or because they hold that there is something anthropomorphic about the idea of duty altogether, and therefore that it is idle to speak of duty on the part of feeble creatures such as

we are, towards the absolute and the infinite. One class consists of those in whom the spiritual organ is defective; the second of those who cannot believe without strict logical proof, and find a stumbling-block in the demand for faith; while a third consists of those who are repelled by moral difficulties. All these classes join to swell the tide of secularism. "To do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbour as yourself" constitutes the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality. Still the question remains, Is the rule here given sufficient in itself; *can the second commandment stand thus isolated?* Is it enough that a man should do to others as he would wish them to do to him? Does it necessarily lead to virtue? Take the example of a sensualist: what he wishes to have done is to have his appetites gratified, to be spared all self-denial. To act towards others as he would wish them to act towards him, might lead to the worst consequences. Also what is the "love" of the sensualist, and what is the "self" which he loves. He loves the lower self in himself and in others. You must be sure that the man who loves you rightly loves himself. You must in short rise to the *ideal* that should be. In this there is a transcending the matter-of-fact rule—"Do as you would be done by." But how and where is the ideal to be found. Is it a fancy, in nature, art, poetry? The dullest life offers some foothold for the God-given faculties of admiration, imagination, and affection. The beauties of nature are tokens of an existence outside ourselves, infinite in power and wisdom, sympathising with every higher feeling of the heart. This is confirmed by our own experience of life. The first dawn of consciousness reveals to us a mother's unselfish devotion. We learn to appreciate the thoughtful justice of a father; watching the world we come to feel that we are in the midst of "a stream of tendency which makes for righteousness," and we see its effects on a large scale in the rise and fall of nations. Here then we find the right interpretation of the rule, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." It is love the ideal in thy neighbour as thou lovest it in thyself. And to this end we must keep our eyes open to the ideal in others. See your friend glorified, as what he may be by God's grace. And now we have seen the Ideal at work both in life and in nature, we may take a further step, and ask whether there is any other name under which it is known to us. Two heathen philosophers shall furnish us with an answer. All lower ideals, says Plato, are summed up in one highest Ideal, the perfection of beauty and goodness. This Ideal is to the world of mind what the sun is to the world of matter, the fountain of life and light. Love is the yearning after this Ideal, at first a dim unconscious yearning, but as it grows in purity it comes to discern its object more clearly, until at length it beholds it face to face, and then there is heaven. For this ideal is God, the Author of the universe, the Father of each individual soul. And Seneca shall tell us what is the ideal nature formed within each:—*sacer intra nos spiritus sedet*, "a holy spirit dwells within us;" and again, *prope est ad te deus, tecum est, intus est*, "God is near you, He is with you, He is in you." Need I remind you that the same truth is proclaimed by the voice of revelation—"In Him we live and move and have our being;" "The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead;" "In Him was life and the life was the light of men;" "That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Once only has the perfect Ideal of man been seen on earth, and that Ideal was one with the Father; the ideal can be formed in each one of us only by the Spirit of Christ within us. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye except ye abide in Me;" "If Christ be in you the spirit is life because of righteousness." Here then we may advance to a further definition of our rule. When we say, "Love the ideal in thy neighbour," we mean as we now see, "Love that which is Christ-like, that which is God-like in thy neighbour." The natural object of love, as Plato has taught us, is the Divine perfection. That we are to love; that, in so far as our heart is in its right state, we cannot help loving, with all our soul and all our strength; all other things we shall love in so far as they embody or represent to us any portion of the Divine perfection. Thus the second commandment is like unto the first, because it is, in fact, an exemplification of it in one direction, just as we might have another exemplification, bidding us love and admire all the beauty and sublimity of outward nature, or, as our Lord bids, "Consider the lilies of the field." The lessons, then, which we should draw from the consideration of the close connection between the first and the second commandments are mainly two. One is, to suspect all religious emotions in ourselves which do not tend to increase our love for our fellow-men. "Pure religion and undefiled," says St. James, "is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted

from the world." If our religion fails to do this, whatever ecstatic heights we may seem to soar to, it is mere self-deception; such religion is vain. The other is that on which we have already dwelt so much, that we are to love our fellow-men in God, as created by God, as redeemed by Christ, as called to be temples of the Holy Spirit, as all having in them the germ of a new and Divine life, which it is the privilege and the duty of human love to cherish and to strengthen, until at last the whole body of the Church, "being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (*J. B. Mayor, M.A.*) *Comprehensive summary of the Ten Commandments:*—There are many things about this law to fill us with admiration. I. Its completeness. It includes the whole of life and all its chiefest duties. II. Its twofold division. The first table of the law reveals and informs a man's duty to God. The second, his duty to himself and his fellows. III. Its twofold summary. When classified from a spiritual standpoint, it has two great commandments: supreme love to God; love to fellow-man as to one's self. IV. Reflections. Its uniqueness, origin, scope, simplicity, tendency to lead to Christ. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The love of our neighbour:*—I. This duty arises out of our RATIONAL AND SOCIAL NATURES. II. The OBLIGATIONS under which we are laid to the practice of the duty. 1. From the connection of this commandment with the first. If we love God, we shall love our brother. 2. A sense of justice, the golden rule, should lead us to do good to our neighbour. 3. The greatest difficulty to contend with is the more powerful influence of other motives addressed to the selfishness of the heart. 4. What is heaven, as to which we profess to aspire, but the region of perfect love. III. APPLY THE SUBJECT AND HOLD REASONINGS WITH THE SELFISH SPIRIT. To all we have said selfishness says, "I must mind myself." (*W. H. Burns.*) *The law of love:*—THE PRINCIPLE OR PHILOSOPHY OF IT. Most men are actuated by exclusive self-love. This law operates as a command and as a restraint. II. THE POSITIVE CHARACTER WHICH THIS LAW GIVES TO ALL THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE SECOND TABLE. By the first commandment of the second table, the different orders of society are protected; domesticated order the well-spring of all social order. Life is protected by the sixth commandment; by the next precept the person of our neighbour is protected, property, reputation. (*R. Frost, M.A.*) *The law of love:*—Mark the unity and the simplicity which characterises this law of love to God. It is based on the declaration that there is but one God the Lord. I. THE LAW OF LOVE IN NOT INFERIOR TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS; in fact, love of God and man includes all which these teach at greater length. II. The law of love is SUPERIOR. 1. The positive, whereas the old law was negative. 2. The law of love is superior because exhaustive. 3. It is superior because it begins at the heart. 4. It is superior because it leads us directly to feel our need of the Spirit of God. (*A. H. Charteris, D.D.*) *The mind's love for God:*—In the first place, then, we want to assure ourselves in general that there is such a power as intellectual affection, and that no man completely and worthily loves any noble thing or person unless he loves it with his mind as well as with his heart and soul. That will not, I think, be very hard to see. Take, for instance, your love for some beautiful scene of nature. There is somewhere upon the earth a lordly landscape which you love. When you are absent from it, you remember it with delight and longing. When you step into the sight of it after long absence, your heart thrills and leaps. While you sit quietly gazing day after day upon it, your whole nature rests in peace and satisfaction. Now, what is it in you that loves that loveliness? Love I take to be the delighted perception of the excellence of things. With what do you delightedly perceive how excellent is all that makes up that landscape's beauty, the bending sky, the rolling hill, the sparkling lake, the waving harvest, and the brooding mist? First of all, no doubt, with your senses. It is the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the sense of feeling which in the glowing cheek is soothed or made to tingle, the sense of smell which catches sweet odours from the garden or the hayfield,—it is these that love the landscape first; you love it first with all your senses. But next to that what comes? Suppose that the bright scene is radiant with associations, suppose that by that river you have walked with your most helpful friend; upon that lake you have floated and frolicked when you were a boy; across that field you have guided the staggering plough; over that hill you have climbed in days when life was all sunshine and breeze. That part of you which is capable of delightedly perceiving these associations as they shine up to you from the glowing scenery, perceives them with delight and takes the landscape into its affection. You love the scene with all your heart. But yet again, suppose a deeper faculty

in you perceives the hand of God in all this wondrous beauty; suppose a glad and earnest gratitude springs up in you and goes to meet the meadow and the sky; suppose that all seems to tell to some deep listening instinct in you that it was all made for you, and made by one who loved you; suppose that it all stands as a rich symbol of yet richer spiritual benefits of which you are aware; what then? Does not another part of you spring up and pour out its affection, your power of reverence and gratefulness; and so you love the landscape then with all your soul. Or yet again, if the whole scene appears to tempt you with invitations to work; the field calling on you to till it, and the river to bridge it, and the hill to set free the preciousness of gold or silver with which its heart is full and heavy; to that too you respond with your power of working; and then you love the scene with all your will or all your strength. And now, suppose that beyond all these another spirit comes out from the landscape to claim another yet unclaimed part of you; suppose that unsolved problems start out from the earth and from the sky. Glimpses of relationship between things and of qualities in things flit before you, just letting you see enough of them to set your curiosity all astir. The scene which cried before; "Come, admire me;" or, "Come, work on me;" now cries, "Come, study me." What bangs the stars in their places and swings them on their way; how the earth builds the stately tree out of the pretty seed; how the river feeds the cornfield; where lie the metals in the mountains?—these, and a hundred other questions, leap out from the picture before you, and, pressing in past your senses and your emotions and your practical powers, will not rest till they have found out your intelligence. They appeal to the mind, and the mind responds to them; not coldly, as if it had nothing to do but just to find and register their answers, but enthusiastically, perceiving with delight the excellence of the truths at which they point, recognizing its appropriate task in their solution, and so loving the nature out of which they spring in its distinctive way. It would be strange indeed if it were not so; strange indeed if the noblest part of us were incapable of the noblest action; strange indeed if, while our senses could thrill and our hearts leap with affection, the mind must go its way in pure indifference, making its great discoveries with no emotion for the truths which it discovered, and for the men in whom those truths were uttered. But it is not so. The intellect can love. But can we think about God's love and not feel ever present, as an element in it, the working of the infinite mind as well as of the perfect heart? No doubt men's minds differ from one another exceedingly in their capacity of affection. You tell your scholar that he must study because his parents wish it, because he ought to be equal to his fellow-scholars, because he will be poor and dishonoured if he is ignorant. These motives are good, but they are only the kindling under the fire. Not until an enthusiasm of your scholar's own intellect begins, and he loves the books you offer him with his mind, because of the way they lay hold of his power of knowing them; not until then has the wood really caught and your fire truly begun to burn. To that end every true teacher must devote himself, and not count his work fairly begun till that is gained. When that is gained the scholar is richer by a new power of loving—the power of loving with his intellect—and he goes on through life, carrying in the midst of all the sufferings and disappointments which he meets, a fountain of true joy in his own mind which can fill him with peace and happiness when men about him think that he has only dreariness and poverty and pain. (*P. Brooks, D.D.*)

*Love of God to be the dominant passion:*—It could scarcely lead to any satisfactory result if we were to attempt nicely to discriminate between what is meant here by the heart, the soul, and the mind. In point of fact, of the four Greek representatives that we have of the same Hebrew original (Deut. vi. 5)—that of the Septuagint, and those of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke—no two precisely agree in the words chosen for the purpose. And what this variation may seem to say to us is this: Apart from all metaphysical and psychological distinctions, whatever terms will best convey to you a description of all the powers, faculties, and capacities which can in any way be affected by love, let them be adopted and employed in exhibiting the nature and extent of the love that you owe to God. Feelings, intellect, and will may perhaps best express for popular purposes the different spheres or constituents of our moral nature which that love ought to pervade and influence. The combination of the three is absolutely essential. 1. The love of the understanding only—a love into which we have reasoned ourselves—which is based upon a certain balancing of argument for and against it, resulting in a decision favourable on the whole to the Divine claims; a love which we profess because we see clearly

that God ought to be loved, that He has a right to a place, aye, and the very first place, in our hearts—this is not the kind of love which is looked for from us by Him who spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all. 2. Nor will He be content with the love which is merely a feeling, and which rests upon no solid foundation of a rational conviction that He is worthy of the love which is felt for Him. You must justify to your judgment the feeling that you have admitted. 3. The will—that power by which the feelings of the heart and the convictions of the understanding are made influential and operative in the conduct. This is the true test of the sincerity of those feelings, and the soundness of those convictions. Any love which stops short of this is but self-love. To be of the right sort, our love for God must be an active moving principle and power, which so determines our thoughts, words, and works, that God in all things may be glorified in us through Jesus Christ our Lord, and we ourselves, as it were, may be absorbed into that glory. (*J. E. Kempe, M.A.*) *Love for God the ruling energy*:—This, like Aaron's rod of old, swallows up all evil enchantments of the heart. It enters the sacred temple within, and, like another Messiah, it expels every lurking desecration forthwith. It is a flame which not only lights up the dark chambers of the soul, but transmutes into its own pure essence all its elements of feeling and of thought. (*Dr. Thomas.*) *The second is like unto it*:—For it has—1. The same Author. God spake all these words. 2. The same tie. 3. The same sanction and punishment of the violation. 4. It requires the same kind of love and service; for the love of our neighbour is the service of God. (*John Trapp.*) *Like unto it* in amplitude and largeness, inasmuch as it is the root out of which all laws of duty to men-ward have grown, as out of the former all offices of religion towards God. (*R. Hooker.*) *It is the duty of every man to love his neighbour as himself*:—It is requisite to show—I. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOUR? We are to account as our neighbour any man whomsoever, friend or enemy, that lives nigh to us, or at a greater distance from us. II. THE LAWFULNESS OF A MAN'S LOVING HIMSELF. It is a duty incumbent on every man to love himself. There is a twofold self. 1. A natural self. 2. A sinful self. This is to be hated, the other loved. He that came to destroy "the works of the devil" came to save the soul and body, the works of God (Luke xix. 10). 1. A man may love his own body, and is bound to preserve the life of it (Eph. v. 29). A man may sin against his own body by excessive labour, neglect, intemperance (1 Cor. vi. 18). 2. A man may and ought chiefly to love his own soul. The new nature, or spiritual self, is the best self we have, and should be most loved (Rom. xiv. 12). III. TO LAY DOWN SOME CONCLUSIONS. 1. That as God is to be loved above all things else, so He is to be loved for Himself (Luke xviii. 19). 2. That creatures may be loved according to that degree of goodness which God hath communicated to them, not for themselves, but for God, who "made all things for Himself" (Prov. xvi. 4). 3. No man can love himself or his neighbour aright while he remains in a state of sin. Love is a "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 22). I. HOW OUGHT WE TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR? I. In the same things wherein we show love to ourselves, we ought to show love to our neighbour. 1. Our thoughts of, and the judgment we pass upon, ourselves (1 Cor. xiii. 5). 2. Our speeches (Titus iii. 2). 3. Our desires after that which is good for ourselves. We should desire the good of others in all things as our own (Matt. v. 44). 4. Our actual endeavours that it may be well with us. So ought we to endeavour to do others good (1 Peter iv. 10). II. After the same manner that we love ourselves we ought to love others. 1. We do, or should, love ourselves holily, in the fear of God. In this manner we must love others. Every man is a creature upon whose soul there is, in a sort, the image of God (Titus iii. 3, 4). 2. Our love to ourselves should be orderly; we must first and chiefly love our souls, and then our bodies (Deut. iv. 9). (1) We must seek the conversion of those who are unconverted (James v. 19, 20). (2) We should show our love to the souls of others by seeking the increase of their faith, holiness, and comfort (1 John i. 4). 3. Our love to ourselves goes out freely. In the like manner we should go forth to others (1 Tim. vi. 18). 4. We love ourselves unfeignedly; and thus it is required we should be to others (1 John iii. 18). 5. We do not only love ourselves truly and sincerely, but with some fervency; our love to others must not be cold (1 Peter i. 22). 6. We love ourselves very tenderly (Eph. v. 29). It is required of us that we "be kind one to another, tender-hearted" (Eph. iv. 32). (*Y. Milward, A.M.*) *The royal law*:—The Christian finds what a right royal law this is of the Saviour's, for he sees that it includes and covers every possible form of duty; that if this command be fulfilled, it necessitates the fulfilling of every other command. He who

is content with visiting the lower eminences which surround Mont Blanc may wander about from one to another, and get picturesque views in detail; but, at the best, they are only partial and imperfect glimpses. He alone who reaches the topmost summit can command at one glance all the glorious view. In like manner must it be with him who wishes to serve God. He may try in detail to keep this or that commandment, and he will be the better and happier for his efforts. But, in order to observe them all truly and in their spirit, he must stand on the moral eminence of love towards God. Then he will be able to perform his duty, not bit by bit, but as a whole, complete and perfect, doing everything for God, and yet not neglecting man. (*Hooper.*) *Love to God*:—1. The NATURE of this principle. 1. Its definition. Love to God is a *principle*, not a *passion*. 2. Its extent. 3. Its sublimity. II. The OBLIGATIONS of this principle. Love to God is (1) the great commandment; (*a*) in point of importance; (*b*) in order of nature; (*c*) as all others are dependent on it. (2) It is most reasonable and simple. (3) It is most powerful, binding, and endearing. III. The INFLUENCE of this principle. Observe (1) the connection between the commandments. (2) The comprehension of duty contained in this commandment. (3) The certainty of this result—loving our neighbour—from the principle. (*W. B. Collyer.*) *Christ's two commandments*:—I. How is the love of God said to be the *first* commandment? It is (1) in order of time; (2) in order of nature. II. How is the love of God said to be the *great* commandment? 1. Upon the account of the greatness and dignity of the object—God. 2. Upon the account of the largeness and comprehensiveness of it—the whole duty of man. 3. Upon the account of the influence it hath upon all the parts and duties of religion, which have all their worth and acceptance entirely from it. 4. Upon the account of its perpetual and everlasting duration. III. How is loving our neighbour the *second* commandment, and like unto it? 1. In respect of the authority that commands it, and our obligation to observe it. 2. In respect of the ground and motive of our obedience, which are some Divine perfections residing in God, and communicated to His creatures. 3. In respect of the extent and comprehensiveness of it. 4. In respect of the reward and punishment that attend the keeping and breaking of it. (*Matthew Hole.*) *The nature of moral and positive duties*:—I. All moral duties are contained in, and may be reduced to, these two heads—the love of God and of our neighbour. II. All positive and ritual injunctions, though in their proper place they ought not to be left undone, yet they are but subordinate to these, and subservient to them. This appears from the following considerations. 1. The moral duties of life are things in their own nature good and excellent, of eternal and necessary obligation. All ritual and ceremonial observances have no intrinsic goodness in the nature of the things themselves; nor any obligation but what arises merely from their being positively and occasionally enjoined. 2. All positive and ritual injunctions whatsoever, can be but subordinate to the practice of moral virtues; because these latter are the end for which the former are commanded, and the former can be considered only as means to the latter. 3. Moral duties, or the practice of true virtue, will continue for ever, but all positive commandments are but of temporary obligation. (*S. Clarke.*) *The love of God man's first duty*:—I. The nature of the love of God (*i.e.*, our love to God). II. The importance of it in point of duty. III. Its influence on our happiness. IV. The methods which infinite wisdom hath employed to cultivate it in our minds. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *Love of neighbour man's second duty*:—Our neighbour signifies in Scripture, and not seldom in heathen writers, every person who is placed within our reach and influence. The principal causes of our narrowing the circle of our neighbours are—1. Hatred, from diversity of faith and worship; or rivalship in profit, advancement, affection, and reputation. 2. Pride. They cannot allow such low creatures as the "multitude," to claim their notice. 3. Selfishness. The selfish man acknowledges no neighbour; is concerned solely for himself, and what he is pleased to reckon his own interest. (*Ibid.*) *God the object of love*:—I can imagine nothing more perilous than the theory that piety is independent of the affections—it were better to be the enthusiast with every feeling excited than the mere philosophical reasoner with the belt of ice for ever round the heart. I. This love of God is reasonable. 1. There are feelings which will be called into exercise according as God is surveyed under different points of view. The proper object of love, as distinguished from other affections, is goodness. It is not as the all-powerful Being that we love God; I have an awe of God as powerful. See how the case stands in regard of a creature. A man cannot be just and not love justice; neither can he be good and not love goodness. Suppose

this creature was your friend, your governor, what would be the effect of this accumulation of qualities? Would not your love be enhanced by their depending on one upon whom it was safe to depend. Now substitute the Creator for the creature, and shall not He be the object of love. God has planted in us these affections, and there is that in Himself which should raise them to the highest pitch. II. The threefold requirement comprehended in the loving "with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind." It is demanded that there be no energy unemployed in the service of God. If such a love seem unattainable, it is not the less to be proposed as the standard at which we should aim. Let it not be imagined that in demanding *all*, God leaves nothing for other objects of affection. The truth is that in proportion as we love the Creator, we shall love with a purer and warmer love every other lawful object of affection. III. That in representing God as the alone sufficient object of love, we state a general truth whose full demonstration must be referred to the scenes of eternity. Let us throw away confused and indeterminate notions of happiness, and it must be admitted that happiness consists in every faculty having its proper object. And if love find its proper object in nothing short of God, may it not be that the perfect happiness of the future shall result from the fact, that every faculty will have found its object in God? But it is certain that in loving God, we have foretastes of its delights—for love is to survive, when faith and hope shall have passed away. Let us, then, take heed lest entangled with earthly attachments, forgetful of the rule that love of the creature must be secondary to love of the Creator, we provoke God to jealousy, and thus weaken the anticipation of heaven. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The true religion*:—I. We have here an explicit revelation of the true nature of religion, about which the whole world has been in so much dispute. The essence of true religion is love to God and love to man. It is towards God a whole and continuous sympathy and love. It is toward man a uniform and dominating disposition of benevolence. II. We have here, then, the physiological idea of the Bible in regard to the perfect man. Christ's ideal is neither philosophy, nor war, nor statecraft, but love to God and man. The capacity to create happiness will be the true ideal of man. III. If this be so, we have now the only true test of personal religion. Conversion and regeneration are not only really possible, but they are indispensable; and no man can enter the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of love and peace in the Holy Ghost, unless he is born again. Selfishness shall not enter into the kingdom of God. IV. This is the true gauge by which to measure the spread, the progress of religion in the soul. We are apt to confound the question of growth in grace with the Greek idea of acquisition, self-culture. The gauge of religion is the intensity and the productiveness of the love principle. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Love divinely cultured in us*:—There is not a daisy that was not organized to be a daisy, but I should like to see one that did not have the sun to help it up from the seed! there is not an aster that was not organized to be an aster, but where is there one that grew independent of the sun? What the sun is to flowers, that the Holy Ghost must be to our hearts, if we would be Christians. (*Ibid.*) *Love renders service easy*:—If one were sent to take care of the poor, miserable, wounded soldiers lying in the plague-stricken hospitals on the plain of Solferino, he would say to himself, "Money would not hire me to do it, but I must do it because it is my duty. Here are men who are suffering and need attention, and I am bound to look after their wants." But let me find my own son among those unfortunate creatures, and, no matter how loathsome might be the offices to be performed toward him, could money buy from me the privilege of ministering to his necessities? Could any motive induce me to leave his side day or night? That which I should do in the one case through conscientiousness, or from a sense of duty, and which would be a disagreeable task, I should do in the other case through love, and it would then be a pleasure to me. I should do it with delight. There would not be hours enough in which I might serve in love my wounded son. (*Ibid.*) *The heart to be educated as well as the intellect*:—Is it not the special characteristic of the age that it trains the intellect with unrivalled zeal and success, while it leaves too often out of sight the heart and the affections? Are not all the prizes of life heaped together, and increasing in their value and what may be called their piquancy, in order to spur on to the utmost the culture of the intellect alone? There is not a schoolmaster who does not complain that he is ceaselessly goaded by the parents to press on their children even beyond their strength in the race for distinction. Nor does this pressure touch the child alone. In age as well as in youth, we are all pressed on by the swift tide of the world to worship the idol of intellect as though it had all to give in earth

and heaven. And where, in all this eagerness to learn or gain distinctions, where is the education which all our life long should be bringing nearer to the heart the truths of the unseen world? (*Capel Cure, M.A.*) *Character made by love:*—The mere knowledge of things will not necessarily exert any influence on conduct; and it were profanely absurd to call that man religious whose deportment is unaffected by the great truths of religion. In respect even of the things of sense, we require a combination of love with knowledge in order to the constitution of character: for we do not call a man a sensualist merely because he knows the objects of sense. He must love those objects, he must have given his heart to those objects, before we think of applying to him such a title; before we think of calling him a sensual man. In like manner you can have no right to say that acquaintance with the articles of religion makes a man a religious man. He may know the articles of religion just as he knows the objects of sense; but he is not a sensualist unless attached to the objects of sense; neither is he religious unless his affections fasten on the articles of religion. When, however, it has been allowed that the affections must be engaged in religion, there will arise various questions as to degree and direction. We have already said, that with many the majesty and the awfulness of the Almighty pass as evidence of the impossibility of His being the objects of our love. They will tell you that He might rightly be the object of the fear, of the reverence, of the adoration of His creatures; but that it savours of an unholy familiarity, and therefore marks a species of enthusiasm to speak of Him as the object of love—and when you set against such an opinion the grave requirements of Scripture, which insist on the love of God as the sum and substance of religion, then you will be told that love as directed towards the Creator must be something wholly different from love as felt between man and man; and thus by representing it a mystic and unearthly thing, they will quite remove it from your comprehension and attainment. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Love ruling the soul, but not excluding other proper activities:*—This we may easily understand by familiar parallels. We say of persons who are cultivated, that their whole manhood is cultivated. We do not mean that there is a thing called *cultivation* which they have in exercise, and nothing besides. We simply mean that there is a given mode of activity; that the reason and the affections act in a certain fine way; that they act with a particular quality which we call *cultivation*. When we speak of a man as well-bred and refined, we do not mean that his taste is the only active part of his nature, but this: that whatever other faculties are acting, they all take on the quality of taste, so that they are of the nature of this predominant influence. Just the same is true of conscience. A man is said to be a conscientious man when conscience rules him. When we speak of a man as conscientious, we do not mean that conscience is the only feeling that rises up and acts, but that it so distributes itself through the mind that every other feeling which comes in acts conscientiously. And when we are commanded to love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves, it is not meant that a man should sit down and love, love, love, love, with a repetition that is just like the ticking of a clock, which repeats the same tick over, and over, and over, and over again. It is not meant that we are to compress all the parts of our life into any such unity, or any such singleness, that they shall all be included in one thing, that one thing being love to God and love to man. It is meant that a strong predominant love to God and man shall so pervade the soul, that there cannot be in all the action of the mind one feeling that will go contrary to that spirit. The reason must be a reason acting in the spirit of love; the conscience must be a conscience acting in the atmosphere of love; the taste must be a taste acting in the atmosphere and spirit of love—love to God and love to man. The appetites and passions, and every other faculty of the mind, in all their power or variety or versatility, may act; but they will act as steeds that feel the one rein, which goes back to the hands of the one driver, whose name is Love. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The worth of love determined by its object:*—Love is but an indifferent passion, till it be united to the thing loved, and then it gets a denomination. For example: If the object be earthly, it is an earthly love; if sensual, it is a brutish love; if it be man, it is a human love; if God, it is a Divine love: so that by our love we are changed and transformed into a thing more noble, or more vile. We therefore debase ourselves in loving any thing but God: there is nothing else worthy of our love. Whatsoever we love, we give it a kind of dominion over us, so that the will loseth its dignity and excellency when it loves inferior things; we are, as it were, married to that we love. "Suppose," saith Raymundus, "a poor man, of mean stock and no reputation, have six

daughters; they are all equal by birth as to reputation and esteem, but they are all differenced by their marriage. The eldest marries a farmer, the next a citizen, the third a knight, the fourth a duke, the fifth a king, the sixth an emperor; by these marriages there is a very great inequality. So, here, by the object of your love you are dignified or debased." (*S. Annesley, D.D.*) *Proprietorship heightens love:* —"Thou shalt love the Lord *thy God*." Those things that are ours, though they are not always lovely, yet we love them; our own children, whether of our bodies or our minds, our own estates. We are more troubled at the loss of anything wherein our own propriety [property] is concerned, than in all the world besides. A small thing of our own is a thousand times more to us than a thousand times as much of another's. We are more concerned for the cutting off our own finger, than the cutting off another man's head. Propriety [proprietorship] doth exceedingly heighten love. (*Ibid.*) *Love is a busy grace:*—Love among the passions is like fire among the elements. Love among the graces is like the heart among the members. Now that which is most contrary to the nature of love must needs most obstruct the highest actings of it. The truth is, a careless frame of spirit is fit for nothing; a sluggish, lazy, slothful, careless person never attains to any excellency in any kind. (*Ibid.*) *The first and great command:*—Love to God is the most excellent of all graces (1 Cor. xiii. 13). Love among the graces is like the sun among the stars, which not only enlightens the lower world, but communicates light to all the stars in the firmament; so love to God does not only its own office, but the offices of all other graces. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 42–45.—**What think ye of Christ?**—I. There are some who never think of Christ at all. II. There are some who deem it unnecessary to have fixed thoughts about Christ. III. There are some who have many thoughts about Christ. IV. There are some who have right thoughts about Christ, but wrong feelings. V. There are some who have right thoughts about Christ, and right feelings. (*Various.*) What think ye of His—I. Person? II. Mission? III. Condescension and grace? IV. Work? V. Ability and willingness to save? (*T. Raffles, D.D., LL.D.*) *A testing question:*—1. It recognizes in man a mighty power, the power to think. 2. It indicates that all right-thinking of Christ must have respect to Him as He is revealed in Holy Scriptures. 3. That to think of Christ is a personal and individual duty. 4. To think right of Christ is a matter of transcendent importance. (*J. Williams.*) *Revelation not to supersede thought:*—The Book of God is not a book for the mentally indolent. An amount of mental digging is needful to discover much of the precious ore that lies hidden under the poetry, parables, proverbs, figures, symbols, and the "many things hard to be understood" in Holy Writ. "The telescope, we know," says Archbishop Whately, "brings within the sphere of our vision much that would be undiscoverable by the naked eye; but we must not the less employ our eyes in making use of it, and we must watch and calculate the motions, and reason on the appearances of the heavenly bodies which are visible only through the telescope, with the same care we employ in respect of those seen by the naked eye. And an analogous procedure is requisite if we would derive the intended benefit from the pages of inspiration, which were designed not to save us the trouble of inquiring and reflecting, but to enable us in some points to inquire and reflect to better purpose; not to supersede the use of reason, but to supply its deficiences." (*Ibid.*) I. WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? For the religion of the Bible extends to the very thoughts. Our conduct towards Him must always be regulated by our views. II. WHAT ESTEEM HAVE YOU FOR HIM? He is esteemed by all most worthy of our regard: Abraham. What regard have you for His greatness? III. WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO PART WITH FOR HIS SAKE? With your sins—the world—with learning—self-righteousness. IV. WHAT IS IT THAT KEEPS YOU FROM HIM? 1. Is it ignorance? 2. Prejudice? 3. Insensibility? V. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITHOUT HIM? 1. In the conviction of conscience. 2. In prosperity. 3. In adversity. 4. In death. 5. In the great day of account. (*W. Jay.*) *All doctrines equally true, but not equally important:*—There is a difference between the railing of the bridge and the keystone. The one is indeed ornamental, but the other is essential to the structure. Take from man an eye, or a hand, or a foot, and you injure him; but take away the head, or heart, or lungs, and you demolish him. The doctrines concerning Christ are of supreme importance. (*Ibid.*) *What think ye of Christ?*—This question is not an appeal to the faith of the Pharisees, but to their opinion. I. I COMMEND THE QUESTION. You should think of Christ—1. Because you cannot help yourself. 2. Because you cannot escape the conse-

quences of the question. 3. As a man thinks of Christ so is he at the hour of his death. II. KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS NECESSARY BEFORE ANSWERING THIS QUESTION. 1. Who is He? "Whose Son is He?" 2. Why did Christ come? 3. Whither is Christ gone? 4. Wherefore will He return? III. NOW WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? 1. Not what will you think to-morrow, but what do you think? 2. Improve the thought. 3. Strengthen the thought. 4. Express the thought. (*C. Molyneux, B.A.*) *The question of questions*:—On my own part, and on the part of those among us who are desirous to have expressed in a compendious form the primary grounds of that belief which makes them not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, I shall give (beginning for the most part in modern and non-theological language) an answer to that question of questions for every age, "What think ye of Christ?" That answer will land us at last on the highest summit of theological speculation. I. "What think ye of Christ?" THAT HE IS EXCEPTIONAL IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. 1. The holiest men are ever most conscious of their own sinfulness. Sublime dissatisfaction with self is the peculiarity of the Christian saint. 2. Jesus is the solitary exception to this rule. Besides the testimony both of enemies and of friends to the fact of His perfect innocence and sinlessness, we have His own witness. No utterance of conscious sin, no half-hid confession. He never includes Himself among sinners. We think, then, that Christ is unique and without parallel. II. WE "THINK" THAT THE EXCEPTIONAL MAN HAS ENDOWED US WITH EXCEPTIONAL FRUITS, WITH BENEFITS UNPARALLELED. Not merely fruits of thought, art, literature. 1. Christ's living influence is yearly sending forth missionaries to the most abject tribes upon the earth. 2. Christ's teaching and example furnish a perpetual motive for tending the sick—perpetuating His miracles of healing. 3. Christ did not merely preach a doctrine: He founded a Church, to be the home of charity. Is she not, with her ministries for the poor, like the mother whom we have seen on Alpine or Pyrenean ridges, as she passes some razor-like edge, knitting for her little ones while she goes, though her heart and eye are up among the clouds? 4. Who shall say what Christ gives daily to those who receive Him? (*a*) Elevation above sordid selfishness. (*b*) Resignation. (*c*) Joy. III. WE "THINK" OF CHRIST THAT HE IS "FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD." 1. The resurrection of Christ is not a fraud—not a singular recovery of a lacerated and tortured man, awakened from a death-like swoon by the coolness of the rocky chamber, or by the pungency of the spices! We have to account for cowards turned into heroes; for the faith that overcame the world. 2. Nor is the resurrection of Christ the projection of creative enthusiasm. The Church is too real for a foundation of mist. Faith did not create the resurrection: the resurrection created faith. We think, then, that as Christ was exceptional in His life, and in the benefits He conferred on humanity, so was He in His victory over the grave. IV. THIS EXCEPTIONAL MAN MUST HAVE HAD AN EXCEPTIONAL ORIGIN. He is the Son of God (Luke i. 35). He is the Word of God (John i. 1). "And the Word was God." V. CHRIST IS THE WISDOM OF GOD. VI. HE IS VERY MAN. His delights are with the sons of Adam. (*Bishop William Alexander.*) *The ideal Christ*:—I. SOME PEOPLE DO NOT THINK MUCH ABOUT HIM ANY WAY. Their minds are preoccupied. They think of something else. 1. These Pharisees were evidently stunned by our Lord's inquiry. 2. We meet those in our time who have reached no convictions worth recording. 3. It is not the part of a wise man to miss such a question as this. II. SOME DO THINK; AND NOW IT IS OF MUCH IMPORTANCE THAT WE INQUIRE WHAT THEY THINK. 1. There is a historic ideal of Christ. This admits the facts of His life. 2. There is a theologic ideal of Christ. A cold dogmatism is the result. 3. There is a poetic ideal of Christ. One imagines a Jesus to suit himself; the result is mystic or emotional. 4. There is an evangelic ideal of Christ. A sacrifice for sin. It holds all the history; receives the theology; accepts the poetry; it recognizes the atonement. III. LET US ASK WHAT THIS WILL DO FOR US? 1. Observe, then, how thinking affects the character; ideals control life. Observe also that one may study his ideal through his personal experience and character; and that is the safest way. What is your notion of Christ doing for you? 3. Observe that the only safety for a young believer is found in accepting the scriptural Christ for his all in all. 4. Observe how pitifully the the world's hero-worship contrasts with the Christian's love. 5. Observe that in after ages the question will be reversed; then it will be of the highest moment to ask, What does Christ think of me? (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Christ not thought about*:—I once asked a man what he thought, and he replied frankly, "I suppose I never do think of Jesus Christ." Then I inquired when he was born. He gave the date—1843. "B.C. or A.D.?" I kept on. He smiled, as if he conjectured I might

deem him an antediluvian. But I asked soberly, "Before Christ or after Christ?" He was silent, and I continued, "Have you been dating letters for twenty intelligent years without even reflecting that you were daily commemorating the nativity of Jesus Christ? Have you actually formed no opinion concerning that personage whose advent among men changed the reckoning of time, whose birthday shook the race into a new era, as His crucifixion shook the planet with a new earthquake?" (*Ibid.*) *Christ's origin:*—Who a man's parents were ordinarily makes very little difference to us. We gauge the man according to his own ability and efficiency, without reference to his origin. Our estimate of Shakespeare or of Bacon is no greater because we know their ancestry. But the case is otherwise with Christ. His practical relation to the world is bound up with His origin. His life suggests, and words lay claim to, a superhuman lineage; and it bears very directly upon the living and thinking of all of us, whether He be indeed born Lord of men and angels, co-equal with God, or whether He be no more than a man like unto ourselves. It makes the difference between worship and admiration; between allegiance and partial adherence; between implicit trust and critical discrimination; between passionate enthusiasm and cool respect. So it behoves us to press the question in this direction; "What think ye of Christ? Is He the Son of God or not?" (*Marvin R. Vincent, D.D.*) *The test question:*—I. LOOK AT SOME THINGS ABOUT CHRIST IT IS WELL FOR YOU TO THINK OF. 1. Think of Him as a Prophet. 2. Think of Him as Priest. 3. Think of Him as King, the immortal, the invisible. 4. Think of Him as qualified for these offices by uniting in Himself the nature of the Deity and the nature of man. II. REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD THINK OF CHRIST. 1. That you may know God. 2. That we may think rightly of ourselves. 3. That you may have faith. Faith comes through thinking. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *The responsibility of thought:*—He holds all responsible for their thoughts. The question is not how do you act, how do you treat Christ, but what think ye of Christ? The seed is held responsible for the harvest, the child for the man, the thought for the act, the character. Christ declared that he who lusted and hated was an adulterer, a murderer. A thought to the mind of God is a thing. The first requirement of education is that the man shall regulate his thoughts. Says the Apostle: "Whatsoever things are true" (Phil. iv. 8). The thought is of first importance. Every harmony that moves the hearts of men first swayed the soul of some one as an unexpressed thought. So it is of sculpture and of painting. The thought went before the creation of the universe. The philosopher strives to find out the things which do not appear from those which do appear. (*Ibid.*) *What think ye of Christ?*—I. THAT CHRISTIANITY CHALLENGES HUMAN THOUGHT. It is a system of thought; its first impulse is to set the mind at work. You will find in all systems of error a tendency to prevent men from thinking. Tyrants do not wish their people to think. Man is not only to think of things on earth, but of things in heaven. How elevating the character of the thought; it travels to the spiritual and invisible. II. THE EFFECT WHICH THE THOUGHTS HE GIVES HAS UPON LITERATURE. The thoughts of Christ are the thoughts that give power to the world. The people who worship Christ are the great inventors and law-givers to our earth. III. WHERE CHRIST IS RECEIVED AS DIVINE, HUMANITY BECOMES DIGNIFIED AND ENNOBLED; for if Christ was Divine, the human nature may be nearly joined to God. Man is lifted up from grovelling appetites, and becomes the prospective inhabitant of eternity; heir to a throne. Christ connected with human nature sanctifies it. IV. NOTE ONE PROPHECY. Isaiah saw Him as a child that was born, a son given, called Wonderful, &c. These characteristics of Christ are all fulfilled in Christianity. Christianity was small at first. The cry of a child was heard; then it grew strong like a son, coming to grasp the government; and then it was wonderful. Then as the everlasting Father it is full of pity. "What think ye of Christ?" When we look at Him personally He is our Saviour. Whatever we think I know what others think; the angels, "Glory to God in the highest," &c. What do the host of the departed think: "Unto Him that loved us," &c. (*Bishop Simpson.*) *The God-man—Jesus Christ:*—That Christ was lineally descended from David, and that as such, He had the body and the mind and the heart of a man, is a historical fact. That body, first natural, then spiritual, became at His ascension a glorified body; but none the less it was the identical body. Christ is now in heaven. "The son of David"—a man—what is the result of that. I. Whatever He came to this earth to do is finished and accepted, else He would not be resting there. II. His presence there in manhood shows what manhood is capable of, what human nature may become. III. There—in that man Christ, David's

son—we have a brother. What a possession—brotherhood in heaven. 1. He is there as a representative man. On the cross He was our substitute, not a representative. Now He is not a substitute, but a representative man. 2. He is pledged as the forerunner of us all. 3. So on earth and in heaven He is David's son and David's Lord. If Christ be man in heaven, no less He is God. 4. And now all that this man died to purchase, He now lives as God to give. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ's solution of David's assertion*:—I. The Jews had not the slightest difficulty in answering THAT CHRIST WAS DAVID'S SON. They had learned that all their lives. Natural that He should come from the nation's greatest man. We all have our pictures for the future, and they correspond to Israel's Christ in the part they perform in our lives. Whose sons are they to be? They are to be born of human exertion. The force of human exertion is all around us, and most of us owe all we have to it. It is the parent of great results in the world. II. HUMAN EXERTION IS NOT ALL. David called Christ his "Lord." "The Lord said unto my Lord." They had magnified David and his greatness and his power so highly, that the thought of somebody being over him and having a right to command him did not form a very prominent feature in their conception of him; and yet they would have acknowledged that he had a Lord. For that, after all, is an essential of our thought in connection with everything. We all want God for a finish to our ideas, even if we do not want Him practically. If we are thinkers, we like God as representing to us the oneness of our system of thought. He forms a sort of easy transition from one line of thought to another. The scientific man calls his God law or nature or some such vague term, and he magnifies it very much in all his thoughts and expressions. His Christ, his great ideal, is a lord to him—it is above all that he does. Another man makes his God the summary of all that is beautiful: he loves music or art, and the idea of God represents to him the perfection of that feeling of which he just catches a glimpse when he is wrapped up in one or other of those pursuits. God stands to him for that wonderful effect which he cannot explain. Another man is busy with commonplace things; perhaps he sees much of the wickedness of the world, and he likes to think that there is a place where everything is better—that there is one who is not assailed, or even reached, with all that troubles him. He likes to think that there is one who realizes all that is good and pure, which he is sure exists, but in which his circumstances do not allow him to have a very great share. He holds to Christ as his Lord. He has one Christ whom he is to produce who is to be his son: he is working for that every day in the rush of life's battles: he has another Christ who is his Lord—a pure, a high, a noble ideal, far above him: his Lord. Religion supplies just that element of romance to life which we feel the want of, for there is little enough of romance in human exertion, after the novelty of some new effort is over. To many men that thought of God as the great mysterious Lord of life—that thought of a coming power, a Christ as one above and beyond us—is just what they need and hold to, because their life is so busy. It is the dreamers who generally supply the infidels; they do not feel the want of a thought superior to this world so much as the men of affairs who will not let this idea of God the Lord depart from their creed, but hold to it because their thought needs it, little as their lives may use it. We have seen that men do hold these two thoughts of the power that is in the world, and that is to save it. Now, Christ's question is seen in all its importance. It was, Can you hold these two together? David did; he called the same person Son and Lord; he worked to bring forth the Messiah by his great and powerful life, and yet all the time he knew that Messiah was his Lord. Whatever can combine these two ideas is the true Christ: that, and that only, can save the world. We separate these things. The things we work for, in our best moments, we will not acknowledge to be our Lord; the things we worship, the things we acknowledge to be great and pure, we forget when we get out at our work. Our sons are not our lords; our lords are not our sons. Hence, we have no true idea of Christ. Till our practical life, our life of human energy, and our thoughtful, our spiritual life, our life of aspiration, are at one, there is no hope of a real salvation for us. The flesh and the spirit are warring against each other, and that contest is wearing us out. Go tell that man who is working so hard to make a fortune, that that is all he is good for, that he has no thought above money, and he will say you insult him; he will tell you that all that work is only a means—he wants to make the fortune, but he has higher motives: and he will talk vaguely of doing good with it. He is the father of one thing, but he acknowledges another thing as lord. Who shall unite these two in our life? Who is our Christ? That is our Saviour's pointed question. Have we the right

idea in searching for a great Deliverer? Only God, in connection with earth, can supply such a want. We shall appreciate that as soon as we see the demand. For, let our object come from the earth, from ourselves, from our fellow-men, and it may stimulate our exertions—it may make us work hard. But we are lords of this earth, we are equal to our fellow-men, and so such an object cannot be our lord—and the best part of us, the cry for something higher, remains unsatisfied. It cannot be the pure thought of God as above us, as apart from us, God the pure and holy One: for, then, how can it be the son of any man, however great and high; how can it call upon our exertions for their assistance in its appearance upon the earth? We are almost driven to give up this idea of a Christ, so difficult does it seem to be to satisfy it; and we go to asking little unimportant questions, and erecting smaller tests as the Pharisees did, or letting the thing drift along unsettled. Jesus claims to be the one that fills this important requirement, and tells us that we must get back to that idea of a Christ before we can appreciate Him; we must answer that old difficulty of David's. He is the Son of David, and the Son of every high and noble character who looks for Him. He came of David's line; He was the fruit of the kingdom which David planted; He carried out into fulness all the character and acts of David's life; He fulfilled all the prophecies and aspirations of David's Psalms. We all know that, if we understand the facts of our Bible at all. But that line of historical facts is but the expression of the fact that He is the Son of all high devoted energy. Christ is to succeed in the world by our energy consecrated to Him. He calls on us to labour for and with Him. Christian character is produced—not by being forced upon us from without, but by the quickening of our own being—that it may bring forth more of Christ in the world. Christ is among us; His life was earthly in all its development; it was His life on earth and among men that made Him Christ. He was David's Lord—far above David in every respect. We read the story of the two lives of David and Jesus, and we never think of doubting which was the life of the Master. (*A. Brooks, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER XXIII.

VERS. 1–7. **The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.**—*Christ's reproaches of Pharisees:*—There must be some just, reasonable, and great cause of our Lord's indignation, and this we find was an accumulation of great wickedness in these men, which received aggravations (1) from their pretences to greater sanctity than others; (2) from their having greater opportunities of being better than others; (3) because they, being many of them in public places, their practice must have a bad influence on their followers. For they who pretend holiness, and are wicked; they who are wicked, though they have great helps to be good; and by being wicked cause others to be so too, their sin is exceeding sinful. The particulars for which our Saviour taxes them, were principally these: 1. Their great pride. Under the title of Rabbi they affected a greater authority than is compatible to men. 2. Their wretched covetousness, which showed itself in the instances of devouring widows' houses, of esteeming the gifts and the gold above the altar and the temple. 3. Their abominable hypocrisy, shown in "teaching others to do what they themselves would not do;" in serving a carnal interest by a religious carriage. It might have been supposed that Christ's disciples had been out of danger of *these* evils, that they would not have come near the place where their Pilot had set a sea-mark. But whoso takes a view of the Christian Church, as Erasmus hath represented it, he'll say, that Pharisaism then lived and reigned as much as ever. (*Hezekiah Burton.*) *Origin of Pharisaism:*—There was a great religious revival among the Jews after their return from the captivity, which continued for a considerable time; and which, after they had rebuilt the temple, sent them back to the law with a sincere desire to honour God by keeping its commands. So long as the life remained, the obedience was the real outcome of an inward principle; but when the life died out, then the obedience became only a fossil, and was soon covered over with corruption, until it became what we see it to have been in the days of the Saviour upon earth. The same danger attends on every spiritual movement. A real devotion to Christ stimulates to reverent attention to the forms of worship, and so long as that is simply an expression of loyalty to Him, all is well; but by and by all thought of

Him drops out, and then only the ritual remains, becoming the idol of the heart, and so the life departs. Thus what was a voice full of sincerity in one generation, is often only an empty echo in that which follows. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Evil ministers better in speech than works*:—If ministers do well, it is their own gain; if they say well, it is thine. Take thou what thine own is, and let alone what is another man's. Sylla and King Richard III. commanded others, under great penalties, to be virtuous and modest, when themselves walked the clean contrary way. A deformed painter may draw a goodly picture; a stinking breath sounds a mighty blast; and he that hath but a bad voice may show cunning in descant. A blind man may bear a torch in a dark night, and a harp wake music to others, which itself is not sensible of. Posts set for directions of passengers by the highway side do point out the way which themselves go not; and sign-posts tell the traveller there is wholesome diet or warm lodging within, when themselves remain in the storms without. Lewd preachers are like spire-steeples, or high pinnacles, which point up to heaven, but press down to the centre. (*J. Trapp.*) *Ministerial inconsistency*:—They had tongues which spake by the talent, but their hands scarce wrought by the ounce; like that ridiculous actor at Smyrna, who, pronouncing, *O cælum*, O heaven, pointed with his finger toward the ground: so these Pharisees had the heaven commonly at their tongues' end, but the earth continually at their fingers' end. In a certain battle against the Turks, there was a bishop who thus encouraged the army: "Play the men, fellow-soldiers, to-day: and I dare promise you, that if ye die fighting, ye shall sup to-night with God in heaven." Now after the battle was begun, the bishop withdrew himself; and when some of the soldiers inquired among themselves what was become of the bishop, and why he would not take a supper with them that night in heaven, others answered, "This is fasting-day with him, and therefore he will eat no supper, no, not in heaven!" (*Ibid.*) *Selfish religious pride*:—Thirty miles north-east of Sholapoor, at Toolazapoor, is the great temple of the goddess Bhowani, and twice in the year the place is thronged by men and women of every grade, who come to pay their vows and sacrifices to the idol. Besides this, at every full moon long trains of pilgrims may be seen flocking thither; and such is the faith of the people in the healing powers of the goddess, that the sick are resorting there constantly in the vain hope of some relief. The temple at Punderpoor is still more renowned. Not to speak of the myriads who go there at the great festivals, persons make a pilgrimage thither every month from a distance of fifty or a hundred miles; and the practice is kept up for many years. One man, who had apparently come from a distance, the writer saw near Barsee, making the journey by prostrations, measuring his length upon the ground. It was under the burning sun of noonday; and, hardly able to proceed, he seemed the very picture of despair. But a case still more remarkable was that of a man performing the journey by rolling himself upon the ground. We came up with him two miles east of Wairag, and asked him where he was going, and why he was thus torturing himself. He at first did not seem to hear; but at length stopping, he lay exhausted upon the ground, and answered in a faint voice that he was going to Punderpoor. After some further questions, as the writer remonstrated with him upon the folly of such a course, he raised his head from the ground, and half reclining, said that he had come so far already he could not desist now. He stated that his village was near Chandrapoor, 450 miles to the east from there, that he had spent fifteen months on the way thus far, and that it was forty miles more, and he wished to complete the pilgrimage. He was accustomed to go about a mile each day. He would then note the place where he had stopped, and walking back to the nearest village, would remain until the next day, receiving his food from the villagers. Then he would return, and from the place left the previous day would begin his toilsome pilgrimage. If he came to a river that could not be passed in this manner, he would go back a distance equal to this space, and roll over the ground a second time. He had for clothing only a coarse cloth bound tightly about his loins, and another about his head; and thus, almost naked, over roads extremely rough and stony, exposed to heat and cold, sometimes drenched with rain or covered with mud—for a year and three months this poor man had been rolling himself along towards the shrine of Vithoba. Yet it was not a sense of sin or a desire for pardon that induced him to undertake this painful journey. But it was evident, upon further conversation, that he was urged on by no higher motive than a selfish pride. He sought a reputation for holiness. (*Bombay Times.*) *Worthless ceremonies*:—When corn runs into straw and chaff, those who feed on it may well be thin and lean; but when it runs into ears and kernel, thou mayest expect such as eat of it to be fat and well-

favoured. When religion runs into formalities and ceremonies, her followers can never be thriving spiritually. They may starve, for all the gaudy flowers wherewith several dishes on her table are decked and set forth. (*Swinnock.*) *Deceptive religious obedience*:—The shops in the square of San Marco were all religiously closed, for the day was a high festival. We were much disappointed, for it was our last day, and we desired to take away with us some souvenirs of lovely Venice; but our regret soon vanished, for on looking at the shop we meant to patronise, we readily discovered signs of traffic within. We stepped to the side door, and found when one or two other customers had been served, that we might purchase to our heart's content, saint or no saint. After this fashion too many keep the laws of God to the eye, but violate them in the heart. The shutters are up as if the man no more dealt with sin and Satan; but a brisk commerce is going on behind the scenes. From such deceit may the Spirit of Truth preserve us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Best places at feasts*:—When Hanway was in Persia, a certain governor rose from his seat and left the room, because Hanway had inadvertently taken his seat higher than he, though at the opposite side of the table. *Pope and councils not infallible*:—There is no external supreme, infallible judge in the Church of God, to whom all Christians are obliged to submit their faith and consciences in all matters of religion. Argument I. This authority which they pretend to is a greater authority than the apostles themselves did ever claim or exercise in the Church of God, as plainly appears from 2 Cor. i. 24—"Not that we have dominion over your faith." This was very agreeable to the nature and person of Christ. Argument II. Such an authority as they pretend to is contrary to that command of the trial of doctrines which is laid upon all Christians; for if there be an infallible judge to whom I ought to submit my faith and conscience in all matters of religion, what need I try doctrines? 1. Christians have ability to try things with. 2. They have a rule to try things by. 3. Christians have a promise of discovery upon trial. Argument III., against the supremacy and the infallible authority of the pope, is taken from the danger of following false guides. People may sin in following their guides and teachers. Argument IV., and last, against this doctrine is, from the want of a Divine appointment and promise. Inference II. Forasmuch as there is no person upon earth that can infallibly guide you to salvation, it concerns you to have the greater care of your own salvation. 1. Study the Holy Scriptures. 2. Pray fervently for the guidance of God's Spirit. 3. If you would discern and hold fast the truth, love and practise it. (*M. Pool.*) *A proud title the sign of usurped authority*:—But, indeed, there was a deeper and worse design than this in it; they did not only aim at splendid and glorious titles, but they did usurp authority and dominion over the consciences of the people, whereof this was but a sign: as amongst us the flag is a sign of the dominion of the seas, so this title was an indication and sign of that authority which they usurped over the people. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 8-12. **But be not ye called Rabbi.**—*Christians are brethren*:—The late Rev. Wm. Jay, in a sermon at Surrey Chapel, said: "Some time ago a countryman observed to me, 'I was exceedingly alarmed this morning, sir. I was going down in a lonely place, and I thought I saw a strange monster. It seemed in motion, but I could not make out its form. I didn't like to turn back, but my heart beat, and the more I looked the more I was afraid. But, as we came nearer each other, I saw it was a man, and who do you think it was?' 'I know not.' 'Oh, it was my brother John!' 'Ah,' said I to myself, as he added that it was early in the morning, and very foggy, 'how often do we thus mistake our Christian brethren!'" *Christian brethren not to be treated as enemies*:—During the Peninsular war, an officer of artillery had just served a gun with admirable precision against a body of men posted in a wood to his left. When the Commander-in-Chief rode up, after turning his glass for a moment in the direction of the shot, he said, in his cool way, "Well aimed, captain; but no more; they are our own 99th." This sad blunder has been repeated too often in the armies of Jesus. The great guns of the Church, which might have battered down the citadels of Satan, have been misdirected against Christian brethren! *A bond of union*:—A Hindoo and a New Zealander met upon the deck of a missionary ship. They had been converted from their heathenism, and were brothers in Christ, but they could not speak to each other. They pointed to their Bibles, shook hands, smiled in each other's faces, but that was all. At last a happy thought occurred to the Hindoo. With sudden joy he exclaimed, "Hallelujah!" The New Zealander, in delight, cried out, "Amen!" Those two words, not found in their own heathen tongues, were to

them the beginning of "one language and one speech." *Recognition of Christian brotherhood*:—It was on a sacramental Sabbath, and at the close of the service, Dr. Cumming invited Christ's followers to remain and partake of the emblems of His atoning love. As we changed our seat to take our place among the communicants, we found ourselves in the pew of the Duke of Sutherland. The only two persons in the pew, besides our republican self, were the beautiful Duchess (then apparently about five-and-thirty years of age) and a poor, coarsely-clad woman, who had strayed in there from her seat in the gallery. On seeing the name of the titled owner of the pew upon the psalm-book, the poor woman looked disconcerted, as if she was "in the wrong box." But when the sacramental bread was passed, the Duchess very courteously took the plate and handed it to her neighbour with such delicate graciousness that the "puir body" was made to feel quite at ease immediately. It was a striking illustration of the unity of Christ's household, in which the rich and the poor, the lofty and the lowly, meet together and feel that Jesus is the Saviour of them all. When the service ended I said to myself, "Now, which of these two women has had the most serious obstacle to contend with in taking up the cross for Christ? That poor labouring woman probably lives in some back alley, and thanks God for her daily meal of potatoes and salt. Her worldly temptations are few; her sources of enjoyment are few; and perhaps her chief comfort in life is found in her Bible, her prayers, her communion with Christ, and her hope of heaven. The Duchess dwells amid the splendours of Stafford House, with everything to attract her toward this world, and very little to remind her of eternity. She has troops of friends, and luxury tends to self-indulgence. The atmosphere of high life is unfavourable usually to godliness. Gold is often a hardener of the heart. So I decided that it required more grace to make the lady of rank a humble-minded, devoted disciple than it did to make the poor woman at her side a Christian. Was I not right? Remember the dear Master said, "How hard it is for them that have riches to enter into the kingdom of God." (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Christ the true Master*:—I. Human masters may transmit their words; Christ alone can impart His Spirit. II. Human masters may teach the elements; Christ alone can conduct to the goal. III. Human masters may establish schools; Christ alone can found a church. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Christ's right to leadership*:—I. He Himself, by Himself, teaches us, and leads us by the way of virtue to heavenly glory. All others teach as they have been first taught by Him. II. All others only teach in words that sound in the outward ears, like a tinkling cymbal; but Christ makes known their meaning inwardly to the mind. III. All others only show what the law commands and what God requires; but Christ gives grace to the will, that we, when we hear the things which ought to be done, may indeed constantly fulfil the same. (*Lapide.*) *The true Master*:—"I am my own master," cried a young man, proudly, when a friend tried to dissuade him from an enterprize he had on hand, "I am my own master." "Did you ever consider what a responsible post that is?" asked his friend. "Responsible! what do you mean?" "A master must lay out the work which he wants done, and see that it is done *right*. He should try to secure the best ends by the best means. He must keep on the look-out against obstacles and accidents, and watch that everything goes straight, else he must fail. To be master of yourself, you have your conscience to keep clear, your heart to cultivate, your temper to govern, your will to direct, and your judgment to instruct. You are master over many servants, and, if you don't master them, they will master you." "That is so," said the young man. "Now I could undertake no such thing," continued his friend; "I should fail if I did. Saul wanted to be his own master, and failed. Herod failed. Judas failed. No man is fit to be his own master. 'One is your Master, even Christ.' I work under His direction." *Calling no man master*:—I. Christians have a Master and a Father. II. Christians have but *one* Master, but *one* Father. III. There is no man upon earth that is the Christian's father or master. IV. God is the Christian's only Father, Jesus Christ their only Master. (*Hezekiah Burton.*) *A truth about religion*:—Religion, like water, will not rise higher than the spring; if it derives its origin from this earth only, it will not rise and raise us up with it to heaven. (*Ibid.*) *Call no man father*:—The reasons for this caution are evident. 1. When the gospel began to be preached, men who were convinced of its truth, and inclined to receive it, were often in danger of incurring the displeasure of their nearest relations and dearest friends, of father and mother, as also of the rulers in Church and State. 2. The Jews at that time were accustomed to pay a blind and slavish deference to their spiritual fathers, their doctors, and wise men,

and to prefer their authority even to that of their prophets and of their own sacred books. 3. Our Saviour foresaw that the same corruption would enter into His Church, and the same slavish obedience to the traditions and doctrines of men; that fathers, and monks, and councils, and synods, and prelates, and popes would at last so engross all power, both spiritual and temporal, and abuse it to such an enormous degree, that scarcely the shadow of Christianity would remain in the Christian Church. (*J. Jortin.*) *What we may learn from earth masters:*—The points may be reduced to three. 1. A belief in God, in opposition to atheism. 2. Moral duties, in opposition to vice and debauchery. 3. Christianity, in opposition to infidelity. (*Ibid.*) *God our Father:*—As God is our Father, a willing compliance and a cheerful obedience are due to Him. God is a Father to us in every sense of the word, bestowing upon us more than we could hope or expect, forgiving us our offences, ruling us with lenity, making allowances for human infirmities, temptations, surprises, mistakes, and errors, for everything that can claim compassion, and is not deliberate and stubborn. We should imitate and resemble Him. We should place our trust and confidence in Him. If God be the Father of *all* beings, they are *all*, in some way, related to us. (*Ibid.*) *God the Father of His people:*—I. He is the Author of their spiritual being, gives life, and imparts His own nature. II. God supplies all the need of His children. They are dependent, &c. III. He provides them with a suitable home and habitation—Himself, His Church, His heaven. IV. He secures the instruction of His children by His works, His word. He has appointed for them teachers. V. He guards and protects His children. VI. He gives them a glorious and everlasting portion. Reverence and fear Him; live and delight in Him; follow and obey Him, &c. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Virtue only commands esteem:*—It is virtue that puts an esteem upon men, it makes their countenances lovely, their words to be remembered; it casts a perfume on all that men do or say; gives every word or action a rich scent. This will make our so much distasted habits and gestures that they shall not be contemned or derided, but reverenced and honoured. (*Hezekiah Burton.*) *Authority means service, not proud dominion:*—Excellent and admirable was the speech of Xunus, Emperor of China, to his son Taais, who, according to the relation of Martinius, lived 2258 years before the birth of Christ. "Take," said he, when he was dying, "this sceptre, due to your virtue and merits; remember that you are the father of your people, that you are to deal with them as with your children; that the people are not born to serve you, but that you are born and designed to serve them; and that a king is alone raised up above all the rest that he might alone be able to serve all. (*C. Buckley.*) *Peril of high things:*—Do you see, so we have it in Herodotus, how God strikes the taller animals with His thunder, and causes them to disappear; while the small ones are not at all affected by it? Do you see how the loftiest houses and the highest trees are in a like manner thunder-stricken. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus Christ to the brethren:*—I. A PROHIBITION. 1. Against a proud, ambitious spirit—"Be not ye called Rabbi." 2. Against a servile spirit—"And call no man your father upon earth." II. A REVELATION. 1. As to Christ. He was their Master. 2. As to the unseen God. He is our Father in heaven. III. AN IDEAL—"All ye are brethren." (*A. Scott.*)

Vers. 13–15. **But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.**—*The sins of the scribes and Pharisees:*—I. THAT THEY SHUT UP THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AGAINST MEN. "Neither suffer ye them that are entering in." 1. They did this by their extraordinary strictness and outward purity. By such austerities they made religion repulsive. This accusation has often been preferred against the pure ministers of a pure religion. Compare this text with the parallel passage in Luke xi. 52. They shut the kingdom of heaven against themselves and others by taking away the key of knowledge. The same sin is committed by any church that imposes the traditions of men in that province in which only the commandment of God is of authority. The kingdom of heaven is opened by knowledge. It is important to recognize this. Ministers of the Church have in a certain sense the power of shutting up the kingdom of heaven against men. (1) Let us learn to read the Bible and listen to its truths, in the assurance that our eternal destiny depends upon the knowledge of them. (2) Let ministers learn their proper vocation as porters to the kingdom of heaven, and let them beware of handling the Word of God deceitfully. 2. The second charge against the scribes and Pharisees. They devoured the houses of widows. They were robbers of the defenceless. Those who lie under this woe are: (1) Those ministers who enter upon and continue in

their office for a piece of bread. 3. The third charge against the scribes and Pharisees—"Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." The apostles of deceit and falsehood have often manifested a zeal in the propagation of their principles which is fitted to minister a severe reproof to those who know and believe the truth. It is not the fact of making proselytes against which the woe is directed; this is the duty of the Church. But they did not care to make their councils holier. (1) They made proselytes by reviling and scorn; (2) by misrepresentation and calumny; (3) by force. (*W. Wilson.*) In the description of the scribes and Pharisees in this chapter we have *a full-length portrait of the hypocrite*:—I. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against others (ver. 13). II. They committed the grossest iniquity under a cloak of religion (ver. 14). III. They showed great zeal in making proselytes, yet did it only for gain, and made them more wicked (ver. 15). IV. They taught false doctrine, artful contrivances to destroy the force of oaths, and shut out the Creator from their view (vers. 16–22). V. They were superstitious (ver. 23). VI. They were openly hypocritical (vers. 25–28). VII. They professed great veneration for the memory of the pious dead, while at the same time they were conscious that they really approved the conduct of those who killed them (vers. 29–31). Never, perhaps, was there a combination of more wicked feelings and hypocritical actions than among them; and never was there more profound knowledge of the human heart and more faithfulness than in Him who tore off the mask, and showed them what they were. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *The woes*:—I. Spiritual ambition; petitioners changed into beggars. The long prayers of the hypocrites, and the long sentence of judgment. II. Those who shut the kingdom of heaven. III. Proselytism. Soul-winners and soul-ruiners. IV. The work of man up, the work of God down; the inward nothing, the outward everything. The true oath always by the living and true God. The blindest ignorance connected with a conceit of keenest insight into the laws of the kingdom of God. V. Legality in little things; lawlessness in great. VI. The outside and the inside of the cup and the platter, or the feast of the religious and moral hypocrite. 1. In the outward form, consecrated or adorned. 2. In the inner character, abominable and reprobate. VII. The whited sepulchres: like pleasant abodes outwardly; caves of bones, diffusing death, within—spiritual death, in the guise of spiritual bloom. VIII. The murderers of the prophets. To persecute Christ in His saints is to persecute Christ himself. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Folly of hypocrisy*:—If the devil ever laughs, it must be at hypocrites; they are the greatest dupes he has. They serve him better than any others, and receive no wages; nay, what is still more extraordinary, they submit to greater mortifications to go to hell, than the sincerest Christian to go to heaven. (*Colton.*)

Vers. 16–22. **Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing.**—*Thoughtless profanity*:—Are there any before me who are accustomed to use God's name as an expletive, and to bandy it as a byword? Who employ it in all kinds of conversation, and throw it about in every place? Perhaps in their hearts they consider this an accomplishment! think it manly and brave to swear! Let me say, then, that profaneness is a brutal vice. He who indulges in it is no gentleman. I care not what his stamp may be in society. I care not what clothes he wears, or what culture he boasts. Despite all his refinement, the light and habitual taking of God's name betrays a coarse nature and a brutal will. Nay, he tacitly admits that it is ungentlemanly, for he restrains his oaths in the presence of ladies; and he who fears not to rush into the chancery of heaven and swear by the Majesty there, is decently observant in the drawing-room and the parlour. (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) *Ostentatious profanity*:—If there are hypocrites in religion, there are also, strange as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety—men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to lie at the root of profane swearing. (*R. Hall.*) *Unreasonable oaths*:—He that sweareth by any person, or thing, doth two things. 1. He attributeth to the thing, or person, by which he sweareth, a knowledge of the heart and the secret intention. 2. He calleth upon the person, or thing, by which he sweareth, to be his judge, or to take a revenge upon him, in case he doth not believe in his heart what he affirmeth or denieth with his words to be true or false; otherwise an oath is no security at all. From whence appeareth that it is unreasonable for any to swear by any other than God, who alone can have a knowledge of the truth and security of the heart; and that he who sweareth by any creature committeth idolatry in his heart, and indeed blasphemeth, paying Divine homage to

a creature, and attributing to the creature what belongs only to the Creator. (*M. Pool.*) *The altar:*—The one altar which sanctifieth the gift is the person and merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE ANTITYPE OF THIS BRAZEN ALTAR (Exodus xxvii.). 1. The altar typifies our Lord if we consider the use of it. To sanctify that which was put upon it, and to sustain it while the fire was consuming it. Our Lord lifts up our gifts towards heaven. 2. The place of the altar. You saw it the moment you entered the door of the tabernacle. The most prominent thought of the soul is Jesus as Mediator. 3. The form of the altar. It was four-square; stability and endurance. 4. The materials of which the altar was made. Shittim wood, overlaid with brass; the former represents the incorruptible human character of Jesus: the latter the endurance of Christ. II. A QUESTION OR TWO. 1. Have you always taken care to keep to the one spiritual altar? 2. Are there not some among you who have been offering to God without an altar at all? You have not respect to the Mediator in your life, and prayers, and acts. 3. Whether we have not often forgotten to attach the importance to the altar which we should have done. We must plead the merit of Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

**Vers. 23, 24. And have omitted the weightier matters of the law.**—*Sins of omission:*—1. The very earliest cause of nearly all sin lies in omitting something which we ought to have done. Perhaps you left your room without prayer. 2. That sins of omission in God's sight are of larger magnitude than sins of commission. 3. They will form the basis of judgment at the last day—"Ye gave Me no meat." 4. Why is any man lost that is lost, but because he omitted God's way of escape? 5. Sins of omission are characteristically sins of the Christian dispensation. Its laws are positive. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The great duties of religion:*—Define these weightier matters of the law. 1. One virtue originating immediately in primitive law is more important than another, an obligation to perform which is founded only on some particular circumstances. 2. Virtues anterior to particulars subsist after those circumstances. 3. A virtue that hath a great object is more than those which have small objects. 4. Every virtue connected with other virtues, and drawing after it many more, is greater than any single or detached virtue. 5. A virtue that constitutes the end, to which all religion conducts us, is more important than other virtues, which at most are only means to lead to the end. (*J. Saurin*). *Small duties of religion:*—Obligation to little duties may be urged, because (1) they contribute to maintain a tenderness of conscience; (2) they are sources of re-conversion after great falls; (3) they make up by their frequency what is wanting to their importance; (4) they have sometimes characters as certain of real love as the great duties have. (*Ibid.*) *The superlative importance of the moral duties of religion:*—I. Moral duties, the weightier matters of the law, the love of God, justice, mercy, and fidelity, are more excellent in their own nature, and ought always to be preferred to all ritual and positive institutions, whenever they come into competition with them. II. Notwithstanding the intrinsic and superior excellence of moral duties, yet those rites and external institutions which are of Divine appointment ought to be religiously observed, and it is really criminal in the sight of God to despise and neglect them. (*W. Leechman.*) *Sins of omission:*—The last words that Archbishop Usher was heard to express, were, "Lord, forgive my sins; especially my sins of *omission*." *Fidelity in little duties no excuse for neglect of great:*—The tithing of cummin must not be neglected; but take heed thou dost not neglect the weightiest things of the Law—judgment, mercy, and faith; making your preciseness in the less a blind for your horrible wickedness in the greater. (*W. Gurnall.*) *All sin traced to an omission:*—It scarcely admits of a question, but that every sin which was ever committed upon the earth, is traceable, in the first instance, to a sin of omission. At a certain point of the genealogy of that sin, there was something of which it is not too much to say that if it had been done that sin would have been cut short. And the very earliest cause of that sin (whether you are able to discover a root or not) lay, not in anything we did, or said, or thought, but in that which we *might have done*, and did *not* do; or, *might have said*, and did *not* say; or, *might have thought*, and did *not* think. Every sin lies in a chain, and the first link is fastened to another link. For instance, that first sin committed after the Fall—Cain's fratricide—was the result of anger; that anger was the result of jealousy; that jealousy was the result of an unaccepted sacrifice; that unaccepted sacrifice was the result of the absence of faith; and that absence of faith was the result of an inattentive ear, or a heart which had grown silent towards God. . . . As you uncoil a sin, you have been surprised to find what a compound thing that is.

which, at first sight, appeared single. You have gone on, finding the germ of one sin in the seed of another sin, till you could scarcely pursue the process because it stretched so far: but, if you went far enough, you found at last that some neglect was the beginning of it all. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Sins of omission the most heinous*:—By which are we most pained—the omissions, or the commissions, of life? Say you have two persons whom you love. I will suppose a father with two sons. The one often offends him by direct and open disobedience; and your heart is made to ache, again and again, by his frequent and flagrant transgressions of your law. The other does nothing which is outwardly and palpably bad. His life is moral, and his course correct. But he shows no sign whatsoever of any personal regard for you. You long to catch some indication of affection; but there is none. Day after day you have watched for it; but still there is none! You are plainly indifferent to him. He does not injure you. But in no thought, or word, or deed, does he ever show you that he has you in his heart, to care for you and love you. Now, which of those two sons will pain you most? The disobedient, or the cold one? The one who often transgresses, or the one who never loves? The one who commits, or the one who omits? Is there a doubt that, however much the committee may the more injure himself, or society, the omitter most wounds the parent's heart? And is it not so with the great Father of us all? (*Ibid.*) *Omission the sin of the lost*:—Why is any man lost who is lost? Is it because he did certain things which brought down upon him the righteous retribution of eternal punishment? No; but because, having broken God's commandments, he omitted to use God's way of escape—to go to Christ, to believe the promises, to accept pardon, to realize truth: therefore he is lost; and the cause of the final condemnation of every sinner in hell is a sin of omission. The gospel precept—unlike the law—is direct and absolute, not negative: "Thou shalt love God, and thy neighbour." And therefore the transgression must consist in an omission. It is only by *not* loving, that you can be brought in guilty, under the code of the gospel of Jesus Christ. (*Ibid.*) *Religious duties great and small to be combined*:—Turning to the household, we may see how the principle here stated holds good. Public religious services must not be made the substitute for home duties; and, again, home duties must not be pleaded as an apology for the neglect of public ordinances. Arrangements ought to be made for rightly engaging in both. The instructing of other people's children must not be allowed to keep us from giving needed attention to the godly upbringing of our own. And, again, the training of our own families should not be made a plea for exemption from all effort for the spiritual welfare of those of others. A workman meeting a friend on the street in Edinburgh, one Monday morning, said to him, "Why were you not at church last night? our minister preached an excellent sermon on home religion. Why were you not there to hear it?" "Because," was the answer, "I was at home doing it." That was a good answer, for the service was an extra one, and the man had been at church twice before. So he was right, with the third, to give his home duties the preference. But then, on the other hand, the "at home doing it" is not all, and it should be so provided for as not to take away from proper attendance on regular ordinances, otherwise the result will be that after a while religion will not be much cared for either in the church or in the home. A tardy student coming late into the class was asked by his professor to account for his want of punctuality; and replied that he had delayed for purposes of private devotion. But his teacher very properly reproved him by saying, "You had no right to be at your prayers, when you ought to have been here; it is your duty to make such arrangements that the one shall not interfere with the other." So in regard to the conflicting claims of the household and the church upon you. Make arrangements for giving due attention to both, and do not sacrifice the one on the shrine of the other. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *These things done, and others not left undone*:—A clear conception of the real nature of Phariseeism is all that is needed to vindicate the severity of this denunciation. 1. The error of the Pharisees was not superficial, but fundamental. Their religion was not simply defective, but positively false. 2. Such radically erroneous notions concerning religion, lulled the Pharisees into absolute self-security. 3. Still further we may account for the severity of these denunciations from the fact that the Saviour foresaw that Phariseeism would in after ages become the greatest hindrance to the progress of His cause in the world. There is a constant tendency to retain the form after the life has departed. I. THAT THE COMMANDS OF GOD ARE OF DIFFERENT DEGREES OF IMPORTANCE. There are matters of more weight than others among the Divine precepts. The heart that reverences God will seek to obey all,

but each in its own order. In morals as in doctrine there are things essential and non-essential. The weightiest of all God's commands have respect to judgment, mercy, faith. The inner is more important than the outward life; out of the heart are the issues of life, and therefore should have the greatest attention. So the great things and the smaller will follow in their train. II. THAT ATTENTION TO THE MATTERS OF LESS IMPORTANCE WILL NOT COMPENSATE FOR THE NEGLECT OF THOSE WHICH ARE OF ESSENTIAL MOMENT. Punctilious title-paying will not condone lack of humble faith in God. III. That when the heart is right with God through faith in Jesus Christ, BOTH THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS AND THOSE OF LESS IMPORTANCE WILL BE PROPERLY ATTENDED TO. (*Ibid.*) *The gnat and the camel*:—I. Inward qualities count for more than outward observances. II. That a just sense of proportion is essential to a well-regulated Christian mind. It is no infrequent thing to find a person who seems to be very religious curiously deficient in the sense of proportion. He cannot quite see what is great or what is small. If he be disposed to obstinacy or bigotry, he simply regards all that is plain to him as great; and all his tenets and regulations as equally great. If he be merely small-minded, by natural affinity he fastens keenly on small points. These are of the proper size for him; and he takes them to be quite large. Or if he be of a self-regarding mind, considering religion simply with reference to his own safety, he lays all the stress on the truths which are near himself, and has but a faint appreciation of those which are much more vast but more remote. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *Cummin*:—"That we meet so often," says Sir Thomas Brown, "with cummin seeds in many parts of Scripture, in reference unto Judæa, a seed so abominable at present to our palates and nostrils, will not seem strange unto any who consider the frequent use thereof among the ancients, not only in medical, but in dietetical use and practice; for their dishes were filled therewith; and their noblest festival preparations in Apicius, were not without it; and even in the polenta and parched corn, the old diet of the Romans, unto every measure they mixed a small proportion of linseed and cummin seed. And so cummin is justly set down among things of vulgar and common use. (*C. Bulkley.*) *Tithe of mint*:—The Pharisee, in his minute scrupulosity, made a point of gathering the tenth sprig of every garden herb, and presenting it to the priest. (*Dean Plumptre.*) *Straining out a gnat*:—The expression may be more precisely rendered, "*strain out* a gnat," and then there may be a reference intended to the custom that prevailed, among the more strict and accurate Jews, of straining their wine and other drinks, lest they should inadvertently swallow a gnat, or some other unclean insect: supposing that thereby they would transgress (Lev. xi. 20, 23, 41, 42). A traveller in North Africa, where Eastern customs are very jealously retained, reports noticing that a Moorish soldier who accompanied him, when he drank, always unfolded the end of his turban, and placed it over the mouth of his *bota*, drinking through the muslin to *strain out* the gnats, whose larvæ swarm in the water of that country. (*Trench.*)

Vers. 25–28. **For ye make clean the outside of the cup.**—*Moral ablution*:—By this allusion to the cup and platter the Saviour taught that it is necessary to cleanse the heart first, that the external conduct might be pure. I. WHY must we cleanse ourselves from sin? 1. Because it renders us injurious to our fellow-men. 2. Because it hinders prayer. 3. Because it renders us offensive to God. 4. Because it is destructive to ourselves. II. How may we cleanse ourselves from sin? 1. Not by merely desiring to be cleansed. 2. Not by external reformations. 3. Not by scrupulous attention to religious ordinances. 4. Not by mere repentance. 5. But by faith in the only cleansing element—the precious blood of Jesus. III. WHEN may we cleanse ourselves from sin? Now! 1. Delay increases the difficulty. 2. The present the only time of which we are sure. 3. God's commands brook no delay, &c. (*A. Tucker.*) *Hypocrisy contradictory*:—Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas, they show fairest at farthest. A hypocrite's profession is in folio, but his sincerity is so abridged that it is contained in decimo-sexto, nothing in the world to speak of. A hypocrite is like the Sicilian Etna, flaming at the mouth when it hath snow at the foot. Their mouths talk hotly, but their feet walk coldly. The nightingale hath a sweet voice, but a lean carcase; a voice, and nothing else but a voice: and so have all hypocrites. (*Adams.*) *Hypocrisy deceptive*:—As a thick wood that giveth great shadow doth delight the eyes of the beholders greatly with the variety of flourishing trees and pleasant plants, so that it seemeth to be ordained only for pleasure's sake, and yet within is full of poisonous serpents, ravening wolves,

and other wild beasts; even so a hypocrite, when outwardly he seemeth holy and to be well furnished with all sorts of virtues, doth please well the eyes of his beholders; but within him there lurketh pride, envy, covetousness, and all manner of wickedness, like wild and cruel beasts wandering in the wood of his heart. (*Cawdray.*) *Whited sepulchres:—Appearances not always to be trusted:*—Hypocrites seem as glow-worms, to have both light and heat; but touch them and they have neither. The Egyptian temples were beautiful on the outside, when within ye should find nothing but some serpent or crocodile. Apothecaries' boxes oft have goodly titles when yet they hold not one dram of any good drug. A certain stranger coming on embassage unto the senators of Rome, and colouring his hoary hair and pale cheeks with vermilion hue, a grave senator espying the deceit stood up and said, "What sincerity are we to expect from this man's hands, whose locks, and looks, and lips, do lie?" Think the same of all painted hypocrites. These we may compare (as Lucian doth his Grecians) to a fair gilt bossed book; look within it, and there is the tragedy of Thyestes; or perhaps Arrius' Thalya; the name of a muse, the matter heresy; or Conradus Vorstius' book-monster that hath *De Deo* in the front, but atheism and blasphemy in the text. (*J. Trapp.*) *False appearances:*—If you go into a churchyard some snowy day, when the snow has been falling thick enough to cover every monument and tombstone, how beautiful and white does everything appear! But remove the snow, dig down beneath, and you find rottenness and putrefaction—dead men's bones and all uncleanness. How like that churchyard on such a day is the mere professor—fair outside, sinful, unholy within! The grass grows green upon the sides of a mountain that holds a volcano in its bowels. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Emblem of hypocrisy*:—A very capital painter in London exhibited a piece representing a friar habited in his canonicals. View the painting at a distance, and you would think the friar to be in a praying attitude. His hands are clasped together, and held horizontally to his breast; his eyes meekly demissed like those of the publican in the gospel, and the good man appears to be quite absorbed in humble adoration and devout recollection. But take a nearer survey, and the deception vanishes. The book which seemed to be before him is discovered to be a punch-bowl into which the rascal is all the while, in reality, only squeezing a lemon. How lively a representation of a hypocrite! (*G. S. Bowes.*) There is a spice of hypocrisy in us all. (*S. Rutherford.*) The hypocrite—the man that stole the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. (*R. Pollok.*) *The hypocrite takes a partial Christ:*—The hypocrite maps out the road to Zion, knows it well, has sounded with plummet the depths of the promises, can talk about them. But he has accepted a two-parts Christ; there is perhaps a little pet sin, snugly tucked up in a warm corner of his heart, that he is unwilling to part with. Christ is his Priest, his Prophet, but he will not have Him as his King. *Hypocrisy sometimes difficult to discover:*—Formality frequently takes its dwelling near the chambers of integrity, and so assumes its name; the soul not suspecting that hell should make so near an approach to heaven. A rotten post, though covered with gold, is more fit to be burned in the fire than for the building of a fabric. The dial of our faces does not infallibly show the time of day in our hearts; the humblest looks may enamel the former, while unbounded pride covers the latter. Unclean spirits may inhabit the chamber when they look not out at the window. (*Archbishop Secker.*) *Posthumous testimony to the great and good:*—I. A SERIOUS CHARGE. 1. A too late recognition of goodness which, when living, was ignored or persecuted. 2. A pretended veneration of the characters of the pious dead. 3. In truth a signalizing of their own goodness. II. A FALSE DEFENCE. 1. Their character belied their profession—persecutors of Jesus would hardly have been defenders of Isaiah, &c. 2. Betrayed great ignorance of their own character. III. A SOLEMN VERDICT. 1. Pronounced guilty of the righteous blood shed by their party. 2. Hypocrites for pretending a veneration for departed worth while they persecuted living goodness. *Tombs:*—Tombs are the clothes of the dead: a grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered. Tombs ought, in some sort, to be proportioned, not to the wealth, but deserts of the party interred. Yet may we see some rich man of mean worth loaden under a tomb big enough for a prince to bear. There were officers appointed in the Grecian games who always, by public authority, did pluck down the statues erected to the victors if they exceeded the true symmetry and proportion of their bodies. The shortest, plainest, and truest epitaphs are the best. Mr. Camden, in his "Remains," presents us with examples of great men who had little epitaphs. And when once I asked a witty gentleman what epitaph was fitted to be written on Mr. Camden's tomb, "Let it be," said he, "Camden's Remains.'

I say also, "the plainest;" for except the sense lie above ground, few will trouble themselves to dig for it. Lastly, it must be "true;" not, as in some monuments where the red veins in the marble may seem to blush at the falsehoods written on it. He was a witty man that first taught a stone to speak; but he was a wicked man that taught it first to lie. (*N. Rogers.*) *God searches the heart*:—Momus, the heathen god of ridicule, complained that Jupiter had not made a window in the human breast, so that it might be seen what was passing within. To an omniscient God no window is needed, every thought, and wish, and intention being perfectly discerned. *Garnished tombs*:—The tombs of saints in Egypt are held in great veneration. They are covered with a circular building in the form of a cupola, and are regularly whitewashed, repaired, rebuilt, and decorated, as was the case with the Jews. In the larger tombs lamps are kept constantly burning, as amongst the Romanists, and no Christian is allowed to enter. At Pera the tablets are all upright, and surmounted with turbans, tarbooshes, or flowers. The dignity of the person in the grave is displayed by the kind of turban at the top of the stone. Most were of white marble, and many richly gilt and ornamented. They are about the size of our railway mile-posts, and are as thick on the ground as nine-pins. The flowers denote females. Some are painted green, these were descendants of Mahomet. (*Gadsby.*) *Whitened sepulchres*:—In the plains of Sahrai-Sirwan Rawlinson noticed many whitewashed obelisks placed on any elevations which occurred conveniently, some rising to the height of fifteen feet, a modern example of "whitened sepulchres." The custom of "garnishing the sepulchres" prevails more or less throughout Persia. *Outward purification must begin within*:—I. It is a characteristic of fallen men that they are apt to content themselves with cleansing the outside. They are at greater pains to *seem* pure than to *be* pure. II. Though outward purity is desirable, and even measurably praiseworthy, yet, if it be not the fruit of a purified heart, it is unreliable and comparatively valueless. For the welfare of this life it is better that one should be winning than repulsive, moral than immoral. It is better to have a washed outside than to have both outside and inside filthy. If outside only it is unreliable; has no inherent permanency. III. A cleansed heart is a sure producer of genuine and permanent purity of life. Learn: 1. That God estimates character by the state of the heart. 2. That man has a corrupt heart, and is therefore loathsome in God's sight. 3. That to have God's favour man must be cleansed, and that to be effectual it must begin in his heart. 4. That there is such a thing as being effectually cleansed and rendered acceptable to the Holy One. (*T. Williston.*) *Deception deceived*:—So it ever comes to pass that we are punished for deceiving others by being ourselves deceived. Our success secures our delusion. When an act which is properly an indication of some good motive is repeatedly performed in the sight of those who cannot see the heart, they take for granted the motive and give us the credit of it—provided only the act be of the class which it is the fashion of the day and place to applaud as religious. We are assumed to be what, at first, we know we are not. But in time this knowledge fades away; we accept as the independently formed judgment of others that which really rested upon our own successful deception; we come to consider our conduct as in itself sufficient proof of the motive which is universally assumed to be its source. We move in a circle of hypocrisy, and it becomes difficult to decide whether we are the authors or the victims of the delusion. We are, in fact, both. (*J. C. Coghlan, D.D.*)

Vers. 29, 33, 36. **How can ye escape the damnation of hell?**—*The difficulty of escaping the damnation of hell*:—I. WHAT YOUR SITUATION ACTUALLY IS. 1. You are even now under sentence of condemnation. 2. You need to be awakened, no man will escape a danger he does not perceive. 3. In order to escape final condemnation you must pursue religion with perseverance. II. THE OBSTACLES. 1. The effect of sin is to make men blind to their own sins. 2. The sinner often seeks deliverance in a way in which it cannot be obtained. 3. The unbelieving heart will not submit to God until its opposition be removed. 4. The fascinating power of worldly objects. 5. Then you say the difficulties are so great that you have not courage to make the attempt to escape. (*E. Payson, D.D.*) *Pretence vain*:—To pretend holiness when there is none is a vain thing. What were the foolish virgins better for their blazing lamps when they wanted oil? What is the lamp of profession without the oil of saving grace? What comfort will a show of holiness yield at last? Will painted gold enrich? Painted wine refresh him that is thirsty? Will painted holiness be a cordial at the hour of death? A pretence of sanctification is not to be rested in.

Many ships have had the name of Hope, the Safeguard, the Triumph, yet have been cast away upon the rocks; so many who have had the name of saintship have been cast into hell. (*T. Watson.*) *Suspension and infliction of judgments:*—1. It is not right that God should punish one generation for the sins of another. 2. It is just that God should punish all generations for their own sins. 3. God might if He pleased pass by the sins of all generations; He might punish them hereafter, not here. 4. It is right that God should punish one generation and not another. He has always acted as a Sovereign in sparing or punishing particular generations. God delayed to destroy the Egyptians. 5. When God does spare one generation and punish another He always has some good reason for both sparing and punishing. 6. The sins of one generation may be a good reason why God should punish the sins of another. 7. It is criminal and foolish for one generation to imitate the sins of a former. 8. It is well for the present generation to discountenance open vices prevailing. 9. Sinners always are the troublers of the world. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*)

Vers. 37–39. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets.**—*The invitation refused:*—Consider some of the different modes in which the rejection of God's call has been made. For, all do not reject Him alike. I. Some will even rise up and say, "I DO NOT CONSIDER THAT I HAVE EVER YET BEEN CALLED." 1. Those who wish they could believe they had been called, but cannot think such good news true. 2. Those who are waiting for a louder, more irresistible call, saying, "Why does not God, if He would indeed save me, make some great interposition on my behalf?" Alas for the guilty unbelief of the one, and the awful, blasphemous presumption of the other! II. Those who, although conscious of having been called, yet treat the matter with INDIFFERENCE. These are "men at ease in Zion"; familiarized with stifled convictions; of secular habit of mind; to whom invisible things carry no reality in daily life. Three classes of them depicted in Luke xiv. 18–20. III. Those who recognize the importance of the Divine call, BUT WHO PUT OFF THE ACCEPTANCE OF IT. Satan decoys them by enticing pictures of their own future. They live in fancies of their own coming holiness, thinking that to-morrow's goodness will make up for to-day's worldliness. Oh the sin! As if they could *command* the sovereign working of the Holy Ghost! As if—having refused Him their attention now—they may recall Him when they please. IV. Those who, at the time, receive, welcome, reciprocate the love of God; and then, when the excitement of the moment is past, THEIR FEELINGS EVAPORATE, and nothing remains. Their religion never becomes a principle. V. Those who listen to the heavenly call, draw nigh, taste the heavenly gift; and then the old, carnal nature asserts its sway, and they draw back again. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *God's continual calls:*—Oh that "how often"! Do not let it be a mere impassioned exclamation. Make it what it is, a distinct, definite question put to you this day—"*how often?*" And what arithmetic can write the answer? I never yet visited a man upon a sick-bed—I never talked with a single person in any of those moments which unlock the breast, and set it free to speak its secrets—that I did not receive this confession: "I have been greatly conscious all my life of the inward striving, and the oft-repeated calls of God in my soul." Sometimes, doubtless, those calls fall louder and deeper upon the spiritual ear than they fall at other times. They lie thickest, I believe, in early life. There are states of mind we can scarcely say how, and there are providential scenes we can scarcely say why, which give an intensity to those many voices, when a verse of Scripture will sometimes roll its meaning like thunder, or when a whisper of the soul will carry an accent tenfold with it. But the call is not confined to those specialities. There is a "finger of a man's hand" which is always waking the strings of thought. It is when we lie down; it is when we rise up; it is when we sit in the house; it is when we are walking by the way. We can see it on the little face of early childhood, before the date when our utmost memories reach; we can trace it in ourselves back to the utmost dawn of rising reason. Perhaps not a room in which we have ever laid down to sleep; perhaps not a church into which we have ever entered, even with careless foot; perhaps not a sin which we ever deliberately went and did; perhaps not an incident for weal or woe that lies on the chequered path of life, but there was something there which swelled that "how often?" (*Ibid.*) *Why the Divine invitation is refused:*—Of all the refusals of God's grace, the real secret is the same. They may cover themselves with various pretexts—just as persons, having made up their mind to decline an invitation, begin to look out for some convenient excuse—but the cause is one.

It is not in any outward circumstances; it is not in any particular temperament; it is not in the want of power; it is not in the straitenings of Divine grace: but the Saviour points to it at once with His omniscient mind—"ye would not." It is the absence of the will; it is the want of that setting of the mind to God's mind; that conformity of the affections to God's promises; that appreciation of unseen things; that spiritual sense, which is the essence and the beginning of a new life. Therefore they cannot come. (*Ibid.*) *Compassion of Jesus towards the guilty*:—Scripture is full of the sublime and pathetic. It opens to us the very heart of the Redeemer. Observe here—I. THE CRUELTY AND WICKEDNESS OF THE JEWS. They paid no regard to the character and Divine commission of God's prophets. 1. An act of great injustice and ingratitude. 2. An act of rebellion against God. II. CHRIST'S TENDERNESS AND CARE. The hen an affectionate creature to her young. When justice pursues, Satan assaults, and hosts of enemies compass us round about; if we can but get under the shadow of Christ's wings we are safe, and, being safe, may be content. The wings of Christ are so large, they are sufficient to cover the whole Church. They are also strong and impenetrable, and ever stretched out to screen us from danger. III. CHRIST'S EARNESTNESS AND IMPORTUNITY. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem." "How *often*." IV. STUBBORNNESS AND PERVERSENESS OF THOSE SO TENDERLY REGARDED. "Ye would not." Not a want of power, but of will. 1. None continue the slaves of Satan and sin but with their own consent. 2. Every man may be saved if he will. 3. Divine influence necessary to overcome the sinner's enmity. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *Relationship between the Lord and His people*:—I have been raising chickens this year, and have devoted a part of my pear-orchard to the chicken-coops; and I have been accustomed to go out mornings and evenings to see that the boy took care of the chickens. I think I have now about ten or fifteen broods. The old hen, when watching them, would cluck; and it was to them a warning of danger, I suppose. They understand it to mean that they are to come in. I could not understand that language; but these little things that had never been to school understood instantly just what she said. She gave her whole self to them; and their instinct was to run under her; and when there to lift themselves close up to her body, and get their warmth from her. I have watched them as they did this again and again. What an idea of the intimate and endearing relationship between the soul and the Lord Jesus Christ is conveyed in that figure. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ the refuge for the destitute*:—I remember some few years ago meeting a young woman at a mission, who said that for two years she had been trying to make herself feel her sins, and could not. This was to her a great grief. I had been preaching on the words of Christ in this verse; so I said to her, "Suppose a little chick were half frozen in a barn-yard, and could scarcely feel itself alive from numbness, what would be the best thing for it to do? Would it not be to flee at once to the warmth of the hen's wing?" I think she saw her mistake. I think she learnt that those who would learn more of their sin, and who desire a more contrite spirit, can find it nowhere so surely and fully as in nearness to Jesus, trusting only in His grace, and finding their shelter beneath His merciful wings. (*G. Everard, M.A.*) *Willingness to save*:—I. THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD TO ISRAEL WHICH THIS VERSE BRINGS BEFORE US. 1. God's sovereignty of Israel. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." Why should Jerusalem be singled out from all other nations. He had a right to select the depositaries of His truth. 2. God's grace in the messages which He sent to this people. "Them which are sent unto thee." 3. God's mercy manifested in His dealings towards them. 4. God's love. 5. God's unchangeableness—"How often." 6. God's justice—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate." 7. God's faithulness in the final issue of His dealings with Israel. II. THE SPECIAL INSTRUCTION TO OURSELVES. Learn what we have to do with the purposes, messages, salvation of God. Like Christ, Christians should desire and seek the salvation of men. (*W. Cadman, M.A.*) *Of God's free grace and man's free will*:—In this invective two things are to be considered, the rebellion of Jerusalem, in ver. 37; the punishment of this sin, ver. 38. Touching the rebellion itself, three things are set down—(1) the place and persons; (2) the degree and practice of rebellion; (3) the manner and form of their rebellion. In this example of Jerusalem's rebellion we learn many things. (*a*) The vileness of man's nature, and our violent proneness to sin. (*b*) To exercise ourselves in the duties of goodness, meekness, peace to all men. (*c*) Not to oppose ourselves against the ministers of God. (*W. Perkins.*) *God's gracious dealings with sinners*:—I. God has desired to gather you to Himself. Have you not had gathering mercies, invitations, appeals, providences, seasons? II. But you have

often rejected the overtures of Divine mercy. Your unwillingness is the result of your ignorance of your real state, unbelief, love of the world, dislike to Christ's terms. III. The obstinate rejection of the Divine mercy must involve the sinner in irreparable ruin. Application: In order to salvation your will must harmonize with the will of God. The entire responsibility is with you. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Privilege and duty*:—I. Jerusalem's PRIVILEGES. The natural advantages of Jerusalem were very great. Typical of higher spiritual privileges—the goodly fellowship of the prophets; the extraordinary ministrations of special men, raised up and qualified by God, and sent to warn people from their sins, and to bid them repent and live; the personal ministry of the Son of God. The mind involuntarily turns to the privileges of England, and of London. II. Jerusalem's SINS. Ingratitude and cruelty. Illustrates the lengths which those will go in sin who cherish affection for forbidden sins, and who harden their hearts against Divine things. III. Jerusalem's DOOM. Warn against hardness of heart and contempt of the word and doctrine. (*J. J. Sargent.*) I. Men, while they are in a state of nature, are exposed to imminent danger. As transgressors of the law of God they are liable to its penalty. They overlook this danger, but it is real, and it is terrific. II. Our Lord Jesus Christ offers Himself as a shelter against this danger. If He had been a mere man He could not have been the Saviour. III. He fulfils this function with condescending tenderness. IV. He delivers His people by the substitution of His own life for theirs. V. The immediate result of application to Him is safety. VI. Men are responsible in the matter of their own salvation. (*President Davies.*) *Judgment in tears*:—Such is the affecting apostrophe in which our Lord's faithful denunciations of "Woe, woe!" terminate. Like the thunder-cloud, which, having discharged its bolt at the earth, weeps itself away—exhausts itself in a healing shower, which closes the rent it had made—so His pity commiserates, and pours itself forth over those whom, in the same breath, He had felt Himself called to rebuke. (*Dr. J. Harris*). *Christ's protection rejected*:—As much as to say, as the parent bird, when she sees some bird of prey hovering over her helpless young, gives them the signal, which nature teaches them to understand, and spreads her wings to protect them, resolved to become a prey herself rather than her tender brood; or, as she shelters them from the rain and cold, and cherishes them under her friendly feathers,—so, says the compassionate Redeemer, so, O Jerusalem! I see thy children, like heedless chickens, in the most imminent danger; I see the judgments of God hovering over them; I see the Roman eagle ready to seize them as its prey; I see storms of vengeance ready to fall upon them; and how often have I invited them to fly to me for shelter, and gave them the signal of their danger! how often have I spread the wings of My protection to cover them, and keep them warm and safe as in My bosom! but, O lamentable! O astonishing! ye would not! I was willing, but ye would not! The silly chickens, taught by nature, understand the signal of approaching danger, and immediately fly for shelter; but ye, more silly and presumptuous, would not regard My warnings; would not believe your danger, nor fly to Me for protection, though often—oh, how often—warned and invited! (*President Davies.*) *O Jerusalem*:—I. WHAT IT IS CHRIST PROPOSED TO CONFER UPON HIS PEOPLE. Christ not only willing but tenderly anxious to confer the various privileges of light and grace. 1. When our Saviour declares He would have collected them, He means He would bless them with all the privileges common to that Church, of which He was the head, and which He came to construct. 2. The moral state of the people when our Saviour stated His willingness to receive them to Himself. The readiness of Christ to receive any class of sinners. The haughty Pharisee. The infidel Sadducee. They had rejected the ministry of Christ. Divine love goes out towards these. 3. Their danger. II. THE DECLARATION of Christ respecting the means employed for our salvation—"I would have gathered you." 1. Tenderness. 2. Long-suffering. 3. A time will come when He will leave us to our sins if we continue to spurn Him from us. (*J. Dixon, D.D.*) *Christ's pity for the sinner*:—The reasons of this special sympathy. I. Christ as our Redeemer knows the dreadfulness of sin, and therefore pities those to whom it clings. II. He pities the sinner, knowing all that is involved in his final doom. III. Christ is the exponent of God's infinite love to man. IV. There is a ground for this compassion of Christ, growing out of His knowledge of the completeness of His salvation and the security of those who accept it. V. The Saviour's compassion is founded upon His knowledge of what the gospel cost Him to achieve. But if Christ's power is boundless and His pity so great, why does He not interfere to save us anyhow? God deals with man as a free agent. 1.

The loss of the soul is self-caused. 2. How great the sin of refusing the gospel. (*B. F. Palmer, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER XXIV.

VER. 1. **And Jesus went out and departed from the temple.**—*Judgment of Jerusalem and the world*:—In this chapter the accounts of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the "end" of the world are so interwoven, that it is not easy to distinguish between them. Many people have been puzzled because they could not draw the line of demarcation arbitrarily, and say where the division was. But the best way of looking at the passage is to regard it as not confused—as one narrative, not two. The destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are here considered as one event. We who live in the present dispensation are they "upon whom the ends of the world are come." The narrative is of one thing in two parts; one tale told in two chapters; one drama in two acts. This is why it looks like two accounts. And it is not difficult to see this. It may be felt to be the duty of a parent, who has an unruly, incorrigible child, to administer corporal chastisement, but he would not strike more than one blow at a time. Between each stroke there is an interval, and the parent may, after having begun, suspend the punishment; and then, when the waiting time is over, and the necessity of punishment still continuing, he may finish what had already been begun. The act of punishment is one, though distributed over two periods of time. So with God's judgments related in this chapter. The destruction of Jerusalem was not merely a prelude to the day of judgment, nor merely a type of it, as is commonly supposed, but it was a part of it. The day of judgment, which is to come upon the whole world, began with the destruction of Jerusalem; and God having struck one blow in one place, is now waiting, with sword still uplifted, to strike again and finish His work. The corresponding account in Luke tells us that God is waiting "until the times of the Gentiles be come in." The Jew was first in grace; he is likewise first in judgment. But the turn of the Gentiles is coming on. Judgment has begun at the House of God, but it stays not there. The awful drama of the end of the world has two acts, and the time in which we are living is due to a suspension of the judgment already begun. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *On the destruction of the temple*:—I. AN INSTRUCTIVE QUESTION—"See ye not all these things?"—these goodly stones, this stately fabric, this masterpiece of architecture. The question was meant as a reproof; 1. That they so much admired it. As if He had said, "Turn your eyes from hence, and see things of a superior nature; the beauty and excellence of the renewed soul; the gospel Church; the house which is eternal in the heavens, whose builder and maker is God. 2. That which they admired, they imagined He must admire also. But what are earthly temples to Him who meted out the heavens with a span, who Himself dwells in unapproachable light, and before whom the seraphim cover their feet and veil their faces? II. A SOLEMN DECLARATION—"Verily, I say unto you," &c. By this Christ may have intended to instruct His disciples—1. That though God may bear long, yet He will not bear always, with a sinful and provoking people. 2. That the most stately structures and the most splendid edifices, through the pride of their inhabitants, shall one day fall in ruins. Only God's spiritual temple will not be burnt up, nor any of the materials of it destroyed. 3. That the time was coming when God would no longer prefer one place of worship to another. 4. That the whole frame of the Jewish economy should shortly be dissolved. The substance being come, the shadows are fled. (*B. Beddome, A.M.*) *The destruction of Jerusalem seemed improbable*:—There was no outward sign of any such disaster. The indications were all against that prediction. The sunlight which, that day, glorified the towers of Jerusalem was of the common kind, only, it may be, brighter than ever. There was nothing unusual in the sight which met the eyes of the disciples. They beheld the tide of traffic ebbing and flowing along its noisy streets in the ordinary way. They knew that in the temple the priests stood ministering, just as they had done for years. Therefore Christ's words, His mournful prophecy, His pitying lament and tears must have seemed to them strange and uncalled for. And yet, although what He saw was so different from what met their vision, though He beheld desolation where they discerned nought save splendour, that difference was but the result of less than half a century's change. In the crowds then pressing

along that city's prosperous courts, there were some who did not taste of death, till they drank the cup of a worse bitterness in the day when Christ's word was all fulfilled. (*E. E. Johnson, M.A.*) *Why Jerusalem must be destroyed*:—And now there rises the question: Why did not Jesus save that city? The awful peril which He saw impending in the near future was destined to involve not the guilty alone, but the innocent as well; why then did not the Son of God avert the coming tribulation He so bitterly lamented? Why did He not do it at least for the sake of those who had shown themselves friendly to Him, the humble ones who followed Him with a sort of dumb faithfulness until the hostility of the government, which frightened the apostles, filled them also with paralyzing fear? There is no doubt that Christ was able to dispel that storm rising so black and terrible. The twelve legions of angels who were ready to save Him from capture, would, at His word, have saved Jerusalem. The myriads of the army of heaven could have turned to a retreating flight the advancing eagles of the heathen conqueror. . . . The destruction of Jerusalem belongs to the workings of that natural law in which there is, after a time, no place and no use for repentance, under which God, for some inscrutable reason, permits the innocent to suffer along with the guilty, and where no regret on the part of any one can save him from the doom of reaping precisely what the community has sown. Christ offered to the Jewish nation, as a nation, deliverance from temporal evil. There is no doubt of that. He stood ready to fulfil for them all the glorious things spoken of Zion by the prophets. Both spiritual and earthly peace lay within their reach. It was bound up in the kingdom preached and offered by Him. He promised to take them out from the realm of natural government, where fixed laws work on regardless of the cry of pain and the supplication for pity, where nothing miraculous ever interposes to avert the gathered lightning of moral retribution, where the storm of judgment breaks over the community that deserves it, even though some who are comparatively righteous must endure thereby what seems temporal wrong. He offered, I say, to redeem that Jewish world from the natural law of sin and death and inflexible justice, and lift it into the higher, supernatural realm of grace and life. But that redemption depended upon their knowing and receiving Him. And their selfishness and pride prevented them from recognizing Him. Their King and Redeemer came, but they cast Him out. They chose to be a law unto themselves. Hence that former law must have its perfect work. The hand outstretched to save the nation drifting to ruin was not grasped, and therefore that nation must whirl on and on, down the rapids and over the brink. The destruction of Jerusalem became simply a question of time. Inward corruption would sooner or later have accomplished what we are wont to regard as solely the result of external force. The fig-tree had ceased to bear fruit; and that fact was of itself a sign of the death which had already begun to work. All that was left of the glorious opportunity was the bitter consciousness that it was past. . . . Under the working of this law, the drunkard comes at last to a point where repentance is too late, and where death lies both in continued indulgence and in attempted reformation. And so with nations. The day may come to even the strongest, when on the whole it is not worth saving, when, although there are many pure patriots in it, the only thing left for it to do is to die and be blotted out of the map of the world. (*Ibid.*) *The warnings of judgment*:—The uncertainty of the day bespeaks our preparedness. When the disciples asked Christ concerning the sign of His coming, He answers them with a how, not with a when. He describes the manner, but conceals the time; such signs shall go before. He does not determine the day when the judgment shall come after. Only He cautions them, with a "Take heed, lest that day come upon you unawares: for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth" (Luke xxi. 34, 35). The bird little thinks of the snare of the fowler, nor the beast of the hunter; this fearlessly rangeth through the woods, the other merrily cuts the air: both follow their unsuspected liberty, both are lost in unprevented ruin. Against public enemies we fortify our coasts; against private thieves we bar our doors, and shall we not against the irremediable fatality of this day prepare our souls? It is favour enough that the Lord hath given us warning; the day is sudden, the warning is not sudden. The old world had the precaution of six-score years, and that (we cannot deny) was long enough; but we have had the prediction of Christ and His apostles of above fifteen hundred years' standing; besides the daily sounds of those evangelical trumpets, that tell us of that archangelical trumpet in their pulpits. When we hear the thunder, in a dark night on our beds, we fear the lightning. Our Saviour's gospel, premonishing of this day, is like thunder; if it cannot wake us from our sins, the judgment shall come upon

us like lightning, to our utter destruction. But I will thank the Lord for giving me warning. The thunder first breaks the cloud, and makes way for the lightning, yet the lightning first invades our sense. All sermons, upon this argument of the last day, are thunder-claps; yet such is the security of the world, that the sons of thunder cannot waken them, till the Father of lightning consume them. The huntsman doth not threaten the deer, or terrify him; but watches him at a stand, and shoots him. But God speaks before He shoots; takes the bow in His hand and shows it us before He puts in the arrow to wound us. (*T. Adams.*) *Christ's coming no delusion:*—The first reason why the declarations of Christ respecting the near approach of His coming, although they were not realized in their utmost sense, yet involve no error, is this—that it is an essential ingredient in the doctrine of the advent of Christ that it should be considered every moment possible, and that believers should deem it every moment probable. To have taught it so that it should have pointed to an indefinite distance would have robbed it of its ethical significance. The constant expectation of the return of Christ is verified, secondly, by the fact that Christ is constantly coming in His kingdom; it is relatively true that the history of the world is a judgment of the world, without superseding by the judicial activity of God, as already manifesting itself in the history of the development of mankind, the judgment as the concluding act of all developments. And it is here we find the foundation of the principle, that great events in history, wherein either the fulness of the blessing that is in Christ, or His severity against sin, is strikingly manifested, may be viewed as types of the last time—as a coming of Christ. To this category, so far as respects the fulness of blessing revealed by Christ, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit belongs. (*Olshausen.*) *The destruction of Jerusalem:*—I. An illustration of the instability of all earthly grandeur. II. An instance of God's punishment of sin in the present world. III. An example of the fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. IV. A proof of the abolition of the Mosaic economy. V. A cause of the dispersion of the Jews. (*G. Brooks.*)

Ver. 6. **But the end is not yet.**—*The end is not yet:*—I. So far as we have any means of judging, THE END IS NOT YET. The negative argument is that there are no conclusive indications of a speedy end, afforded either by the Word of God or the condition of the world. Such are alleged, but rest upon gratuitous assumptions. It is assumed that a certain form or pitch of moral depravation is incompatible with the continued existence of society; but we do not know how much evil is necessary to the end in question. The same is true as to the predictions of the Word of God; they may not be sure signs. Experience renders this clear; all these signs have been misapplied before. Let us look at the positive arguments in favour of the same position; that the fulfilment of Scripture is still incomplete, and will require a long time for its completion. Refer to the grand and comprehensive scale on which the Divine purposes are projected in the Scripture. The language of the Bible indicates a long continued process of change and dissolution. The spread of the gospel; the general vindication of Scriptures from doubt; to exhibit society in its normal state, and the effects of holiness as compared with sin; all will take ages. II. IT IS BETTER TO ASSUME THAT THE END IS NOT YET, THAN TO ASSUME THE CONTRARY. 1. The doubt in which Scripture leaves the day creates a presumption that it was not meant to influence our conduct by the expectation of this great event as just at hand. The expectation of a speedy end would paralyze effort, while the opposite belief invigorates it. 2. No less dissimilar is the effect of these two causes in relation to the credit and authority of Scripture. The constant failure of the predicted signs discredits Scripture. 3. The preparation for death is not secured by a belief in the approach of the great final catastrophe. If men are unprepared to die, they will be as much surprised by death as by the coming of the end. Let us prepare to die and thus prepare to live. "The end is not yet." Let us not imagine our work done. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *The magnitude of the Divine purpose indicates the end of the world as far distant:*—The natural impression made, perhaps, on all unbiassed readers is, that in the Bible there are vast beginnings, which require proportionate conclusions, even in the present life. There are germs which were never meant to be developed in the stunted shrub, but in the spreading oak. There are springs, in tracing which we cannot stop short at the brook or even at the river, but are hurried on, as if against our will, to the lake, the estuary, and the ocean. Every such reader of the Bible feels that it conducts him to the threshold of a mighty pile, and opens many doors, through which he gets a distant glimpse of long-drawn aisles, vast halls, and endless passages; and how can he believe that this glimpse is the

last that he shall see, and that the edifice itself is to be razed before he steps across the threshold? (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 7.—**For nation shall rise against nation.**—*War for those who reject peace:*—See here the woeful effects of refusing God's free offers of grace. They that would have none of the gospel of peace shall have the miseries of war. They that loathed the heavenly manna shall be hunger-starved. They that despised the only medicine of their souls shall be visited with the pestilence. They that would not suffer heart-quake shall suffer earthquake. Or, as Bradford, the martyr, expresses it, they that trembled not in hearing shall be crushed to pieces in feeling. As they heap up sin, as they treasure up wrath, as there hath been a conjuncture of offences, so there shall be of their miseries. The black horse is at the heels of the red, and the pale of the black (Rev. vi. 4). God left not Pharaoh, that sturdy rebel, till He had beaten the breath out of his body, nor will He cease pursuing men with His plagues till they throw the traitor's head over the wall. (*John Trapp.*) *War:*—The relations of Christianity to war are at first sight an extraordinary enigma. The Christian recognition of the right of war was contained in Christianity's original recognition of nations, as constituting at the same time the division and the structure of the human world. Gathering up the whole world into one communion spiritually, the new universal society yet announced its coalescence with mankind's divisions politically; it was one body of one kind, in many bodies of another kind. It gathered up into itself, not only the unions, but the chasms of the human race, all that separated as well as all that united. In some schools of thought there is a jealousy of this national sentiment, as belonging to members of the Church Catholic, as if it were a sentiment of nature which grace had obliterated. Christianity does not abolish but purify nature. It may be said that the tie of country is not inculcated in the New Testament; which, on the other hand, speaks of us as members of the Church which it contemplates extending over the whole world. Hooker says that Scripture, by leaving out, does not condemn, but only sends us back to natural law and reason. The Christian Church adopted nations with their inherent rights; took them into her enclosure. But war is one of these rights, because, under the division of mankind into distinct nations, it becomes a necessity. Questions of right and justice must arise between these independent centres. Christianity does not admit but condemns the motives which lead to war—selfish ambition, rapacity; but the condemnation of one side is the justification of the other; these very motives give the right of resistance to one side. Individuals can settle their disputes peaceably by the fact of being under government; but nations are not governed by a power above them. The aim of the nation in going to war is exactly the same as that of an individual entering a court. It is the same force in principle, only in court it is superior to all opposition; in war it is a contending force, and as such only can assert its supremacy. So far we have been dealing with wars of self defence, which by no means exhaust the whole *rationale* of war. War is caused by progress, selfish greed, the instinctive movements of nations for alteration and improvement. We must distinguish the moral effects of war and the physical. There is one side of the moral character of war in special harmony with the Christian type; death for the sake of the body to which he belongs. This consecrates war; it is elevated by sacrifice. Is, then, war to be regarded as an accident of society, which may some day be got rid of, or as something vested in it? I. It is said that the progress of society will put an end to war. But human nature consists of such varied contents that it is very difficult to say that any one principle, such as what we call progress, can control it. But if progress stops war on one side it makes it on another, and war is its instrument; nor does it provide any instrument by which nations can gain their rights. The natural remedy for war would seem to be a government of nations; this would be a universal empire, and can this be accomplished by progress? II. Are we then to look for a cessation of war from the side of Christianity. It assumes the world as it is; it does not profess to provide another world for us to live in. It is not remedial to the whole human race, but only to those who accept it. Prophecy foresees the time when nations shall beat their spears into pruning-hooks; but this applies as much to the civil governments of the world. It foresees a reign of universal love, when men shall no longer act by terror and compulsion. A kingdom of peace there will be. But Christianity only sanctions war through the medium of national society, and the hypothesis of a world at discord with itself. In her own world war would be impossible. III. Lastly, Christianity comes as the consoler of the sufferings of war. (*J. B. Mozley, D.D.*)

Ver. 12.—**The love of many shall wax cold.**—*The love of the saints destroyed by the abounding of iniquity*:—I. WHEN INIQUITY MAY BE SAID TO ABOUND. 1. When those who are set for the defence of the gospel can see its doctrines corrupted without emotion. 2. When those who live in total disregard of practical religion increase. 3. When all classes give each other countenance in crime, and provoke each other to it by example, by solicitation, and by menaces (Gen. vi. 5–7; xix. 12, 13). II. THE ABOUNDING OF INIQUITY OPERATES TO COOL THE BLOOD OF CHRISTIANS. (*Sketches.*) *Declension and backsliding in the Church*:—I. THE EXTERNAL POSITION OF THE CHURCH. Abounding iniquity in the forms of speculative error, obvious and shameful sin, direct opposition to the gospel, &c. II. THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH. The same circumstances which cause gross wickedness to abound in the world, produce coldness of love in the Church. Antediluvians, Jewish history, &c. The wickedness which abounds in the world is often the fruit of coldness in the love of the Church, and then the reaction, &c. That you may sustain no harm by the abounding of iniquity, guard your attention, affections, &c. Cherish ardent, enthusiastic love to Christ. (*A. Tucker.*) *Evil example contagious*:—Conversation with cold ones will cast a damp, and will make one cold, as Christ here intimates; there is no small danger of defection, if not of infection by such; they are notable quench-coals. This both David and Isaiah found, and therefore cried out each for himself, "Woe is me" (Psa. cxx. 5; Isa. vi. 5). There is a compulsive power in company to do as they do (Gal. ii. 14). It behoveth us, therefore, upon whom the ends of the world are come, to beware lest we suffer a decay; lest, leaving our first love, and led away with the error of the wicked, we fall from our former steadfastness (Rev. ii. 5; 2 Pet. iii. 17). The world, says Ludolfus, has been once destroyed with water for the heat of lust, and shall be again with fire for the coldness of love. Latimer saw so much lack of love to God and goodness in his time that he thought verily Doomsday was then just at hand. What would he have thought had he lived in our age, wherein it were far easier to write a book of apostates than a book of martyrs? (*John Trapp.*) *Temptations of the early Christians to apostasy*:—There was always, in the converts of Jerusalem, a strong temptation towards a relapse into Judaism; and in those disturbed times which preceded the fall, any man with Jewish blood in his veins, with the traditional Jewish temper, the ancestral beliefs, the intense love for his nation and people, must have been hard beset. Why should he, too, not choose the heroic part, and cast in his lot with the defenders of the sacred walls? Why not with his dying body make a rampart against the on-pressing Roman, rather than slip away in cowardly desertion like a traitor, leaving the glorious city to perish as it might? All patriotic instincts, all that the Jew most cherished, must have drawn the convert in that direction: it was a sore trial to have to make this choice between the Old Testament and the New. It was such a crisis as rarely happens to a man, to a society, to a nation. It broke up the old Church, the old national life. By destroying the centralized worship of the temple, and staying the immemorial sacrifices, it taught Christians to look far afield, it bade them bow down in no single shrine to worship the Father, and it sent them forth to evangelize a world lying in darkness. They learnt, by the fall of the Holy City, that the Christian faith was to be not national but cosmopolitan, and that out of the ruins of a narrower polity a larger and wider world would grow. . . . It was by endurance and self-denial of no ordinary kind that these early Jewish Christians succeeded in overcoming the danger besetting them at every turn. They endured to the end; they learned by patience to get a broader and wiser view of the true position and relation of the faith of their adoption. The sneers of the unconverted Jews, the sense that they had lost their patriotic standing-ground, the oppression and sword of their Roman masters—these were the bitter draughts which refreshed their souls, and nerved them for independence in a larger sphere of life. By these they not only saved their souls, but ennobled their views and aims, till they were able to enter fully into the new conditions of the faith of Christ, and thereby take an active part in the outward movements of a missionary church. (*Dean Kitchen.*) *Iniquity the cause of unbelief*:—We are not to expect that apostates will own that iniquity is the cause of *their* apostasy. They have always assigned other causes of it, which in their opinion clears them from all suspicion of unjust prejudice or prevention. And these are (1) the immoral and unexemplary lives of the clergy; and (2) the irrational system of Christianity. (*Bishop Warburton.*) *Rarity of steadfastness*:—It is but a "he," a single man, that holdeth out, when "many" lose their love and therewith their reward. Ecebolus, Æneas, Sylvius, Baldwin, Pendleton, Shaxton, and many others, set forth gallantly, but tired ere

they came to their journey's end. Like the Galli Insubres, they showed all their valour in the first encounter. Like Charles VIII. of France, of whom Guicciarden notes, that in his expedition to Naples he came into the field like thunder and lightning but went out like a snuff. Like Mandrobulus in Lucian, who, the first year offered gold to his gods, the second year silver, the third nothing. Or, lastly, like the lions of Syria which, as Aristotle reports, bring forth five whelps, next time four, next three, and so on, till at length they become barren. So apostates come at last to nothing, and therefore must look for nothing better than to be cast off for ever: when they that hold out and hold on their way, passing from strength to strength, from faith to faith, &c., shall be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength; yea, they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Caleb was not discouraged by the giants, and therefore had Hebron, the place of the giants: so those that hold out in the way of heaven shall be sure to have heaven. Thomas San Paulius, at Paris, a young man of eighteen years, being in the fire, was plucked up again upon the gibbet, and asked whether he would turn. To whom he said, That he was in his way towards God, and therefore desired them to let him go. That merchant of Paris, his case was nothing so comfortable, who, for jesting at the friars, was by them condemned to be hanged; but he, to save his life, was content to recant, and so he did. The friars, hearing of his recantation, commended him, saying, If he continued so he should be saved; and so, calling upon the officers, caused them to make haste to the gallows to hang him up, while he was yet in a good way, said they, lest he fall again. (*John Trapp.*) *The honour of endurance*:—There lies a ship in the stream. It is beautiful in all its lines. It has swung out from the pier and is lying at anchor yonder; and men, as they cross the river on the ferry-boats, stand and look at it and admire it; and it deserves admiration. But it has never been out of port: there it stands, green, new, untried; and yet everybody thinks it is beautiful. It is like childhood, which everybody thinks is beautiful, or ought to be. There comes up the bay, and is making towards the navy-yard, another ship. It is an old man-of-war. It has been in both oceans, and has been round the world many times. It has given and taken thunder-blows under the flag of its country. It is the old *Constitution* we will suppose. She anchors at the navy-yard. See how men throng the cars and go to the navy-yard to get a sight of her! See how the sailors stand upon the deck and gaze upon her! Some of them, perchance, have been in her, and to them she is thrice handsomer than any new vessel. This old war-beaten ship, that carries the memory of many memorable campaigns, lies there; and they look at its breached bow, its shattered rigging, its coarse and rude lines, its dingy sides, which seem long since to have parted company with paint; and every one of them feels, if he is a true patriot, "God bless you, old thing! God bless you!" (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Not to fail at the end of the Christian life*:—When Diogenes had spent the greater part of his life in observing the most extreme and scrupulous self-denial, and was now verging on ninety years of age, one of his friends recommended him to indulge himself a little. "What!" said he, "would you have me quit the race close by the goal?"

Ver. 14. **And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness.**—*The gospel of the kingdom*:—I. "GOSPEL"—good news, God spell—the information God has to tell us. An epitome of the news. Familiarity with the message takes aways its edge, and blunts its impressions. II. It is not merely a gospel, good news, but a gospel OF SOMETHING VERY SPECIFIC—of a kingdom. This kingdom is composed first of moral and next of personal elements—"The kingdom of God is not," &c. Who are the personal subjects of this kingdom? Men of every rank and every clime. The gospel is not so cramped as we sometimes think. III. This kingdom, thus composed, SHALL OVERFLOW ALL KINGDOMS. Heathendom is gradually dying out over all the world. Mahometanism is almost gone; the crescent wanes over all the earth, &c. The gospel shall be preached to all the world as a *witness*. Not to convert all nations, &c. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The controlling influence of the gospel*:—I. The kingdom of Christ, as a kingdom of control, set up in the hearts of His followers. 1. It controls the opinions. They who are under this kingdom are obliged to believe all the truths of the Bible. 2. It controls the will. God makes it criminal to choose the evil and refuse the good. 3. It controls the belief of mankind. The subjects of this kingdom are called upon to trust in Christ, and in Him only, for salvation. 4. It controls the affections—"Thou shalt love," &c. It controls the temper, pride, and all those feelings which are akin to it. II. THERE IS INFINITE MERCY IN SUCH CONTROL. 1. Without it the

opinions of mankind have ever been tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. 2. There is mercy in a control being exercised over the will. Man is in a wilderness of sin, &c. 3. Were it not for this, every man might form a system of belief for himself, &c. 4. Man's affections are collected to one point. III. The gospel shall be preached for A WITNESS. Of human depravity. Of the method of reconciliation with God, &c. (*R. Watson.*) *The gospel of the kingdom:*—I. The SUBJECT of the text. The gospel. The gospel of the kingdom. II. The MODE of its communication. The gospel of the kingdom is to be "preached." It must be preached freely, plainly, affectionately, faithfully. III. The EXTENT of its diffusion. The whole world stands in need of it. The gospel is the only remedy for it. It is expressly designed for all. IV. The great END OF ITS PUBLICATION. As a witness. It shall witness to man's mind, state, &c. 1. The responsibility of having the gospel preached to us. 2. Our duty to labour for its diffusion among those who possess it not. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) I. The King is our Lord Jesus Christ. II. The seat of this kingdom is the soul. III. The spirit of this kingdom is wise and beneficent and holy. Every kingdom has its peculiar character. IV. The progress of His kingdom is unostentatious; irresistible, yet noiseless, like many of the mightier forces in nature. IV. The boundaries of His kingdom are the boundaries of the dwellings of human kind. 1. Submit to Christ as a King. 2. Seek the extension of His kingdom by personal exertions, by pecuniary contributions, by prayer. (*Anon.*) *The gospel a witness:*—1. That there are ends to be answered by the publication of the gospel, over and above the gathering in of a remnant from the mass of human kind. The statement is simply that the gospel is to be preached for a witness. 2. We are bound to ascertain the nature of this witness, in order that we may understand the responsibleness laid on all who ever heard the gospel, and the ends which are answered by its publication. 3. You are sufficiently acquainted with the nature of the gospel to regard it as an authoritative account of all that is benevolent, and all that is awful in Deity. 4. It is not an uncertain and unaccredited witness, but one which carries with it its credentials in all its marchings over the face of the globe. 5. The witness of the gospel hereafter. The gospel is now a witness to warn and direct; hereafter it will accuse and condemn. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The universal witness:*—The preaching of the gospel throughout the world testifies—1. To the unchanging mercy of God. He is the same as He was before the flood—would have been warned of the end of their evil courses. Men shall be without excuse. 2. To the character and mission of Christ. Men who accept the gospel shall prove that He is the Saviour. 3. To the invincible hostility of men. They shall have in their own characters a vindication of God's past judgments. *Universal adaptation of the gospel to men's needs:*—The gospel is a plant which is not affected by earthly changes. It is the same in the temperate as in the torrid zone, and as in the frigid. It does not seem to be scorched by heat, or benumbed by cold. Age does not diminish the freshness of its bloom; soil does not affect its nature; climate does not modify its peculiar properties. Among the frost-bound latitudes of North America, and the burning sands of Africa, or the fertile plains of India, we find it still shooting up the same plant of renown, the same vine of the Lord's right-hand planting, the same "tree of life," raised up from the beginning of time, "whose leaves were for the healing of the nations," and under which all kindreds, and tribes, and tongues, and people shall one day rejoice, when privileged to take shelter under its all-covering shade, and draw refreshing nourishment from its perennial fruits. (*Dr. Duff.*) *Vitality of the gospel:*—See what vitality the gospel has! Plunge her under the wave, and she rises the purer from her washing; thrust her in the fire, and she comes out the more bright for her burning; cut her in sunder, and each piece shall make another church; behead her, and like the hydra of old, she shall have a hundred heads for every one you cut away. She cannot die, she must live; for she has the power of God within her. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 15–19. **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation.**—*The great judgment:*—The prophecy was by no means exhausted by what happened to Jerusalem. Though it begins there, it does not stop there. History repeats itself. 1. Were the last days of Jerusalem calamitous days, times of great tribulation, violence, and war—so will it be at the ending period of the present world. 2. Did Jerusalem's day of judgment come on in a seemingly natural course of things—so also will it be at the coming of the great day. It will have much less of the immediately supernatural than we imagine. 3. Were those last days of the old

economy days of abounding falsehood and deception — the same is to occur again. 4. The zealots in the days of Jerusalem's troubles would by no means believe what was before them, or what wickedness they were enacting in the name of truth. They relied on their covenant privileges. So will it be in the end. 5. We are not left without consolation and hope. There was an elect who escaped the destruction when Jerusalem fell. Jesus will save His own in the day of doom. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

Ver. 20. **Not in the winter.**—*Winter and how to meet it*:—The winter season is especially full of temptation, because of the long evenings allowing such full swing for evil indulgences. You can hardly expect a young man to go into his room and sit there from seven to eleven o'clock in the evening, reading Motley's "Dutch Republic" or John Foster's Essays. It would be a very beautiful thing for him to do, but he will not do it. Then the winter has especial temptations in the fact that many homes are peculiarly unattractive at this season. In the summer months the young man can sit out on the steps, or he can have a bouquet in the vase on the mantel, or, the evenings being so short, soon after gaslight he wants to retire, anyhow. But there are many parents who do not understand how to make the long winter evenings arractive to their children. *A good use of winter nights*:—Employ these long nights of December, January, and February in high pursuits, in intelligent socialities, in innocent amusements, in Christian work. Do not waste this winter, for soon you will have seen your last snow shower and have gone up into the companionship of Him Whose raiment is white as snow, whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten it. For all Christian hearts the winter nights of earth will end in the June morning of heaven. The river of life from under the throne never freezes over. The foliage of life's tree is never frost-bitten. The festivities, the hilarities, the family greetings of earthly Christmas times will give way to larger reunion and brighter lights and sweeter garlands and mightier joy in the great holiday of heaven! (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Winter dissipation*:—This season is not only a test of one's physical endurance, but in our great cities is a test of moral character. A vast number of people have by one winter of dissipation been destroyed and for ever. Seated in our homes on some stormy night, the winds howling outside, we imagine the shipping helplessly driven on the coast, but any winter night, if our ears were good enough, we could hear the crash of a thousand moral shipwrecks. There are many people who come to our city on the 1st of September who will be blasted by the 1st of March. At this season of the year temptations are especially rampant. Now that the long winter evenings have come there are many who will employ them in high pursuits, in intellectual socialities, in Christian work, in the strengthening and ennobling of moral character, and this winter to many of you will be the brightest and the best in all of your lives, and in anticipation I congratulate you. But to others it may not have such effect, and I charge you, my beloved, look out where you spend your winter nights. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 23–26. **Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ.**—I. Let us settle what we really want in life, and we may safely shut our ears to many counsellors. II. Let us learn more and more of the true Christ, and we shall not be led astray by false Christs. III. Let us give ourselves to earnest practical living, and not gape after wonders. IV. Let us not think that some other Christ is needed when we are surrounded by great and unwonted troubles. (*Anon.*) *The glory of the coming of Christ*:—The coming of Christ will be—I. Preceded by frequent delusive rumours. II. A self-evident manifestation. III. A time of judgment. IV. A time of great distress of nations. V. "With power and great glory." VI. For the salvation of the elect. (*Anon.*) I. The Christian dispensation is disturbed by attempts of impostors to delude the unwary. II. These attempts at imposture are accompanied by credentials likely to deceive many. III. There is in our possession a test sufficient to unmask all pretenders. (*Anon.*) *Forewarned*:—Our Lord forewarns—I. His own people of the danger of being led astray. II. Of the manner of His coming—sudden, unmistakable. III. Sinners of the certainty of judgment. Do we heed the warnings? Do we live as if we gave attention to them? (*Anon.*) *Christ's advent not restricted*:—Take as an example of the twilight condition in which the Christian world stands to-day, the different opinions that its members have concerning the Lord's second coming. Some say He came in judgment when the Roman army encompassed and subdued Jerusalem. "Lo! Christ was there;" and so He was, in that Divine Word of His which then and thus

became visibly true. Others affirm that He came in the descent of the Holy Ghost; and so He certainly did, and by that Spirit He still abides and works here on earth, remaining with and in His Church always even unto the end of the world. Yes. Christ is here as well as there, in this temple as well as in that where the first disciples were gathered. Yet another voice says, "The Redeemer comes in every signal manifestation of spiritual life, in each great reformation and revival of faith, in each social uplifting of the people to holier desires and to a better life. In all of these Christ is, no doubt, present. By and in them He is evermore coming. And He comes, moreover, to each individual soul at baptism, at conversion, and in the Holy Communion. He comes into the secret closet of prayer and meditation. He comes to every open heart, and outside the closed door of others He stands, and knocks, and waits. Blessed truths are these, all of them. Christ does come by many paths to help the needy, and He comes with power. But no one of these comings is exclusive of the others. We are not to believe that Christ is altogether "here" or "there," that His presence is entirely restricted to any single one of the many ways by which He has promised to bestow the blessings of His risen life. And all of these comings put together should not exclude from our minds the belief or the constant thought of that other coming, which is to be not as a combination or succession of separate star-gleams, but as the lightning, a body of glory covering the whole world, and reaching at once from the east even unto the west. (*E. E. Johnson, M.A.*).

Ver. 27. **For as the lightning.**—*The last conflagration:*—I. Christ's advent shall be SUDDEN. Unexpected by the masses; like the flash that leaps from the bosom of the black cloud, sweeps through the sky, and completes its journey in an instant. II. Christ's advent will be with INTENSE AND VIVID SPLENDOUR. The lightning fills the whole world; leaps from the east, and finds its lair only in the remote and distant west. When the searching lightning of that day shall come it will penetrate the cell of the captive, &c. What an arrest will take place. The world will be going on when Christ comes, as it does this moment. There will BE SIGNS, AND SYMPTOMS, AND PREMONITORY WARNINGS OF CHRIST'S ADVENT. 1. Some will say, on seeing them, "The whole thing can be explained on the principles of natural science," &c. It may be so; but certainly these scientific objectors seem to be the successors of a class who are a sign of the times, while they say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" &c. 2. Others will meet all statements on the subject with "Wishes it may not be true," &c. 3. God's own people will say, "Come, Lord Jesus; we have been looking for Thee," &c. 4. The testimony of God's Word as to the accompaniments of this day. 5. What is the lesson from all this? "What manner of persons," &c. 6. Seek to promote things that will survive the last fire. 7. The prospect of a dissolving world is a more practical motive force than the prospect of death. This is the apostolic motive power. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*). *Duty to be done in time of judgment:*—About sixty years ago, there was in America a universal superstition—not an enlightened belief—that the world was about to close. They believed that the world was about to end, because a total eclipse of the sun took place at noonday. There was all the darkness and the gloom of midnight. It happened that the Congress of the United States was assembled at this hour; half the members of the Congress believed that that dense night, caused by a total eclipse of the sun, was really the darkness that preceded the ushering in the judgment and another state and world. They were in great alarm, and two or three of the most agitated got up at once, and moved that the Congress do adjourn. There was a panic. In the midst of the panic, and while some were proposing an adjournment, an old and venerable Puritan, who had learned noble lessons from the Puritans of England, the salt of the country at that time, rose up and said, "Mr. Chairman, we are told that our duties are always imminent, that they are always obligatory. Some in this house are afraid that the last day is come; it may be they are right; I have some suspicion they are so; but as our duties never cease, instead of moving that the house adjourn, as we cannot see in this darkness to do business, I move that the candles be brought in, and that we proceed to the order of the day." That man spoke like a Christian, and he lived like a Christian. And may we be found going on with the orders of the day when the light of the last day shall flash upon this world. (*Ibid.*) *The coming of the Son of Man:*—The Rev. Edward Irving was once preaching at Perth. The text was taken from Matthew XXIV., regarding the coming of the Son of Man. While he was engaged in unfolding his subject, from out of a dark cloud which obscured the

church, there came forth a bright blaze of lightning and a crash of thunder. There was deep stillness in the audience. The preacher paused; and from the stillness and the gloom, his powerful voice, clothed with increased solemnity, pronounced these words: "For as the lightning cometh out of the earth, and shineth even unto the west; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." *Christ's second coming:*—Here are two opposite yet ever-present dangers. One is of fancying that our Saviour and our salvation are to be found in some extraordinary out-of-the-way fashion of religious manifestation: "Behold he is in the desert." The other danger is that we shall fancy that our Saviour and our salvation are to be found in particular states of our own interior feeling: "Behold he is in the secret chambers." The first was superstition; this is fanaticism. I. BOTH CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES SPEAK REPEATEDLY OF A SECOND COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN SUCH A SENSE AS FORBIDS US TO CONFOUND THE SECOND WITH THE FIRST. The two are put entirely apart in time, though they are internally and morally connected with each other; the one preparing the way for the other, and each being in fact fragmentary and unintelligible without the other. II. THAT COMING IS PERSONAL AND LITERAL. We may call signal social revolutions, reforms in government, the emancipation of slaves, or great accessions of knowledge or charity, new comings of Christ. The figure is intelligible; but they are not comings of Him. They may be comings of the impersonal power and principles of His religion—partial blessings reminding us of the one great blessing that includes them all; but He is to come. "Ye shall see the Son of Man( not His ideas, but Him) coming in power and great glory." Nor will it do to tamper with Holy Scripture by such a theory of interpretation as that His coming means our going. The death or departure of the individual is one thing; the Bible often mentions that, meaning just what it says. The Lord's coming is another. III. THIS GREAT COMING IS TO BE CONNECTED WITH A SEPARATION OF THE GOOD FROM THE BAD, THE BELIEVERS FROM THE DENIERS, THE SPIRITUALLY ALIVE FROM THE SPIRITUALLY DEAD. IV. THERE IS, HOWEVER, SOME REFERENCE TO A KIND OF COMING OF CHRIST WHICH WAS TO TAKE PLACE IN THE LIFETIME OF THE GENERATION THAT WAS ON THE STAGE WHILE THE SAVIOUR WAS SPEAKING. V. INSPIRED WRITERS, APOSTLES, SIGNIFY THEIR EXPECTATION THAT CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT WOULD TAKE PLACE DURING THEIR OWN NATURAL LIFE. Were they mistaken, and mistaken teachers of others? A vast amount of ingenious effort has been made to break the force of this objection without sacrificing the infallibility of the record. For the most part it has failed by taking the purely external or philological method, and without sounding spiritually the depths of the Evangelic purpose. Let us honestly take the language of honest men in its ordinary acceptation. What, then, shall we say? All difficulties are cleared by the following proposition, which is reasonable and reverential: The purpose of revelation, in this matter, was to create in Christians, not a belief that Christ would come at any particular hour in history, but a belief that He is always at hand, and that all Christians should at all times and in all places be ready, as men that stand with their lamps trimmed and burning, to meet Him personally. The date of the event was no part of the Divine communication. In proportion as we rise, in thought, toward the immensity of the life of God, and have "the mind of the Spirit," the whole period of history shrinks, great distances dwindle, epochs are pressed together, and "a thousand years are as one day." Besides, the highest authority in modern physical science, in astronomy, and geology, and chemistry, harmonizes singularly enough, as to the issue, with the Apostolic language. It concludes that the machinery of the material universe is wasting, its movements are slackening, its balance is slowly loosening, and that a general catastrophe is inevitable. The sneer of the scientific sceptic of the last century is silenced by the science of to-day. We may say that in the Bible predictions generally, borrowing a phrase from the fine arts, what we may call historical perspective is lost sight of. We are not told at what intervals from each other, or always in just what order, these majestic events, by which eternity seems to open down into time, shall follow on. Chronology is not the object. The facts are what we are to know, and receive, and feed upon in our hearts by faith. The moment we begin to try our petty arithmetic on them we miss the mark, and lose our way. We all know that, even with ourselves, the moments of tremendous peril, when awful events are casting their colossal shadows about us, are just the time when the ordinary measure of succession drops out of sight. We look across the great tract and see other great conjunctions, as if they were nigh at hand. Christ Jesus is not enclosed in time, but time is all in Him. (*Bishop Huntington*). *Christ's second coming a revelation:*—The essential circumstance in this parable on

analogy is not so much the suddenness of the splendour that breaks forth from the cloud, as the wide-reaching and supernatural illumination and revelation which come with it. It annihilates all the darkness of the night and of the storm. Each of all the hidden objects stands out clearly manifest. The daylight comes so slowly that we seldom think of its revealing power. Even when we pause to watch its increase, the world has ample time to grow into its old look of naturalness without any shock to us; and, ere the sun has fully risen and disclosed clearly to our sight the familiar objects around us, we have already well-nigh forgotten that the night ever hid them. But it is not so when the lightning comes. That has no twilight. Its dawn is its fullest day. It transfigures the world at once. It divides the light from the darkness somewhat as we imagine God did at the beginning—separating them perfectly, and leaving no neutral ground between them. (*E. E. Johnson, M.A.*)

Ver. 28. **For wherever the carcase is.**—*The carcase and the vultures:*—Our Lord says, wherever there is a rotting, dead society, a carcase hopelessly corrupt and evil, down upon it, as if drawn by some unerring attraction, will come the angel, the vulture of the Divine judgment. There are many "comings of the Lord" which on a smaller scale have embodied the same principles as shall be displayed in world-wide awfulness at the last judgment. I. The first thing in these words is THAT THEY ARE TO US A REVELATION OF A LAW WHICH OPERATES WITH UNERRING CERTAINTY THROUGH ALL THE COURSE OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY. God can tell when evil has become incurable, when the man or country has become a "carcase." There may be flickerings of life unseen by our eyes. So long as there is possibility of amendment, "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily." II. We have here A LAW WHICH SHALL HAVE A FAR MORE TREMENDOUS ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE FUTURE. These days proclaim "*the* day of the Lord." In the prophecies both of the Old and New Testament the universal judgment is seen gleaming through the nearer partial judgments. That judgment is to be the destruction of opposing forces, the sweeping away of the carrion and moral evil. There are many temptations to put the "day of the Lord" in the background; such suppression is unfaithfulness. III. That this is a law which need never touch you, nor need you know about it except by the hearing of the ear. It is told us that we may escape it. Take Christ for your Saviour and you shall have a refuge from the vultures. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Suppression of retributive warnings:*—Such suppression is unfaithfulness. Surely if we preachers believe that tremendous truth, we are bound to speak. It is cruel kindness to be silent. If a traveller is about plunging into some gloomy jungle infested by wild beasts, he is a friend who sits by the wayside to warn him of his danger. Surely you would not call a signalman unfeeling because he held out a red lamp when he knew that just round the curve beyond his cabin, the rails were up, and that any train that reached the place would go over in horrid ruin; and surely that preaching is not justly charged with harshness which rings out the wholesome proclamation of a day of judgment when we shall give each account of ourselves to the Divine-human Judge. (*Ibid.*) *Retribution operative in delay:*—Now that is the law that has been working from the beginning, working as well in regard of the long delays as in regard of the swift execution. There is another metaphor, in the Old Testament, that puts the same idea in a very striking form. It speaks about God's "awakening," as if His judgment slumbered. All round that dial there the hand goes creeping, creeping, creeping slowly, but when it comes to the appointed line, then the bell strikes. And so years and centuries go by, all chance of recovery departs, and then the crash! The ice palace, built upon the frozen blocks, stands for a while, but when the spring thaws come it breaks up. *The sanitary order of human life:*—You know how in Eastern lands, if any beast of burden falls and dies, though the moment before the whole horizon may have been clear, with not a bird in sight, a stream of vultures suddenly appears to wrangle over the unexpected feast. You know how on any tropical ocean, if a carcase be thrown overboard, though at the moment there may not be a speck in the sky, the albatross and other birds of mighty wing appear as if by magic, and scold and fight over the welcome repast. Our Lord, then applies this familiar image of the carcase and the birds of prey to the judicial and retributive forces of human history, and intends to illustrate some law or principle by which they are governed. I. A certain order underlies the events of human history. Catastrophes do not come by chance, or spring from caprice. The effect always has a cause. Judgment only follows on the heels of offence. II. This order is a sanitary and beneficent order. Unconsumed, the carcase would but rot and fester and infect the air. All the birds that prey on

carrion are scavenger birds, and we owe them nothing short of health and life, for a world without scavengers would soon become a stinking sepulchre. III. All the strifes and discords of time are parts of that great conflict between good and evil in which the ultimate defeat of evil is assured. The calamities and miseries to which men lie open, are intended to remove only that which must be removed if we are to live in health and peace. Wherever there is evil, there also is good, to replace the evil as well as to overcome and destroy it. What greater consolation than to know that the very miseries of men are messengers of the Divine mercy, come to give health and life rather than to destroy, since they come only to destroy that which is fatal to life and health. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *Inner reading of history*:—If only we have eyes to read it aright, to see the Divine will and the Divine laws at work in it, the history of the Kings of England is just as instructive to us as the history of the Kings of Israel, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire as the siege and capture of Jerusalem, the reformation wrought by Luther as the revival of religion under Hezekiah, the French Revolution as the rupture between the ten Hebrew tribes and the two. No historical event is without its religious lesson for us, if only we can trace it to its moral cause; no human life, if only we can read its illustrations of that law-abiding Providence which watches over us as carefully as it did over the Jews, and shapes our rough-hewed ends for us as it shaped theirs. (*Ibid.*) *The need for scavengers*:—That the vultures gather wheresoever the carcase is, and gather to consume it, is clearly for the health of the world; for, unconsumed, the carcase would but rot and fester, and infect the air; by its infection turning the very breath of life into a minister of death. All the birds that prey on carrion are scavenger birds. Most of the scavengers, from the vulture of the East down to the flies which cleanse our shops and rooms from every morsel of corruption are a little loathsome to us: yet how much we owe them! We owe them nothing short of health and life. A world without scavengers would soon become a stinking sepulchre. (*Ibid.*) *Speedy destruction of carcases*:—On the highway, the ass, mule, or camel, which has fallen under its burden, and is no longer able to rise, is unloaded by its master, its saddle, halter, and even its shoes are taken off, and it is scarcely dead when its skin, too, is hastily removed to be sold to a tanner; the carcase is left where it fell; and as the traveller passes by upon the narrow road his horse is frightened, not more by the repulsive scent and sight, than by the eagles, vultures, ravens, crows, and magpies, that take wing on his approach, or continue to dispute the prey with hungry dogs. When night comes on, however, the winged devourers withdraw, and give place to sneaking jackals and foxes, and to the hyenas and wolves, which now warily quit their lairs, and hasten to secure a share of the feast. (*Van Lennep.*)

Vers. 29–34. **Immediately after the tribulation of these days shall the sun be darkened.**—*The manifestation of Christ in judgment*:—I. There will be a manifestation of Christ in truth and UNMISTAKABLE REALITY. Till the moment of His coming, it will be possible to deceive. False prophets were the bane of the old dispensation; false Christs are the bane of the new. Then He will stand before men as the true Messiah. "I am the truth" will be condemnation for millions in that day. II. Christ will be manifested in UNIVERSALITY. At present He is here and there as men carry the message. His coming then shall be like the lightning flash, which penetrates everywhere, awfully beautiful, irresistibly destructive, and fearfully silent. III. The AWFUL MAJESTY in which He will appear. This is set forth in the appalling changes that will come over the material heavens. IV. Christ will be manifested as IN SEARCH OF HIS OWN. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," not secretly as before; but His angels shall conspicuously gather together the dead. (*E. T. Marshall.*) *The sign of the Son of Man*:—The Jews, with carnal spirit, were continually saying to Jesus, "Master, we would see a sign from Thee." They were refused. But to His people He does give signs—distinct, striking, and unmistakable—signs which constitute at once the seal and epitome of the truths for which they stand. I. THE SIGN OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION. "This shall be a sign unto you," &c. (Luke ii. 12). A most disappointing sign this must have been to the shepherds, if they shared the current expectation of a regal and triumphant Messiah. A sign of exquisite tenderness and attractiveness to us. II. The sign of Christ's GLORY. Our Lord, in answer to the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming," &c., sketches a solemn prophetic picture of the events that are to precede it—the apostasies, and wars, and famines, and tribula-

tions—and then finishes with this as the final omen, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens." Vast conjecture and speculation have been awakened as to the nature of this sign. The many descriptions of Christ's coming given in Scripture agree in one particular, that He comes in clouds. Examine this sign, and seek to interpret it. . . . As in the sign of Christ's first coming there were marks of glory accompanying the marks of humiliation, so in the sign of His second coming there will be marks of His humiliation accompanying the marks of His glory. Both signs are true, they shine on the pages of prophecy as we read, like the dazzling lenses of a revolving lighthouse, first one and then the other; now the glory and now the humiliation; now the suffering and now the conquest. The one has been fulfilled. Glory, then, in the accomplishment of the one. Watch for the appearing of the other. "What I say unto you I say unto all—Watch." (*A. J. Gordon.*) *The last congregation*:—I. The persons of whom that assembly will be composed. II. The process by which that assembly will be collected. III. The manner in which that assembly will be arranged. Only two classes will be recognized. The last division of the assembly will be public and visible. How momentous the events which that division has created and displayed! IV. The decision which on it will be pronounced. The principles by which the decision will be guided. The consequences which the decision will involve. (*J. Parsons.*) *Tokens of perdition*:—I. Vicious habits. II. A resort to infidelity or universalism to relieve the mind from presentiments of a judgment to come. III. A false hope and a false profession. IV. The approach of age without religion. V. Carnal security. VI. Satisfaction with worldly good. VII. A loose and presumptuous confidence in God's mercy. VIII. Increasing hardness of heart. IX. Neglect of prayer and the means of grace. X. The rejection of many calls. How many of these marks of death do you find upon yourself? (*E. Griffin, D.D.*) *The kingdom comes in crises of judgment*:—The kingdom of God is *within* you, but the crises of judgment are periodical and *outward*. The kingdom is within the individual—the kingdom of habit, which eludes observation; silently formed day by day, growing as seed grows in the earth, full of slow, secret developments; the kingdom of impressions received—no change on the face showing the inner working; the kingdom of life discipline—lessons quietly, privately learned—experiences which only you know of laid to heart—memories hoarded; the kingdom of prayer, aspiration, spiritual communion, into which you can enter alone, none knowing how or when you pray—the Divine Host coming in silently, "without observation." It comes also, this spiritual kingdom, to nations, "without observation;" slowly beneath its invisible sway slavery disappears; the place of woman is secured; human law brought into nearer affinity with Divine law; the brotherhood of man gradually acknowledged, in theory, at least; even the horror of war alleviated. Thus slowly, without observation, do the kingdoms of the world tend to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. But, oh, how much remains to be done! Philosophers talk of the military barbarous phase giving place to the industrial phase in civilization, and we enter the Inventions Exhibition, 1885—that late product of the nineteenth century—and the first things which meet our gaze are certain awful cannons and war implements for the destruction of human life, and the unfraternal torture of human beings. Cold steel, gunpowder, and the big battalions have it all their own way in a world which laughs at arbitration, sneers at right, and still swears by Christ. And now see how the judgment crises of this kingdom *within* work themselves *out*, and are as startling and as terrible as any appearance of the Son of Man in the clouds, surrounded by His angelic heralds of judgment. Every time the measure of a nation's iniquity is full, there comes such a judgment crisis. It came to Jerusalem when the armies of Vespasian, in the year 70, trampled out the heartless and effete ecclesiastical system of the old Judaism. It came to Rome when the unparalleled corruption of the Cæsars had spread to the provinces, and in due time the empire went to pieces, under the weakness of its head, and was broken up to be re-constituted in the Christian nations of modern Europe. It came to England when the Reformation stamped the authority of the Pope out of the kingdom. It came again when huge popular oppression and political wrong nerved the people to strike for justice in the execution of an English king. It came to France after centuries of organized selfishness and robbery of the poor by the rich, in the French Revolution and Reign of Terror, 1793. It came again with the overthrow of an adventurer, who in our time rose to power by treachery and massacre, and wielded the sceptre of France for more than twenty years until the judgment fell upon him at Sedan and hurled him from the throne. People were taken in by

Napoleon III. and the glitter of his empire. They thought that he at all events had outdone Providence. But neither he nor any one else can do that. One Frenchman at least saw clear—stood firm for the permanence of spiritual principle, and waited for the kingdom of God which cometh not with observation. That was Victor Hugo. Nothing could induce him to enter France whilst Antichrist was on the throne. The day after Sedan he presented himself at the ticket-office in Brussels, and left that night for Paris. (*H. R. Haweis, M.A.*)

Ver. 35. **But My words shall not pass away.**—*The words of Christ*:—The characteristics of our Lord's words. 1. The authority which speaks in them. 2. Their elevation. 3. Their awful depth. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The permanency of Christ's teaching*:—1. The words of Christ are abiding because of their special inspiration. His words cannot die by reason of the living power that is in them. 2. The teachings of Jesus have a great and an enduring task to perform. The gospel has the "power of an endless life" which the work before it demands. Great things and great ends require great and large preparation. The Niagara Falls is one, if not the greatest, of the wonders of the world; but the river St. Lawrence was twenty-seven thousand years making the deep cutting in the rock which forms the cataract. The great task before the gospel, of bringing the light of truth to every heart, must be accomplished. The efforts of the Church must not be relaxed until this end has been attained. Whatever changes are woven into the nature of things the continuation of gospel teaching is inevitable. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever." 3. As the gospel has survived the revolutions of more than eighteen centuries, so it will survive those yet to come. 4. The impression which the words of Jesus make on the souls of the redeemed is another proof that they shall not pass away. When the world has passed away, these words will abide in the hearts of men who have believed in Christ. Every portion of the gospel we learn and feel and practice will remain with us for ever. (*The Weekly Pulpit.*) *The transient and the permanent*:—"Heaven and earth shall pass away." I. IT NEEDS SOME THOUGHTFULNESS TO APPREHEND THE TRANSIENT CHARACTER OF THESE GREAT OBJECTS OF OUR INTEREST. 1. The forms of life and activity with which we are familiar pass away. The morning light, buds, seasons, living creatures, soon die. 2. If we extend our vision and take within its sweep not only the life of the individual, but the course of the ages, and the history of the world. These pass away. II. AND YET IN ALL THIS THERE IS PERMANENCE. The form passes, but the material remains. Perhaps even the material may be our name for the unknown nothing, and there remains only the law, only the type, only the order, which unceasingly lives. Thus the form of the living thing disappears, but life remains; and that vegetable life which we saw so busy and so plentiful in forms of flower and leaf and tree, shall next year bring forth new flowers and put out fresh leaves; and when the trees that to-day stand erect, monarchs of the forest, shall, fallen prone, be slowly turning into the fuel of future ages, that same life shall yet be lifting up new pillars of the forest, tall and stately, beautiful and strong, over which new generations of branches and leaves shall wave beneath the sunshine and be swayed by the breezes of the future years. And so is it with the life of the animal and man. This animal, this man, may perish, but man remain. And the human race has not vanished. Babylon, Egypt, and ancient Greece and Rome have disappeared, but man remains, in his essential nature unchanged. The moods of the sensitive nature pass away and follow each other like the shadows on the mountain-side when the fleecy clouds are floating o'er the sky on a summer noon. And yet there is something that remains. There is the subject of these sensations; there is that element which is always present in these conscious states which knows itself and them, and the differences between each state, and the resemblances and the differences between itself and them, and the combination of all into one homogeneous whole. There is something permanent, something that lasts. You cannot destroy, you cannot waste it, you cannot, indeed, change it. It is itself—itself always—eternal, I believe, as the eternal God. Or we might illustrate it again in relation to thoughts, to ideas, to concepts; to those class cognitions of the mind which result from the comparison and the abstract classification of states of sensation, of memory, of judgment. We thus gain ideas—the good, the beautiful, the true, the evil, the human, the Divine. The individual states, the individual acts, the individual persons who, by these acts, produce these states—all these may vanish. They may be only a memory; or even grow in memory dim, and at last fade away from the last reminiscence of the soul; but the ideas we have formed—that abstract beauty, goodness,

humanity, or divineness—these remain. Their light will play about other forms; their relations dwell within the caverns of our nature and fill them with music, or make them hideous with discord. III. THUS THE WORDS OF CHRIST SEEM ONLY TO BE THE FOLLOWING ACCOMPANIMENT OF WHAT WE SAW ON ALL SIDES OF OUR QUEST—THAT THERE IS A PERMANENT, AND THAT THERE IS A TRANSIENT. He goes down to the very base of the nature, and declares that a man must be born from above if he is to see the kingdom of God. The spiritual only can behold the things of that kingdom, which are wholly spiritual. The worship of God is to be in spirit and in truth. His own very words are to be interpreted in the sphere of the spiritual and the true, and the work He came to do for men was not to make their lot here easy or hard, not to spread life's path with flowers or with thorns; it had no respect to these mere circumstances and conditions of outer life. But it went to the very centre of being, to the inner personality of the man. And, as Christ Himself gave up all that He had that was external, material, physical, letting it all go in death, and living only in His living union with the eternal God, so must man live only in that living personality, letting all else die with Christ, and even when living, not living except as Christ lived in him. (*L. D. Bevan, D.D.*) *The immutability of the words of Christ:*—I. The permanence and immutability of the gospel are proofs of the perfection of its plan. II. The immortality of the words of Christ is proof of their perfect adaptability to the constitution and course of nature. III. Is proof of their perfect consonance with absolute truth. IV. Is proof of their identity with the ultimate basis of life. V. Two lessons. 1. He that formulated this immutable scheme is and must be Divine. 2. Upon these words of Christ we have an assured and stable basis upon which to build for eternity. (*E. S. P.*) *The enduring word:*—I. WHAT WORD IS THIS? 1. "My Word." Who spoke this word? Jesus Christ the Saviour. Must not He be God who could fling upon the winds such a prophecy as this, and be sure of its everlasting success? It is not the word of Jeremiah, John, &c. They were the instruments, but Christ's word is nevertheless audible in all. 2. What are some of the marks and characteristics of Christ's word? Given in the Bible. 1. Authoritative. We hear men saying, "We want an authority:" here it is. 2. True. 3. Spirit and life. 4. "Never man spake like this man." II. WHAT DOES CHRIST SAY? of His word? It shall not pass away. Empires, &c., have passed away, but the word of Christ still survives; it speaks with undiluted emphasis; it spreads with uninterrupted speed. All things that threatened to extinguish it have only aided it. Those things that once seemed to rise like mountain obstructions to its march are day by day dissolving like wreaths of snow in the sunshine, in contrast to the advancing and triumphant word of the Lord. And when the new heaven and the new earth shall come, Christ's word shall not cease. The only change will be, all its promises will be enjoyments, &c. Comfort for the believer. Of the least promise that you choose to select you may say, "Heaven and earth," &c. Encouragement to the seeker, worker, minister, &c. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The immutability of the Divine Word:*—1. The certainty of Divine truth. 2. The words of Christ considered in their necessary imperishableness. 3. The words of Christ shall never pass away, because they form the last of that series of communications given by God to a lost world. 4. Because they are founded on eternal truth, and on the fixed counsels of the immutable God. 5. Because of their connection with His own final glory as Mediator. 6. These are the words preached unto you. (*D. Moore, M.A.*)

Vers. 38, 39. **And took them all away.**—*The moral of accidents:*—I. What are we to THINK? Let us now collect and enumerate a few thoughts that we ought to think when we are considering sad things that happen. 1. How many accidents are but slight as to the hurt they do in comparison with the service of the lesson they teach. 2. From how many things "going to happen" we are saved when loss and danger appear imminent. 3. How manifest and honourable are the work and courage of man in averting accidents, and in lessening the harm they do. 4. How incessant is the beneficial operation of the great natural laws, and how varied in kind is their benefit. 5. How careless and untrue is the work of many men; how needful is it that they should have a warning they will heed. And how often, after all, does the right accident happen obviously at the right time and to the right kind of person. 6. How certain it is that unfaithfulness in work will bring disasters, small and great, which are misnamed when we call them "accidents;" for, though we knew not, we might have known that they were sure to happen. And—7 How certain it is, too, that, if anything favourable to us unexpectedly occurs, we shall not be able to

take advantage of it unless we are men of some resource and some character. II. We come now to our second question: WHAT ARE WE TO DO? What are we to do, then? We are not to eat, drink, and marry, careless of the way in which we do these things, and unmindful of our duty to God in them, as if the world, that can take care of itself, would take care of us without any good heed of our own. We are to ask and get answered the question, "What must I do to be saved?" Let us, seeing that so much we have may at any time be the prey of the spoiler, store up the inconsumable, imperishable riches. Many men have lost their lives by accident; no man ever lost his soul by accident. (*T. T. Lynch.*) *Noah's flood:*—Three rules without an exception—I. "THE FLOOD CAME AND TOOK THEM ALL AWAY." 1. Many in that time were wealthy. Not one rich man could escape with his hoards. 2. There were some in those days who were extremely poor. The pauper out of the ark perished as well as the prince. 3. There were in those days learned men in the world. Their knowledge could not deliver them. 4. There were many who were very zealous in the cause of religion. Their outward religion of no avail. 5. Some of the oldest men that have lived perished. 6. They wondered at Noah building his ark, as contrary to reason; criticised his building; some took his part; some worked for him. All out of Christ perished. II. The flood found them ALL EATING, DRINKING, AND MARRYING—this without exception. The mass of men are busy about fleeting interests, and neglect the salvation of their souls. The reason—1. Men's indifference about their souls. 2. Universal unbelief. 3. That they were always and altogether given to worldliness. III. ALL WHO WERE IN THE ARK WERE SAFE. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 40, 41. **Two women shall be grinding at the mill.**—*Routine life:*—The text speaks of an experience which comes to all of us in our turn, as life gradually builds us round. At first, in our childhood, it is otherwise. This earth seems, then, to have no fixed hardness; the spot on which we stand melts off indefinitely into a dreamlike distance, which is hazy and vague, and peopled with we know not what possibilities, holding within its rays strange fairy worlds which rumours may fill as they will, and everything seems possible, and anything might happen, and no relentless law of undeviating existence has imprisoned our expectations and experience, and the world of our hopes mingles with the world of our senses, and earth and heaven are not afraid of each other; their lines cross without a shock. But, as we grow up, we know how solid and how hard the whole thing becomes. The earth takes its stiff limits and its exact rules; it is seen, and known, and measured—a round ball, rolling in space, compact, and massive, and blind, and entire—a round, rolling ball, and we roll round with it. We are things in it, embedded in it; we belong to it; we have a fixed spot and lot on its surface. To it we are tied; we are bound to definite purposes which we never dream of disputing. So we travel with the moving earth; and our days are settled for us; occupations and holidays repeat themselves, year after year, with stolid regularity, against which gradually we give up protesting; we make up our minds to live out our own parts; and all the emotions that beat against this even tenour of uneventful days—dreams, impulses, alarms, hopes, aspirations—cease to be more than empty visions. The common day closes in upon us, settled and familiar; the common world is about us, with interests that ever increase, with work and play, with rule and habit; and the steady block of endless business fills in all our allotted space of action, fills it in down to every cranny, thick and solid and unyielding. (*Canon Scott-Holland.*) *Circumstances no index of character:*—How powerless and immaterial are circumstances for those two! Every single circumstance of life is identical; together they rise at the same hour; right through the day they grind together; at the same hour they go to the evening meal, and at the same hour they sleep. Everything, year after year, repeats itself. They dress alike; they were paid alike; life passed for both on the same level of low, unchanging poverty. To any one looking on they would be wholly alike—two poor women, of the same class, occupation, education, wage, interest, dress. Nothing from end to end of these earthly circumstances could be found to distinguish the one from the other. At the same mill they had turned and turned, to both the earth had been equally harsh and unkind, and no lights shone in upon them, and no changes ever surprised them. On and on together, hand in hand, and face to face, they had ground at the same mill up to the last; and lo! one is for heaven, and one for hell. Within they are as different as black from white, as good from evil; so dominant, so imperial is human character, so free it is from the control of circumstances. Oh, what wide comfort!

What can it matter what our conditions may be? Two grinding at the mill; one taken, and the other left. Is there any one who sinks under the sodden monotony of daily routine, who withers under the pressure of everyday sameness; who finds himself chained into that mean, petty, narrow block of circumstances which he knows to be killing out all spiritual emotions in those about him, and yet he cannot break from it, and he dreads to feel creeping over his soul the same melancholy dryness he sees in others? That which kills another may be life to him, if he will use it. He alone is the master. . . . And yet, on the other hand, how powerful is circumstance! It is at the mill, at the grinding—there and nowhere else—that the thing has got to be done, the difference is to be created. There, as they ground and ground together, these two poor women built up bit by bit the wall of their separation. It was out of the doing of the same things that one grew readier for the Lord, and the other darkened down to the slothful servant. At the mill, still grinding, the Lord finds them. No one, then, need leave his mill. In the field where men work, there our drama works itself out. Circumstances are nothing, but they are also everything; and we shall discover our weakness if we attempt to ignore them. . . . Strength of character lies not in demanding special circumstances, but in mastering and using any that may be given. Our work and daily contact with our fellows form our scene of action, and God blesses with a peculiar blessing the efforts to put to profit, not some self-selected occasion, but the actual conditions in which we find ourselves. (*Ibid.*) *Faithful performance of common duties*:—Philip Henry one day calling upon a tanner, found him so busy tanning a hide that he was not aware of his approach until he tapped him on the back. Starting in confusion, the man exclaimed, "Sir, I am ashamed you should find me thus." Philip Henry replied with solemn emphasis, "May the Lord Jesus, when He comes, find me discharging with the same faithfulness and zeal the duties of my calling!"

Ver. 42. **Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.**—*The coming of the Son of Man*:—I. THE WARNING. Christ's coming is compared to that of a thief in the night. Seems disparaging, but is remarkably apt (1 Thess. v. 2–4). The dispensation under which we live is emphatically that of night, in comparison with the dispensation which is to be introduced at the day of the Lord, &c. The plans of the housebreaker are all laid beforehand, and yet studiously concealed. So the coming of the Lord and the day of His appearing are fixed with infinite wisdom, but kept secret with a profound reserve. That mystery wears a pleasing or repulsive aspect, according to the preparedness of those to whom the Master comes. II. THE CAUTION. It is remarkable that the Evangelist Luke, while omitting the parable, gives us the most lucid account of its application (Luke xxi. 34). III. THE PRECEPT. A personal preparation for the coming of our Lord is to be regarded as a matter of imminent motive with us all. You may be deceived as to the signs; but you are not to be negligent of the event. "Watch and pray." Watchfulness is the habit of keeping the eye constantly alive to events; prayer is the habit of keeping the heart constantly lifted up to God. Taking into account the conditions under which we are admonished to watch and pray, the intent becomes palpable that things we are not permitted to know beforehand will be gradually unfolded to us as the events are about to transpire. But the chief motive defies analysis. The holy instinct of loving hearts prompts that ardent expectancy with which "hope" anticipates the appearing of the Lord. (*B. W. Carr.*) *Watchfulness*:—I. THE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL. 1. Of what person? 2. In what manner? 3. For what purpose? 4. At what time? Date unknown (ver. 36), knowledge might induce carelessness, &c. II. THE UNFORESEEN DISCLOSURE. 1. To many, of the character of others. It will be a day of great surprises. We only judge by appearances. God knows thought, intention, character. 2. To many, of their own destiny. Judge not. Leave the judgment with God. III. THE NEEDFUL WATCHING. 1. With increasing prayer. 2. With unfaltering diligence. 3. With unfailing patience. Biding the Lord's time submissively. He will not always tarry. (*J. C. Gray.*) *Temptations demand watchfulness*:—1. Temptations may enter the SENSES without sin, for to behold the object, to touch, or taste, is not to commit sin, because God Himself hath thus ordered and framed the senses by their several instruments and organs. He hath kindled up light in the eyes, He hath digged the hollow of the ear, for hearing, and hath shut up the taste in the mouth or palate, and hath given man his senses very fit for the trial and reward of virtue. Therefore, we may make a covenant with our eye, bridle our taste, bind our touch, purge our ears, and so sanctify and consecrate every sense

unto the Lord, which is indeed to watch. II. They may enter the THOUGHTS, and be received into the imagination, and yet, if we set our watch, not overcome us; for as yet they are but, as it were, in their march, bringing up their forces; but have made no battery or breach into the soul. III. The sense and fancy may receive the object with some delight and natural complacency, and yet without sin; if we stand upon our guard, and then oppose it most, when it most pleads for admittance. (*Anthony Farindon.*)

Ver. 44. **Then be ye also ready.**—I. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN. His title. His coming is death. There is certainty in His coming. II. THAT MAN IN HIS UNCONVERTED STATE IS UNREADY FOR HIS COMING. Man is not ready—1. For he is born under the curse of the law. 2. For he is under the dominion of sin. 3. For his life is one of disobedience to the commands of heaven. 4. For he is unfit for the glorified state. III. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY FOR BEING READY. 1. The nature of the readiness. Not being born in a Christian land—not mere profession. Be ready: the act is ours, the grace is God's. 1. Ready in state. 2. Ready in life. (1) It is necessary that we are regenerate. (2) That our generation-work be done. (3) That the mind be weaned from the world, and fixed on spiritual objects. IV. THE ARGUMENT USED TO ENFORCE THIS NECESSITY—"For in such an hour." 1. Youthful hour. 2. Hour of health. 3. Hour of carnal amusement. 4. Hour of worldly prosperity. (*T. Jones.*) *Ready for death:*—I. To speak of DEATH. 1. At death, the body is dissolved into dust. 2. At death, the soul and body separate. 3. At death, the soul appears before God. II. WHO ARE READY FOR DEATH? 1. All who are prepared to die see their lost state by nature. 2. All who love God. 3. All who have God. III. REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DIE. 1. Death is sure. 2. The time is uncertain. 3. This is the only world where you can be prepared to die. 4. Now is the time God has given you to prepare to die. 5. He is a wise man who prepares to die. 6. He is a fool who refuses to prepare to die. (*A. Fletcher, M.A.*) *Comfort under bereavement:*—I. THE ADMONITION. To be ready for the coming of Christ ought to be the great end of life. 1. To be ready for death, is to have obtained the pardon of all sins. 2. It is to possess renewed natures. 3. It is to have all the graces of the Spirit in vigorous exercise. II. THE MOTIVE AND ARGUMENT EMPLOYED. 1. The uncertainty of the event in question. 2. Death may come when, according to human calculation, there is the least prospect of it. 3. It may call us when our earthly concerns may make it most inconvenient for us to depart. 4. It may approach when we are least ready for its approach. (*T. Brown, D.D.*) *The shortness and uncertainty of life:*—I. THE SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN LIFE. II. INQUIRE HOW THE UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE SO SELDOM LEADS MEN TO PREPARE FOR LEAVING IT. 1. Want of consideration. 2. Love of this world and its enjoyments. 3. A vague impression that death is a distant event. III. SOME OF THE COMFORTS AND ADVANTAGES OF BEING PREPARED FOR DEATH. 1. It secures the testimony of a good conscience, connected with the favour of God, and the happiness that results from both. 2. Preparation for death alleviates the afflictions of life, and affords much consolation under them. 3. It frees from slavish fear of that event. (*A. Grant, D.D.*) *The great business of life:*—I. THE EVENT PREDICTED. 1. His coming at the day of judgment. 2. At the hour of death. II. THE DUTY ENJOINED. 1. It is an evangelical readiness. 2. It is a gracious readiness. 3. It is an habitual readiness. (*T. Hitchin.*) *The second advent:*—I. WHAT IS REVEALED concerning our Lord's character and appearance? 1. Preparation made. 2. His first coming was in weakness; His second, in illimitable power. His first, in humiliation; His second, in glory. II. The EFFECT of His coming. 1. Renovation. 2. Dissolution. 3. Manifestation. (*E. Fisk, LL.B.*) *Ready to die:*—A ship in a port, with all its provisions and sails and men on board, is in one sense of the word, "ready"—ready for sea; but it may not be "ready" in the sense this text enjoins. Its sails must be in their places, its anchor must be up, every man must be at his post: then it is actually ready for the ocean and its storms. Let the command come, and in a minute or two it is disengaged from the fastenings that held it, lies down to the breeze, and without hurry or alarm is gone. And this is the readiness our Lord has here in His mind—a state of actual readiness, preparedness of mind and heart. (*C. Bradley.*) I. A CALL TO A STATE OF PREPARATION. The readiness to which we are called is a state that will give us admission to Paradise. The qualification for such a distinction and privilege is—1. The possession of Christian acceptance and holiness. 2. A faithful and assiduous fulfilment of trust. Trusts

of the most important kind are committed to man, for which he is accountable and responsible. 3. Habitual watchfulness. II. OUR LORD ENFORCES THIS CALL BY THE DECLARATION OF AN IMPRESSIVE FACT. 1. The coming of the Son of Man. 2. The purposes of His coming. 3. Man's ignorance of the period of His coming. (*J. Rattenbury.*) *Preparation for death*:—I. THE EVENT FOR WHICH WE ARE TO BE READY. 1. At death, the body turns to its original dust. 2. At death, the soul and body separate. 3. At death, the soul appears before God. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN BEING READY? Great events require suitable preparation. Preparation for death implies—1. A perception of unfitness for death, without an interest in the favour of God. 2. Faith in Christ, which is instrumental in obtaining pardon of sin, &c. 3. Holiness. 4. Diligence in the use of the public and private means of grace. III. MOTIVES TO URGE US TO BE READY. 1. Death is sure to come. 2. The time of death's approach is uncertain. 3. Abundant provision is made to induce this preparation. 4. The present life is the only period in which we can prepare for death. 5. To be ready indicates true wisdom, and gives peace. (*W. N.*) *Ready*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO BE READY FOR? To be ready to leave all that is about us and all that belongs to us, however cherished. 1. To be ready to leave this world, with all its cares, its troubles, and anxieties, for a better. 2. To be willing to be rid of many things that now burden us, and that every Christian more or less feebly desires to be rid of: sin, sorrow, sickness, appetites, disquiet, &c. 3. To be ready to stand at the judgment-seat of Christ. How do you expect to appear there? II. WHY WE ARE TO BE READY. 1. It is Christ's command. Surely that is enough. 2. He who commands is competent to say what the readiness consists in. It is not what we think, nor what the minister prescribes, nor what custom says; but what Christ has inspired in His own holy word. Faith in Christ, &c. 3. He has promised to make us ready. He is the author first, and the finisher next, of our faith. 4. Why is it so important to be ready? We are to see the Son of God, &c. 5. Such readiness will not interfere with the duties of this world. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *Getting ready for heaven*:—"Mamma," said a child, "my Sunday-school teacher tells me that this world is only a place in which God lets us live a little while, that we may prepare for a better world; but, mother, I do not see anybody preparing. I see you preparing to go into the country, and Aunt Eliza is preparing to come here; but I do not see any one preparing to go to heaven. If everybody wants to go there, why don't they try to get ready?" *Always ready*:—Sir Colin Campbell, when summoned to go to India to quell the rebellion, was asked, "How long would it take him to get ready?" He replied promptly, "Half-an-hour." As a good soldier he lived in constant readiness for the call of duty. What a lesson for Christian soldiers! Suetonius tells us that it was a piece of Julius Cæsar's policy never to fore-acquaint his soldiers of any set time of removal or onset, that he might ever have them in readiness to draw forth whithersoever he would. Christ, in like manner, who is called the "Captain of our salvation" (Heb. ii. 10). Our enemy is always ready to annoy us; should we not therefore look to our stand, and be vigilant? Solomon's wisdom, Lot's integrity, and Noah's sobriety, felt the smart of the serpent's sting. The first was seduced, the second stumbled, and the third fell, while the eye of watchfulness was fallen asleep. (*John Trapp.*) *Judgment not the less certain because unexpected*:—Every judgment, coming of Christ, is as the springing of a mine. There is a moment of deep suspense after the match has been applied to the fuse which is to fire the train. Men stand at a distance, and hold their breath. There is nothing seen but a thin, small column of white smoke, rising fainter and fainter, till it seems to die away. Then men breathe again; and the inexperienced soldier would approach the place, thinking that the thing has been a failure. It is only faith in the experience of the commander, or the veterans, which keeps men from hurrying to the spot again —till just when expectation has begun to die away, the low, deep thunder sends up the column of earth majestically to heaven, and all that was on it comes crushing down again in its far circle, shattered and blackened with the blast. It is so with the world. By God's Word the world is doomed. The moment of suspense is past: the first centuries in which men expected the convulsion to take place at once—for even Apostles were looking for it in their lifetime. We have fallen upon days of scepticism. There are no signs of ruin yet. We tread upon it like a solid thing fortified by its adamantine hills for ever. There is nothing against that, but a few words in a printed book. But the world is mined; and the spark has fallen; and just at the moment when serenity is at its height, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,

and the feet of the Avenger shall stand on the earth. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Sudden death*:—I. The SOLEMN EVENTS for which we ought always to be ready. 1. Death. 2. Judgment. 3. Eternity. II. IN WHAT THIS READINESS CONSISTS, and how it is to be obtained. It consists in a proper arrangement of all our temporal and spiritual concerns. The preparation of the heart for the worship of God on earth and in heaven is from the Lord, and includes—1. Divine illumination. 2. There must be faith. 3. A life of faith must be evidenced by a life of holiness. 4. We must live a life of prayer. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ALWAYS READY. Reasons—1. It is certain the Son of Man will come. 2. It is uncertain when the Son of Man will appear. (*Essex Remembrancer.*) *The latter end considered*:—Why do men refuse to heed the caution, and shrink from contemplations on their latter end. 1. The love of life is a powerful instinct. As men shrink from death by this vital instinct, so the thoughts of it are disagreeable. 2. The sentiments and symbols of men respecting death which have a painful and mischievous effect upon the imagination and feelings. 3. There are reasons which act powerfully from out of the affections, to make men slow to think of death. The mother could think of death except as a separation from her child. 4. Do you fear to come to God because of sin. Christ removes this. The pain of dying is small. We shall enter upon another life divested of the hindrances of this. Why is it not as easy to think of death as a golden gate, as to think of it as a murky gate? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Watching for the future no hindrance to present duty*:—I remark, then, in view of this subject thus far opened, that a proper Christian watchfulness and forethoughtfulness in regard to death and the future life will not abstract us from this world, but return us back to it better fitted to perform our part here than ever before. You are, after a long, weary summer's day, suffocated with heat, grimed with dust, covered with perspiration, and fretted of skin; and you are permitted to go down to the shore of the ocean, and bathe in its translucent waters; and your body is cleansed and cooled, and reinvigorated; and you return along the shadow of the evening, grateful, and stronger than you went. Now, God's ocean of eternity is so near, that the soul, moiled with trouble, may cast itself in, and bathe its troubles away, and return to its life again, bright, clear, inspired, strong. If you think of death as a slave, looking upon it as going into servitude under a hard master, then it may weaken you, and take away the comfort that you have; but if you think of it, as every child of God has a right to think of it, as going to your Father's house, where a rich banquet is prepared for you, and where you shall enjoy the companionship of saints and angels, it will be a source of comfort and strength to you. We can afford to take trouble here for the sake of gaining such an inheritance. What would I care for being poor, if I knew that at the end of one year I should have ten millions of dollars? Men would toil hard, and unremittingly, and without complaint, if they could be assured that the boundary of their toil was within their computation, and that all beyond was to be enjoyment and the amplest wealth. Men do endure everything in the hope of securing wealth and enjoyment. How will they pursue laborious industry in the chilling regions of the North, or how will they plunge into the heat of the tropics, encountering sickness, and the malaria of every delta that has commerce in it, in the hope that they may return to their father's house, or the village or neighbourhood of their birth, and spend the few closing days of their life in pleasure and comfort. And if such is the strength of the hope of a short period of earthly peace and rest, how much greater must be the strength of that man's hope who expects, after a few years (he cares not how few, so that God's will is done) he shall rise out of this world of trouble, and care, and vicissitudes, into the land of glory; God's land of freedom, of nobility, of purity, of truth? (*Ibid.*) *Dying in work*:—It was Augustine's wish that Christ, when He came, might find him either praying or preaching. It was Latimer's wish (and he had it) that he might shed his heart-blood for Christ. It was Jewel's wish that he might die preaching, and he did so, for presently, after his last sermon at Lacock, in Wiltshire, he was, by reason of sickness, forced to his bed, from whence he never came off till his translation to glory. I have heard the like of Mr. Lancaster, a precious man of God, some time pastor of Bloxham, in Oxfordshire, a man very famous for his living by faith. Cushamerus, a Dutch divine, and one of the first preachers of the gospel at Erfurt, in Germany, had his pulpit poisoned by the malicious Papists there, and so took his death in God's work. "What! would you that the Lord, when He comes, should find me idle?" said Calvin to his friends, who wished him to forbear studying awhile for his health's sake. And such a like answer made Dr. Reynolds to his physician upon the like

occasion. Elijah was going on and talking with Elisha (about heavenly things, no doubt) when the chariot of heaven came to fetch him. There can be no better posture or state for the messenger of our dissolution to find us in than in a diligent prosecution of our general or particular calling. (*John Trapp.*) *Always ready to die:*—Mr. Wesley was once asked by a lady, "Suppose you knew you were to die at twelve o'clock to-morrow night, how would you spend the intervening time?" "How, madam?" he replied; "why, just as I intend to spend it now. I should preach this night at Gloucester, and again at five to-morrow morning. After that I should ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I should then repair to friend Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, converse and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at ten o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory." *A minister is a steward:*—I. What Christ's ministers are entrusted with? 1. The gospel. 2. The ordinances. 3. The care of the Church. 4. The souls of the members. II. What ministers may be said to be stewards and rulers; teachers and preachers; elders or pastors? III. Who are wise, faithful servants of Jesus Christ? 1. Such as serve Christ because they love Him. 2. Such as serve Christ in all humility. 3. Such as serve Him with a perfect heart. 4. Such as feed the Master's household with all that food the Master hath provided or appointed for them. 5. Such as feeds the whole household. 6. Such as seeks the honour of Christ in all he does, not his own gain. 7. Such as cares for the weak babes, or little children, of his Master's family. (*Benjamin Keach.*)

Vers. 45, 51. **Who, then, is that faithful and wise servant.**—I. The PARTICULAR RELATION in which we are here represented as standing to the one that is above us. II. The representation that is here given of that ATTITUDE in which the servant is found who is obedient to his Master. There are terms used particularly descriptive of the conduct of the individual. 1. Fidelity. 2. Wisdom is associated with faithfulness—"faithful and wise." 3. Habitual and persevering continuance in well-doing. III. The BLESSEDNESS which is included in this benediction of the Master. 1. Blessed at the appearance of Christ, also while he lives, in his present activity. 2. Positive reward. 3. Contrast the deception of the evil servant. (*T. Binney, D.D.*) *The faithful servant and his reward:*—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE FAITHFUL SERVANT. 1. The faithful servant is one whose service is sincere. 2. The faithful servant is one whose service is unreserved, limited only by his capability. 3. His service is uniform. 4. His service is according to the prescribed rule, "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." 5. His service is that of faith—the living faith of the heart in the truth of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ. II. HIS REWARD. The reward is here made to depend upon the servant being found occupying the position assigned him, with all fidelity, "when his Lord cometh." We must not infer that the faithful servant is not blessed prior to his Lord's coming, at the hour of death. Nor do his onerous duties diminish, but rather contribute to, the blessedness of the faithful servant. He has to suffer, it is true; but these minister to his blessedness. The master promotes his servant to the highest post of honour because of his fidelity in an inferior position. He is made a "ruler." These pleasures will be internally progressive. The reward, however, will not be equal in degree. It is a matter of the first importance to determine whether we are in deed and truth the servants of Christ. (*R. Scott.*) *The activity of service:*—Christ's departure from this earth is no reason for His Church's inaction, but the source of her activity. Far from withdrawing His Church's interests from earth by His withdrawal, He endows it with more effective energies, larger capacities for action. She can do more on earth, and not less, now He is gone. He shows this by picture after picture. He tells us that we are to be a society carefully and shrewdly organized, and this organization is to be formed with a view to work, production, fruit. We are to be organized with a view to our capacities, so to be arranged as to serve best for direct, present, practical usefulness here on earth; we are to be as a house which a householder has left, in which house every one is in his place, each according to his gift; and in this house there will be careful provision, that each shall have his food in due season—food brought him prepared through the hands of officers appointed for that one service, while at the door will ever sit the porter, who will have the office of watching while the others work. How careful, how orderly it all is! No loose shiftiness to fill up an interval. No indifference as to what may be done in the long waiting time. His going does not destroy or diminish

the seriousness or care with which the interval is to be organized. How busy it all is to be. What! did we fancy that the haste and urgency of worldly business would conflict with the solemnity of watching for the Lord? Why, this kingdom of His is to be, during all the waiting time, like a house of business. It will be as a merchant house, in which everybody is bent on making all he can out of the money given him. He gives no picture of a Church ever on its knees at some silent shrine, praying for a far-off time. He foresees a body of men busy and intent, absorbed in the practical use of their gifts, bent on turning five talents into ten or two into four. (*Canon Scott-Holland.*)

## CHAPTER XXV.

VERS. 1–13. **Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.**—*The ten virgins*:—I. WE HAVE HERE TWO CHARACTERS CONTRASTED. "Five were wise and five were foolish." That we may define the difference between them, it is needful that we have a clear conception of the things in which they were alike. 1. They all had some knowledge of, and regard for, the bridegroom, and desired to honour him by going forth to meet him as he led home his bride. 2. They all had lamps which at the moment were burning. 3. That while the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. Not until his coming was announced did the difference between them develop itself. In all outward things the wise and foolish virgins were alike; the difference between them was internal. The going out of the lamp is commonly understood to mean the making of a profession, while the absence of the reserve store of oil is supposed to signify the want of sincerity in that profession. This seems to unduly narrow the scope of the parable. For the foolish virgins had a real regard for the bridegroom; they had gone far to meet him, and were disappointed at their exclusion. There was genuineness about them as far as they went; only they did not go far enough. Hence I cannot restrict this part of the story to deliberate hypocrites. I regard the foolish virgins as those who have had some feelings of attachment to Christ, and certain impulses Christward to which they yielded at the time; but they were not constant. Their emotion was a real thing, and when they were acting upon it you could not call them hypocrites; but it was not the right thing. They were animated by impulse, not principle. Their religion did not go down to the lowest depths of their nature; it was a thing on the surface. Their seed fell "upon rocky ground where it had not much earth," &c. They commenced to build a tower, but without counting the cost (Luke xiv. 28, 32). II. THAT CHARACTER IS REVEALED BY CRISIS. A man has only as much religion as he can command in the hour of trial. The minor surprises of life are to prepare us for the last emergency. III. THAT CHARACTER IS A PERSONAL THING, and cannot be given by one man to another, but MUST BE ACQUIRED AND MANIFESTED BY EACH ONE FOR HIMSELF. Character is not transferable. I cannot give you my courage to fortify you for duty. How perilous to leave preparation for these testing times till they have come upon us. Every time we perform duty the soul is made stronger. Here the store of oil is obtained. "Add to your faith virtue" (1 Peter i. 5, 7). IV. THAT LOST OPPORTUNITIES CANNOT BE RECALLED. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Character revealed by crisis*:—The great truth here taught, therefore, is that character is revealed by emergency. It is in moments of surprise that a man's true self comes out to view. He is the ablest general who can in an instant find some resource when an ambushed foe starts up before him. He is the most skilful mariner, who, in sudden extremity, can rise to the occasion, and bring his vessel and his crew safely into port. Nothing will more correctly reveal what is in a man, than the coming upon him of some crushing and unlooked-for crisis. Let it be temporal ruin by the failure of all his calculations, or the disappointment of all his hopes; let it be the entrance of the death-angel into his home, and the removal from it of his nearest and dearest earthly friend; let it be his own prostration by some serious illness which puts him face to face with his dissolution: and forthwith the extent of his resources is unfolded, and it is at once discovered both by others and by himself, whether he is animated by unfailing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit, or whether he has been deceiving himself, and all the while relying on some other support. (*Ibid.*) *Reserve power the outcome of daily discipline*:—

We all know how true that is in common life. When, in times of danger, some great leader comes suddenly to the front, and shows that he has the very qualities which the occasion needs, it will always be found that he has been preparing himself—unconsciously, perhaps, but really—for years, by the careful discipline of daily labour, for the work which is now so successfully performed by him. While others were asleep, he was at his toil: and by the study of many earnest months, perhaps also by the labour of many midnight hours, he has been laying up that reserve supply, on which at the moment of necessity he has been able to draw. Thus, though the revelation of his ability may have been sudden, the growth of it has been gradual; and because in times of quiet and safety he kept up the discipline of work, the crisis which swept others into oblivion only floated him into fame. (*Ibid.*) *Lost opportunities*:—You know the story of the ancient sibyl who came to KING Tarquin offering for sale nine books which she declared would be of great value to him in the government of Rome. She asked what seemed an exorbitant price, and he would not buy them. On that she retired, and burned three of the books: then she came back, and asked the same sum for the remaining six. He again refused; and she retired, and burned three more, only to come back and ask the same price for the remaining three. Then, by the advice of his councillors, he secured them on her own terms. Now, beneath that old fable there is an important truth; for, the longer we refuse God's overtures, the less these overtures contain, while the demand upon us is still the same for the remainder. How many more of these books of privilege are you going to suffer to be destroyed? And what a motive there is in all this for immediate acceptance of God's offer of mercy! (*Ibid.*) *The ten virgins*:—I. THE CHARACTERS DELINEATED. 1. That the visible Church is composed of persons of opposite states and conditions. 2. That it is not always easy to distinguish the truly pious from those who are destitute of the root of the matter. All had lamps. Form one thing, inward life another. 3. That one special feature by which all who possess the wisdom which cometh from above are distinguished, is the provision they make, not only for their more immediate wants, but also for future contingencies. II. THE IMPORTANT EVENT ANNOUNCED—"While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." 1. A mournful statement—"My Lord delayeth his coming." 2. An arousing cry—"Behold, the bridegroom cometh." 3. A solemn summons—"Go ye out to meet him." III. The RESULTS WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY TRANSPIRED. 1. A hurried preparation—"Then all those virgins arose," &c. 2. A sad discovery—"Our lamps are gone out." 3. A happy entrance—"Went in with him," &c. 4. An unavailing appeal. (*Expository Outlines.*) *Torches lighted*:—I. The soul NEEDS LIGHT. The fact that Christ died to save sinners is the only torch that can scatter the soul's gloom. II. The soul needs a MOVEABLE light. These torches are in motion. The gospel can be taken anywhere. III. NO MAN HAS ANY LIGHT TO SPARE. IV. Some people apply for the light WHEN IT IS TOO LATE. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *The gospel the only true soul torch*:—Now there are some people who get one thing out of this parable, and there are others who get another thing; but I get this: the soul needs light. If you see the bridegroom's party coming down the hill, what do you find? Torches. If you see the bridal party coming out of the door, what do you see? Torches. What does the soul in its midnight of sin and suffering need? Torches. Confucius tried to strike a light for China, and he did kindle it; but it went out and left her uncounted millions to make the centuries dismal with their wailing. Zeno, Cleanthes, Aristotle, each struck a light and passed it along from hand to hand, but it went out; and I have to tell you that the universities of the earth, while they have in their chemical laboratories made the blue light, and the green light, and the yellow light, they have never yet been able to make the white light of pardon and peace and hope for a lost world. Peace! where is it? Diving bells have gone two hundred feet down, and not found it in the depths of the sea. Astronomers' telescopes have swept across the heavens and not found it in the air. From a consuming brand of Calvary I pick up the only light for a lost world. The fact that Christ died to save sinners is the flambeau which, flung on the darkness of your soul, will scatter its gloom as by a daybreak. A good many years ago in Washington there were two Congressioners who met once every week to talk about the immortality of the soul; but they despised the Bible. They found no comfort. Their time expired, and they went home. Years passed along. They both visited Washington, and at the same time, and happened to meet at the President's levée. They saw each other at the great distance across the room. They pressed their way through the crowd until they came to each other, and, after years of absence, the

first thing that one said to the other was: "John, any light?" "No light." Then this one accosted the other, and said: "Henry, any light?" "No light." They said nothing more; they parted to meet at the judgment. Oh, are there any who have swung off from this grand old gospel, thinking to find rest for their soul? Have you found comfort, peace, joy, heaven? From a score of souls there comes up to me the cry to-night: "No light! no light!" (*Ibid.*) *The gospel a moveable light:*—But I learn, also, from this subject, that the soul needs a moveable light. These torches coming out of the door are in motion. These torches of the bridegroom's party on the hill are in motion, hoisted, lowered, glancing in and out among the leaves, all moveable. The soul needs a moveable light, and in the gospel of Christ we have it. That gospel is not a lamp-post standing on one street. It is not a chandelier hung in one room. It is not a lighthouse set at one harbour. It is a flambeau—a moveable light—something to be carried. And we need to take it into our homes, and we need to take it into our stores and shops, and into our schools, and into our churches, and in the cellars where the poor freeze, and in the garret where the fevered languish, and into the hospital where the wounded die, and far out in the wilderness where the emigrant struggles. Do you know that the lights of this world are stationery, and that soon you and I will have to start on a road where all these lights will fail us? (*Ibid.*) *No grace to spare:*—"Oh," says some one in this house: "I had a very good father and very good mother; if there ever was a good woman, she was; and somehow I hope through their piety to get into heaven." Had they any surplus of piety? None. Had they any goodness to spare? None. You cannot borrow oil out of their lamps. There never was a better man than Jonathan Edwards, but he had no grace to spare for his son Pierrepont, who made an awful shipwreck. President Burr was a holy and consecrated man, but he had no grace to spare for Aaron Burr, whose life was a horrid debauch. And, I suppose, if at the last, all the redeemed of heaven were gathered in a circle, and some poor soul should go round and say: "Have you olive oil to spare? give me some for my lamp?" I suppose they would all answer: "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and for you." "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it." Every man for himself, every woman for herself. (*Ibid.*) *Too late:*—I suppose every hour of the day and night there are souls going into eternity unprepared. Oh, what excitement it must be about the death-bed, crying out for a lamp, and for the oil, and for the light; throwing hands out, throwing them up, throwing them around, until the nurse asks, "What do you want, water?" He says, shaking his head: "No." "Bathing of the temples?" He shakes his head: "No." What does he want? Oh, he cannot get his light burning. He must start; he is started; he comes up to the gate of heaven; he knocks; he cries: "Let me in!" He is not admitted. He says: "I want to see the bridegroom." The voices within say: "You can't see the bridegroom; he is busy with the guests now." Says the man: "I must come in; my children are in there. I must come in." A voice within says: "You refused the grace that would have brought you where they are." "But," says the man, "I must come in; all my friends and kindred are in. Hark! now I hear the sound of their voices, and the bounding of their feet. Let me in." And a voice from within says: "You are too late!" It says to one man: "You are twenty years too late;" to another, "you are over five years too late;" to another, "you are a month too late;" to another, "you are a minute too late;" and the mob of destroyed ones outside the door take up the chorus, and cry: "Too late!" And the hot wind of the desert sighs: "Too late!" and the bell in the tower of eternal midnight tolls and tolls: "Too late! too late!" And the torches of the silly virgins begin to flicker and hiss in the storm, and one by one they go out, until in the suffocating darkness they cry: "Our lamps have gone out!" And they go wandering through eternity, ages after ages, feeling out for the light, for comfort, for peace, for hope, but finding none, and crying: "Our lamps have gone out!" and then turning in another direction, and wandering on, age after age, age after age, feeling for hope, and comfort, and light, and Heaven, but finding none, and crying: "Our lamps have gone out!" (*Ibid.*) *The gifts of grace are chiefly to be exercised in order to an actual preparation for the coming of Christ by death and judgment:*—Very miserable is the state of such as these who have grace to get when Christ cometh. 1. All the profession of these virgins is lost. 2. All opportunities and means of grace are now lost, never to be enjoyed more. 3. The door of hope is shut against them. 4. The door of grace is shut. 5. They have now lost their communion with the wise virgins, who are safe within the door. 6. These virgins

have now lost their veils. They are discovered to themselves, the king, to the world. 7. These who were in the midnight's sleep, are now in their midnight's darkness. 8. All who profess to be the bridesmen must take heed of resting in aught that is common to them with the foolish virgins. What gifts of grace are chiefly to be in exercise in order to an actual preparation for the coming of Christ by death and judgment? (1) There is always a general and habitual preparedness to meet Christ in hearts that are truly godly, but not always a particular, actual fitness. (2) That though a state of grace is here supposed, seeing grace cannot be exercised where it is not; yet there may be need to have it cleared. (3) Maintain your faith in frequent exercise, and make no less conscience of acting daily faith than you do of daily prayer. (4) This faith doth necessarily work by love. (5) Keep even accounts with God, and still be perfecting that repentance which is the work of every day; and let there be no old reckonings between God and you. (6) Be much in the exercise of goodness, mercy, and works of liberality towards Christ in His needy members, according to your opportunity and power. (7) Exercise diligence and faithfulness in your particular calling. (*W. Hook.*) *The folly and danger of resting satisfied with the outward form of godliness*:—I. That true religion consists of a lively principle of grace in the heart. Principle and practice are to work together in religion. II. That many professed Christians content themselves with the mere outward forms of religion. This danger arises from the natural blindness of the understanding; the natural pride of the heart exposes us to it. III. That many become conscious of this error and seek to remedy it when it is too late. (*J. Mark.*) *The misery of dying unprepared*:—"Our lamps are gone out." I. What is implied in this complaint or acknowledgment. II. Consider how it came to pass that the lamps of some of these virgins had gone out when the cry was heard. III. Consider when it was that the foolish virgins found their lamps gone out. 1. It was not till after they had burned for a considerable length of time. 2. It was when their light was most needed. The midnight hour. 3. At an hour when they could not be rekindled in time for their intended purpose. (*T. Henderson, D.D.*) *The believer's readiness for the heavenly marriage*:—I. The MARRIAGE. 1. It exhibits the love of Christ to His people. 2. The security of His people. 3. It furnishes valuable hints to the Church of Christ. How careful should the bride be to manifest her sincere love to the bridegroom. 4. How many times we have appeared weary of His love. II. The PREPARATION for this marriage. 1. It is not in any man's excellence in his natural state above others of his fellows. 2. It is not on account of any special dexterity and judicious skill—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." 3. The preparation is by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit—"Of Him we are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness," &c. III. The END of us all. (*H. Allen, M.A.*) *The ten virgins*:—I. The PREPARATION. 1. All were moved by one desire—to welcome the bridegroom, and partake of the banquet. Even the foolish may be right in part. 2. The wise went wholly prepared. 3. The unwise took lamps and vessels, but no oil; perhaps did not examine the vessel. Thought they had enough, &c. The experiment of many seems to be, an attempt at discovering how little religion will suffice for their safety. II. The DISCOVERY. 1. The light gone out! Night dark. Bridegroom coming. Midnight cry. Terrible thing to have no light of truth, hope, &c., in the night of error, sorrow, death. 2. The oil exhausted. Sad for the heart to be without grace in seasons of perplexity and peril. 3. No oil to be borrowed. He who has most religion, has none to spare; and cannot impart grace to empty souls. 4. Oil must be bought. Those who seek grace at last may find those who might guide and comfort full of engagements. 5. The door shut. Could neither meet the Bridegroom or enter in. III. The APPEAL. 1. Respectful. 2. Earnest. 3. Heartrending. 4. Fruitless. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The wise and foolish virgins*:—I. There was A COMMON LIKENESS and resemblance between the wise and foolish virgins, that continued for a considerable time; so THAT THE REAL DIFFERENCES WERE NOT DETECTED TILL THE APPROACH OF THE BRIDEGROOM. II. THAT THERE WAS A MOST IMPORTANT AND SERIOUS DISTINCTION. "Five of them were wise and five were foolish." Their wisdom was shown in making a proper preparation for the future. III. THE DELAY IN THE FINAL APPEARANCE OF THE BRIDEGROOM. IV. BUT THOUGH HE TARRIED LONG, HE CAME AT LAST. 1. At midnight. 2. With a cry. V. THE CASE OF THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM CAME. VI. THE FINAL RESULT. (*R. Watson.*) *The unconverted in danger of mistaking natural emotions for true religion*:—I. That an unconverted person may make a false profession of religion, as these "foolish virgins" took

their burning lamps to do honour to the bridegroom. 2. That an unconverted person, making a false profession of religion, may suppose it to be genuine religion, as these five foolish virgins hoped that their lamps would be burning when the bridegroom came. 3. That those who make such a vain profession are most unwise. 4. That notwithstanding the folly of such conduct many are guilty of it—"Five." (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *The desirableness of preparation for Christ's coming*:—I. THE EVENT. It is of great importance. 1. If we consider the extent of the influence of that event. 2. From the estimation in which it was held by Jesus Christ Himself. 3. From the estimation in which it has been held by the wisest and best of the human race. 4. From the great design of it. 5. It will excite the deepest possible interest. 6. The excitement produced by the Saviour's coming will last for ever. 7. It is not an occurrence of uncertain character. 8. It will be sudden. II. THE PREPARATION. 1. One part of this preparation consists in previous intimacy with the heavenly Bridegroom. 2. Some congeniality of spirit between your souls and the mind of Jesus Christ. 3. A longing desire for His approach. 4. A diligent discharge of all Christ's commands. III. THE DESIRABLENESS OF THIS PREPARATION. 1. Out of regard to tranquillity at the time of His coming. 2. Out of respect of gratitude; how much has He done for us. 3. On account of the felicity of being received by Him into the feast. 4. Out of respect to the misery of those not found ready. (*E. Hull.*) *The trimming of the lamps*:—I. OUR PARABLE TEACHES THAT HOWEVER LONG AND DEEPLY A MAN MAY SLEEP, HE IS SURE TO AWAKE AT LAST—"Then." Is it not true that to every soul comes the time when God calls—calls plainly, audibly, loudly—"Then"? There are such critical moments in the history of lives—moments when we are justified in saying, "Hark! that is the call of God." Calls of God's providence are like the calls of the hours—they repeat themselves with renewed power in every stroke; perhaps I may say that God never startled and terrified any soul with the inevitable twelve until it had been deaf to the repeated calls of the preceding hours. Illness, bereavement, &c. To every soul comes the tremendous and inexorable, Then! II. THERE ARE EPOCHS IN AN AGE WHEN ALL THINGS SEEM TO CALL TO ARISE AND TRIM THE LAMPS, AND WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM SEEMS SO NEAR. Amidst surrounding gloom, voices will seem to mark the epoch and to give the call. III. HEALTHIEST LIVES NEED WARNING. They all arose. Holiest souls have fears, need vigilance, and must use the means. They arose—they were all on their way to meet the Bridegroom; they all passed for a professing Church; they all testified their love to the Bridegroom; they were all called by His name. How little is implied in professions! Not what I say, but what I am, is my security. Do you never fear for yourselves at last? Does the Master never wake thee at night and say, "Where is thy lamp? I gave it thee to guard?" &c. IV. HOWEVER EXCELLENT AN INSTRUMENT A LAMP MAY BE, IT IS ONLY AN INSTRUMENT. So they all arose and trimmed their lamps. The lamp is the turning point of the parable. Alas! a lamp useless! a lamp without oil! No lamp is its own end—and the profession of Christianity is not its own end, and none of the means employed by God are their own end. Lamps are to give light, and for progress, and duty, and comfort. And the trimming implies, obtaining fresh oil, and removing clogging from the wick. 1. Faith is a lamp; and yet faith may not save. It may be wanting in love which purifies the heart, &c. 2. Knowledge is a lamp. It is only instrumental—not its own end, &c. 3. Experience is a lamp. But it needs the oil. Not what I have passed through can avail for me, not my frames and feelings, but what these are before God. V. EVERY PRIVILEGE BRINGS DUTIES—"They all arose and trimmed their lamps." They had all slept. From few things are we more in danger than from sleep. 1. There is a state of soul, spiritually so-called—indifference of their danger. Let no one suppose he is in a state of security because he knows no fear. 2. They all slept; but even in that case there must have been a difference. The rest in the unwise, the proof of folly, may be, in the wise, the proof of wisdom. The foolish were resting and trusting in the morning, or in the dark lamp without oil; the wise slept, but their lamp was kindled as a night-light, placed by their bedside for fear of the night. They watched for their Lord. 3. Let us trim our lamps. We have no time to sleep. You have a lamp to trim—a soul, a faith. What vigilance is needed! In every other department of life you are awake. Here you sleep. Arise, and trim your lamps. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The ten virgins*:—I. Review the parable in ITS LITERAL SIGNIFICATION. II. ITS SPIRITUAL APPLICATION. 1. The Bridegroom is Jesus. This is one of the general Scriptural representations of the Saviour (Psa. xlv. 10, &c.; Isa. xliv. 5; Matt. xxii. 1, 2; ix. 15; John iv. 29). The object of the Bridegroom's affection is the

Church (2 Cor. xi. 2, &c.; Eph. v. 25). Now to render a union possible between Christ and mankind—(1) They must have one nature (Titus ii. 14; iii. 4). (2) They must have one mind. In our natural state we are alienated, &c. Christ, by the exhibition of His love in the gospel, overcomes this. (3) In conversion the soul is espoused to Christ (Jer. ii. 2). (4) The marriage celebration is reserved for the Second Advent (Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 2, &c.). Conclusion: Consider the dignified Bridegroom. His glory is supreme, His riches are infinite, His beauty unrivalled, His love unspeakable and passing understanding. Are not His claims then irresistible? Reject Him not. Congratulate believers on their choice and portion. Expostulate with those who have forsaken Him. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *The ten virgins:*—I. IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL PROBATIONARY CHARACTER—"Who took their lamps." In this, the profession of Christianity is exhibited. Religion is to be manifested. This profession of discipleship and friendship with Christ—1. Should arise from love to Christ. 2. Must be public and open before men. 3. Must be constant and continued. 4. It must be sustained by Divine grace. A profession without the grace of God in the soul will be joyless, promiseless, transitory. II. THE DELAY OF THE BRIDEGROOM, AND THE VIRGINS IN THEIR SLEEPING STATE. The early Christians expected His Second Advent in their time. So in many ages since. But the period is not revealed. The virgins "all slumbered and slept." There are no obvious distinctions between the two classes. But the wise prepared for the future. The others were satisfied with the present—had no supply for the coming exigency. III. THE SOLEMN ANNOUNCEMENT. 1. The period. 2. The pomp and magnificence of His coming. The event is momentous, and the scene truly sublime. All beings in all worlds will be interested in it. IV. THE AWFUL DEFICIENCY OF THE FOOLISH VIRGINS IS DISCOVERED. What shall they do? We cannot give grace to each other now. How much less, then! V. THE CONCLUSION OF THE CEREMONY AND THE CONSUMMATION OF THE FEAST. The wise acknowledged, &c. But the foolish labour to supply the deficiency in seeking oil. But "the door is shut." 1. The door of opportunities and means. 2. The door of mercy. 3. The door of hope. 4. The door of heaven. Application: 1. Let the subject lead to solemn examination. 2. To earnestness, and diligence, and vigilance. (*Ibid*). *Preparation for heaven:*—The design of Christ in the parable is to induce watchfulness—a state of preparation for death which conducts to the judgment seat of Christ. I. THE HAPPINESS DESTINED FOR THE FOLLOWER OF CHRIST. This happiness is heaven, with all its enjoyments, &c. It is described in the text, "Went in with Him into the marriage." Implies—1. Christ's gracious approval of them (John xvii. 24; Isa. xlii. 5; Rev. xix. 7, 9). 2. His people will be introduced by Him into heaven as the purchase of His blood, the travail of His soul, and the gems of His crown (John xiv. 1, 2). 3. They will be guests at the marriage feast. This denotes—(1) The consummation of the union of Christ with His Church, of which they will not only be the observant, but the participant (Isa. liv. 5; Hosea ii. 19; Eph. v. 25-27). This union will never be broken; it is an everlasting bond (Rev. iii. 12.) (2) That they dwell in His immediate presence, and in the most intimate fellowship and communion with Him—in a state of eternal rest and joy. (3) High festive enjoyment (Rev. vii. 14). (4) Social enjoyment. The guests may come from far, but they rejoice together (Heb. xii. 22, &c.). II. THE PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HEAVEN—"They were ready." Alluding to the wise who took oil, &c. This readiness is illustrated by the wedding garment (Matt. xxii. 11). What is the nature of spiritual preparation for death and an interview with our Judge, &c.? 1. It is Divine. Not self-righteousness; not external. 2. Spiritual enlightenment to discover our sinful, impure, and perishing state; and the method of God's salvation through Christ; and to see its superiority to every other promulgation. 3. Faith in the work of Christ. 4. Inherent righteousness, purity, &c., as effected by Divine energy; developed in practical conformity to the will of God. 5. Constant expectation of, and preparation for, the coming of Christ (2 Tim. iv. 8; Titus ii. 13). This preparation is real and lasting. It is both inward and outward. Not like the foolish virgins (ver. 7). III. THE SIGNIFICANT IMPORT OF THE DECLARATION—"And the door was shut." 1. As an intimation of the happiness and security of the wise (Rev. iii. 12). Adam was placed in Paradise; but the door was left open, and so he went out again; but in heaven the glorified saint will be shut in. 2. It intimates the doom of the wicked. Heaven will never be seen and enjoyed by sinners. Their probation is ended; their glad time is over. All the means of grace have passed away. The dispensation of the gospel is closed. All instruments employed to convert and to save will be employed no more. The Spirit

will strive no more. Hope is for ever past. Application: 1. Be thankful that the means of preparation are propounded by the gospel; "wise" persons will avail themselves of those means. 2. Let Christians be watchful; trim their lamps; the Bridegroom is at hand. 3. How awful to have the door shut against us! It will either open for us, or close against us. (*Helps for the Pulpit.*) *Reserves*:—I. This demand touches LIFE itself. Your doctor will tell you that the best thing you can do is to keep as fine a reserve of vitality as you can possibly store away, if you mean to give him a chance when some day he has to pull you through the sore conflict between life and death. How often is it said, "Nothing could be done for him because he had nothing to fall back upon; he used up all his life as he went along." Here then is the first meaning of "oil" in my vessel with my lamp. II. These reserves mean CHARACTER. We can store up character as we store up life: for searching emergencies we store up spiritual substance of manhood. III. These reserves mean ACHIEVEMENT. The power to do the grandest thing possible to your nature, when you feel you must, or some precious thing will be lost. To cube your power out of the latent stores. IV. WE CAN STORE UP OTHER AND BETTER THINGS AGAINST THE TRIAL OF THE SOUL. We can store up faith, hope, love, and whatever makes a Christian. (*R. Collyer, D.D.*) *Reserve power revealed in emergency*:—Reserves of life or light, of courage or character, of insight or endurance, or whatever the demand may be, for failing here, it is as when wells fail in a dry time, because they have no deepness or power to reach the perennial spring. That in our common life we may do as well as those about us, or even seem to be doing better, if we are reckless as to these reserves, while others are carefully storing them away. But such times are no test of a man or a manhood, any more than the piping times of peace, when they flame out in scarlet and gold about London, are a test of the Queen's guards; or than our own men were tested when they went southward through our streets with their music and banners. It is Waterloo and the Crimea, Chancellorsville and Ball's Bluff, and such grim backgrounds as these against which they must stand, before the matchless manhood of such men can come into bold relief and reveal itself finally. And so we can all run easily enough through our easy-going times, make good headway as we imagine, and hold our own with the best, but these days have no virtue in them to reveal this secret of our reserved power. They are like the main part of a voyage I made once across the Atlantic, in which the weather was so pleasant and all things ran so easily that I suspect the most of us felt about equal to the captain, and concluded it was no great thing to run a steamer after all, when you once got the lines. But when a great storm struck us as we passed Cape Race, and all night long the good ship shuddered and panted through the wild waters, and when, next morning, peering deckward, we saw the faithful fellow standing by the mainmast with his arms twisted about the ropes, swinging in the tempest, watching it with steady eyes, alert and cheerful, though he had been on deck all night, turning his ship round in the teeth of the tempest and the trough of the sea, so that she might escape the awful strain and the avalanche of waters which were filling men with dismay, then we knew our captain. The reserves were coming out. Here was a man nothing could daunt, and who, if the worst had come, would, no doubt, have seen still to our safety so far as he was able, and been the last to leave the wreck. That man had light in him and life equal to the demand—oil, in a word, in the vessel with his lamp, and so he brought the good ship, at last, to her haven, and won the "Well done." (*Ibid.*) *Reserve power helpful to achievement*:—When the great Duke of Bridgewater undertook to construct those canals which lie at the root of the vast wealth of modern England, and had their part in the splendour of this metropolis, he found the strain so hard at last that he was glad to get a note accepted for five pounds. He gave up his princely mansion, lived in a small house, and clad himself so humbly that one day as he was standing by a great pile of his own coal, a boy, thinking he was a common person, cried, "Here, man, give us a lift with this sack!" He loved his bit of humour, so took hold with the boy, and got for his thanks, "Ah, man, thou's big enough, but thou's lazy!" He came at last to the end of his reserves of money and courage, and on a Saturday night, sitting with Brindley, who had borne the burden with him, the mighty engineer said, "Well, Duke, don't be cast down, we are sure to pull through." They did pull through, and Brindley found the strength for it in the last drips of oil in the vessel, but he found it; and the result was the first splendid stroke which set England on her feet, and gave you the port you wanted in Liverpool. (*Ibid.*) *Reserve of faith*:—Because, to speak first of faith, we need not merely enough to live on through our ordinary experiences, but stores

of it to fall back on and draw on when ruin and disaster seem to have it all their own way. When we wake up suddenly to wonder whether God can be in heaven and we so forlorn on the earth; whether the Christ was not mistaken in His abiding confidence, and all the saints; and what better thing there can be left than just to grit our teeth and bear it. Millions have struck the same troubles, but have risen out of them through their reserves into the very life and light of God. No disaster has overcome them utterly; no trial broken them clean down. It was no matter that the heavens were black as midnight, except for the fierce pain of it—or that "from out waste nature came a cry and murmurs from the dying sun;" the reserves were there, and they drew on them to the last, and went in to the joy of the Lord. Poor creatures some of them, who could give no reason why they should hold on so and stay so cheerful, any more than the fountain can give a reason for its flowing, or the plant you find in some deserts for its store of cool water! They have been sending out roots far and wide, tapping the secrets of reserved power and storing up the treasure, and now nothing can exhaust them. The old Bible has been drawn on, and the stores open to them outside in thought and life; and, above all things, the inward and inexhaustible fountains of God's own blessing. No danger of the oil giving out; it burns clear away until they pass beyond the veil. (*Ibid.*) *Two kinds of parables*:—Parables are of two sorts. 1. Argumentative; wherein some notable reason is couched, or ground is laid for some excellent encouragement in our converse with God, by showing what falleth out among men. In these argumentative parables, the parts of the parables are not to be strained, but the scope and parable itself is to be regarded. 2. Representative. This sort yields us a notable delineation of some heavenly matter, by laying the scene of it among earthly affairs; for God is feign to lisp to us in our own dialect, and speaks as we can understand. This parable is of the latter sort. (*T. Manton*). *Scope of the parable*:—1. The thing compared—the "kingdom of heaven." II. The comparison itself—"likened to ten virgins." Who are described (1) by their quality or state; (2) by their number—ten (3) by their rank or distribution—five wise, five foolish; (4) by their work or employment—they went forth to meet the bridegroom; (5) by their preparation for that work—they took their hand-lamps. (*Ibid.*) *Oil both in lamps and vessels*:—I. Profession must not be neglected; both the wise and the foolish took their lamps with them. Burning profession is two-fold, vocal and real; by word and by life. II. Profession of godliness, though never so glorious, should not be rested in, without a saving work of grace upon the heart to maintain it. Grace must show forth, but withal it must have a bottom within; as a fountain or spring sendeth forth streams to water the ground about it, or the heart sendeth forth life and spirits to every faculty and member, so the graces of the Spirit in believers show forth in their carriage and behaviour, to make their tongue drop that which is savoury, their actions orderly and even, their carriage in all relations and affairs grave and serious. 'Tis well when all this hath a bottom, that there is a principle of life within, to diffuse this virtue into every part of their conversations. (*Ibid.*) *The Spirit as oil*:—The Spirit doth not give a draught, but the spring; not a dash of rain that is soon dried up, but a well; not a pond, that may be dried up at length, but a fountain that ever keepeth flowing, so that we shall never thirst more. Not a petty refreshment for a season, but His Spirit to dwell in us as a full fountain, to flow forth for the refreshment of himself and others. Though the ocean be in God, yet there is a river in the saints. (*Ibid.*) *The mistake of a little religion*:—It may be good words without practice; or practice without principle. Many talk well; their notions are high and strict, but observe them narrowly, and you will find them cold and careless; like the carbuncle, at a distance it seemeth all on fire, but touch it, and it is key-cold. "Be warmed, be clothed" will not pass for charity, nor opinions for faith, nor notions and elevated strains for godliness. You would laugh at him that would think to pay his debts with the noise of money; and instead of opening his purse, shake it: 'tis as ridiculous to think to satisfy God, or discharge our duty, by fine words, or heavenly language, without a heavenly heart or life. 'Tis not enough to do good, but we must get the habit of doing good; to believe, but we must get the habit of faith: to do a virtuous action, but we must have the habit of virtue; to perform an act of obedience, but we must get the root of obedience. (*Ibid.*) *Formalism easy*:—A form is easily gotten and maintained. Painted fire needs no fuel to keep it in. Vanishing affections are soon stirred. All excellent things have their incident difficulties, and nothing is gotten without diligence, labour, and serious-mindedness. (*Ibid.*) *Temporary grace*:—The grace of temporaries is good of its kind, but must not be rested in. 'Tis like priming the post, to make it receptive of other colours, 'tis an inchoate

imperfect thing. (*Ibid.*) *The reserve of oil*:—Oil, in Scripture, is the symbol of inward grace. Regarding the virgins as types of Christian disciples, whatever is merely outward in Christian profession is the lamp and light; whatever is inward and spiritual is the oil reserved in the vessels. The lesson is, be watchful and careful over the nourishing of the inner life. The foolish virgins are not hypocrites, but those too easily satisfied with profession, and too negligent of soul-culture. Illustrate—1. Setting out on profession. Some take up Christian life seriously, others lightly and confidently. Some inquire how it is to be maintained, others rest in present emotions, and vaguely hope all will go well. 2. Waiting on through years of Christian living. Profession has to be tested, and the test is, "keeping on living." Continuance is the severest of tests. 3. Failing or succeeding when the waiting-time is over. All will be well now, and all will be well for ever, if the life of love, and devotion, and trust, be kept up in our souls. How Jesus will find us when he comes depends on the "oil in our vessels." (*Selected.*) *The certainty of Christ's coming*: 1. Reason saith He may come. Argue from—1. the nature of God. 2. The providence of God. 3. The feelings of conscience. 4. Show the conveniency of such a day. II. If doubtful to reason, 'tis sure to faith. Faith argueth—1. From Christ's merit and purchase. 2. From Christ's affection to us. 3. From the affections of His saints to Him, which Christ will satisfy. 4. From the constitution of His Church. 5. From His promise. (*T. Manton.*) *The use of Divine delayings*:—The Lord tarrieth sometimes when men think He should come sooner. To come late is many times the best time. God keepeth back His best blessings for a while, and detaineth them long in His own hands before they come to us. Therefore wait His leisure. Expectation is tedious, and reckoneth every minute. Strong desires are importunate, and usually we go by an ill count; not by eternity, but time. The timing of all things is in God's hand: not left to our foolish fancies, but His wise ordering. The dial sometimes goeth before the sun; so doth our time before God's time. We would make short work for faith and patience, and so our graces would not be found to praise and honour. (*Ibid.*) *Ancient lamps*:—These are often elegant in form and elaborate in design. They are covered at the top, where there is a hole for pouring in the oil, while another at the side receives the wick; there is often a handle large enough to pass one finger through, for the purpose of holding it. These lamps are often adorned with graceful designs of heathen deities, or mythological subjects, of animals, and birds, and comic scenes. These were evidently hand-lamps, intended to be carried about the house; but when they were required to burn for a considerable time, they needed to be replenished, and a small earthern jar filled with oil was set near the lamp, as it now is, from which a new supply was added whenever the light grew dim. It was thus in the parable of the ten virgins; when the lamps had burned down with the long delay of the bridegroom, "the wise" virgins were enabled to replenish theirs, which "the foolish" could not do. (*Van Lennep.*) *The coming of the Eastern bridegroom*:—In Egypt, as well as other Oriental countries, the same usage still prevails:—"We heard the sound of music and mirth, and running to the window observed the glare of torches in the street. We were told that it was 'the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride.' Some of us instantly set out to witness the spectacle of an Eastern marriage. The bridegroom was on his way to the house of the bride. According to custom, he walked in procession through several streets of the town, attended by a numerous body of friends, all in their showy Eastern garb. Persons bearing torches went first, the torches being kept in full blaze by a constant supply of ready wood from a receiver, made of wire, fixed at the end of a long pole. Two of the torch-bearers stood close to the bridegroom, so that we had a view of his person. Some were playing upon an instrument not unlike our bagpipe, others were beating drums, and from time to time muskets were fired in honour of the occasion. . . . At length the company arrived at the entrance of the street where the bride resided. Immediately we heard the sound of many female voices, and observed by the light of the torches a company of veiled bridesmaids, waiting on the balcony to give notice of the coming of the bridegroom. When they caught sight of the approaching procession they ran back into the house, making it resound with the cry, 'Halil, halil, halil!' and music, both vocal and instrumental, commenced within. Thus the bridegroom entered in, and the door was shut! We were left standing in the street without, 'in the outer darkness.' In our Lord's parable, the virgins *go forth* to meet the bridegroom with lamps in their hands, but here they only waited for his coming. Still we saw the traces of the very scene described by our Lord, and a vivid representation of the way in which Christ shall come to His waiting Church, and the marriage supper of the Lamb

begin." (*Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews.*) *The visible Church is the kingdom of heaven*:—I. IN WHAT RESPECT THE VISIBLE CHURCH MAY BE COMPARED TO A KINGDOM. 1. Because it is under kingly government. 2. Because it is a distinct state from any other kingdom or sort of government. 3. Because every kingdom consisteth of divers sorts. 4. Because the same laws bind all sorts of persons within the compass of the kingdom. 5. Because ignorance of laws is not allowed in excuse of wrong-doing. 6. Because in every kingdom there is a statute book, and officers to govern. 7. Because in a kingdom all who violate the laws are called to account and punished. II. WHY IS THE CHURCH CALLED THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? Because—1. Its constitution and laws are not of this world. 2. The same King reigns as in heaven. 3. The doctrine, faith, order, rule, and government promote a heavenly life, and so lead to heaven. 4. The saints are the subjects of heaven. 5. The Church is the figure of heaven. 6. The Church ought to show the glory of heaven begun below. (*Benj. Keach.*) *Figure of Christians as virgins*:—Apply to both the male and female sex. 1. They are chaste and not defiled. 2. They are commonly the younger sort, and are of yielding or complying temper. 3. They are often (perhaps) tempted, but they yield not. 4. They are often espoused. 5. They delight to be clean and neatly dressed. 6. Virgins espoused have cordial affection, or dear love, to their bridegroom. 7. They love and delight in the company of each other. (*Ibid.*) *The folly of the foolish*:—It consisteth—I. In their attaining to some degree of the knowledge of the way of salvation, and yet having no interest in the blessed Saviour. II. In that they had the means but never used it; a price in their hands, but no heart to improve it. III. To sleep in harvest, or come to the market when it is over, certainly argues great folly in such persons. IV. Their folly consisteth in running the greatest hazard, and yet thinking themselves safe. V. It is not great folly to refuse to cut off a corrupt and rotten member, when told that death will inevitably ensue, or their life must go if it be not done. VI. Their folly consisteth in believing the father of lies, and in trusting in their own hearts, when nothing is more deceitful. VII. To value the good opinion, and having the approbation of men above the love of Christ, and the approbation of God, is folly with a witness. VIII. Their folly consisteth in losing the love, both of God and the world, and in exposing themselves to the wrath of God and men. (*Ibid.*) *Saving grace likened to oil*:—Grace is here compared to oil, from the qualities or nature thereof. 1. Oil is of a softening, a mollifying and healing nature. 2. Oil is contrary to scorpions, and expels poison; so is grace contrary also to Satan, that old serpent, and it also expels the poison of sin, and Satan's temptations. 3. Oil will not mingle or incorporate with other liquid things, but it will be always uppermost. 4. Oil is of a reviving nature, and opens obstructions, causing a man to breathe freely, so grace revives the soul. 5. Oil is of a feeding and fattening nature, as well as beautifying. 6. Oil makes the lamp burn, feeds it, and continues its light; so the grace of God in a believer makes his life, profession, and conversation to burn, and give much light. (*Ibid.*) *Slumbering saints*:—1. Sleep or spiritual drowsiness riseth from those gross vapours which seize on and clog the soul. 2 Slothfulness, or a careless and dull frame, hath a great tendency to produce sleep. 3. Wearisomeness, as when a man is tired out with his work, makes him sleepy in religious duties. 4. A dark and cloudy day easily puts us into a drowsy frame. 5. An apprehension that it is a great while to day, makes a man settle down to sleep again. 6. When a man apprehends no danger, he is apt to slumber in security. 7. Some distempers or diseases which seize upon the body cause an unusual sleepiness. 8. Surfeiting and drunkenness cause immoderate sleep. 9. A sleepy company that a man may be in will infect him with sleepiness. 10. Long watching tends to produce immoderate sleepiness. (*Ibid.*) *Trimming the lamps*:—The trimming of the lamp denotes the cleansing of it, and the taking off of the dead ashes that hinder the light, or prevent its burning so clearly as otherwise it would. Now what is this, but the putting away of all iniquity by faith and unfeigned repentance. Our conversation, or lamp of profession, is subject to gather filth, and the dead ashes of corruption often hinder the shinings of our lives, to the glory of God. Unbelief, deadness, earthliness, and self-confidence is like to a thief in the candle, or dead ashes in the wick of a lamp, and therefore must be snuffed by mortification, lest the spirit of God be grieved and depart from us, as to His quickening and comforting influences. (*Ibid.*) *The coming of the Lord Jesus*:—Doctrine: The Lord Jesus will come again, or appear the second time. 1. Prove that Christ shall or will come again. 2. Give some reasons why the Lord Christ will come again. 3. Show how He will appear. 4. Lay down a few of the signs of His coming. 5. Show how we

may be said to be ready. 6. Who are they that will not be ready? 7. Show what may be meant by shutting the door. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's knowing His own*:—1. The Lord Jesus did not know them to be His sheep. 2. He knows them not so as to approve of them. 3. Knowledge sometimes refers to love and affections. 4. Knowledge is sometimes taken for intimate communion, and they are such that never had this knowledge of Christ, or Christ of them. (*Ibid.*) *Works of supererogation*:—No man can be benefited by another man's grace and good works (I mean as to his personal and eternal salvation); none has any grace to spare for another, nor, if he had, has he any right or capacity to transfer or communicate it. I. No mere man in this life can fully and perfectly obey all the commandments of God, for how should a morally imperfect creature yield a full obedience to an every way perfect law? II. Though we cannot perform full and entire obedience to the law of God, yet this is still due from us to the Author of our being. Though we have lost our power to obey, God has not lost His right to command and require obedience of us. III. The obedience which God requires of us, is principally and chiefly that of the soul and inward man, and secondarily that of the body and outward man; which latter is of no value, but as it flows from, and is expressive of, the former. IV. The least defect in our obedience, much more an habitual revolt from God, is death by the original law, the law of innocency given to Adam in and at his creation; and habitual and final disobedience is no less so by the law of grace, the gospel remedying the law; and that with farther aggravation on account of unbelief, and our rejecting the only remedy, which infinite wisdom and love has provided for us, and offered to us. V. The impotency which we all labour under to fulfil the law of God, and perform His commands, is owing to the corruption of our natures, derived to us from the fall of our first parents, whereby we lost the image of God, and became as unstable and weak as water, naturally disinclined for every, and disabled for any good work. VI. Though no mere man hath, or ever can, fulfil the law of God, yet our Lord Jesus Christ hath perfectly obeyed it, and hath also suffered the curse due to our transgression of it, in such a way as to render it fit for God to forgive all them that believe on His name. VII. Though believers cannot perfectly obey all the commandments of God in this life, yet they are aiming at it, and making daily progress towards it. (*John Billingsley.*) *Readiness*:—I. Wherein doth this readiness consist? 1. Habitual readiness is to have "oil in their vessels"—that is, grace in the heart. Those who have a work of grace upon their hearts, (1) have been effectually called; (2) are justified by His grace; (3) are sanctified by the Spirit; (4) preserve herein to the end. 2. An actual readiness. When gracious souls have notice of their Lord's coming, they endeavour to put themselves in the best posture to receive Him. They are (1) sober; (2) vigilant; (3) watch unto prayer. II. What is implied in the saints entering in with Christ to the marriage? 1. They shall enter into the nearest relation to Jesus Christ. 2. They shall enter into the joy of their Lord. III. When Christ and His saints are entered into heaven, there will be neither going out nor coming in for ever. Application—1. There will be a certain and final separation between empty professors and real saints. 2. What a grievous loss will they sustain, who do not thoroughly attend to religion! 3. What a mercy it is that the door of the sanctuary is still open. (*S. Lavington.*) *Points of likeness and unlikeness in the ten virgins*:—They get the same name, virgins; they wear the same dress; they are on the same errand; they all have lamps; they all have vessels; they all slumber and sleep. They have thus many features in common. Man could not discern the difference, at least for the time. The peril of mere externalism is that which our Lord points out here. No doubt there must be externalism. Religion must have an outside as well as an inside. The lamp must not only have oil, but it must burn; the external must indicate the internal. And we may say that our Lord intimated the necessity of a thorough consistency and completeness in the outward religious life of a man, so that, as a fair external is no excuse for internal unsoundness or incompleteness, so a sound internal is no excuse for an inconsistent life. Our Lord, then, here depicts—(1) a complete externalism; (2) a beautiful externalism; (3) a deceptive externalism; (4) a prolonged externalism; (5) an unavailing externalism. Up to a certain point in a man's life, or character, or religion, externalism may avail; but beyond that it gives way; it exhibits its unprofitableness. This externalism may not always be hypocrisy, but it is imitation. It is not the flower in its natural colour and growth, but painted, artificial. . . . Though in most respects they were all alike, yet there was a difference. It was within; it was imperceptible from without; it could only be discovered when the bridegroom came. Only then the want came out in the

foolish. Then was it seen who were wise, and who were foolish. That day is the day of certain and unerring detection. It is the day of weighing in the balances. It is the separation of the false from the true. . . . Thus a man may be very much like a Christian, and yet not be one. He may come very near the kingdom, and yet not enter in. He may have all the outward features of a Christian, and yet be lacking in the main one. He may have the complete dress of the saint, and yet not be one. He may have a good life, a sound creed, a strict profession; he may be one who says and does many things excellent; he may be a subscriber to all the religious societies in the land, a member of all their committees, or a speaker at all their meetings, and supporter of all their plans; he may profess to be looking for Christ's coming, and going forth to meet the Bridegroom, yet not necessarily a Christian! He may lack the oil, the Holy Spirit. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *History of a conversion*:—While spending a week recently in the society of a number of faithful pastors from the Canton of Vaud, one of them, at a public meeting, related to us the conversion of a lady in his parish. She was one of those who live only for this world; the thoughts of her sins had never caused her uneasiness; she was careful and troubled about many things, but neglected the one thing needful. One night, while alone in her room, she saw the lamp which lighted it suddenly go out. Although she was alone, she said aloud (thinking only of the accident which left her in the dark), "There is no oil in the lamp!" The words thus spoken echoed in the room and sounded in her ears, but with a new sense. She recalled the parable of the five foolish virgins who had no oil, and whose lamps had gone out at the coming of the bridegroom; and from that moment, day and night, the word of God remained in her soul, as an arrow remains in the side of a stag who flies away from the hunters. It recurred to her constantly—"No, I have no oil in my lamp! My God! what will become of me?" She was filled with fear; then she began to pray, and continued in prayer until God answered her favourably, and gave her His peace. *Unreal religion*:—They were not lighted lamps, but sparks of their own tinder-boxes; fantastical fire, an *ignis fatuus*, a painted flame, which neither heats nor lights. The glow-worm seems to have both heat and light, but touch it, and it hath neither. Alchemy gold may seem brighter and better than true gold, but it can neither pass the seventh fire, nor comfort the heart as a cordial: so here. A man may live by a form, but he cannot die by it. They that kindle a fire, but not of God's sanctuary, and compass themselves about with precious sparks, they may walk here for a while in the light of their fire, and in the sparks that they have kindled. But when all is done, this is all they shall have of God's hand—they shall lie down in sorrow (Isa. l. 11). (*John Trapp.*) *Half the virgins lost*:—An army would be very cautious if they knew beforehand that one-half of them should be destroyed. (*T. Manton.*) *Wisdom and folly*:—Now wisdom lieth in providence, and folly in negligence, especially in weighty matters. (*Ibid.*) *Righteousness cannot be shared*:—In point of power, they have no power to transfuse and put over their righteousness to another; as a man cannot divide and part his life between him and another. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the only grace-giver*:—Such a difference there is between the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints. He can give us of His oil, and will do it, will not deny those that seek it humbly and seasonably, and have enough Himself; as the "precious ointment upon Aaron's head and beard ran down to the skirts of his garments" (Psa. cxxxiii. 2), so doth Christ the Head communicate His gifts and graces to all His members. (*Ibid.*) *The kingdom of heaven on earth*:—Because here is the very glory of heaven begun, that look as the same sun which fills the stars with glory; the very same beams touch the earth also, so the same glory which shines in heaven shines into the poor Church here (1 Pet. v. 10). God hath called His people into His eternal glory. (*T. Shepard.*) *How the soul comes to be espoused to the Lord Jesus*:—1. The soul beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus, makes choice of Him. (1) With the whole soul. (2) Everlastingly. (3) Above all others. 2. The soul hence gives itself, like one espoused to her husband, to the Lord Jesus (Cant. ii. 16). 3. The soul hence takes full contentment in the Lord Jesus, as a spouse hath enough, would not change for all the world, as Peter when he had a glimpse of Christ's day. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's love*:—1. It is a real love. 2. It is fervent and earnest. 3. It is constant. 4. It is pure. What His love will do for us: 1. It will set us next Himself in honour. 2. He will enrich thee. 3. He will counsel thee. 4. He will dwell with thee. 5. He will rejoice with thee. 6. He will comfort thee. (*Ibid.*) *Faith is a lamp; and yet faith may not save*:—It may be wanting in the love which purifies the heart, and it may be the gift of logic and not the gift of God, an intellectual apprehension and nothing more. A man may work out

many principles and nothing efficiently; a lamp is for guidance; men are not saved by the lamp, nor without the lamp. Perhaps you remember how an old king of Sweden, walking on the road to Upsala, once had a long conversation with a farmer about religion, and it haunted him, for the farmer spoke of his feelings on religion with so much peace and rest and satisfaction. When the king lay on his deathbed, and his mind was disturbed, the Archbishop of Upsala came to him. "What is faith?" said the king, and the archbishop discoursed to him eloquently and logically. "Ah," said the king, "that is all very ingenious! But it is not comfortable—it is not what I want; it's nothing, after all; what I want is the farmer's faith—nothing but the farmer's faith will do for me now." The lamp of faith is only an instrument. It needs the oil; "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Therefore arise and trim the lamp. (*Paxton Hood.*) *Knowledge an oilless lamp*:—Knowledge! Lamp of the ages, observatory of the nations, the torch waving its fires over the race to light it on. Your knowledge pierces the recesses of self, it cannot be a statement coldly shining like a distant beam; it is inner, inner—it is consciousness. Have you any knowledge of which you can really say We know?—knowledge like that I have of the bones of some ancient antediluvian creature, knowledge like that I have of a mummy, an hieroglyph on a Rossetta stone, knowledge of a clime I have never seen, of a distant planet or constellation? This will not do, this is all an oilless lamp—a romance about Jesus of Nazareth will not do; I must know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. A creed about Christianity will not do. A philosophy of Christianity will not do. Deeper, deeper—"I know whom I have believed." Oh, be ye sure of this, for there is much of the other, and it is oilless. This knowledge lives—is a part of the very being; therefore arise and trim this lamp. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 10. **And the door was shut.**—*The shut door*:—I. EXCLUSION. 1. Necessary for the sake of the redeemed. One guest who does not enter into the spirit of your festivity robs your friends of their joy. 2. Necessary when we regard the sinner himself. II. FINALITY OF EXCLUSION. The word here used for "shut" does not mean simply "to close to," but to shut that it cannot be opened—"to lock." The door is open now. (*D. F. Jarman, B.A.*) *The closed door*:—I. THE CHARACTERS IN DANGER OF THIS GREAT CALAMITY. 1. The mere religious professor. 2. The procrastinating. II. WHAT IS THE DOOR WHICH IS SHUT. 1. The door of repentance will be shut. 2. The door of religious opportunity and of hope. 3. The door of "glory, honour, and immorality" will be shut. (*D. Moore.*) *The door was shut*:—1. The door of heaven was shut. 2. The door of mercy was shut. 3. The door of hope was shut. 4. The door of hell was shut. (*W. Hare, M.A.*) *The gates closed*:—Two readings of the text. I am glad some gates will be closed. 1. The persecutions of this world cannot get through the gate of heaven. 2. The fatigues of life will not get through the gate. 3. The bereavements of life will not get through the gate. There will be some persons who will come up to that gate at last who will not be admitted. 1. The outrageously wicked and abandoned most certainly cannot get in. 2. The door of heaven will not open to those who are depending upon their morality for salvation. 3. The gate of heaven will not open for the merely hollow professor. 4. All infidels and sceptics will be kept out. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Lost opportunities*:—1. Let us consider how easily this may happen with respect to outward blessings and opportunities in life. Take education; friendship; wealth; personal capacity; the value of these is often missed till it is too late. Thus as the years pass, we listen in life to the sound of the closing doors as, one after another, they strike upon the ear of the soul and of the conscience. 2. The door is shut for each of us as we draw our last breath. There is no repentance in the grave. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The door an emblem of separation*:—A door is a barrier which often separates two very unlike scenes. On one side, for instance, are green fields, and bright sunshine, and running streams, and happy laughter. On the other, the manacled forms of listless prisoners, the dark cell, the moan of despair, the vision of death. Or, outside are wild, sobbing, wintry winds, driving showers of hail and sleet, homeless wanderers, friendless outcasts; inside, bright light, abundant food, a warm hearth, and a cheerful circle of friends. Between such opposite scenes as these there is only a door. The real question in all such cases is, "Can I open that door? Can I pass through it?" If not, all the waters of the sea, all the mountains of the world, could not form a stronger barrier. (*G. Tugwell, M.A.*) *The door was shut—rejection of the wicked*:—Dreadful to be read or heard; but much more so to be experienced. Oh,

foolish virgins; foolish indeed. All their labour is now lost, and they themselves too. Separated from the wise virgins, their fellows, and from God. I. The "door" primarily the door of heaven, and with it the door of (1) opportunity; (2) pity; (3) hope. II. Awfulness of this. (1) It is God who shuts the door. (2) No other way of entrance. (3) Might once have entered. (4) Others are in and we shut out. III. Improvement. (1) Terror of wicked. (2) Happiness of saints. (3) Distinction between saints and sinners is a lasting one. (*B. Beddome, A.M.*) *Lost opportunities*:—In the spiritual world as well as in the natural world there is a seed-time, and unless you sow your seed in the seed-time it will rot in the ground. What would you think of the farmer who said, "It is not quite convenient for me to sow the corn at the time when the other farmers are sowing it. I very much prefer to enjoy myself, and go my own way, and do what I like. God is a God of love and mercy, and He is also omnipotent, and He certainly would not wish that my wife and children should starve for want of food; so I will sow my seed in the summer, and then God in His omnipotent mercy will cause it to bring forth a harvest, and I shall have a supply, and my wife and children will be provided with food." Do you think this man's strange idea about the love of God will alter the facts of the case? I tell you that while he is talking thus he is deliberately violating the laws of God revealed by nature, and as he deliberately violates the laws of God on selfish grounds, without the slightest necessity, and wantonly, that man shall put his seed into the ground and talk about the love of God, and his seed shall rot before his eyes and his children shall die of starvation, the love of God notwithstanding. You must sow at the right time, or it will not spring up. (*H. P. Hughes, M.A.*) *Shut doors*:—Thus, as the years pass, we listen in life to the sound of the closing doors as, one after another, they strike upon the ear of the soul and of the conscience. We hear them proclaiming that a something which once was ours, and for the use of which we still have to answer, is ours no longer. We hear them more often, we hear them louder, as the time flies past; and thus in their frequency and their urgency they lead us up towards a climax when there will be the closing of a door and none beyond it—the door of our individual probation at death, the door of all probations at the last judgment. Place the last judgment in the light of that aspect of life on which we have been dwelling, and it is seen in its essential character and principle to be not an innovating catastrophe as much as the result to which the lesser catastrophes of life steadily point onward. It is the final term of many experiences which lead up to it. As by a continuous analogy it exhibits visibly, and on a scale of unimagined vastness, that judgment of God which is ever going forward invisibly, and, with individuals, bringing to a close first one and then another sphere and department of our responsibility, until the account is sufficiently made up to be closed in whatever sense, until the time has come when all accounts can be closed, and the last hour for the world of moral beings of their probation has clearly sounded in the providence of God. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The feeling of exclusion*:—The poet Cowper tells us that, when under conviction of sin, he dreamed that he was walking in Westminster Abbey, waiting for prayers to begin. "Presently I heard the minister's voice, and hastened towards the choir. Just as I was upon the point of entering, the iron gate under the organ was flung in my face, with a jar that made the Abbey ring. The noise awakened me; and a sentence of excommunication from all the churches upon earth could not have been so dreadful to me as the interpretation which I could not avoid putting upon this dream." *Too late*:—Have you not felt a fainting of heart, and a bitterness of spirit, when, after much preparation for an important journey, you have arrived at the appointed place, and found that the ship or train by which you had intended to travel had gone with all who were ready at the appointed time, and left you behind? Can you multiply finitude by infinitude? Can you conceive the dismay which will fill your soul if you come too late to the closed door of heaven, and begin the hopeless cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us"? (*Wm. Arnot.*) *The door of doom*:—A lady, who heard Whitefield in Scotland preach on these words, being placed between two dashing young men, but at a considerable distance from the pulpit, witnessed their mirth, and overheard one say, in a low tone, to the other, "Well, what if the door *be* shut? Another will open." Thus they turned off the solemn words of warning. Mr. Whitefield had not proceeded far when he said, "It is possible there may be some careless, trifling person here to-day, who may ward off the force of this impressive subject by lightly thinking, 'What matter if the door be shut? Another will open.'" The two young men were paralyzed, and looked at each other. Mr. Whitefield proceeded: "Yes: another *will* open. And

I will tell you what door it will be: it will be the door of the bottomless pit!—the door of hell!—the door which conceals from the eyes of angels the horrors of damnation!" *The duty of watching for the Lord's coming*:—Many things should make us look and long for the Lord's coming. A sense of justice should have this effect. He suffered here; should He not rejoice here? He was put to shame here; should he not be glorified here? He was judged and condemned here; should He not rule and reign here? He laboured here; should He not rest here? Love to Christ should have the same effect. When a friend whom we greatly love is absent, don't we often think of him? and if we hope that he will soon return, do we not long for it, and count the months and days that intervene? If you are expecting a friend, say from India, does not your nimble mind seem to go with him all the way home? You say, Now he is passing the Sunderbunds, now crossing the Bay of Bengal, now at the Point de Galle, now in the Indian Ocean, now in the Red Sea, now passing through the Desert, now in the Mediterranean, and now sighting our shores. If we did not so often go to the Bible, with a veil upon our faces—an extinguisher upon our heads—we should see that the thought of Christ's coming was far more present to the mind of the early Christians than it is to ours. (*John Milne.*) *The benefits of watching for the Lord's coming*:—It quickens to care and diligence. He was a shrewd man who said, "The eye of the master is worth a dozen overseers." I remember once living at a place where a large number of people were constantly employed in keeping the walks, grounds, and gardens in order. The proprietor was absent, and everything had a sleepy, slovenly look. But when tidings came that he would soon return, all became awake, earnest, and active. The pruning, the rolling, the weeding, the sweeping, went on amain; none rested till all was ready; and all were gratified by the look and word of approval, when the master came. And so, if we constantly felt, "I know not the day or hour that my Lord may come," it would exercise a salutary influence on our whole character and conduct. It would keep us from much sin and folly; it would keep us from wearying and despondency; it would keep us always ready, in that frame of mind, and that employment of time, in which we should like Him to find us. It would keep us from being absorbed with earthly things; it would regulate our affections, connections, and recreations. Shall I go where I would not like my Lord to find me? Shall I tie myself to those whom I must leave behind when the Lord comes? If you were always watching, you would have a constant sense of readiness, and so a constant peace of mind. If you were always watching, it would have an effect on those among whom you live; it would either condemn or awaken them. We know the watchman on the streets at night. He has his lamp; he is on the outlook; he is not sauntering idly along; he has an object. But, you say, would not all these ends be answered by thinking of death, that it will come, and may come at any time,—oh! how suddenly in these last times, both on land and sea? Well, in many respects this would have the same effect. But do you habitually watch for death? Is it always present to your thoughts, influencing your whole character and conduct? If your mind is like mine, you will honestly answer No. Death is not a pleasant object of contemplation,—that death-struggle, that death-dew, that parting with loved friends, that cold, lonely grave! But, blessed be the Lord, He does not bid us watch for death; He bids us watch for Himself. (*Ibid.*) *Uncertainty of the time of our Lord's advent a motive for watching*:—Take heed of slackening the spring, of weakening the motive, by introducing the idea that a long period must elapse, that great changes and revolutions must take place, before the Lord can come. Take heed of this, for it will certainly diminish your freshness, spirituality, love, and zeal. I marvel at the presumption of mortal men, who take it upon them to fix how near, or how distant, that coming is. Christ, when on earth, said distinctly, No man knows it; angels do not know it; I myself know it not. He says, "All that My Father hath showed Me, I have made known to you," but this a thing which My Father at present has not seen fit to show Me. He has kept it in His own power. We can see the Divine wisdom of this reticence. The element of uncertainty is just the tempering of the spring,—what gives it an unchanging elasticity in all generations. If men knew the exact time, the whole world would be on the *qui vive*. Flesh and blood could then take cognizance of it; and this high, holy, spiritual motive would degenerate into a mere carnal, sensational thing. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 14–30. **Who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.**—*Life a journey*:—1. There is a variety of circumstances which will attend the believer

in his journey through life. 2. Moreover travellers need not to be told that the weather during their different journeys is not uniformly the same. 3. In point of affluence and fortune all the travellers to Canaan are not alike. 4. A passenger to Zion, like most travellers, must expect to meet with different kinds of company on the road. 5. When persons undertake a journey to a distant unknown country it is not unusual to have recourse to a guide. 5. Also a guard is necessary, as the way to heaven is infested with robbers. 6. There is no convenient travelling without a competent supply of provisions. (*W. J. Hall, M.A.*) *Unequal gifts*:—Let us see what Jesus Christ does not say. 1. He does not say that the Master loves those least to whom He gives least. 2. He does not say that the Master acts capriciously, but in wisdom. 3. He does not say that this inequality lasts beyond the time of trial, beyond the present life. Inequality (1) A fact. (2) A social bond. (3) We should contend against all the inequalities of the present life which can hurt the moral destiny of our fellow creatures. (4) The attitude which God takes towards humanity in the short period which we call history. He appears absent. (*E. Bersier.*) *The servants at work*:—1. The commendation of human industry which passed from the lips of Christ. 2. The gifts of God are multiplied in faithful hands. The gospel is life and power: it is prolific. Christ enlarges man. (*Ibid.*) *The account to be rendered*:—There is an account to be given. Mediocrity has its temptations: 1. Envy. 2. Ingratitude. 3. Contempt of duty. 4. After indolence the impiety which blasphemes. (*Ibid.*) I. THE OFFICE SUSTAINED, a servant of God. 1. Diversity of talent. 2. Diversity of sphere. II. THE CHARACTER ATTACHED TO THE DISCHARGE OF THIS OFFICE. "Good and faithful." 1. In a desire to be governed by our Master's will. 2. Love to our Master's service. 3. Diligence in our Master's work. 4. Rejoicing in the Master's triumphs. III. THE RECOMPENSE BY WHICH THE OFFICE IS TO BE CROWNED. A recompense of—1. Acknowledgment. 2. Exaltation. 3. Pleasure, "joy of thy Lord." (*J. Parsons.*) *The parable of the talents*:—I. THAT OUR DIVINE REDEEMER IS CONSTITUTED THE HEAD AND LORD OF THE CHRISTIAN ECONOMY. II. THAT IN THIS EXALTED CAPACITY HE BESTOWS A VARIETY OF TALENTS UPON THE CHILDREN OF MEN. Time is a talent. Intellectual power is a talent. Moral capacity is a talent. Religious opportunity is a talent. Relative influence is a talent. III. THAT HE WHO HAS IMPARTED THESE TALENTS RIGHTEOUSLY DEMANDS THEIR IMPROVEMENT. IV. THE PERIOD WILL ARRIVE WHEN HE WILL COME TO DEMAND AN ACCOUNT. While the investigation will be inclusive, it will embrace each individual. It will be impartial. The result will be joyful and solemn. (*G. Smith.*) *Talents*:—What is it to trade with what God has given us, and how does the increase come? 1. Whatever God commits to us, gift or grace, has within itself a tendency to grow. The secret of worldly success is—1. To set about at once to make the best use of whatever we have. God often puts a good thought into the mind; do not trifle, but make the best of it. Christ will come again. Love can be thus enlarged, the intellect, memory. Consecrated time becomes larger time. Specially happy the man who has put millions of minds into God's bank. Money. 2. Make a good investment by investing in eternity. 3. You are sure of good security, the promise and fidelity of God. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Faithful service and its reward*:—This portion of the Divine word, while bearing on one great truth, was intentionally fitted to a great many truths. Such as the following: I. As Christians, WE ARE SERVING AN UNSEEN MASTER. Our Lord is here compared to one who hath gone to a far country. II. He hath gone to RECEIVE TO HIMSELF A KINGDOM (Luke xix. 12; Matt. xxv. 21, &c.) The conflict is past and the labour is ended. He is exalted to the Father's right hand, &c. His people acknowledge Him to be their king. III. In the absence of this heavenly Prince a great AND RESPONSIBLE CHARGE IS DEVOLVED UPON HIS SERVANTS (ver. 14.) His servants are charged with perpetuating and administering the affairs of His kingdom. They are the living depositories of His truth. They are not only to conserve the truth, but to diffuse it, &c. IV. IT IS A LONG TIME ERE THE LORD OF THOSE SERVANTS COMETH AND RECKONETH WITH THEM. In some of its aspects life is short; in others it is long—very long. How long does it sometimes seem to watch with your Lord only one hour? And so, the slothful servant says, My Master delayeth His coming; and the foolish virgins sink into sleep; and the soul who is like a bride adorned for her husband asks, "Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming?" V. THE RESULTS OF WORK DONE FOR CHRIST REMAIN. When the talents are used they grow by use, and increase for God. VI. VARIED AND ABUNDANT REWARDS ARE RESERVED FOR THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF CHRIST. He who had gone into the far country comes back invested with honour and power to raise others to honour. He is able

to give rule. Putting aside the imagery, may we not picture what would be the actual blessedness of a faithful servant thus applauded, and thus more than repaid. No commendation like the Master's "well done." Every faithful servant shall have praise of God. The holy felicity has within it the means of its own replenishment. It is His joy we go to share. "Be thou faithful," &c. (*S. M'All.*) *The replenishment of heavenly felicity*:—In the present world it cannot be denied that sweet as peace is, even peace may be monotonous; and coveted as joy is, it is the very nature of joy to subdue the appetite that gave to it its relish. But it is His joy we go to share. Eternity will seem as natural to you as time seems now. Heaven, with all its effulgence, will not dazzle you, and that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory will not for a moment be oppressive to your soul. But surely something of the felicity of that state would form part of your experience if you would only believe that, imperfect as you are, you are really dear to Christ. Oh, do not think that He will begin to love you when you reach a world where there is nothing but love. Your danger, your struggle, your sorrow, attract at least the sympathy of this Friend in heaven. Your services, they are not wholly disregarded. Jesus loves you—loves you as you are, and, in a measure, for what you are as well as for what you shall be. The potter values the clay while it is yet upon the wheel, and when it is far from having reached the shape of beauty he designs to give it. The refiner prizes the silver long before the dross is entirely purged away, and the master's countenance is reflected there. Oh, thou afflicted one, tossed to and fro and not comforted—poor, timid, heir of heaven—you call yourself only vileness; not thus do you seem to your Saviour. "Since thou wast precious in My sight," He says, "thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." (*Ibid.*) *The entrusted talents*:—This parable, a needful complement to the story of the virgins; outward exertion must be combined with inward character. We must work as well as wait. I. We have here AN EXPLANATION OF THE DIVERSITY WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS IN THE MATTER OF OPPORTUNITY OF SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF THE REDEEMER. We observe the fact that there is such a diversity. These talents do not denote the original endowments which men bring into the world with them, or the possessions into which they come by birth. These are gifts of God; but the reference here is rather to those opportunities which have been given to men in consequence of their abilities and environment. In His bestowment of spiritual opportunities Christ has regard to the natural abilities and providential surroundings of each man; and as in the sovereignity of God there is a diversity in the latter, so in the gracious administration of Christ, there is like diversity in the former. No man has more opportunities of service than he can avail himself of to the full. If Christ has given you one talent, it is because at present He sees you cannot handle more. II. THAT NEW OPPORTUNITIES COME TO US WITH OUR IMPROVEMENT OF THOSE WHICH WE ALREADY HAVE. By utilizing what we have, we get what we have not. The foundation of colossal fortunes have been laid in the taking advantage of little opportunities. The true method of increasing our sphere is to fill to overflowing that in which we are. So heaven shall give new opportunities of service to men who have made the most faithful use of earth. Faithful service widens opportunity. III. THE RESULT OF NEGLECTING OPPORTUNITY. 1. What is said concerning the man with one talent. It is not alleged that he wasted his master's goods; he simply neglected his opportunities. He was not notoriously wicked, but left undone what he had ability to do. Life is to be made productive. Many are content to do nothing because they cannot do some great thing. He who buried one talent would have buried five, his failure was in his character. 2. He cherished wrong views of God. All wrongness of conduct is based on a wrong view of God. Two things are to be said: 1. The more rigorous God is supposed to be, the more surely He will punish unfaithfulness. 2. It is not true that God is thus austere. The love of God must constrain us. IV. The SENTENCE PRONOUNCED on the unprofitable servant. Here is a clear end of probation. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The parable of the talents*:—I. The parable assumes that all who call Christ "Lord and Master," will find some work to do for Him, and even some distinctively spiritual work. We have all some "goods" of Christ's entrusted to us, and some capacity for using them. However inequitably this world's goods may be divided, in the spiritual realm every man may take and do as much as he can. Who is to hinder us from being as self-denying, as lowly in spirit as we care to be? Our ability is the only measure and limit of our duty as well as of our right. II. That the term of service is to be followed by a day of judgment, in which every man's work will be tried, and either approved or condemned. III. The reward of faithful service will be enlarged

capacity and scope for service. The Christian reward is above suspicion; it is the power to do more work. It is a reward after which all must yearn. IV. The spirit and character of our service will depend on our conception of the Divine character and spirit. V. That those who have but slender capacities for service may turn them to the best account by associating themselves with others, and helping in a common work. Help to work in some organization. VI. That the rewards are not arbitrary, but reasonable and meritable. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *Great talents and small:*—I. That becoming a Christian is merely GOING OUT TO SERVICE. It is a voluntary service; not forced. II. DIFFERENT QUALIFICATIONS ARE GIVEN TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. III. The grace of God was intended to be ACCUMULATIVE. Take the one talent and make it two. IV. INFERIORITY OF GIFTS IS NO EXCUSE FOR INDOLENCE. V. There is going to be a day of SOLEMN SETTLEMENT. VI. That our degrees of happiness in heaven will be graduated according to OUR DEGREES OF USEFULNESS ON EARTH. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Each man has his appropriate gift:*—You are to understand that there are different qualifications for different individuals. There is a great deal of ruinous comparison when a man says: "Oh, if I only had that man's faith, or that man's money, or that man's eloquence, how I would serve God." Better take the faculty that God has given you and employ it in the right way. The rabbis used to say, that before the stone and timber were brought to Jerusalem for the Temple every stone and piece of timber was marked; so that before they started for Jerusalem, the architects knew in what place that particular piece of timber or stone should fit. And so I have to tell you we are all marked for some one place in the Great Temple of the Lord, and do not let us complain, saying: "I would like to be the foundation stone, or the cap stone." Let us go into the very place where God intends us to be, and be satisfied with the position. (*Ibid.*) *Better to use one talent well than five wickedly:*—The man who kindled the fire under the burnt offering in the ancient temple had a duty as imperative as that of the high priest, in magnificent robes, walking into the Holy of Holies under the cloud of Jehovah's presence. Yes, the men with one talent are to save the world, or it will never be saved at all. The men with five or ten talents are tempted to toil chiefly for themselves, to build up their own great name, and work for their own aggrandizement, and do nothing for the alleviation of the world's woes. The cedar of Lebanon standing on the mountain seems to hand down the storms out of the heavens to the earth, but it bears no fruit, while some dwarf pear-tree has more fruit on its branches than it can carry. Better to have one talent and put it to full use than five hundred wickedly neglected. (*Ibid.*) *Ordinary talents do most of the work:*—I am glad that the chief work of the Church in this day is being done by the men of one talent. Once in awhile, when a great fortress is to be taken, God will bring out a great field-piece and rake all with the fiery hail of destruction. But common muskets do most of the hard fighting. (*Ibid.*) *The grace of God was intended to be accumulative:*—When God plants an acorn, He means an oak, and when He plants a small amount of grace in the heart, He intends it to be growthful and enlarge until it overshadows the whole nature. (*Ibid.*) *The talents:*—I. WHAT WAS COMMITTED TO THEM. 1. It was a responsible trust. 2. It was not alike in the case of all. It differed not in nature, but in amount. 3. It was regulated by a certain principle—"To every man according to his several ability." II. WHAT WAS DONE BY THEM. 1. The faithful. 2. The slothful. (1) A spirit of dissatisfaction; (2) or this servant may have felt that it was in vain for him to exert himself, on the ground that his means were so limited. (3) Again, this servant may have been one of those timid, over-cautious persons, who, lest they should do wrong, do nothing. We should "add to our faith, fortitude." III. THE ACCOUNT REQUIRED OF THEM. 1. It was delayed for a considerable period. 2. Highly gratifying in the case of those who were first summoned. (1) An emphatic expression of approval. (2) Promotion to a state of high dignity and honour. (3) The enjoyment of transporting bliss. The case of the other servant. 3. Unsatisfactory in its nature, and most serious in its results. (1) A foolish plea. (2) A withering rebuke. (3) A peremptory command. (4) A fearful doom. (*Expository Outlines.*) *One talent:*—I. THE REASON OF HIS CONDUCT. 1. He may have believed he could do nothing worth accomplishing with one talent. 2. He may have been envious of others. 3. Dissatisfaction with the distribution of the talents may have caused his inactivity. 4. Want of interest in his master's success. 5. He may have neglected his master's work for his own. II. WHETHER ANY OF THESE MOTIVES WILL JUSTIFY HIM. 1. Does dissatisfaction with God's government of the world constitute a just excuse for inactivity? Yes; if it is unjust. I have a right to resent injustice. Is God's government

unjust. Faith says "No." Vain excuse. (1) Because God had a right to do what He would with His own. (2) Because the responsibility was proportioned to the gift. 2. Will his belief that no very great thing could be accomplished with one talent justify him. (1) You misunderstand God if you think He takes no account of little things. (2) He not only notices but prizes little things. The two mites. (3) One-talented men are the true workers of the world. (4) It is the multitude of them that builds up the mighty result. 3. But is the servant justified in supposing that his own interests must first be considered before his master's? Certainly there are many who are now pleading this: "I will attend to God's matters one day—my own absorb my attention now." No justification in this: (1) Because God commands you to study His interests first. (2) Because, you being merely His steward, this is just. (3) Because, you being the creature of His hands and His servant, it is doubly just. (4) Because this is the true way to advance your own interests. (See Trench on Parables, p. 281, for an apt illustration.) III. CONCLUSION. Have any of you buried talents? Dig them up and begin this glorious career of working. (*The Southern Pulpit.*) *Human responsibility*:—I. ALL THAT WE HAVE, AND, INDEED, ALL THAT WE ARE, BELONGS TO GOD. 1. We have nothing that we can call our own—ourselves, our possessions, &c. We are servants—under authority, &c. God's authority over us is entire and unlimited. 2. God has entrusted us with "His goods"—(1) Minds and bodies endowed with numerous and admirable powers. (2) More or less of worldly substance. (3) Positions of influence and authority. (4) The Sabbath, &c. II. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TALENTS IN DIFFERENT NUMBERS OR PROPORTIONS. 1. Whether the term "talents" should be applied to all the powers, possessions, and opportunities for usefulness which the Lord of heaven confers upon His servants, or only those which are most eminent and valuable in the possession of each of them, admits of doubt. 2. Their unequal distribution illustrates in various ways the Divine perfections. It manifests His sovereignty, in doing as He pleases with His own; His goodness, as we have no claim or merit; His wisdom, in their adaptation to each. III. THE TALENTS ARE IMPROVABLE. They may be increased in value by wisdom and fidelity in their consecration to the Redeemer's service. IV. THE CERTAINTY OF THE DAY OF RECKONING, HOWEVER IT MAY BE DELAYED. The results of death and judgment and eternity are not the less sure because some wish they were doubtful or uncertain, nor are they the less near because some choose to think of them as distant. V. THE TREATMENT OF THE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS. As their diligence and their faithfulness had been alike, a similar reward is given to each, and both are commended in the very same words. Confessed, unnumbered sins must, from the nature of the case, be rewards, "not of debt, but of grace." What a generous Master we have! His "Well done!" will be honour and bliss that shall captivate and enrapture as can no earthly delights. VI. THE DOOM OF THE SERVANT WHO HAD BUT ONE TALENT, AND HID IT IN THE EARTH, IS MINUTELY DESCRIBED. The ground of his condemnation. His sin was slothfulness. All his pleas were poor pretences. It was right that he should be deprived, while others were enriched. There can be no valid excuse for not serving God. (*T. D. Crothers.*) *Fidelity in the service of God*:—Explain the nature of fidelity. I. Fidelity requires A KNOWLEDGE OF OUR OBLIGATIONS, and, therefore, those who wish to be faithful will endeavour to obtain clear and correct views of what they are bound to do. II. It requires an enlightened view of the GROUNDS OF THOSE OBLIGATIONS. Without this there can be no rational desire or fixed purpose to discharge them. III. It requires SUPERIORITY OVER ALL CONFLICTING TENDENCIES. A man may have a desire to do his duty, and he may have a general purpose to perform it, but then may be too weak to withstand temptation. Fidelity in the service of God requires, therefore: 1. A knowledge of what He would have us do, as men, in all our relations of life, as Christians or as ministers. 2. Such views of our relation to Christ, and our obligations to Him, as shall awaken in us the desire to do His will, and lead us to form the purpose that we will in all cases endeavour to perform it. 3. Such a strength of this desire and such firmness of this purpose as render them actually controlling over our whole inward and outward life. IV. From this statement of THE DUTY IT IS PLAIN—1. That it is a very simple one. 2. It is a very comprehensive duty. It, in fact, includes all others. 3. It is one of constant obligation. 4. It is obviously exceedingly difficult. It supposes the renunciation of ourselves and of the world. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The master's approval of the faithful servant*:—I. HIS CHARACTER. 1. A good and faithful servant accepts his position as a servant, with all that is included in that position. 2. He bears the work-burden of his

servitude. 3. He renders service with hearty goodwill. 4. He is obedient to his master. 5. He has his master's interest ever before him. 6. He is profitable to his master. II. THE CONDUCT UPON WHICH THIS CHARACTER IS BASED. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things." III. THE COMMENDATION AND REWARD. "Well done." 1. This is real commendation, not doubtful. 2. This is complete and full commendation. 3. This is useful commendation. It is not an encumbrance, like a robe of state or an official chain of gold, but it is as a strong girdle for the loins. "Enter thou into the joy of the Lord." 1. The joy of the Lord on His return to His servants. 2. The joy of the Lord in the goodness and fidelity of His servants. 3. The joy of the Lord in commending and rewarding His servants. 4. The whole personal joy of the Lord, so far as it can be shared by His servants. 5. The joy set before Him when He endured the cross. 6. The joy of finished work and completed suffering, of the joy provided in that kingdom which is joy. This text teaches—1. What the Christians are expected to be—servants. 2. What we are expected to do. 3. What we may expect to obtain. 4. Supplies a present test of character and motive to service. (*S. Martin.*) *The good and faithful servant*:—I. THE APPROVED SERVANT DESCRIBED. 1. Good. (1) Good in nature. (2) Good in principle. (3) Good in motive. (4) In fruitfulness. 2. Faithful. (1) To God. (2) To himself. (3) To others. II. THE APPROVED SERVANT COMMENDED. "Well done." 1. Surprise. 2. Humility. 3. Adoration. 4. Love. (*H. March.*) *The good servant*:—1. He is commended. 2. Promoted. 3. Admitted to joys unspeakable. (*W. Jowett, M.A.*) *The faithful servant and his reward*:—The parable of the ten virgins shows us our duty to ourselves; the parable to the servants our duty to others, &c. The one parable cries "Watch!" The other cries "Work!" I. LOOK AT THE FAITHFUL SERVANT. There are several things respecting him illustrating our own position. 1. He was a "servant;" one who is dependent upon, and responsible to another. Whatever our position, this is the character of every one of us. Men often speak as if God had no claim upon sinners. The man who hid his talent was as much a servant as he who by diligent trading made his five talents into ten. We are all servants, whether we own our Master or not, &c. Ascertain the character you bear. 2. He was entrusted with some of his master's property. So are we. 3. The talents bestowed upon the servants varied in their number. So it is with us. 4. They are given to us to be used according to the will of the proprietor—we may invest them, or waste them, or hide them. 5. They are entrusted to us for a limited period; the extent of that period is unknown. II. LET US LOOK AT THE CONDUCT OF THE SERVANT. He was not elated with pride because he had more than others, nor was he depressed with envy because he had less. He realized his responsibility, and at once set to work, &c. He was "good" and "faithful," referring to his character and conduct. While faithful to his master, he was good to his brethren, and the manifestation of his goodness is seen in the revelation that follows, "Faith without works is dead," &c. III. Look at the FAITHFUL SERVANT'S REWARD. Gives his account with joy. 1. Has his master's approval. 2. He is raised to a higher position. 3. He was admitted to his master's presence—a honour beyond our comprehension. Apply the subject. (*Charles Garrett.*) *The unprofitable servant*:—I. The individual referred to is described as acting in the capacity of a SERVANT. This denotes responsibility. Knows his Lord's will. He possesses capability. II. HIS SIN. He did not squander the talent. His sin was knowing to do good and doing it not. He was of a phlegmatic constitution of body and mind. He did not seek the aid of God's grace. What a lamentable state of mind to wish to get to heaven, and yet to turn in a bad temper from the only path that leads to it! But is God a hard Master? Ask the Christian who experiences in his heart the power of the religion he professes. Ask Nature. III. HIS END. "Outer darkness." (*R. Jones, B.A.*) *The discharged servant*:—There is, perhaps, no position more painful for a good and kind master to be placed in, no duty so painful for him to fulfil, as the being compelled to discharge a servant for misbehaviour, whatever the nature of the offence may be. There is something sad, and almost solemn, as the hour of departure draws nigh in which the servant is about to quit the threshold of the home where he has, it may be, served for years. At such a moment sins of omission and commission can scarcely fail to rise up in memory's glass slowly and upbraidingly before the downcast mind. It is then the obstinacy within relents, the hardness melts, the pride of the heart is abased, when it is too late. How apparent, then, is the folly of disobedience. Then is seen how useless were all those promises of amendment drowned in the opium of forgetfulness, or strangled in the birth by the complicated influences of procrastination. At such an

hour, too, the value of the place he is leaving rises up before the mind's eye in a way never experienced before. As the foot is lingering for the last time on the step of the master's door, the comforts of a quiet and peaceful home are then contrasted with the cold and forlorn aspect of things without. Now if this be the case in regard to the affairs of this world, how much more forcibly does it apply to the next scene of existence? Here we must imagine no longer an earthly, but a heavenly Master, about to dismiss, not a servant merely that fills his or her respective place in a common household, but a man considered as a rational and accountable being. (*Ibid.*) *The sin of unprofitableness*:—I. UNPROFITABLENESS IMPLIES A MIND UNLIKE THAT OF GOD, AND THEREFORE UNFIT FOR COMMUNION WITH GOD. 1. The mind of the unprofitable one is marked by indifference to the welfare of others. 2. The goodness of Deity is not merely negative; it seeks to bless mankind. II. UNPROFITABLENESS WILL EXCLUDE THE SOUL FROM HEAVEN; IT IS A FRUSTRATION OF THE MERCIFUL DESIGNS OF GOD. (*E. Gibbon, M.A.*) *The unprofitable servant*:—I. The EXCUSE SET UP by the unprofitable servant for his neglect. It is general. "I know that thou art a hard man." This is the language of the disobedient heart with reference to the merciful parent of the universe. The service is framed to meet our moral happiness. The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness. The excuse uses an audacious tone; God is unreasonable, and expects the impossible, and does not put forth the needful agencies. II. THE SENTENCE pronounced on him. 1. Supposing there was truth in his accusation, why did he not adopt the course less injurious to his Master? 2. Deprivation—"Take, therefore, the talent from him." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The wicked and slothful servant*:—I. HIS PROFESSION. 1. The name, "servant of the Lord," is most honourable. 2. It is a most comprehensive name. How comes it that any whose dispositions thus widely differ should be found among the professed followers of Christ? 1. They have false notions of what constitutes a genuine servant of the Lord. 2. They have low thoughts of God. II. HIS CHARACTER. 1. He had been slothful. 2. He was therefore wicked. (1) He was wicked because unfaithful to his trust. (2) Because cherishing dishonouring thoughts of his Master. (3) Because he acted contrary to his own avowed convictions. III. HIS DOOM. 1. A just doom. 2. This will be the doom of many. (1) To every individual is given at least one talent. (2) Of even one talent a strict account will be required. (3) This should lead us to self-examination and prayer. (*H. March.*) *The capacity of religion extirpated by disuse*:—Many persons read this parable of the talents, I believe, very much as if it related only to gifts external to the person; or, if to gifts that are personal, to such only as are called talents in the lower and merely man-ward relations and uses of life, such as the understanding, reason, &c. But the great Teacher's meaning reaches higher than this, and comprehends more, namely, those talents which go to exalt the subject in its God-ward relations. The main stress of His doctrine hinges, I conceive, on our responsibility as regards the capacity of religion itself; for this, in highest pre-eminence, is the talent, the royal gift of man. In pursuing the subject presented, two points will naturally engage our attention. I. THE CAPACITY FOR RELIGION IS A TALENT, THE HIGHEST TALENT WE HAVE. We mean by a talent, the capacity for doing or becoming something, as for learning, speaking, trade, command. Our talents are as numerous, therefore, and various as the effects we may operate. We have talents of the body, too, and talents of the mind, or soul. All those which can be used, or which come into play, in earthly subjects, and apart from God and religion, are natural; and those which relate immediately to God, and things unseen as connected with God, are religious. The religious talents compose the whole God-ward side of faculty in us. They are such especially as come into exercise in the matter of religious faith and experience, and nowhere else. 1. The want of God—a receptivity for God. 2. Inspiration—a capacity to be permeated, illumined, guided, exalted by God or the Spirit of God within, and yet so as not to be any the less completely ourselves. 3. The spiritual sense, or the power of Divine apprehension. 4. The capacity of religious love. 5. The power of faith a power of knowing God. Their true place and order in the soul is—(1) At the head of all its other powers, holding them subordinate. (2) All the other talents fall into a stunted and partially disabled state when they are not shone upon, kept in warmth, and raised in grade by the talents of religion. (3) All the greatest things ever done in the world have been done by the instigations and holy elevations of the religious capacity. This, therefore, is the real summit of our humanity. II. THE RELIGIOUS TALENT OR CAPACITY IS ONE THAT, BY TOTAL DISUSE AND THE OVERGROWTH OF OTHERS, IS FINALLY EXTIRPATED. Few men living without

God are aware of any such possibility, and still less of the tremendous fact itself. On the contrary, they imagine that they are getting above religion, growing too competent and wise to be longer subjected to its authority, or incommoded by its requirements. The teaching of Scripture, "To him that hath shall be given," &c. This spiritual extirpation is referable to two great laws or causes. 1. To the neglect of the talent or capacities of religion. All living members, whether of body or mind, require use or exercise. It is necessary to their development, and without it they even die. 2. To the operation of that immense overgrowth or over-activity which is kept up in the other powers. Is it wrong to assume that your religious senses were proportionately much stronger and more active in childhood than it is now? Thus onward the thoughts that crowd upon us, standing before a subject like this, are practical and serious. 1. How manifestly hideous the process going on in human souls under the power of sin. It is a process of real and fixed deformity. 2. There is no genuine culture, no proper education, which does not include religion. 3. Let no one comfort himself in the intense activity of his mind on the subject of religion. That is one of the great things to be dreaded. To be always thinking, debating, scheming in reference to the great question of religion, without using any of the talents that belong more appropriately to God and the receiving of God, is just the way to extirpate the talents most rapidly, and so to close up the mind in spiritual darkness. 4. Make little of the hope that the Holy Spirit will at some time open your closed or consciously closing faculties. 5. This truth wears no look of promise, in regard to the future condition of bad men. 6. How clear is it that the earliest time in religion is the best time. The peculiar blessing and the hopeful advantage of youth. A great share of those who believe embrace Christ in their youth. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *God blesses those who improve their privileges:*—WHAT IS IMPLIED IN MEN'S FAITHFULLY IMPROVING DIVINE BLESSINGS. 1. This implies their acknowledging that all their favours come from God. As long as men disregard the hand of the Giver, they will certainly despise His gifts. 2. A proper improvement of Divine favours implies a grateful sense of Divine goodness. The slothful servant did not thank his Master for the one talent. 3. A faithful improvement of Divine favours implies a cheerful and unreserved consecration of them to Him who gave them. 4. Faithfully improving Divine favours implies employing them in the service of God. II. THAT THOSE WHO FAITHFULLY IMPROVE THE BLESSINGS WHICH GOD BESTOWS UPON THEM MAY REASONABLY EXPECT FURTHER MARKS OF HIS FAVOUR. 1. The faithful improvement of Divine favours affords the highest enjoyment of them. Men never enjoy their talents buried or abused. 2. The faithful improvement of Divine favours in time past prepares men for the reception of more and richer blessings in time to come. Masters bestow their best favours upon their best servants. 3. God has promised to reward past fidelity with future favours. 4. God's conduct confirms the declarations of His Word. He has in all ages bestowed peculiar advantages upon those who have improved the temporal and spiritual blessings He has given. 1. All the blessings we possess have been sent in mercy. 2. If God will reward only those who improve His favours in His service, then men are unwise and criminal in converting them to their own use. 3. Men ought to be more concerned to improve God's favours than to gain the possession of them. 4. Those who abuse God's favours have reason to expect that He will diminish them. (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *Laying ourselves out for God:*—Therefore you should keep a constant reckoning how you lay out yourselves for God. (*T. Manton.*) *Christ absent from us:*—It was needful that Christ should go from us for a while; for He would not govern the world by sense, but by faith. (*Ibid.*) *Diversity in service:*—Every one hath his service and opportunity to do something for God; all offered to the tabernacle gold, or silver, or brass, or shittim-wood, or goats' hair, or badgers' skins. So, as Christ went to Jerusalem, some strewed the way with garments, others cut down branches, some cried "Hosanna"; that was all they could do. (*Ibid.*) *Diversity in ability:*—There is a diversity as to the measure and degrees. Every barque that saileth to heaven doth not draw a like depth. (*Ibid.*) *Our account with God:*—Who made thee to differ? (Romans xii. 35). "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." The sun oweth nothing to the stars, nor the fountain to the streams. Our account must be answerable to our receipts; there is a proportion of return expected. (*Ibid.*) *Diversity of talent helpful to service:*—God will have this difference for the beauty and order of the whole; variety is more grateful. Hills and valleys make the world beautiful; so do distinct orders, ranks, and degrees of men. All eye or all belly is monstrous; difference with proportion

maketh beauty; therefore one excelleth another, and several gifts and ranks there are for the service of the whole. (*Ibid.*) As divers countries have divers commodities, and one needeth another; one aboundeth with wines, some have spices, others have skins, and commodities in other kinds, that by commerce and traffic there might be society maintained among mankind; so God in His Church hath given to one gifts, to another grace, to maintain a holy society and spiritual commerce among themselves. (*Ibid.*) *Use the talent we have*:—It was a good saying of Epictetus in Arrian, Si essem luscinia, &c. If I were a nightingale, I would sing as a nightingale: Si essem alauda, &c. If I were a lark, I would piere as a lark; but now I am a man, I will glorify God as a man. But alas! how often do men of the best endowments miscarry. (*Ibid.*) *Satanic abuse of great talents*:—The devil loveth to go to work with the sharpest tools. God hath given great abilities to some above others, to enable them for his service. Now the devil, to despite God the more, turneth his own weapons against himself. (*Ibid.*) *Talents given for activity*:—Strength is not to be wasted in sin and vanity, but employed for God. It is better it should be worn out with labours than eaten out with rust. (*Ibid.*) *Trading for God, not self*:—Applause, vainglory, and such-like carnal motions and ends may set some men on work, and make them prostitute the service of Christ to their own lusts. This is not to trade as factors for God, but to set up for ourselves. (*Ibid.*) *A gift and a trust*:—As a gift, they call for our thankfulness; as a trust, for our faithfulness (*Ibid.*) *Dread of God natural in the carnal mind*:—Fear is more natural in the carnal mind, because a bad conscience is very suspicious, and our sense of God's benefits is not so great as the sense of our bad deservings is quick and lively. (*Ibid.*) *A picture of the devil*:—The best picture that could be taken of the devil would be by the characters of malice, falsehood, and envy. But God is justice itself, goodness itself, mercy itself, as it is expressed in Scripture. (*Ibid.*) *The unprofitable are destroyed*:—(Matthew iii. 20), "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." Not only the poisonous, but the barren tree. (*Ibid.*) *The sinner self-condemned*:—Grant the sinner's supposition, it bindeth the duty upon him, and so he cuts his throat with his own sword. (*Ibid.*) *Doing better than excusing*:—Certainly it is better be doing than excusing. Doing is safe, but excuses are but a patch upon a sore place. (*Ibid.*) *Private conceits*:—You must not lift up your private conceits against the wisdom of God. (*Ibid.*) *Nothing idle in nature*:—In the whole course of nature nothing is idle; the sun and the stars do perpetually move and roll up and down; the earth bringeth forth; the seas have their ebbings and flowings, and the rivers their courses; the angels are described with wings, as ready to fulfil God's commandment, and run to do His pleasure. It were an unworthy thing, among so many examples and patterns of diligence, for man alone to be idle. (*Ibid.*) *The sovereignty of the Divine endowments*:—Now, most men quarrel with this. But mark, the thing that you complain of in God is the very thing that you love in yourselves. Every man likes to feel that he has a right to do with his own as he pleases. We all like to be little sovereigns. You will give your money freely and liberally to the poor; but if any man should impertinently urge that he had a claim upon your charity, would you give unto him? Certainly not; and who shall impeach the greatness of your generosity in so doing? It is even as that parable, that we have in one of the Evangelists, where, after the men had toiled, some of them twelve hours, some of them six, and some of them but one, the Lord gave every man a penny. Oh! I would meekly bow my head, and say, "My Lord, hast Thou given me one talent? then I bless Thee for it, and I pray Thee bestow upon me grace to use it rightly. Hast Thou given to my brother ten talents? I thank Thee for the greatness of Thy kindness towards him; but I neither envy him, nor complain of Thee." Oh! for a spirit that bows always before the sovereignty of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Variety God's law*:—God gives to one five, and to another two talents, because the Creator is a lover of variety. It was said that order is heaven's first law; surely variety is the second; for in all God's works, there is the most beautiful diversity. Look ye towards the heavens at night: all the stars shine not with the same brilliance, nor are they placed in straight lines, like the lamps of our streets. Then turn your eyes below: see in the vegetable world, how many great distinctions there are, ranging from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall, or the moss that is smaller still. See how from the huge mammoth tree, that seems as if beneath its branches it might shade an army, down to the tiny lichen, God hath made everything beautiful, but everything full of variety. Look on any one tree, if you please; see how every leaf differs

from its fellow—how even the little tiny buds that are at this hour bursting at the scent of the approaching perfume of spring, differ from each other—not two of them alike. Look again, upon the animated world: God hath not made every creature like unto another. How wide the range—from the colossal elephant to the coney that burrows in the rock—from the whale that makes the deep hoary with its lashing, to the tiny minnow that skims the brook; God hath made all things different, and we see variety everywhere. I doubt not it is the same, even in heaven, for there there are "thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers"—different ranks of angels, perhaps, rising tier upon tier. "One star different from another star in glory." And why should not the same rule stand good in manhood? (*Ibid.*) *Talents for small spheres:*—God hath a deeper reason than this. God gives to some men but few talents, because He has many small spheres, and He would have these filled. There is a great ocean, and it needs inhabitants. O Lord, Thou hast made Leviathan to swim therein. There is a secret grotto, a hidden cavern, far away in the depths of the sea; its entrance is but small; if there were nought but a Leviathan, it must remain untenanted for ever: a little fish is made, and that small place becomes an ocean unto it. There are a thousand sprays and twigs upon the trees of the forest; were all eagles, how would the forests be made glad with song, and how could each twig bear its songster? But because God would have each twig have its own music, He has made the little songster to sit upon it. Each sphere must have the creature to occupy it adapted to the size of the sphere. God always acts economically. (*Ibid.*) *Few talents will have to be accounted for:*—If you had but little, God required but little of you; why, then, did you not render that? If any man holds a house at a rental of a pound a year, let it be never so small a house for the money, if he brings not his rent there is not one half the excuse for him that there would be if his rent had been a hundred pounds, and he had failed to bring it. You shall be the more inexcusable on account of the little that was required of you. Let me, then, address you, and remind you that you must be brought to account. (*Ibid.*) *Improvement of talents:*—The right use of the Divine blessings is well represented by his trading or occupying with his Master's property. This not to be understood in a way of merit, for when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. But the image of trading fitly sets forth the course of active improvement of every gift, which the true Christian pursues, his diligence and industry in his calling, and the common utility which is thereby promoted. Whatever is bestowed on him, he considers not as his own, but as his Lord's. He employs it, therefore, with the scrupulous conscientiousness of a faithful servant. He does not waste his gifts in idleness, abuse them to self-confidence and pride, or lessen and destroy them by rash and ambitious schemes. He does not rest with complacency in the barren thought that he possesses them. He does not display them with ostentation. He does not compare himself with others, or endeavour to ascertain whether his talents are more or less than those of his neighbour. He does not interfere with a province not assigned to him, or hinder the work of his fellow-servants, or require everything to be done in his own way, or quarrel with those who differ from him in their mode of acting. But his concern is to trade with his talents. Whatever will tend to the discharge of his personal and relative duties, whatever will instruct the ignorant, relieve the distressed, assist the needy, guide the inquiring, comfort the sorrowful, reclaim the wandering, and confirm and encourage the sincere—all this, with a due regard to circumstances, and in the fear of God, he considers his proper vocation. Whatever use he can make of any circumstances in which he is placed, any office he holds, any influence he has gained, any knowledge he acquires, any parts or accomplishments which he possesses, any favour God has given him with others, any occasions or incidents which present themselves he straightway turns to account, even as the merchant traffics with his commodities. Above all, he employs the means of salvation to his own personal benefit. He repents of his sins, and trusts in the sacrifice of Christ for pardon and justification before God. He values the Bible, prizes the Sabbath, derives improvement from pious example, profits by Divine chastisement, and learns from the mistakes and sins of others, and thus uses every advantage for spiritual instruction with fidelity and thankfulness. If he be a minister of the sanctuary he considers all his opportunities for saving souls, all his ability for discharging his high office, as a solemn trust deposited with him, and for which he must give an account. (*Bishop Daniel Wilson.*) *Multiplied talent:*—It is not only enjoined upon us if we would be Christians to occupy with our gifts, but to multiply them. The industrious servant of God will do this. He learns as he goes on; he gains more

experience; he overcomes difficulties. He not only does more than when he first began, but he does things better. He contrives to do more good continually. He does not rest contented with the ordinary plans of others, but enters on undiscovered ground and marks out new regions of usefulness. He looks around him for occasions of doing good to others and getting good himself, of learning or teaching, acting or enduring for God and his neighbour. (*Ibid.*) *The householder and his servants*:—I. THE TALENTS ENTRUSTED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE SERVANTS. 1. The man travelling represents our Lord, the absolute Owner of all things, Lord and Redeemer of His Church. 2. The servants represent the professed disciples and members of Christ, the visible body of the faithful, particularly the ministers and stewards of His mysteries. 3. The talents represent the various powers and blessings which Christ has assigned to us for the salvation of our souls, the benefit of our fellow-men, and the glory of His name. II. THE RIGHT EMPLOYMENT OF THE TALENTS BY THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS. 1. The faithful servant of Christ studies to do his Lord's will, and has a delight in the work. 2. Shrinks from no trouble or danger, estimating all he can do for such a Master as nothing. 3. Aims at approving himself to his Master, not to the world. 4. Laments lost opportunities. 5. Walks wisely in the management of his concerns. 6. Begins immediately, proceeds diligently, works contentedly, and perseveres cheerfully. III. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT'S REWARD. 1. He receives the commendation of his Master. 2. Made ruler over many things. 3. Enters into the joy of his Lord. IV. The slothful servant. 1. His character. It is not said that he wasted his Lord's goods; simply that he buried them—made no use of them, and this was enough to condemn him. 2. His doom. (*Ibid.*) *Well used talents prepare for enjoyment in heaven*:—This parable shows plainly enough that your talents are to be put to use and gain usury for the Lender. They must be kept well rubbed with work if they are to shine brightly in their heavenly setting. I do not believe with those people who seem to think it will be all as one a thousand years hence, whether we cultivate our minds in this life or not, and that it matters nothing how small our knowledge may be. All is good if turned to a right account, and the acquirements of this life may enlarge our spiritual capacities for another. And I cannot help thinking that, to some extent, our power of seeing and appreciating the hidden things of the next life will depend on the exercise and growth of our faculties in this. (*N. Macleod, D.D.*) *God is never niggardly in His gifts*:—In considering our life, with its duties and responsibilities, there are two mistakes, into both of which, though they are contradictory the one to the other, we commonly fall. 1. We often feel that very little has been entrusted to us, that our gifts are few, our opportunities of cultivating them fewer still. We need therefore to remember that in the parable even the slave who is least gifted and trusted receives one talent, and that a Hebrew talent was equivalent to some £350—a very large sum to be entrusted to a slave. Our Master is no niggard, He gives liberally to all. All things are ours—the pure, bright heaven, the fruitful earth, the golden splendours of the sun and the silver splendours of the moon, the fragrant flowers and the songs of birds, the social affections, the Word of Life, and the common salvation; and, though the capacity to appropriate and use these heavenly gifts may vary, yet what man is there, capable of using them at all, but will confess that he has received many things, and things of inestimable value, at the Master's hand? 2. But then, if we acknowledge that we have received many and great gifts, we are too apt to forget that the large sum of good in which we rejoice is made up of many trivial contributions. We need to be reminded that the one talent of the parable was equivalent to sixty *minæ*, to three thousand shekels, to some eighty thousand of our pence, and that the only way to get its full profit out of the talent was to use every shekel and every penny well. Great single opportunities are very rare; we cannot often find a good investment for heavy sums; but we may wisely employ a few pence or a few shekels every day. The talents of the parable may stand for high gifts, such as faith, love, obedience; but we cannot keep these faculties always at their utmost stretch, nor live at the heroic level day after day. It is by a perpetual use of them in the daily round and common task of life, in the discharge of small recurring duties and the endurance of the little temptations which are never absent, that we develop them to the fulness of their stature. And it surely is a very comfortable and helpful thought, that if hour by hour we try to do the work of the hour well, to be honest and diligent in business, to rule our tempers in the home, to help a needy or sympathize with an afflicted neighbour, to teach our class with patient care, to sing a song of praise with the heart and the understanding—that in the discharge of these and the like trivial

duties we are serving God, trading with the Master's money; that by these small gradual accumulations we are doubling the talent which He has put into our hands. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The man with one talent needed:*—The world greatly needs men of one talent, and there are ways in which such men are often of surpassing usefulness. Hur was probably a man with only one talent, and yet it was partly through his help that the prayers of Moses prevailed against the enemies of Israel. The heroes of Thermopylæ were for the most part also men of one talent, yet the splendour of their glorious heroism still illumines the world. In the case of many a shipwreck the man with one talent, the rough, honest sailor who helps the women and children to escape and then himself remains behind to die is in truth "not far from the kingdom of God," not far from its inner shrine, not far from the great Cross of Calvary. . . . As a matter of fact, men with one talent are often surprisingly near to the men with five talents. In the realm of the spirit extremes often meet. Men with one talent are often *vicarious sufferers*. Nature makes experiments on them, as on some worthless body, for the benefit of the whole human race. They are used as stepping-stones on which others may rise to higher things. They act as humble pioneers to the loftiest and most successful pilgrims. . . . It is easy enough to see that there is often something sublime in the devotion of the man with one talent. Great in nothing else, he is often really grand in his unswerving and unlimited loyalty to a nature higher than his own. And this devotion has a vast uplifting influence. (*A. H. Crawfurd, M.A.*) *Latent possibilities in the man with one talent:*—We never really know what our talents are till we begin to use them. The noblest powers are often the most slowly developed. Saul is amongst the prophets sometimes. Elisha is often called from the plough. The dunce acquires undying fame. The very same want of depth in the soil which causes the good seed to spring up quickly also causes it ere long to wither away. When there is little to evolve evolution is a rapid process, but when there is much to evolve the process is a slow one. Cathedrals are not built in a day. The soul is like the phœnix—from the withered ashes of a wasted past it soars aloft into the glad strength of an immortal life. (*Ibid.*) *Encouragement for the man with one talent:*—All men have at least one talent. The elements of the noble and the sublime exist to some extent in each of us. Even now, in the midst of his humble work, on the rough face of the man with one talent there is cast from time to time the sublime and awful shadow of his inescapable destiny, of that great day of the Lord when all created souls shall be transfigured and glorified by the splendours of the Eternal, when "the dead, *small* and great, stand before God." If the poor man with one talent shall hereafter stand there, surely he is good enough to stand hand in hand with any of his brethren now on earth! (*Ibid.*) *Importance of little things:*—Human endowment and human performance, the "few things," get their significance from their relation to the "many things"—the great, thronging facts and principles and laws of the kingdom of God. The most persistent and varied activity and the largest achievements of the greatest men are but small in themselves considered, but they are points where the vast economy of the kingdom of God—that something which is vaguely indicated by "many things," "the joy of the Lord"—emerges into the region of our human life and touches it. That which is out of sight is more and greater than that which pushes out into our view. That point of rock which rises out of the hillside is, to the geologist, not merely a distinct stone—it tells him the dip and quality of the great strata underground which buttress the hills. Obedience, responsibility, duty, work, love, trust—all that makes up Christian life here—are sides and manifestations of the unseen, spiritual universe. Godliness has promise, not only of the life that now is, but of that which is to come—has the promise which one part of a thing gives of the other part. Godliness is a part of the life to come. Godliness is God revealing Himself in human character. Follow back godliness and you come to God. The boy who is learning his alphabet is handling the same elements which enter into the plays of Shakespeare or the dialogues of Plato. He has begun upon literature when he has learned A B C. It is a little thing in itself for him to learn twenty-six letters, but it is a very great thing when you consider the alphabet as the medium of the world's thought. Even so the largest endowment and result are but "a few things," but they acquire a tremendous and eternal importance as integral parts of the great moral economy of God. (*Marvin R. Vincent, D.D.*) *Faithfulness is on the direct line of mastery:*—Fidelity tends and leads up to mastery. Success is a thing of stages and aggregations, and it is of vastly more consequence that the man should be rightly pointed—set in the direction of a larger,

Divine success, than that he should achieve what he undertakes here. If there is no larger, purer, more spiritual kingdom than this there is no such thing as real success. If there *is* such a kingdom, and if the earthly sphere of Christian life and work is a part of it, then the success may well lie beyond the line of our human vision, and be too large for our little inch-rules. The great principle holds—fidelity leads up to mastery. You see it illustrated daily. You see the faithful journeyman advanced to the foremanship, the plodding student become an authority; you see men of moderate ability becoming powers in business or in manufacturing by steady devotion to one thing. The thing itself may be small; their perseverance magnifies it: and they themselves grow into the ability to handle larger things through their fidelity to the smaller interest. (*Ibid.*) *Faithfulness the main thing*:—This parable turns on moral quality rather than on ability. Its key-note is not five talents, nor two talents, nor one talent, but faithfulness to all three. It is faithfulness, and not amount, which links the talent to the joy of the Lord, the "few things" to the "many." The amount of ability is not the first thing for us to consider; it is the faithful use of whatever ability we have. To use aright we must *be* right. Vigorous use of talent is not necessarily right use, for unfaithfulness is vigorous also. (*Ibid.*) *The unused talent passes from the servant who would not use it to the one who will*:—A landlord has two farms lying together—the one is admirably managed, the other is left almost to itself, with the least possible management, and becomes the talk of the whole country-side for poor crops and untidiness. No one asks what the landlord will do when the leases are out. It is a matter of course that he dismisses the careless tenant, and puts his farm into the hands of the skilful and diligent farmer. He enforces the law of the text. In the kingdom of Christ this law is self-acting. To bury our talent and so keep it as originally given is an impossibility. To have just so much grace and no more is an impossibility. It must either be circulating and so multiplying, or it ceases to be. It must grow or it will die. Hence it is that in your own souls you perhaps are finding that, no matter what effort you make, you cannot enter as heartily into holy services and occupations as once you did, but are finding your old joy and assurance honey-combed by unbelieving thoughts. Hence it is that the susceptibility to right feeling you had in boyhood has gone from you. You did not mean to become unfeeling, but only shrank from acting as feeling dictated. But he who blows out the flame finds that the heat and the glow die out of themselves. (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *The law of spiritual capital*:—It is a law with the operation of which we are familiar in nature and in the commercial world. It is he who has even a little capital to begin with, and who makes a right use of it, who soon leaves far behind the man who has none, or who neglects to invest what he has. And the more this capital grows, the more rapidly and the more easily is it increased. After a certain point it seems to increase by virtue of its own momentum. So in certain sicknesses, as soon as the crisis of the disease is past and a little health has been funded again in the patient's constitution, this rapidly grows to complete recovery. So with popularity, it begins one scarce knows how, but once begun, the tide flows apace. You may scarcely be able to say why one statesman or one author should be so immeasurably more popular than others; but so it is that, when once a beginning is made, tribute flows in naturally, as water from all sides settle in a hollow. It is this same law which regulates our attainment in the service of Christ. However little grace we seem to have to begin with it is this we must invest, and so nurse it into size and strength. Each time we use the grace we have by responding to the demands made upon it, it returns to us increased. Our capital grows by an inevitable law. The efforts of young or inexperienced Christians to give utterance to the life that is in them may often be awkward, like the movements of most young animals. They may be able to begin only in a very small way, so small a way that sensitive persons are frequently ashamed to begin at all. Having received Christ they are conscious of new desires and of a new strength; they have a regard for Christ, and were they to assert this regard in the circumstances which call for its assertion their regard would be deepened. They have a desire to serve Him, and were they to do so in those small matters with which they have daily concern their desire and ability would be increased. Grace of any kind invested in the actual opportunities of life cannot come back to us as small as it was, but enlarged and strengthened. Such grace, then, as we have, such knowledge as we have of what is due to others, to ourselves, and to God, let us give free expression to. Such investments of Christian principle as are within our reach let us make; such manifestations of a Christian

temper and mind as our circumstances daily demand let us exhibit, and it must come to pass that we increase in grace. There is no other way whatever of becoming richly endowed in spirit than by trading with whatever we have to begin with. We cannot leap into a fortune in spiritual things; rich saints cannot bequeath us what their life-long toil has won; they cannot even lend us so that we may begin on borrowed capital. In the spiritual life all must be genuine; we must work our own way upwards, and by humbly and wisely laying out whatever we now possess make it more or be for ever poor. (*Ibid.*) *The man with two talents*:—He has his own peculiar interest as he stands in the little group of three before the master. He is significant, we may almost say, because of his insignificance. As the master puts the money in their hands we can see them look at it, and can guess what they think about it. The man to whom five talents are given is surprised that he should receive so much. He is exhilarated and inspired, or perhaps, on the other hand, he is paralyzed and overcome. The man to whom one talent is given is startled at the smallness of the trust. He, too, feels a positive emotion. Either he is stung to energy and determines that he will do something strong and good even with this little gift, or else he is crushed into despair. Is this then all of which his master thinks him worthy? Both of these men are interesting. They represent extremes. But the man of two talents stands and looks at his trust, and it is just about what he might have expected. It is neither very great nor very small. It does not exalt him, and it does not make him ashamed. He turns away, and goes out to use it with a calm, unexcited face. He is the type of common mediocrity. He is the average man. He presents the type to which we almost all belong. There are none of us probably who are conscious of anything which separates us as notably superior to the great mass of our fellow-men. On the other hand, it is not probable that many of us count ourselves distinctly below the average of human life. We do not lay claim to the five talents; we will not confess to the one. It is as men and women of two talents that we ordinarily count ourselves and ask to be counted by our brethren. Therefore this quiet, commonplace, unnoticed man, going his faithful way in his dull dress which makes no mark and draws no eye, doing his duty insignificantly and thoroughly, winning so unobtrusively at last his master's praise, ought to be interesting to us all. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *The predominance of mediocrity*:—The average man is by far the most numerous man. The man who goes beyond the average, the man who falls short of the average, both of them, by their very definition, are exceptions. They are the outskirts and fringes, the capes and promontories of humanity. The great continent of human life is made up of the average existences, the mass of two-talented capacity and action. 1. It is so even in the simplest and most superficial matter of the possession of wealth. The great fortunes, with their splendid opportunities and their tremendous responsibilities, rise like gigantic mountains which everybody sees out of the general level of comfortable life. On the other hand, excessive poverty, actual suffering for the necessaries of life, terrible as it is, is comparatively rare. A part of its terribleness comes from its rarity. The great multitude of men are neither very rich nor very poor. The real character and strength of a community lies neither in its millionaires nor in its paupers, but in the men of middle life who neither have more money than they know how to spend, nor are pressed and embarrassed for the necessities of life. 2. The same is true in the matter of joy and sorrow. The great mass of men during the greater part of their lives are neither exultant and triumphant with delight, nor are they crushed and broken down with grief. They do not go shouting their rapture to the skies, and they do not go wailing their misery to the sympathetic winds. They are moderately happy. Joy flecked and toned down by troubles; troubles constantly relieved and lighted up by joy; that is their general condition; that seems to be their best capacity. The power of the intensest joy and the intensest pain belongs only to rare, peculiar men. 3. Mental capacity. Most men are neither sages nor fools. Few men are either scholars or dunces. 4. Popularity and fame. Those whom the world praises and those whom all men despise are both of them exceptional. You can count them easily. The great multitude whom you cannot begin to count, who fill the vast middle-ground of the great picture of humanity, is made up of men who are simply well enough liked by their fellow-men. They are crowned with no garlands, and they are pelted with no stones. They have their share of kindly interest and esteem. You cannot well think of them as either losing that or as gaining much beyond it. 5. Character and religion. Here, too, it is the average that fills the eye. Where are the heroes? You can find them if you look. Where

are the rascals? You can find them too. Where are the saints? They shine where no true man's eyes can fail to see them. And the blasphemers likewise no one can shut out of his ears. But the great host of men: do you not know how little reason they give you to expect of them either great goodness or great wickedness? You do not look to see their faces kindle when you talk to them of Christ. You do not either look to see them grow scornful or angry at His name. You do not count upon their going to the stake for principle. But you do count upon their paying their honest debts. You have to shut your thoughts about them in to this world, for when you think of them in eternity heaven seems as much too good for them as hell seems too bad. (*Ibid.*) *Dangers of mediocrity*:—It is not always an easy thing for men to make up their minds to mediocrity. It is a young man's right, almost his duty, to hope, almost to believe, that he has singular capacity, and is not merely another repetition of the constantly repeated average of men. To see those dreams and visions of youth gradually fade away; little by little to discover that one has no such exceptional capacity; to try one and another of the adventurous ways which lead to the highest heights and the great prizes, and find the feet unequal to them; to come back at last to the great trodden highway, and plod on among the undistinguished millions—that is often very hard. The fight is fought, the defeat is met, in silence; but it is no less, it is more terrible. The hour in which it becomes clear to a young man that that is to be his life, that there is nothing else for him to do except to swell the great average of humanity, is often filled with dangers. Let us see what some of them are. 1. He has to make up his mind to do without both of the different kinds of inspiration which come to the men who are better off and the men who are worse off than he is. The man of five talents excites admiration and expectation; the man of one talent has an incentive to do great things in spite of difficulties; but to the middle man, the man who is neither very much nor very little—the man who has two talents, but only two—both of these forms of impulse are denied. He is neither high enough to hear the calling of the stars, nor low enough to feel the tumult of the earthquake. What wonder, then, if he often falls asleep for sheer lack of sting and spur? What wonder if he does the moderate things that seem to be within his power unenthusiastically, and then stops, making no demand upon himself since other men make no demand upon him? 2. A want of definiteness and distinctness. Genius, by its very intensity, decrees a special path of fire for its vivid power. Conscious limitation, on the other hand, knows there is no hope for it except in one direction. Both have the strength which comes by narrowness. But the man who knows himself to be only moderately strong is apt to think that his strength has no peculiar mission. The commonplace man is the discursive man. He has neither the impetuosity of the torrent nor the direct gravitation of the single drop of water. He lies a loose and sluggish pool, and flows nowhither, and grows stagnant by and by. 3. The constant danger of being made light of by other men. Becoming uninteresting to others, he loses interest in himself. He attracts no reverence, and he enlists no pity. He finds himself unnoticed. He must originate out of himself all that he comes to. He hangs between the heaven and the earth, and is fed out of neither. What he does seems to be of no consequence, because it wakens no emotion in his brethren. He has no influence on other men, and so there is no effluence, no putting forth of life from him. (*Ibid.*) *The advantages of mediocrity*:—It is in the quality more than in the quantity of talents that their true value lies. Given by God they constitute a true, direct, and sacred connection and channel of intercourse between your soul and His. Forget your brethren and think of Him, and realize your direct relationship to Him. When you have done that you may come back into the mass again and see what are the special advantages which belong to a faithful life lived in the average condition, lived with the average capacities of man. 1. Such a life brings out and makes manifest the solid strength which belongs to the simple qualities of manhood. Types of power which can only be developed in supreme joy or supreme sorrow enthrall our imagination; and then some plain man comes who knows not either rapture or despair, who simply has his daily work to do, his friends to help, his enemies to forgive, his children to love and train, his trials to bear, his temptations to conquer, his soul to save; and what a healthiness he brings into our standards, with what a genuine refreshment he fills our hearts. Behold how great are these primary eternal qualities—patience, hope, kindness, intelligence, trust, self-sacrifice. We do not accept them because we cannot have something finer. They show us their intrinsic fineness, and we do them reverence. The arctic frost! The torrid heat! Behold the true strength,

the real life of the planet is not in these. It is in the temperate lands that the grape ripens and the wheat turns calmly yellow in the constant sun. 2. The man conscious of mediocrity has the advantage of displaying in his life and character the intrinsic and essential life of human nature. He is one with his fellow-men, and it is he who—being faithful, pure, serene, brave, hopeful—has power to make his brethren all that he tries himself to be. 3. May not the average life find a self-surrender to the help of other lives more easy, and make that surrender more complete, just in proportion as it is released from that desire for self-assertion, that consciousness of being something which is worthy of men's observation, that self-love which must haunt the lives of those who, in any way, on either side, find themselves separated from the great bulk of their fellow-creatures? 4. And is it not true that all that assertion of the intrinsic value of every life which is the very essence of our Christian faith, all that redemption of the soul, in the profoundest and the truest sense, which was the work of Christ, must come with special welcome and appreciation and delight to any man who feels his insignificance and is in danger of losing himself in the vague mass of his fellows? Christ redeems him. Christ says, "Behold yourself in Me, and see that you are not insignificant." Christ says, "I died for you." Set thus upon his feet, made a new man, or made to be the man he is, with what gratitude and faith and obedience must that man follow the Christ who is his Saviour! (*Ibid.*) *The average man:*—I. HIS DANGERS. 1. He will be surely tempted to ape greatness. 2. He will be tempted to underrate himself. 3. He may lose himself in the crowd. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS. 1. He has the necessary talents. 2. God designed to do most of His work in the world through the average man. 3. The magnificent reward that awaits him. (*F. E. Clark.*) *A hard man:*—The servants in our parables seem to have erred from an opposite excess of temperament. His melancholy broodings prevented the unprofitable servant from a right use of his master's talent; the virgins were over sanguine that their oil would hold out. I. OBSERVE THIS MAN. 1. He has begun with less than the others had. The melancholic mind is apt to exaggerate this fact. 2. Yet he was treated according to his ability. He was not expected to render more than he could. 3. We see the influence of his temperament in disparagement of the largeness of his Lord's purposes and dealings; he interprets everything after his own spirit. Toil for such a master must be thankless and graceless indeed. II. Looking at the man, therefore, as representing the peculiar dangers attaching to certain temperaments, I think we see sufficiently THE NATURE OF THE WARNING HE FURNISHES US. 1. It is essential to all profitable service of our Master, that it shall be hearty service. What heart can there be in any such labour as shall have no generous thoughts of Him for whom it is done. We must get a better conception of God, and create in our souls a healthful moral incentive to doing right. 2. Again, to be a profitable service, it must be felt also to be a service that shall react upon ourselves. It must improve us as well as glorify God. God puts joy and consolation into any duty; he who does the duty has the joy. III. THE WRONG CONCEPTION OF GOD WHICH GAVE STRENGTH TO THE MELANCHOLY AND ENERVATING TENDENCIES OF THIS DARK-SOULED SERVANT IN HIS RELATIONS WITH HIS MASTER. Have we put this "hard man" upon the throne of the universe? This conception of God is at the bottom of most of the hindrances in the way of Divine faith. It is the "hard man" that comes to throw a false light upon our conception of the atonement; so much suffering for so much sin. Is this the God that Jesus Christ depicted? IV. THE PHRASES INTRODUCED TO DARKEN THE PICTURE ARE WORTHY OF NOTICE. "Reaping where thou hast not sown." "Gathering where thou hast not strawed." What a contrast to the "Refiner" in Malachi. To the diseased vision all things are distorted. 1. We may all at times have intervals of gloom corresponding to those which our text has suggested. 2. Do not darken your life by fear. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." 3. God is love. (*G. J. Proctor.*) *Christ's talents:*—In Eastern lands, and ancient times, slaves were artizans, workmen, whose profit belonged to their master. The apostle Paul thought of himself as a slave put in trust, placed under trusts. I. Christ's talents. Such we are to regard all gifts, powers, or possessions that are entrusted to us. Our special talent is that one thing in which we stand out distinct from others. II. Christ's apportionment of His talents. Two rules decide the apportionment. 1. The talent must match the capacity. 2. The talents put together must secure ability for all the work which Christ wants done. III. Christ's expectation concerning His talents. 1. Service by their use. 2. Culture by their use. IV. Christ's judgment of those entrusted with His talents. 1. Judgment is the

same for all trusts. 2. It is based on quality, not results. 3. The judgment is severe, not on those who tried and failed, but on those who never tried. 4. The reward is simply other and larger trusts. (*Selected.*) *Trading with talents:*—A trader either trades with his own, or with another man's stock, whose servant he is. Now no man hath any stock or talent of his own, but all their talents which they are required to improve and trade with are the Lord's. 1. Hast thou a rational soul, wisdom, knowledge, and great understanding? It was given unto thee by the Lord. 2. Hast thou riches, or much wealth? It is the Lord's money. 3. Hast thou acquired parts, great learning? This is also thy Master's goods. 4. Have you the gospel and the ministration of the word? It is the Lord's trust. 5. Have you faithful ministers? They are the Lord's. 6. Have you precious talent of time and the opportunities of time? This you are entrusted with by the Lord. 7. Have you health, strength, and advantages to attend upon the word and means of grace above many? All this is from the Lord. 8. Have you spiritual gifts and saving grace? Those talents you have received from the Lord. 9. Are you fathers or masters, and so have authority over families, children, servants? These are the Lord's trusts. Traders ought to know the worth of those commodities put into their hands. Traders must not be timorous in laying out their money. Traders should know where to buy, of whom, and who to trade with. Traders must know the terms on which they are to trade. Traders must know in whose name they trade. Traders must trust, or they will have little or no trade at all. Traders must keep their accounts well. Some traders give more attention to their private affairs than to their business. Some traders break, and expose such that are faithful dealers to loss and shame. (*Benjamin Keach.*) *Our trust of talents:*—I. God has committed to men a variety of gifts or talents. By what is here called *talents*, is to be understood all such blessings and privileges as providence favours us with. What God requires from every man is according to what His providence has imparted to him. II. All our talents, more or less, all the gifts of God to men, may and must be improved. They were conferred for this very purpose. The blessings of providence are no blessings to us if we want wisdom or will to make a right use of them. III. The reward will be in proportion to the actual improvement which men make of the talents entrusted to them. IV. In the day of judgment Divine justice will be displayed in such manner as will strike every sinner dumb, as will silence every excuse, and quite confound him. (*E. Sandercock.*) *The joy of the Lord's service:* When Richard Cameron, one of the noblest of our Scottish martyrs, had fallen mortally wounded on Airdsmoss, he said, "I am dying, happy, happy; and if I had a thousand lives I would willingly lay them all down one after another for Christ. Oh, He is near me; I think I see Him! I am just coming, Lord Jesus." And he added, "Tell my parents not to weep, but continue steadfast in the faith, and not to fear a suffering lot for Christ." *The reward of fidelity:*—I. The different capacities, advantages, and situations of men, are owing in general to the wise providence of God. II. It is of little importance to us what our station in life is, or what the duties belonging to it; but of the greatest whether we perform or neglect them. III. It is not of so great moment how long, or how short, our time and service are, as how well we have fulfilled them. (*S. Brown.*) *Divers talents:*—Some have abilities superior in kind, others in degree; some excel in strength of body, others of mind; some in judgment, others in imagination and memory; some are fit for contemplation, others for action; some to design, others to execute; some to govern nations, enact laws, and administer justice, others for inferior and private, yet necessary and useful employments. This variety is designed to fill up the various places and offices, which are proper in the great community of the world. (*Ibid.*) *Parable of talents:*—Doctrine I. That Christ Jesus is the great Lord and Owner. II. That Christ, at His departure, appointed every man his work; and, at His ascension, gave gifts unto men, to be employed for His glory till He come again. III. That it pleases the Lord to dispense His gifts variously among His people; to some more, to some fewer, talents. All have some talent. There is diversity, however (1) Of employments and offices; (2) In the kind of gifts; (3) As to the measures and degrees. The account must be answerable to our receipts. (*T. Manton.*) *Varieties of gifts:*—Some are able to lay down the truth soundly; others able to apply it forcibly. Some have the gift of prayer and utterance, others are able to inform the judgment and convince gainsayers. Some to clear up doctrines, others to stir affections. Among hearers, some have more wisdom, some more knowledge, some more affection. Amongst the penmen of Scripture there is a great variety; John is sublime and seraphical, Paul spiritual and argumentative

Peter, in an easy, fluent, and mild way; Isaiah more court-like and lofty; Jeremiah more priest-like and grave. Among the saving gifts there is a diversity of graces, though all have all in some measure. The new creature is not maimed, yet some are more eminent, some for one grace some for another. Abraham for faith, Job for patience, Moses for meekness, Timothy for temperance. Every grace working according to the diversity of tempers, some are modest and mild, others bold and zealous; some are mourning for sin, others raised in the admiration of the grace of God in Christ; others exemplary for strictness and weanedness from the delights of the animal life. (*Ibid.*) *Hiding, not wasting, God's trusts* :—Mark, 'tis not said he did embezzle his talent, as many waste their substance in riotous living, quench brave parts in excess, sin away many precious advantages of ordinances and education and powerful convictions. He did not misemploy his talent, as some do their wealth, others their wit, to scoff at religion, or to put a varnish on the devil's cause; their power to oppress and crush the good. The precious gifts that many have, are like the sword in a madman's hand, they use them to hurt and mischief. No such thing is charged upon this evil and naughty servant. 'Tis fault enough to hide our talents, though we do not abuse them. (*Ibid.*) *Modesty not to invalidate talent* :—It is true that the violet loves the shade, but then it manages to bloom there—to thrive and multiply. It makes itself known by its delicate, agreeable perfume. It does not hide itself in the earth. No flower is more sought for, and in an invalid's room none more grateful. There are some Christians like towering cedars, some like branching oaks, some like willows by the water-courses. There are others like spring flowers; they are so modest and bashful that you must seek them and bring them into the light. They much prefer the shade. But, as we none of us live to ourselves, such a disposition must not be looked upon with too much favour. Modesty may become a disease. If a lady is so bashful that she never dare venture into the streets without a thick veil over her features, her sensitiveness of organization must be diseased. So in Christian congregations, there is a reserve about some which needs to be broken down. They never emerge into the daylight. They are timid, full of distrust—a distrust which almost amounts to self-excommunication. Now, the subject which suggested itself to my mind as I read these words was this—The temptation to depreciate small abilities and scanty opportunities. (*R. Thomas.*) *The increase of talent* :—A merchant going abroad for a time gave respectively to two of his friends two sacks of wheat each, to take care of, against his return. Years passed; he came back, and applied for them again. The first took him into his storehouse, and showed him the bags of grain; but they were mildewed and worthless. The other led him out into the open country, and pointed out field after field of waving corn, the produce of the two sacks given to him. Said the merchant, as he gazed, "You have indeed been a faithful friend; give me two sacks of that wheat. The rest shall be thine." I leave you to make your own application of the allegory. (*Ibid.*) *The law of use and neglect in the kingdom of heaven* :—The other day I met with a curious myth illustrative of this point. It comes from the East, from Mohammedanism; but it is very expressive. A tribe of men dwelt on the shores of the Dead Sea. They had forgotten all about truth, and had taken up with lies; and were fast verging towards the saddest possible condition. Whereupon it pleased a kind Providence to send them the prophet Moses with an instructive word of warning. But no—the men of the Dead Sea discovered that there was no comeliness in this Moses—no truth in his words; they received him with scoffs and jeers. Moses withdrew, but the laws of nature did not withdraw. The men of the Dead Sea, says the narrative, when next he visited them, were all "changed into apes;" sitting on the trees there, grinning now in the most *un*affected manner, gibbering and chattering very genuine nonsense. There they sit and chatter to this hour, "only, I believe, every Sabbath there returns to them a bewildered, half consciousness, half reminiscence," seeming to have some distant idea that once they were of another order. They made no use of their souls, and so they have lost them. Their worship on the Sabbath now is to roost there, and half remember that they once had souls. There is no little truth in this old Moslem myth. They made no use of their souls, and so have lost them. Brethren, that is God's law. We keep what we use. We lose what we neglect to use. (*Ibid.*) *The pleasure of small abilities* :—Why is it not possible for us to acknowledge the abilities God has given to others, and render them their due without our coveting them ourselves? We have none of us been overlooked. If He has not given us the greater, He has given us the less, and if not the less then the least, and for each there is the fit and natural sphere of exercise. It is as much pleasure to the linnet to sing its unpre-

tentious song as for the lark to mount high above the corn fields on a bright sunny morning, and pour down its flood of melody on the earth. It is as much pleasure to the sparrow-hawk to steal along the hedgerows as for the eagle to cleave the sky in the wildest storm. If God has given us small capabilities, He has likewise given us the position adapted to them, and in that position we may find the sweetest pleasure and the greatest usefulness of which we are capable. (*Ibid.*) *Talents for service not ornament*:—Man is not placed upon the earth merely to be a passive recipient of the favours of heaven. He is here in the capacity of a servant; and what is a servant for if not to serve? Some of us imagine sometimes, I fear, that we are here to occupy a kind of ornamental position in the church. I remember to have read of Oliver Cromwell that, on one occasion he was visiting one of the great churches of our land, and discovered in the niches of one of its side chapels a number of silver statues. "What are these?" demanded he sternly of the trembling dean who was showing him round the church. "Please your highness," was the reply, "they are the twelve apostles." "The twelve apostles are they? Well take them away at once, and melt them down and coin them into money that, like their Master, they may go about doing good." Such is the mission that God has given to each one of us. The world we live in is not a great play-ground, but a vast harvest field, where every man, each in his own particular sphere, must thrust in the sickle and reap. None of us can say, like those of whom our Saviour speaks, standing in the market-place, "No man hath hired me." (*R. Morton.*)

Ver. 31. **When the Son of Man shall come in His glory.**—The righteous at the judgment. I. THE KINGLY CHARACTER OF THE LORD JESUS. II. THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. 1. Blessed of God. 2. Represented as being at the right hand of God. III. THAT TO WHICH THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE INTRODUCED. 1. A kingdom. 2. A prepared kingdom. (*B. W. Bucke, M.A.*) *The peculiar character of the general judgment*:—I. WHO ARE TO BE JUDGED?—"All nations." II. THE JUDGE OF MAN. 1. The Judge will be righteous in His decisions. 2. The Judge Himself having been the witness of all the moral actions of men will require no evidence. 3. Then why do we live so thoughtlessly? III. THE ISSUE OF THE JUDGMENT. Final separation of the wicked and the righteous. (*R. Jones, B.A.*) *The last judgment*:—I. THE PERSONAL GLORY AND MAJESTY OF THE JUDGE. 1. He will appear in that nature which He assumed as the Saviour of men. 2. The attributes of a suffering and degraded humanity will not be requisite to identify the Judge. 3. Heaven's innumerable inhabitants will accompany the Son of Man. 4. Then shall He set up the throne of His glory. II. THE SUPREME PREROGATIVES OF THE SON OF MAN AS DISPLAYED IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE WORLD. 1. The veil has been removed which conceals His dignity. 2. His unsearchable wisdom and power is further exhibited in the separating process. III. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE AWARDS OF THE JUDGMENT WILL BE DISTRIBUTED. 1. The Judge speaks from His throne as King in Zion. 2. He proceeds to assign reasons for the Father's having thus received them. 3. The language of surprise on the lips of the righteous. IV. THE FINAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS. 1. Express our solemn satisfaction in the assurance that Christ will sit as Judge of the race. 2. Let us daily demonstrate our love to Christ by abounding in works of mercy. 3. If through self-interest any Christian be undone, he will be found without apology. (*J. Dixon.*) *The judgment*:—I. THE VAST ASSEMBLAGE. 1. All the holy angels. 2. All nations. 3. All classes. 4. All ages. 5. All characters. 6. We shall be there. 7. All must obey the summons. Each must answer to his name. II. THE FINAL SEPARATION. 1. Here, this separation is impossible. The tares grow with the wheat. 2. Here, while many unions are injurious, many separations are painful. There, all will feel that the separation is right. 3. It will be based on character. Here wealth, &c. sunders men. There, all will belong to one of two classes—sheep or goats. 4. Viewed from our present standpoint, many of those separations will be painful. III. THE SOLEMN SENTENCE. 1. Even to the good. 2. Still more to the wicked. There will be no reversal of the sentence. 3. Execution will promptly follow the sentence. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The great day of the Lord*:—Contrast the first and last coming of Christ. I. Its great revelations. II. Its great account. III. Its great separation. IV. Its great decision. (*D. Gerok, D.D.*) *The final separation*:—I. ITS AUTHOR. 1. His ability. 2. His prerogative. II. ITS NATURE. 1. Its exactness. 2. Its completeness. 3. Its consequences in respect to place and employment and interest. 4. Its duration. III. ITS PRINCIPLE. 1. On the ground of character. 2. The test of character being the state of mind and heart toward the Redeemer.

3. The evidence of a right state of mind and heart toward the Redeemer being the treatment of His people. "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged." (*G. Brooks.*) *The final separation:*—I. THE IMPORTANT PERIOD REFERRED TO—"When the Son of Man shall come." 1. What this statement implies. It is the certainty of the Saviour's second coming; no intimation given of the precise time. 2. What this statement announces—It tells us *how* He will come. (1) The manner of His appearing—"in His glory." (2) His numerous retinue—"and all the holy angels." (3) The dignified position He will assume—"Then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." II. THE SOLEMN TRANSACTIONS DESCRIBED. 1. The persons who will appear before Him—"all nations." 2. The division that will take place—"and He shall separate them." III. THE SEPARATE AWARDS PRONOUNCED. 1. The righteous. (1) The ineffable welcome they receive. (2) The special reasons adduced. (3) The questions which the favoured throng propose. (4) The explanation which is given in reply. 2. The wicked. (1) Their awful doom. (2) The grounds on which it rests. IV. THE FINAL ISSUE DECLARED—"And these shall go away," &c. (*Expository Outlines.*) *The great separation:*—I. LET US CONTEMPLATE IT AS A REVEALED FACT. II. THE NATURE OF THIS SEPARATION. 1. It will be made by the Judge Himself. 2. It will be made wholly on the ground of moral character. 3. It will take place at the judgment day. 4. It will be a separation in place and residence. 5. It will be a separation in interest and employment. 6. It will be eternal. III. ON WHAT GROUND IT WILL BE MADE. 1. Upon our moral character formed in this state of probation. 2. This has an important bearing upon our earthly friendships. 3. What must be done in order to avoid being separated with the wicked. (*G. Coad.*) *The great separation:*—I. The coming. II. The sitting. III. The gathering. IV. The separating. V. The convicting. VI. The sentencing. VII. The executing. (*Dr. Bonar.*) *Christ come in His glory:*—The Judge of this world is Jesus Christ. Let us inquire—I. How Christ cometh to be the world's Judge; and with what conveniency and agreeableness to reason this honour is put upon Him. To a judge there belongeth these four things—(1) Wisdom; (2) justice; (3) power; (4) authority. II. Why is Christ the Judge of the world rather than the Father, and the Spirit, who made us and gave the law to us? These have one common nature, and the operations that are with the Divine essence, are common to them all. There is also an order and economy, according to which all their operations are produced, and brought forth to the creature; according to which order their power of judging fell partly to the Father, and partly to the Son. (*T. Manton.*) *Christ's appearance:*—Doctrine. That Christ's appearance for the judgment of the world shall be glorious and full of majesty. I. HIS PERSONAL GLORY. 1. The dignity of His person. 2. The quality of His office. 3. The greatness of His work. 4. The foregoing appearances of Christ. Why will He come in this great glory? (1) To take off the scandal and ignominy of the cross. (2) To beget a greater reverence and fear in the hearts of all those that shall be judged by Him. (3) For the comfort of His people; for Christ is a pattern and pledge of what shall be done in them. II. HIS ROYAL ATTENDANCE—"Holy angels with Him." 1. Partly for a train. 2. Partly that, by their ministry, the work of the day may be more speedily dispatched. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Shepherd:*—A shepherd among men is not lord of the flock, but a servant to take charge of them. I. CHRIST IS A GOOD SHEPHERD. 1. Known by His care and vigilancy. 2. Shown by His pity and wisdom, to deal tenderly with the flock, as their state doth require. 3. Seen in His constantly performing all parts of a shepherd to them. 4. Proved in His giving His life for them. II. CHRIST IS A GREAT SHEPHERD. 1. Great in His person; the Son of God. 2. Great in regard to the excellency of His gifts and qualifications. 3. Great in regard of His flock; He is the Shepherd of souls, millions of them are committed to His charge, and one soul is more worth than all the world. (*Ibid.*) *The godly are as sheep:*—1. Sheep are such kind of creatures as naturally gather themselves together, and unite themselves in a flock. 2. They are innocent and harmless creatures. 3. They are obedient to the shepherd. 4. They are poor, dependent creatures—(*a*) because of their erring (wandering) property; (*b*) because of their weakness. (*Ibid.*) *The wicked are as goats:*—They are as goats both for their unruliness and uncleanness. Unruliness; they have not the meekness of sheep; are ready to break through all fence and restraint; so a wicked man is yokeless. They are also wanton and loathsome—'tis a baser sort of animal than the sheep—therefore chosen to set forth a wicked and ungodly man. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 34–44. **Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed.** I. Consider the reference made to the CONDUCT of the righteous. II. Their STATION—"the right-hand." III. The SENTENCE. IV. The ORDER OF IT. The righteous receive their sentence first. 1. The King will bless before He curses. That their slanderers may witness the honour which the King confers. 2. Let us now kneel to Him by whom it shall be pronounced. V. The LANGUAGE of the sentence—1. The language of welcome. 2. Of benediction. 3. Of munificent communication—"Inherit the kingdom," &c. (1) How astonishing the grace of God to provide such an inheritance for sinful creatures. (2) How we are indebted to the grace of Christ for giving us a precious acquaintance with these things. (3) How should we value the Scripture which makes the discovery. (4) Remember that there is another sentence at that day. (*J. A. James.*) *Christ inviting His saints to His kingdom:*—I. THE TIME WHEN THIS INVITATION WILL BE GIVEN. 1. After our Lord has assembled round Him the whole world. 2. He will give us this invitation before He condemns the ungodly. II. THE CHARACTER IN WHICH CHRIST WILL GIVE THIS INVITATION—"Then shall the King," &c. III. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS INVITATION WILL BE GIVEN. 1. Those who have abounded in good and charitable works. 2. They think nothing of their good works. 3. They are those whom the Father has blessed. IV. THE KINGDOM TO WHICH CHRIST CALLS HIS REDEEMED. 1. It is really a kingdom. 2. A prepared kingdom. 3. A kingdom prepared long ago. 4. It is one which we are to inherit; our possession of heaven will be full and free. 5. We are to inherit this kingdom with Christ our Lord. (*C. Bradley.*) *Heaven:*—I. THE PERFECTED NATURE AND BEING OF THE RIGHTEOUS. A new body to which they will be united. Its identity with the former. II. THE STATE AND CONDITION IN WHICH IT WILL BE ENJOYED, AND TO WHICH THEY WILL BE SUMMONED. It must be a place, and not merely a state. Epithets by which this heavenly country is designated. III. THE INHABITANTS OF THIS FUTURE ABODE. The great object of their contemplation and source of their happiness, infinitely surpassing all the rest, will be the Deity Himself. Their worship will be of the highest order. They will have the most extensive intercourse, and be in the most intimate fellowship. There will be different orders and societies among them. The happiness of all will be continually progressive, according to the degree in which it is possessed by each. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *A call to glory:*—The call is not arbitrary. It signifies—(1) Sympathy; (2) Service; (3) Sovereignty. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The unavailing declinatures of praise and blame:*—The true principle of Christian benevolence rests on the identifications of Christ with His people; and in the transactions of the great judgment this principle is brought out and wielded by the Judge, to the surprise alike of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous, to their astonishment, hear themselves commended for loving services to the King, which they are quite unconscious of ever having rendered. The wicked, on the other hand, to their amazement and dismay, hear themselves condemned for having refused to the King services which they are quite unconscious of ever having had opportunities to render or refuse. I. THE IDENTIFICATION OF CHRIST WITH HIS MEMBERS. 1. Christ for me. 2. Christ with me. 3. Christ in me. II. ITS SURPRISING INFLUENCE ON THE JUDGMENT. 1. The plea of the unrighteous in exculpation seems to involve—(1) A professed ignorance of Christ and His people; (2) a complaint that if they had the opportunity it was not made plain and palpable; (3) a profession that had they seen their opportunity they would have embraced it. 2. The righteous' modest declinature of praise. It is to be explained on the grounds, on their part, of a certain want of—(1) Recollection; (2) Recognition; (3) Realization. (*H. Martin, M.A.*) *The tests of the final judgment:*—I. The TERMS of judgment. 1. Negatively. (1) Not the mere rightness of a creed. (2) Not any inwrought impression upon the man's own mind, if unattended by the outward marks of a converted heart. (3) That which is furnished in the life. II. The JUSTICE WHICH IS MANIFESTED IN THE APPOINTMENT OF THESE TERMS. Love to Christ is the principle, without which there can be no present enjoyment and no hope of future glory. Thus we hold it to be a test of final judgment, an evidence of love to the Saviour, to have honoured the people of Christ, especially those without rank or standing in society. All the riches of providential gift are intended to be the materials whereon stated Christian principle shall work. But mark the consideration of the Saviour: He has so brought down this exhibition of charity that it is within the reach of all, a cup of cold water. (*S. Robins, M.A.*) I. Consider the UNION which subsists between the Redeemer and His people, and the happy privilege it implies—"these, My brethren."

II. The indispensable DUTIES which the brethren of Christ owe to each other. (*W. Clarke.*) I. GUARD AGAINST MISTAKE. Men think that if only they are generous they will be saved. That we cannot be justified by the merit of almsgiving. II. THE LESSONS HERE TAUGHT. 1. That though men are not justified by our works they shall be judged by them. That the Judge will pay especial attention to works of charity. (*A. McCaul, D.D.*) *The objects, source, and dignity of Christian liberality*:—I. The OBJECTS of Christian bounty. The least of the brethren of Christ. 1. Least in consideration. 2. In civil station. 3. In age. The brethren of Christ demand our first care. II. ITS NATURE. 1. It is essentially humble. 2. It is tender in its exercise. 3. It is appropriate. III. ITS SOURCE. 1. Its source is the love of Christ. 2. The magnitude of His love; its activity. IV. ITS DIGNITY. Christ considers Himself your debtor. (*T. Robinson, M.A.*) *The disabilities of selfishness*:—1. Selfishness is incompatible with the fundamental principles and purposes of human society. 2. Selfishness is inimical to the proper development and perfection of thy own individual life. 3. Selfishness is a direct contradiction of the entire mission and character of Christ. 4. What emphasis He gives to the *least* of My brethren, as if He would sternly exclude mixture of motive. 5. The unconsciousness of the selfish man is striking. (1) It blinds the soul. (2) It makes sympathy unintelligible. (3) What grand opportunities for the service of love and reward it loses. We are all familiar with the excuses of selfishness. (*H. Allon.*) *The Divine law of compassion*:—Without this principle of love men have not the temper of Christ. His kingdom is meaningless to them. Pure philanthropy owes its noblest spirit to Christ. From what other source could it have sprung? 1. Is it a legacy to us from the ancient world? The temper of humanity could not have been wholly lacking in ancient times. 2. It is impossible that Judaism, so happily conspicuous in ancient times for the tender springs of mercy which God's hand cleft for it out of the rock of Sinaitic Law, should have slowly leavened Gentile society with the spirit of compassion. 3. If we turn to the voluminous instructions of the great ethical systems, we are no nearer an answer to our question. We are compelled to trace to Christ the development of that spirit of humanity, of which compassion is one of the vital elements. The foundations of the Christian doctrine of compassion. I. Much stress must be laid on the impression produced by Christ's earthly life. II. A second fruitful element was Christ's revelation of the nature of sin. It was not based on a misconception of the character of those on whom it was poured. III. This power was given to us by Christ, for He has cleansed and sanctified human nature. VI. Christ's revelation of the dignity of man. V. Christ's revelation of immortality. Let nothing tempt us to forget the spiritual and supernatural ground on which all adequate sympathy with our fellow men must stand. The most effectual benevolence rests on the mystery of Christian faith. (*T. R. Evans.*) *There is more in our deeds than we are aware of*:—Dear people, the law and conditions under which human life grows and works are the same whether we make for good or whether we make for evil. We cannot complain of them in the one case without protesting against them in the other. If we deem the conditions under which our life may go down hill to the pit to be hard and cruel, we must take into account that we are incriminating also the conditions under which our life can now climb upwards towards the blessed hills of heaven. Both stand and fall together. If, in this case of sin, we find ourselves to be handling and discharging powers that lie behind and within us, unsuspected, incalculable in range, yet, subject to our will, set loose and in action; so, in the case of goodness, there lie within us and behind us stores of energy immeasurable, beyond belief, such as eye hath not seen nor heart conceived—energies which wait on our little volitions to liberate and discharge themselves also. In both cases we find ourselves to be creatures that move under the influence and pressure of higher and deeper agencies than ourselves. Neither our evil nor our good dates from our own petty life, or has its origin in our tiny scope of will. Both were born long ago; both are ancient and immense; both occupy this dim and unknown background on the surface of which our little day plays itself out. "Kingdoms" they are named of our Lord, kingdoms—a kingdom, on the one hand, of this world, of Satan, worked and pushed and animated and fed, built and bonded together, by principalities and powers, by workers of wickedness in high places; a kingdom charged with mysterious forces and full of dark and dreadful hosts; and, on the other side, a kingdom of God, of heaven, of Christ, of righteousness, set over against the other, with its own patient and unwearied armies, who watch and war there with swords of victory and helms of flame and wide unslumbering eyes; a kingdom behind us, weighted with accu-

mulated glories, and thick with bonded ministries, and rich with memorial honours; a kingdom of Christ, filled with His breath, and fed with His body, and alive with His promise, and aglow with His hopes, and built with His headship, and expanded by His pleadings, and mighty in His intercessions. These are the two kingdoms, on the mere skirts of which we walk, and move and live. (*Canon Scott-Holland.*) *Self-forgetfulness*:—In the text the thought is not that the just failed to discern the Master in the men they helped, but that Christ is to be the motive of all action. Let us consider for a few moments this ideal of a Christian worker. I. THE BEAUTY OF SELF-FORGETFULNESS. In nature we see this lack of self-consciousness. There is no deeper tint to the bloom of the flower because there is an admiring crowd. The stars look down as beautifully in the silent desert, etc. The sea breaks and scatters its treasures on a dead shore, etc. There is an utter self-obliviousness. How this self-forgetfulness adds to the charms of a child. A saint loses his sanctity when we see that he thinks himself saintly. II. SELF-FORGETFULNESS CONTRIBUTES TO POWER. A traveller says, while climbing an ice-bridge in the Alps, he had to cut in the ice rests for his feet. There was no trouble in doing this so long as his mind was centred on his work, and he forgot self and danger. When he thought of self he trembled, and to tremble there was death. The man who loses all thought of self in a grand work, enlarges his nature until he seems to circle beyond the stars. III. SELF-FORGETFULNESS CONTRIBUTES TO HAPPINESS. There is joy in an unselfish ministry. Look at the steps by which we attain to this. 1. The first feeling in looking to Christ is that of shame, because of our sinfulness and insincerity. 2. The next thought: "How can I attain to the exalted life of Christ?" 3. Then our thoughts of self are lost in admiration of the excellences of Jesus. Christ becomes enthroned within us, and He is a force that manifests Himself constantly. The Christian shines unconsciously—as the jewel sparkles, as the bird sings. Love thinks nothing of the sacrifice it makes. Told of what it has done, it blushes at what it deems unmerited praise. Self-forgetfulness is the first sign that we are doing work for the God above us. (*C. D. Bridgeman, D.D.*) *Christian sympathy*:—I. THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST ARE OFTENTIMES FOUND IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH PATHETICALLY CLAIM THE SYMPATHY OF THEIR FELLOW CREATURES. 1. For the sake of correction. 2. For the sake of preservation. From what dangers are we snatched by that poverty at which we murmur. 3. For the sake of example to others, and that God may be glorified in them. 4. That we may have an opportunity of exhibiting our love to the Redeemer by extending the necessary relief to them. II. JESUS SO IDENTIFIES HIMSELF WITH HIS DISCIPLES, AS TO REGARD EVERY EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY WITH THEM AS AN ACT OF KINDNESS TO HIMSELF. III. Every act of kindness to a suffering disciple, flowing from the simple motive of love to the Master, HE WILL MOST ASSUREDLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND RECOMPENSE. Here is consolation for the poor; Jesus Christ is the companion of their distress. (*J. Gaskin, M.A.*) *The principle by which men shall be judged*:—I. CHRIST'S IDENTIFYING HIMSELF WITH MEN—"Ye have done it unto Me." 1. Who are Christ's brethren to whom these acts are done, and which are counted as having been done to Him? They are humble afflicted Christians; but the word brother must have a wider meaning; cold-heartedness will not be excused because those who we so treated were not of Christ's family. The spirit of pity is not confined by the knowledge we have that this man or that is one of Christ's brethren. Christ acknowledges as His brethren men whom nobody ever acknowledged before. We shall not recognize the "brethren" unless we have the brotherly spirit within us; that will open our eyes and work marvels within us. II. That our Lord is giving AN OUTLINE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF JUDGMENT by which men shall be tried who do not know and have not known or seen Him. Its connection between Him and His brethren is not arbitrary, it is founded in nature and fact. In all ages, and in all nations, there are circumstances sufficient to test and prove the character of man. Jesus here tears asunder every false covering under which men claim to be accounted religious, when they omit the common calls on mercy and kindness. Great duties are not open to all; go were you will, opportunity for pity can be found. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *The final test*:—I. The PERSON by whom the last trial is to be conducted. It is the King: who is also spoken of as the "Son of Man." The combined justice and mercy in His appointment, who is to decide our portion for eternity. The equity of the trial depends mainly on the character and capacity of the being who presides. An angel would not guarantee a just verdict; the Omniscient will. Oh for a judge who can have a fellow feeling with us. It is a beautiful arrangement of the gospel that the offer of Judge and Redeemer should meet in the same Person.

II. THE TEST. Relieving or not the distressed. The power of being charitable not limited to the richer classes. So that we show you the lower ranks of society are no more excluded than the higher from the alleged blessedness of givers; and that those who seem to you to have nothing to bestow, may as well abide, at the last, a scrutiny into ministrations to the necessitous, as others who have large incomes at their disposal, and can take the lead in all the bustle of philanthropy. Ay, and we reckon it a beautiful truth, that, from the fields and workshops of a country may be sent to the platform of judgment the most active and self-denying of the benevolent; and that however in this world the praise of liberality is awarded only to those who can draw out their purses and scatter their gold, our labourers and artizans may be counted hereafter amongst the largest contributors to the relief of the afflicted. The donations which they have wrung from overtasked limbs, or which they may be said to have coined out of their own flesh and blood, may weigh down in the balances of the judgment the more showy gifts which the wealthy dispense from their superfluities, without trenching, it may be, on their luxuries—yea, and thus is there nothing to prove to us that there may not be poured forth from the very hovels of our land, numbers who shall as well abide the searching inquiries of the Judge, as the most munificent of those who have dwelt in its palaces, and be as justly included within the summons, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," though none are to be thus addressed but such as have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and succoured the sick. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The reasons for Christ's sentence*:—(1) Good works are the reasons of this sentence. (2) The good works only of the faithful are mentioned, and not the evil they have committed. (3) Only works of mercy, or the fruits of love, are specified. (4) All cannot express their love and self-denial in this way. (*T. Manton.*) *Judgment upon works*:—1. At the general judgment all men shall receive their doom, or judgment shall be pronounced according to their works. 2. Christ hath so ordered His providence about His members, that some of them are exposed to necessities and wants, others in a capacity to relieve them. 3. Works of charity, done out of faith, and love to Christ, are of greater weight and consequence than the world usually taketh them to be. (*Ibid.*) *The surprise of the righteous*:—These blessed of the Father, brethren of the Son, and heirs of the kingdom, stand amazed that the Son of Man should so overwhelm their trifling services with a glorious reward. Nay, they can hardly recollect any service at all. The ministries were so trifling, and were bestowed on objects so inconsiderable, often with such mixture of bad motives, and such deficiency of good, that it amazes them to find every transient item legible in the book of the Judge, now seated upon the throne of His glory. Mark how He receives them, how He gathers up the bruised, withered, scattered flowers which seemed dying in our hands, and makes of them a garland; binds them on His brow as a diadem; points to them before His angels as an honour. (*J. W. Alexander.*) *Christian benevolence*:—I. WHY IS THE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE SO IMPORTANT? 1. Christian benevolence is the image of God—the nearest approach we can make to His likeness. 2. Peculiarly an imitation of Christ. 3. The distinguishing bond of Christian profession. 4. Is the fulfilling of the law, and contains every kind of virtue that has our fellow-creatures for its object. 5. Is the spirit of heaven. II. OBSERVATIONS ON THE MODE OF DOING GOOD. 1. Secure the principle of charity by some system. 2. Visit the sick and the poor, &c. (*Anon.*) *True benevolence of Christianity*:—"Pagan philosophy," says Robert Hall, "soared in sublime speculation, wasted its strength in endless subtleties and debates; but among the rewards to which it aspired, it never thought of 'the blessedness of him that considereth the poor.' You might have traversed the Roman empire, in the zenith of its power, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, without meeting with a single charitable asylum for the sick. Monuments of pride, of ambition, of vindictive wrath, were to be found in abundance; but not one legible record of commiseration for the poor." The primitive Christians, it is evident, taught this lesson of philanthropy to the world. Hospitals were referred to as an existence at the Council of Nice, A.D. 325. *Sins of omission*:—The wicked are described by sins of omission. I. Explain sins of omission. II. Some sins of omission are greater than others. III. In many cases, sins of omission may be more heinous and damning than sins of commission; partly because these harden more, and partly because omissions make way for commissions. (*T. Manton.*) *Done to my friends is done to me*:—Cicero writes thus to Plautius, "I would have you think that whatever friendly service, or good advice, you shall bestow upon my friend Furnius, I shall take it as kindly as if it had been done to myself." *Kind-*

*ness to Christ's servants*:—After telling us of the arrival of himself and his companions at a heathen village on the banks of the Orange River, Dr. Moffat says: "We had travelled far, and were hungry and thirsty and fatigued. We asked water, but they would not supply it. I offered three or four buttons that still remained on my jacket for a little milk. This also was refused. We had the prospect of another hungry and thirsty night. When twilight drew nigh, a woman approached from the height beyond which the village lay. She bore on her head a bundle of wood, and had a vessel of milk in her hand. She laid them down, and returned to the village. A second time she approached with other and larger supplies. We asked her again and again who she was. She remained silent, till affectionately entreated to give us a reason for such unlooked-for kindness to strangers. The solitary tear stole down her sable cheek when she replied, 'I love Him whose servants ye are, and surely it is my duty to give you a cup of cold water in His name. My heart is full, therefore I cannot speak the joy I feel to see you in this out-of-the-world place!' I asked her how she kept the life of God in her soul, in the absence of all communion with saints. She drew from her bosom a copy of the Dutch New Testament she had received in a school some years before. 'This,' she said, 'is the fountain whence I drink; this the oil which makes my lamp burn.'" *Christ's representatives*:—A rich young man of Rome had been suffering from a severe illness, but at length he was cured, and received his health. Then he went for the first time into the garden, and felt as if he were newly born. Full of joy, he praised God aloud. He turned his face up to the heavens and said, "O Thou Almighty Giver of all blessings, if a human being could in any way repay Thee, how willingly would I give up all my wealth!" Hermas, the shepherd, listened to these words, and he said to the rich young man, "All good gifts come from above; thou canst not send anything thither. Come, follow me." The youth followed the pious old man, and they came to a dark hovel, where there was nothing but misery and lamentation; for the father lay sick, and the mother wept, whilst the children stood round naked and crying for bread. Then the young man was shocked at this scene of distress. But Hermas said, "Behold here an altar for thy sacrifice! Behold here the brethren and representatives of the Lord!" The rich young man then opened his hand, and gave freely and richly to them of his wealth, and tended the sick man. And the poor people, relieved and comforted, blessed him, and called him an angel of God. Hermas smiled and said, "Ever thus turn thy grateful looks first towards heaven, and then to earth." (*Translated from the German of Krummacher.*) *Practical beneficence the true Christian life*:—To be servant of humanity is to be servant of Christ. The love of God cannot be where compassionate love of man is wanting. From gospel truths such as these start here is made. The exclusive emphasis laid in the text on practical beneficence shows that it alone is accepted as evidence of devotion to Christ. With Christ religion is simply goodness; personal devotion to Him is the very heart of goodness. I. CHRIST'S RELATION TO MEN FROM WHICH HIS AND OUR TRUE ATTITUDE TO THEM SPRINGS—"My brethren." All are His brethren. The least are included. Their poverty and destitution, pain and sorrow, are His own. Relief of their wants is relief to Him, &c. Those who are Christ's brethren should be ours. We should be so lifted up into the spirit of His life, that His attitude towards all men becomes ours. Our best love of Christ is evidenced in love to man. II. SERVICE OF THE LEAST IS, IN A SPECIAL WAY, EVIDENCE OF NOBLE LOVE. His greatest love was shown towards the worst of men, and the most genuine evidence of our love to Christ is in our stooping to the least. This attitude to men must spring from a deep interpretive sympathy—from a love which believeth all things—"the enthusiasm of humanity." Service of God, which separates us from service of the least among the brethren of Christ, is monkish and not Christian. We need faith in self-sacrificing love as mighty to redeem. God's supreme demand is that we live to bless His children. The Christian principle and life have their place in all the concerns of our daily existence. We need to be continually reminding ourselves that we are dealing with brothers. III. WHAT IS NOT DONE TO CHRIST'S BRETHREN IS DEFECTIVE OF SERVICE RENDERED TO HIM. Every opportunity which business life affords of reaching out to other souls to bless them, and which is neglected, is something positively not done to Christ. The redeeming principle must rule us in our attitude towards all the great social questions which arise for solution to-day—questions between capital and labour, landlord and tenant, seller and buyer. What is needed to-day is not a sentimental adherence to the principle of beneficence, &c., but an enthusiastic devotion to Christ, such that we shall seek with all our might His ends, and even be willing to make sacrifice to

the death for their attainment. (*R. Veitch, M.A.*) *Necessity of good works*:—Be warned against that fatal fanaticism which has devastated a great part of Christendom in these latter days, which takes its stand upon one half of the truth in order to deny the other half, which calls justification by faith only "the gospel," just as if judgment according to works were not equally "the gospel," just as if every fundamental truth revealed in Scripture were not equally a part of the "everlasting gospel." There was a certain clergyman (in Ireland) who preached all his life that we never can be saved by good works, and that all our good works are as filthy rags, and so on. At last a neighbour remonstrated with him after this manner: "Why do you always preach against good works? there is not one of them in your parish!" Doubtless this anecdote, which might savour of the ridiculous if it were not so sad, is only too true in fact; there are, we must fear, not a few places where justification by faith is preached every Sunday—where neither priest nor people ever do any good works of piety and charity—whence, therefore, both priest and people will certainly go into everlasting fire unless they repent and amend. God forbid I should say that justification by faith only is not true, is not part of the gospel; but I do say—and observation of mankind fully confirms me in saying—that the teaching of justification by faith, as though it were the whole of the gospel, is simply the most ruinous error that could be committed. If that be the gospel which is plainly and clearly laid down in the New Testament, then salvation by faith is the gospel, salvation by works is the gospel, and salvation by sacramental incorporation in Christ is the gospel too. The faithful preacher will preach these doctrines all round, without dwelling on any one or two to the practical exclusion of the others for other; a faithful Christian will believe them all round, and strive to live by them, not staggered because they seem to be inconsistent, because in human systems they are made to mutually exclude one another, but knowing that what God hath joined together man has no right to put asunder, whether in doctrine or in practice. I do not ask thee for one moment to forget the law by which thou must be justified before thy God, the law of faith in Him who freely justifieth the unrighteous; but I do ask thee to remember, O man, the rule by which thou shalt be tried before thy Saviour and thy Judge. Those that treat Him well He will reward, those that treat Him ill He will condemn. (*R. Winterbotham, M.A.*) *Relation of good works to Christianity*:—Good works do not make a Christian; but one must be a Christian to do good works. The tree bringeth forth the fruit, not the fruit the tree. None is made a Christian by works, but by Christ, and being in Christ, he brings forth fruit for Him. (*Martin Luther.*) Faith to the power of good works is saving faith. (*F. B. Proctor, M.A.*) *Christ reproaching the wicked*:—It was I who formed you, and ye clave to another. I created the earth, the sea, and all things for your sakes, and you misused them to My dishonour. Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not. Ye have become the workmen of another master, even the devil. With him possess darkness, and the fire which shall not be quenched, and the worm which sleepeth not, and the gnashing of teeth. I formed your ears that you should hear the Scriptures, and you applied them to songs of devils, to harps, to jokes. I created your eyes that ye might behold the light of My commandments, and follow them; but ye opened them for adultery, and immodesty, and all uncleanness. I ordained your mouth for the praise and glory of God, and to sing psalms and spiritual songs; but ye applied it for the utterance of revilings, perjuries, and blasphemies. I made your hands that you should lift them up in prayers and supplications; ye have stretched them out in thefts and murders. (*Hippolytus.*) *The blessed sometimes think themselves cursed, forgotten, and forsaken*:—The cloud that casts its cold and its freezing shadow over your home broke into innumerable blessings. Those things that pained you when they touched your flesh no sooner approached the chancel of the soul, the immortal spirit, than they became the very soil on which character grew up, and ripened into happiness and heaven. There is not a line of suffering visible upon your road that has not had parallel with it a line of glory, of happiness, and joy. When you thought you were cursed, you were really blessed; what you dreamt in your ignorance were calamities were the very credentials of the people of God; and if God had not so dealt with you, you had never been in that happy group to whom he speaks those thrilling words, "Come, ye blessed." Do you see a mother with an infant in her arms? The infant in its ignorance put forth its hands to touch the flame of the candle, as if it were a bright and beautiful plaything. The mother draws back its hand, or puts away the candle; much to the child's disappoint-

ment, but much to the child's happiness and comfort. So God deals with children of a larger growth. We in our ignorance would seize the flaming thing that would burn to the quick; He in His compassion puts it away, and bids the heart be still; and what you know not now He tells you you shall know hereafter. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The final separation*:—I. THE DIVISION. 1. They shall be divided into two parts—the sheep and goats. There shall be two positions, on the right and on the left hand. There will be no third class. There is no state between being converted and unconverted. 2. They will be divided readily. It is not everybody that could divide sheep from goats. They are extremely like each other: the wool of some sheep in a warm climate becomes so like hair, and the hair of a kind of goat so like wool, that a traveller scarcely knows which is which; but a shepherd who has lived amongst them knows the difference well. The eye of fire will soon separate the sheep from the goats. 3. They will be divided infallibly. Not one poor trembling sheep will be found amongst the goats. 4. That division will be keen and sharp. The husband torn away from the wife. 5. It will be very wide as well as keen. The distance between happiness and misery. 6. The separation will be final. II. THE DIVIDER. "*He* shall separate." Jesus will be the Divider. 1. This will assure the saints of their right to heaven. *He* said "Come." 2. This will increase the terror of the lost, that Christ shall divide them. Christ, so full of love, would not destroy a sinner unless it must be. He also has power to carry out the sentence. III. THE RULE OF THE DIVISION. The great division between the sons of men is Christ. He is the divider and the division. The rule of the division is—1. Actions. 2. Actions about Christ. 3. The actions which will be mentioned at the judgment day, as the proof of our being blessed of the Lord, spring from the grace of God. They fed the hungry, but sovereign grace had first fed them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The reward of the righteous*:—I. There is much of teaching IN THE SURROUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES. "*When* the King shall come in His glory." Then we must not expect our reward till by and by. When the King shall come in His glory, then is your time of recompense. Observe with delight the august Person by whose hand the reward is given—"When *the King*." It is Christ's own gift. The character in which our Lord Jesus shall appear is significant. The King. He will come in His glory; the cross is exchanged for the crown. II. THE PORTION ITSELF. The reward of the righteous is set forth by the loving benediction pronounced by the Master, but their very position gives some foreshadowing of it. The righteous the objects of Divine complacency, revealed before the sons of men. The welcome uttered—"Come." It is the gospel symbol, "Come ye blessed," which is a clear declaration that this is a state of happiness; from the great primary source of all good—"Blessed of My Father." It is a state in which they shall recognize their right to be there; a state therefore of ease and freedom. It is "*inherit the kingdom.*" A man does not fear to lose that which he wins by descent from his parent. It denotes full possession and enjoyment. The word "*kingdom*" indicates the richness of the heritage of the saints. It is no petty estate, no happy corner in obscurity; but a kingdom. Your future joy will be all that a royal soul desires. According to the word "*prepared*" we may conceive it to be a condition of surpassing excellence. III. THE PERSONS WHO SHALL COME THERE. 1. Their name—"Blessed of the Father." 2. Their nature. Sons to inherit. 3. Their appointment. 4. Their doings. Actions of charity selected—1. Because the general audience assembled around the throne would know how to appreciate this evidence of their new-born nature. 2. They may have been chosen as evidences of grace, because as actions, they are a wonderful means of separating between the hypocrite and the true Christian. (*Ibid.*) *Charitable actions reveal an inward grace*:—When you read "for" here, you must not understand it to be that their reward is because of this, but that they are proved to be God's servants by this; and so, while they do not merit it because of these actions, yet these actions show that they were saved by grace, which is evidenced by the fact that Jesus Christ wrought such and such works in them. If Christ does not work such things in you, you have no part in Him; if you have not produced such works as these you have not believed in Jesus. Now somebody says, "Then I intend to give to the poor in future in order that I may have this reward." Ah, but you are very much mistaken if you do that. The Duke of Burgundy was waited upon by a poor man, a very loyal subject, who brought him a very large root which he had grown. He was a very poor man indeed, and every root he grew in his garden was of consequence to him; but merely as a loyal offering he brought to his prince the largest his little garden produced. The prince was so pleased with the man's evident loyalty and

affection that he gave him a very large sum. The steward thought, "Well, I see this pays; this man has got fifty pounds for his large root, I think *I* shall make the duke a present." So he bought a horse and he reckoned that he should have in return ten times as much for it as it was worth, and he presented it with that view: the duke, like a wise man, quietly accepted the horse, and gave the greedy steward nothing. That was all. So you say, "Well, here is a Christian man, and he gets rewarded. He has been giving to the poor, helping the Lord's Church, the thing pays, I shall make a like investment." Yes, but you see the steward did not give the horse out of any idea of loyalty, and kindness, and love to the duke, but out of very great love to himself, and therefore had no return; and if you perform deeds of charity out of the idea of getting to heaven by them, why it is yourself that you are feeding, it is yourself that you are clothing; all your virtue is not virtue, it is rank selfishness, it smells strong of selfhood, and Christ will never accept it; you will never hear Him say, "Thank you" for it. You served yourself, and no reward is due. (*Ibid.*) *Heaven prepared for the saints*:—If I might so speak, God's common gifts, which he throws away as though they were but nothing, are priceless; but what will be these gifts upon which the infinite mind of God has been set for ages of ages in order that they may reach the highest degree of excellence? Long before Christmas chimes were ringing, mother was so glad to think her boy was coming home, after the first quarter he had been out at school, and straightway she began preparing and planning all sorts of joys for him. Well might the holidays be happy when mother had been contriving to make them so. Now in an infinitely nobler manner the great God has prepared a kingdom for His people; He has thought "that will please them, and that will bless them, and this other will make them superlatively happy." He prepared the kingdom to perfection; and then, as if that were not enough, the glorious man Christ Jesus went up from earth to heaven; and you know what He said when He departed—"I go to prepare a place for you." (*Ibid.*) *Hard to see Christ in the poverty of the saints*:—Do not judge amiss of others. God's people are a poor, despised, hated, scorned company in the world as to visible appearance; and what proof of Christ is there in them? Who can see Christ in a hungry beggar? or the glorious Son of God in an imprisoned and scorned believer? or one beloved of God in him that is mortified with continual sicknesses and diseases. A pearl or a jewel that is fallen into the dirt, you cannot discern the worth of it till you wash it, and see it sparkle. A prince in disguise may be jostled and affronted. To a common eye things go better with the wicked than with the children of God. If you see the image of Christ in them, you will one day see them other manner of persons than now you see them, or they appear to be. (*T. Manton.*) *Charity ministers to self-enjoyment*:—Wells are sweeter for draining; so are riches, when used as the fuel of charity. (*Ibid.*) *God rewards charity*:—The poor cannot requite thee; therefore God will. (*Ibid.*) *Destiny determined by serviceableness*:—The judgment will go according to our serviceableness or otherwise. "Every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil." We are apt to imagine that true religion consists in extraordinary frames of mind, ecstatic moods. It consists in nothing of the kind, but in the faithful discharge, in the spirit of Christ, of the human duties of our every-day existence. Many are the legends concerning the Quest of the Holy Grail, the traditional Cup of Healing from which the Saviour drank the sacramental wine the night He was betrayed. But the prettiest of them all, prettiest because truest, is that which represents a bold knight of the Round Table travelling far over mountains and through deserts in search of the mysterious Grail. His protracted and exhaustive journeys, however, turned out fruitless. At length, wan in countenance, depressed in spirit, and fatigued in body, he resolved to return to Arthur's Hall, a sadder but not a wiser man. However, as he was nearing the gate of Camelot, he saw a poor man writhing in the ditch, evidently in the last agonies of death. Moved with compassion, the sworn defender of the rights of the poor and the weak dismounted from his steed, sought a cup of water, and handed it to the suffering man; when lo! the cup glowed as if it were a thing alive, flamed as if it were the sapphire of the New Jerusalem. The knight at last saw the Holy Grail, not, however, in traversing barren wildernesses or performing deeds of prowess, but in succouring the poor and forlorn. "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these little ones, ye have done it unto Me." "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." A little gift to a little one—it will be honourably mentioned in the judgment day. (*J. C. Jones.*)

Ver. 46. **And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.**—*The final state of the saints in heaven*:—There is a state of happiness which the spirits of just men enter into immediately after their separation from the body. But after the resurrection and the general judgment, then the righteous shall go into life eternal. I. The state of happiness itself. That good men shall enjoy a state of happiness in the world to come is evident. 1. From the light of nature and reason. General notion among the wiser heathens. Universal desire in mankind. The unequal distribution of things in the present state. 2. From Divine revelation. II. The eternity of this happiness. Testimony of Scripture. (*Outlines of Sermons.*) I. THE PARTIES SENTENCED. II. THE PENALTIES AWARDED. 1. Positive infliction. 2. Incited passions. 3. Bitter reflection. 4. Painful associations. 5. Mutual recognition. III. THE PERPETUITY DETERMINED. 1. Necessary. 2. Just. 3. Certain. (*J. Blackburn.*) *For ever*:—Your opinion about "for ever" can have no manner of effect upon the reality of that "for ever." A party of boatmen on the Niagara river may have a very strong opinion when they are caught by the rapids, that it is very pleasant rowing; but neither their shouts nor their merriment will alter the fact that the world's cataract is close at hand. You have a strong opinion that hell-fire is a delusion; that they are superstitious, and cruel, and ignorant who ask you to pause, and awake, and prepare for this coming, this continued retribution; but your opinions will not have the slightest, the remotest, the minutest influence on the tremendous fact. (*Reynolds.*) *Heaven and hell*:—I. The everlasting state of the righteous. It will consist of: (1) Perfect knowledge; (2) Perfect love; (3) Perfect purity; (4) Perfect felicity. II. The eternal state of the wicked. Includes: 1. The privation of infinite good. (1) They have lost heaven and all its blessedness at once. (2) They are strangers to the endearments and consolations of friendship. (3) Nor is there any, the smallest, rest from pain. 2. The infliction of infinite evil. Tormentors in hell: (1) Conscience; (2) Satan; (3) Fellow-damned; (4) The sufferer will be his own tormentor; (5) Memory; (6) Anticipation. (*T. Raffles.*) *The nature of true righteousness*:—The following four particulars are necessary to entitle us to the denomination and character of righteous men. I. The establishment within us of good principles, and acting from them. II. The superior efficacy of such principles within us to the efficacy of all other principles. III. The manifestation of their superiority by avoiding all habitual guilt, and practicing all known duties; and IV. A constant endeavour to grow better. (*Richard Price.*) *Eternal life*:—I. Eternal life, what it is. 1. It is life in the most perfect existence. 2. It is life in its fullest enjoyment. The intellect in its highest flights, the will in its most entire subjugation, and the affections, shall be fully enjoyed there. 3. It is life in its eternal duration. II. The persons who are to enjoy eternal life—"the righteous." They have been stripped of their own righteousness, and are clad in the righteousness of Christ. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*)

## CHAPTER XXVI.

VERS. 1–5. **That they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill Him.**—*Craft and cruelty coupled in the Church's adversaries*:—Neither of them "wants their mate," as the Scripture says of those birds of prey and desolation (Isa. xxxiv. 16). These priests and elders were so bitterly bent against Christ, that nothing would satisfy them but His blood. All plants and other creatures have their growth and increase to a period, and then their declination and decay, except only the crocodile, who grows bigger and bigger, even till death. So have all passions and perturbations in man's mind their intentions and remissions, except only malicious revenge. This dies not, many times, but with the man (if that), as nothing can quench the combustible slime in Samosaris, nor the burning flame of the hill Chimæra, but only earth. St. Peter tells us (1 Peter ii. 23), that our Saviour, being reviled, did not only commit His cause to God, but Himself to God: as expecting the increase of His enemies' opposition till they had put Him to death. (*John Trapp.*)

Vers. 6–13. **Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper.**—*Christ anointed for His burial*:—Let us endeavour to find out what was the latent virtue in the apparently simple act which won so noble a reward. I. There can be

no doubt that the majority of Christians would express SURPRISE AT THE HIGH HONOUR PROMISED TO MARY FOR SO SLIGHT A SERVICE. She did not resign wealth. What she did was of no utility. In these days and in this land we have a narrow and prejudiced way of judging of the character and actions of men. There is a national character, our likes and dislikes; we are disposed to try everything by this standard. Our national qualities are industry, prudence, regularity. There is another class of national qualities also—warm affections, enthusiasm, high unearthly devotion—these are contrary to our mental constitution. You find them in excess in warmer climates. Both of these characteristics have their faults and excellences. What is our ideal of a religious character? That a man should be upright, sober; hence our religious temper is not enthusiastic. The conduct of the woman was the result of overpowering love. May not this narrative teach us that God above all things values love to Himself, that one outgoing of the soul to Himself is worth hundreds of acts of duty apathetically rendered. II. So also did she offer AN ILLUSTRIOUS EXAMPLE OF IMPLICIT FAITH. She had in view His burial, and did it to that end. A marvellous effort of faith. The apostles were not equal to it, though Christ had told them of His death and resurrection. (*J. R. Woodford, M.A.*) *True principles of Christian economy*:—I. Let us seek to challenge and CORRECT THE WORLD'S CHARGE OF WASTE brought against this and all similar acts of homage to Christ. Waste is useless and prodigal expenditure. Sin is the parent of extravagance. There are notions in the world on the subject of giving to God which we can correct:—1. Let us mark, in opposition to selfish policy, that as *hoarding* is not always *saving*, so neither is expenditure always waste. So the Divine method. The sunshine streams down from heaven with no stint, yet without waste; because all this vast outcome of goodness returns in richest blessing to its Parent Benefactor. The same principle of generous expenditure forms the life and success of commerce. A man of sordid habits toils with old worn-out machinery, because he dreads expense of repairs, only to find that his inferior goods have fallen out of demand. Again, does the selfish man congratulate himself, when he has refused some urgent opportunity of doing good, that, whatever conscience or the world may say of him, he has at least saved his money? He is mistaken. There is no safe keeping of that which vexes and displeases God. But there is another fallacy of the ungenerous and selfish, suggested by the text, viz., that everything is wasted that is given to Christ. Finally, it is the fallacy of the selfish that, while they will not make sacrifices for Christ, they think they have a right to prevent others; but this will not exempt us from doing our own duty. II. What the world calls waste, as done to Christ and His cause, the Saviour Himself commends as duty, which secures our truest interest and honour. (*J. R. McGavin, D.D.*) *The problem of poverty, and how to deal with it*:—What are the cardinal principles of the problem? 1. The essential claim which this class of mankind has upon the common brotherhood is not one of charity, but is founded in religion. It is not a humane sentiment to be gratified, but a law of Christianity to be obeyed. 2. The poor may be considered in the light of Christ's legacy to His Church in all ages. Had there been no poor claiming our sympathy and kindly ministry, what a lack there had been in the training of the Christian graces. 3. We are to perform this high and sacred duty in testimony of our love to Christ, and in gratitude for His love and services in our behalf. (*American Homiletic Review.*) *The worth of life enhanced by kindly acts, which serve no direct practical purpose*:—Indeed in many of the sweetest and purest relationships of life, the half of those deeds of kindness and interest which are wrought, and often wrought at much cost and with labour, are of this sort. They are not absolutely necessary to the wellbeing or existence of those in whose behalf they are done. Probably life could be spent happily enough without the gifts which such deeds bring. But life is not mere subsistence; life is made up of a thousand little slender veins and channels through which affection flows noiselessly and unseen. Life and the inner power of life are made up of infinite little gleams of sympathy, and are not to be measured and weighed like beams of timber by their size. Life is a great and living tree, with countless twigs and foliage which render it fair and attractive. And in all the relationships of life, day by day all persons are conscious that a large portion of their thoughts and time and care is bestowed on what serves no other purpose than merely to express what is within the heart, and seeks for utterance. "To what purpose this waste?" one might say when one sees how much is thus given and done—not because it is essential to maintain life, but because it is simply the outcome of

friendly interest and affection, and because to stifle it would be to prevent the free breathing of a pure and warm heart. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *Spiritual emotion not to be suppressed*:—Is there no religion except what is called the practical? and must everything you say and do and give have a direct religious purpose? May that not be true in the sacred region of religious life, which I have already indicated as true in the daily home-life? May there not be great religious emotions and desires which seek for utterance, and nothing more? May there not be a deep gratitude for spiritual blessings which longs to show itself, and which only wants to express its force towards Him from whom the blessings have come? I am not encouraging a mere sentimental religion, or a religion which has nothing but emotion in it; but I desire to destroy nothing which God has formed, and to suppress no genuine spiritual aspiration. And I wish that all should feel how natural it is, and how true to the religious instincts, that there should be times and seasons when the devout soul finds pleasure and satisfaction in what seems to effect no direct purpose. There are occasions when the very essence of religion consists in words and works of worship and praise. To what purpose this waste of time, or thought, or language? some may ask. And the answer is, that goodness in religion is often what goodness is in the home-life of men; it is goodness, not for what it accomplishes, but for what it expresses of the state of the heart. (*Ibid.*) *The universal memorial*:—1. This memorial affords an instance of the Saviour's foreknowledge, and of His fidelity and power in the accomplishment of His predictions. 2. It reminds us that as we possess this gospel ourselves it is our duty to impart the knowledge of it to others. The text implies that the gospel is for the world. 3. It sanctions and encourages the efforts of Christian females, as well as of others, to serve the cause of Jesus Christ. 4. It teaches us that a desire to supply the temporal necessities of the poor is not to supersede a devout regard to the claims of Christ, and to the welfare of souls. 5. It directs us to serve Christ according to our ability, and intimates that no sacrifices are too costly to be made for Him. 6. It reminds us that Jesus Christ sometimes bestows upon us such peculiar mercies, as demand peculiar and extraordinary expressions of gratitude. 7. It shows that those things are the most agreeable to Christ which are done with a devout regard to His death. 8. It admonishes us that such opportunities as are peculiarly favourable for testifying our regard for Christ, and to the salvation of our souls, if they are neglected never may return. (*J. Alexander.*) *Mary anointing Christ.* I. WHO WAS THIS WOMAN? She was a blessed woman, had the favour of Christ in no ordinary way. Blessed in her deed and in the approbation of it. She was Mary of Bethany. II. THE ESTIMATE WHICH CHRIST FORMED OF THIS WOMAN'S ACT. It was not elicited by the act itself immediately, but by the estimate formed by others. What determines the moral character of a work? Not the work itself, its amount, but the motive. Love was her motive. The act itself was self-denying. It was an act of clear preference. There were other objects on which she might have bestowed the ointment. It was a striking act of faith. She did it for His burial. Our Lord marked the deed of the woman not only in the credit He gave her, but in the comfort He imparted. She only wanted His approval. The honour He gave—"Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached," &c. Why should not we love Jesus as did this woman? Mary anointed to His burial. To what shall we anoint Him? Let us employ our talents for Him and suffering humanity. (*C. Molyneux, B.A.*) *A woman's memorial*:—I. LET US OBSERVE THE WOMAN HERSELF. 1. This act was the impulse of a loving heart. 2. What this woman did was done purely to Christ and for Christ. 3. She did an extraordinary thing for Christ. 4. Her act was beautifully expressive of her broken heart. II. LOOK INTO THE FACE OF HER LOVING LORD. III. APPEAL PERSONALLY TO YOU. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The originality of service*:—You and I generally look to see whether the thing our new heart tells us to do has ever been done before; and then, if, like Martha, we love Christ, we still think it will be the proper mode of showing our love to prepare Him a supper, and go and stand and wait at the table. We look for a precedent. We recollect that the Pharisee gave Christ a supper; we remember how many others of the disciples have given Him a dinner; and then we think that is the proper orthodox way, and we will go and do the same. "Mr. So-and-so gives ten guineas; I shall give ten guineas. Mrs. So-and-so teaches in the Sunday-school; I shall teach in the Sunday-school. Mr. This or That is in the habit of having prayer with his servants; I shall do likewise." You see, we look to find out whether anybody else has set us an example, and then we get into the habit of doing all these things as a matter of form. But Mary never thought of that; she never asked whether

there was anybody else that had ever broken an alabaster box of ointment on that sacred head. No, she goes her way; her heart says, "Do it," and she does it. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus Christ deserves to be served after an extraordinary manner*:—Was there ever a people that had such a leader or such a lover as we have in the person of Christ? And yet, my dear friends, there have been many impostors in the world, who have had disciples more ardently attached to them than some of you are to Christ Jesus. When I read the life of Mohamed, I see men who loved him so, that they would expose their persons to death at any moment for the false prophet, dash into battle almost naked, cut their way through hosts of enemies, and do exploits out of a passionate zeal for him whom they verily believed to be sent of God. And even that modern delusion of Joe Smith lacks not its martyrs. When I read the history of the Mormonite emigrants, and of all the miseries they endured when driven out of the city of Nauvoo; how they had to pass over trackless snows and pathless mountains, and were ready to die under the guns of the United States marauders, and how they suffered for that false prophet, I do stand ashamed of the followers of Christ, that they should permit the followers of an impostor to suffer hardships, and loss of limb and life, and everything else that men count dear, for an impostor, while they themselves show that they do not love their Master, their true and loving Lord half so well, else would they serve Him in an extraordinary manner, as He deserves. When the soldiers of Napoleon performed such unexampled deeds of daring in his day, people ceased to wonder. They said, "No wonder that they do that; see what their leader does." When Napoleon, sword in hand, crossed over the bridge of Lodi, and bid them follow, no one wondered that every common soldier was a hero. But it is wonderful, when we consider what the Captain of our salvation hath done for us, that we are content to be such everyday nothings as the most of us are. Ah! if we did but think of His glory, and of what He deserves—if we did but think of His sufferings, and of what He merits at our hands, surely we should do something out of the common; we should break our alabaster box, and pour the pound of ointment on His head again. (*Ibid.*) *Things of highest value have not a marked price*:—To value only what can be "sold" is to appreciate least what in nature and man is most glorious, and most capable of affording exquisite and perfect satisfaction. The gold and purple of the sunset, the flushing tenderness of the dawn, the rippling songs of birds, the full-voiced chorus of breaking billows, the pure air fresh with the fragrant breath of wild flowers, the rain pouring its living draught into every arid blade and leaf, are God's free gifts to men. The innocent joy of childhood, the generous enthusiasm of youth, the strength of wisdom, the serenity of a holy trust in God—in what earthly market can these blessed things of the Spirit be bought or sold? With what coin minted by man can you purchase the tenderness of sympathy, the confidence of friendship, the devotion of love? Only to be won are they by the unselfish blending of your own lives with the lives of others. The things that cannot be bartered, the price of which no merchant quotes, the value of which no figures can express, which no thief can steal, and no moth or rust corrupt, alone form the wealth of the soul. (*J. R. S. Harington.*) *The Saviour's defence of sublime devotion*:—The action of Mary was deeply symbolical. There may often be more in our actions than we imagine. It may be by loving instinct she almost antedated the death of our Lord. It was the gospel in figure; in Mary's offering He saw symbolized the greater offering He was about to make, prompted by a deeper love than hers. I. THE WOMAN'S SUBLIME DEVOTION. 1. She was completely under the sway of devoted love to Christ's person—"Unto Me." The prominent feature of Mary's character was her power of loving. This caught the eye of Christ, and gained His admiration. Here is an ideal of what a follower of Mine should be. Devotion to the Lord's person is the chiefest of Christian virtues. Now in making love the test of excellence Christ differs from all the rest of the world. 2. Her devotion was original and fearless. It was her own way of manifesting her love. It shocked the twelve. Let a person only love and he becomes a genius in manifesting it. Mary was unmindful of criticism. 3. Her devotion was magnificent. She did not think how little she could give. II. CHRIST'S CHIVALROUS CHAMPIONSHIP OF THIS WOMAN. Note the resemblances that exist between the action of the woman and our Lord's action in a few hours afterwards. 1. There is a resemblance in motive. Love led to both offerings. He died because He loved. He intercedes because He loves. There is a sweet savour in love. In His body there is an alabaster box that contains the ointment, a salve for every wound. 2. There is a resemblance of self-devotion. She could not have given more. Christ gave

all that He could. He emptied Himself. 3. In the broken box Christ saw His end. That was the gospel. 4. The magnificence of Christ's work. It is "plenteous redemption." (*A. G. Brown.*) *Mediocrity in religion best liked by the world*:—The general verdict will be, "It is very romantic—very sentimental, and quite unnecessary." The world likes a dead level of mediocrity in the things of God. Its perpetual cry is, "Now, do be moderate!" There are not a few who would like the religious experience of the Church to be something like Norfolk scenery. When I was preaching there some time back a farmer went out with me for a walk, and just as I was inwardly thinking that it was about the most deplorable bit of country I had ever seen—as flat as a billiard table with here and there a ditch, he suddenly stopped, and said, "Now, sir, this is what I call a really fine view." I looked at him with astonishment; but with all simplicity he said, "I call this really a fine view; for whichever way you look there is nothing to break it. Now in Kent and many other counties wherever you look there is some big hill or tree that stops the view, but here there is nothing." This is the idea of Christian beauty which many entertain. Its charm lies in there being nothing to attract attention. In fact it has become quite a compliment now to say, "Oh, so-and-so is a fine man. He never forgets himself." The man who never forgets himself is not worthy of the name of man. A man who never forgets himself is, to say the least, a miserably selfish mortal. What Christ asks at your hands and mine is—not a love which only sometimes makes me forget myself, but a love which will put self out of court entirely—a love which will raise me out of myself—a love which, in other words, will be superior to all calculation as to consequences. It was so with Mary. She had spent all her little earnings upon her gift. (*Ibid.*) *Love the great energy in religion*:—Although this spirit of boundless consecration may often make mistakes, and it does—though it may often run into some strange extravagances, and it does—yet, at the same time, in the end it accomplishes far more than the very wise but very cold spirit. The author to whom I have previously referred makes this remark on the point, and it is very true—"One rash but heroic Luther is worth a thousand men of the Erasmus type, unspeakably wise, but passionless and time-serving." The men who leave their mark on the world, and the men who really extend the empire of Christ's kingdom, are not generally the men who are very calculating and very professional, but men who, whatever else they may lack, have their hearts surcharged with love. Oh would ye be a real power? Ye must have a love that scorns all meanness. How different does Mary appear from the disciples? She does a noble deed: they criticize it. It does not require love to criticize. Indeed, love will not criticize. Love is too noble a thing to condescend to it, specially when criticism means perpetual fault-finding. If there be good, love delights to take down her harp and praise it to her utmost, but if there is nothing to praise, love prefers to be silent rather than cavil. Only mean spirits find pleasure in finding fault. (*Ibid.*) *Originality in religion*:—The Church wants a number of original workers—those who will not merely run in the rut that is already made in the road, but strike out for themselves some new ways of honouring Christ. It has been well remarked that when the stream is low it runs along the channel that is already made; but let there be a downfall of rain, let the river only rise, and it fills up all the channels, and then the banks, not able to restrain the stream, will overflow and run far and wide. The new wine of a passionate love to Christ can never be contained in old bottles. (*Ibid.*) *Immortality of good deeds*:—There is nothing, no, nothing, innocent or good, that dies and is forgotten: let us hold that faith, or none. An infant, a prattling child, lying in its cradle, will live again in the better thoughts of those who loved it; and plays its part, through them, in the redeeming actions of the world, though its body be burned to ashes, or drowned in the deepest sea. There is not an angel added to the host of heaven but does its blessed work on earth in those that loved it here. Forgotten!—oh! if the good deeds of human creatures could be traced to their source, how beautiful would even death appear! for how much charity, mercy, and purified affection would be seen to have growth in dusty graves! (*C. Dickens.*) *Superiority of Christian to humanitarian virtues*:—The doing good may be a mere humanitarian virtue. It may be the cultivation of a virtue which is to help our kind. It may arise from the feeling of kindred, from sympathy, from compassion. When it has only this origin, it is a virtue worthy of all honour. It tends to make us think better of our race. It shows the nobleness which by nature is implanted in the human heart. It exhibits and testifies to the godlike qualities of the being who was made in the image of his Maker. The world is full of such acts. The

book of "Golden Deeds" in which Charlotte Yonge has embalmed the memory of many an act of humanity, of patience, of self endurance, of bravery, tends to make us think better of humanity, helps to kindle the affections, and inspires us with emulation of imitating those deeds. But the act of Mary has another significancy. There is a quality in it which we put into our acts of mercy, self-sacrifice, and bravery. There is a quality in it which may be the very mark which is to distinguish our act as it distinguished hers; and that quality was the faith and love which were directed to the Saviour of the world. Without it the act was nothing. Without this quality we could not understand the commendation of the Saviour, and why it should be a memorial to all generations. It was the affections going forth to the Saviour; it was the homage which was paid Him as the Redeemer; it was the clinging to Him as the altogether lovely. A distinct act of faith to-day is a witness to the world in favour of Christian redemption. It was the great truth which was then dawning upon the world, that there was a Saviour, the Son of God, who had come to save man. Wherever this gospel was to be preached, wherever it was to be proclaimed that there are good tidings, wherever it was to be made known that there is mercy and life for man, there was this significant act of this woman to be told, because she saw this truth, because she thus proclaimed herself a believer in Him, a disciple of Him. She paid homage to Him in this character and office. (*R. B. Fairbairn, D.D.*) *The anointing at Bethany:*—Great love can impose great obligations. I. THE DEED. II. THE SIGNIFICANCE of the deed. One only of those present at this transaction was competent fully to declare its import. 1. It was a useful work. Such is the first inscription. The word translated good means, primarily—fair, goodly, beautiful, as to external form and appearance. This it was, but the language implies more. It was moral excellence that distinguished the miracles and teachings of the Saviour, and the quality pertaining to them He ascribes to this humble performance. More precisely, however, the epithet refers to the effect and influence of the work possessing this quality. This is the ordinary sense of the word, where it is used to characterize the practice of piety among the followers of Christ. 2. It was a great work. "She hath done what she could." The deed was co-extensive with her ability. To the eye that looked only upon the outward appearance, it seemed an act which nothing but its wasteful extravagance raised above insignificance. To the eye that searcheth hearts, it was grand, august, important. The value of a deed wrought upon Christ, or for the sake of Christ, though relative to us, is absolute to Him. If it be our best, though it were another's least, it is great and precious when its perfume ascends to heaven. 3. It was an act of faith in a crucified Saviour. III. The COMMEMORATION of the deed. For the most delicate service that mortal rendered Him on earth, our gracious Redeemer provides the most delicate reward. Upon the immediate disciples of our Lord the accomplishment of this declaration first devolved. 1. How exceedingly precious to Christ is the love of His people! 2. How precious to Christ is the memory of His people! 3. How great the jealousy of Christ for the good fame of His people! 4. How generously Christ estimates the offerings and services of His people! Mary was not so lavish of her ointment as Jesus of His praise. Be very sure that whatever others may do, He will put the best construction upon a work of faith and love wrought for His sake. 5. Learn how Christ would have us cherish the memory of His people. Records of good men's lives are among the means which God hath most emphatically approved and blessed for the sanctification of believers. (*C. W. Baird.*) *The woman that anointed Jesus:*—I. From the words of this text we evidently perceive that our Lord distinctly foresaw the great progress which the gospel would soon make in the world. II. From the text we learn that reputation for good works is desirable and valuable. III. Also we learn that some seasons and circumstances may justify uncommon expense. IV. What this woman now did in anointing the body of Jesus was very commendable. V. With all His great and transcendent wisdom, Jesus did not disdain what we call the weaker sex; but allowed them to be capable of true and distinguished worth and excellence. VI. The text gives no encouragement to those honours approaching to idolatry or altogether idolatrous, which some have since given to departed saints, both men and women. VII. We have, in this history, an instance of the favour of our Lord for virtue. VIII. This text teaches us to think and judge for ourselves, and to act according to the light of our own judgment and understanding, after having taken due care to be well informed, without paying too great deference to the favourable or the unfavourable sentences of others. (*N. Lardner.*) *True fame:*—No one likes to be forgotten. Our Lord

was not induced to pronounce this eulogy—1. By Mary's social position. 2. By the intrinsic value of that which was presented to Him. 3. By the opinion of those who were present with Him at the time. 4. The great thing, the one thing to which Jesus looked, was the motive from which the action was performed. What a sublime prophecy that eulogium is! (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The anointing of the feet of Jesus*:—Lessons: 1. Man's gifts to God are consecrated by love. 2. Profusion is not necessarily waste. 3. Amid the conflicting duties of life the immediate is best. "She hath done what she could"—not *all* that she could, but that which her hand found *presently* to do. 4. Our Lord not only accepts and commends the act and gift, but recompenses them in a royal manner. (*H. M. Jackson.*) *Profitable waste*:—That is profitable waste which—I. Makes solid, although often unseen, preparation for the future. II. Sacrifices worldly advantages at the call of God and duty. III. Spends labour, and parts with possessions, in exchange for spiritual attainment. IV. Surrenders life for a blessed immortality. (*Anon.*)

Vers. 14–19. **Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests.**—*Judas, the truth sold for money*:—What was his prompting principle? (1) Not a Divine impulse; (2) or sense of public duty; (3) or malicious feeling towards Christ; (4) but avarice. A man, to commit this sin, must have—(1) Truth at his disposal. (2) A tempting offer. (3) Deliberately accept the offer. (*Homilist.*) Men may sell the truth for money who—(1) Have no dislike to it; (2) feel themselves under an obligation to it; (3) have no intention of doing any injury to it. (*Ibid.*) *Emblem of avarice*:—Gotthold's sons had purchased a savings-box, to keep the little sums of money they occasionally received. They soon found that, however easy to drop the pieces in, it was much more difficult to bring them out. He thereupon observed, "That is an emblem of the hearts and coffers of the vast majority of the men of these times. They are very greedy to take, but very backward to give, especially for the glory of God and the relief of the poor. Oh, how long we must shake, and how many arts we must try, before we can extract even a penny from a hard and penurious man, for the service of God or his neighbours! So long as he lives, he imagines that the business for which he came into the world is to collect and keep money; but when he has to leave the world, and when death breaks the savings-box to pieces, and he must resign his hoard to others, he does it with reluctance and displeasure. I really believe that, were it not too absurd and useless, many a miser, in making his will, would do what a miser once actually did—appoint himself his own heir. How dreadful a folly to hoard up gold, and to lose heaven."

Vers. 20–25. **And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.**—*Self-distrust*:—Every man is a mystery to himself. In every soul there lie, coiled and dormant, like hybernating snakes, evils that a very slight rise in the temperature will wake up into poisonous activity. Let no man say, in foolish self-confidence, that any form of sin which his brother has ever committed, is impossible for him. Temperament shields us from much, no doubt. There are sins that we are "inclined to," and there are sins that we "have no mind to." But the identity of human nature is deeper than the diversity of temperament. I. ALL SINS ARE AT BOTTOM BUT VARYING FORMS OF ONE ROOT. The essence of every evil is selfishness; and when you have that, it is exactly as with cooks who have the "stock" by the fireside—they can make any kind of soup out of it, with the right flavouring. All sin is living to oneself instead of to God, and it may easily pass from one form of evil into another, just as light and heat, motion and electricity, are all various forms of one force. Doctors will tell you there are forms of disease which slip from one kind of sickness into another; so, if we have got the infection about us, it is a matter very much of accidental circumstances what shape it takes. II. ALL SIN IS GREGARIOUS. The tangled mass of sin is like one of those great fields of sea-weed that you sometimes come across upon the ocean, all hanging together by a thousand slimy growths; which, if lifted from the wave at any point, drags up yards of it inextricably grown together. No man commits only one kind of transgression. All sins hunt in couples. III. ALL SIN IS BUT YIELDING TO TENDENCIES COMMON TO US ALL. The greatest transgressions have resulted from yielding to tendencies which are common to us all. Cain killed his brother from jealousy; David befouled his name and his reign by animal passion; Judas betrayed Christ because he was fond of money. Many a man has murdered another simply because he had a hot temper.

And you have got a temper, and love of money, and animal passions, and that which may stir you up into jealousy. Your neighbour's house has caught fire and been blown up. Your house, too, is built of wood, and thatched with straw, and you have as much dynamite in your cellars as he had in his. Do not be too sure that you are safe from the danger of explosion. IV. ALL TRANSGRESSION IS YIELDING TO TEMPTATIONS THAT ASSAIL ALL MEN. Here are one hundred men in a plague-stricken city; they have all got to draw their water from the same well. If five or six of them died of cholera, it would be very foolish of the other ninety-five to say, "There is no chance of my being touched." And we all live in the same atmosphere; and the temptations that have overcome these men, that have headed the count of crimes appeal to you. V. MEN WILL GRADUALLY DROP DOWN TO THE LEVEL WHICH, BEFORE THEY BEGAN THE DESCENT, SEEMED TO BE IMPOSSIBLE TO THEM. First, the imagination is inflamed, then the wish begins to draw the soul to the sin, then conscience pulls it back, then the fatal decision is made, and the deed is done. Sometimes all the stages are hurried quickly through, and a man spins downhill as cheerily and fast as a *diligence* down the Alps. Sometimes, as the coast of a country may sink an inch in a century, until long miles of the flat sea-beach are under water, and towers and cities are buried beneath the barren waves, so our lives may be gradually lowered, with a motion imperceptible but most real, bringing us down within high-water mark, and at last the tide may wash over what was solid land. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Is it I?—Sinful possibilities*:—A moment of dismay among the disciples. The Master had just declared that one of them should commit an act of the basest treachery, and betray Him to His enemies. How do they take His words? Do they break out in indignant remonstrance? Do they fall to accusing one another? Does each draw back from his brother apostle in horror at the thought that possibly that brother apostle is he who is to do this dreadful thing? No; they are all self-engrossed; each man's anxiety is turned, not towards his brother, but towards himself. Now, there are times in the lives of all of us, when that comes to us which came here to Christ's disciples. I. WHEN WE SEE DEEP AND FLAGRANT SIN IN SOME OTHER MAN. While the act from which we recoil is repugnant to our conscientiousness, the powers that did it and the motives that stirred those powers into action are human, and such as we possess and feel. II. WHEN WE DO SOME SMALL SIN, AND RECOGNIZE THE DEEP POWER OF SINFULNESS BY WHICH WE DO IT. The slightest crumbling of the earth beneath your feet makes you aware of the precipice. The least impurity makes you ready to cry out, as some image of hideous lust rises before you, "Oh, is it I? Can I come to that?" III. THE EXPRESSION OF ANY SUSPICION ABOUT US BY ANOTHER PERSON. Perfectly unwarrantable and false we may know the charge to be; but the mere fastening of the sin and our name together, must turn our eyes in on ourselves and set us to asking, "Is it possible? I did not do this thing, indeed. My conscience is clear. But am I not capable of it? Is there not a fund of badness in me which might lead me almost anywhere? And if so, can I blaze up into fiery indignation at men's daring to suspect me? Can I resent suspicion as an angel might, who, standing in the light of God, dreaded and felt no sin? No; our disavowal of the sin would be not boisterously angry, but quiet, and solemn, and humble, with a sense of danger, and gratitude for preservation. IV. BY A STRANGE BUT VERY NATURAL PROCESS, THE SAME RESULT OFTEN COMES FROM JUST THE OPPOSITE CAUSE. Unmerited praise reveals to us our unworthiness. A man comes up to our life, and, looking round upon the crowd of our fellow men, he says, "See, I will strike the life of this brother of ours, and you shall hear how true it rings." He does strike, and it does seem to them to ring true, and they shout their applause; but we whose life is struck feel running all through us at the stroke the sense of hollowness. Our soul sinks as we hear the praises. They start desire, but they reveal weakness. No true man is ever so humble and so afraid of himself as when others are praising him most loudly. V. EVERY TEMPTATION which comes to us, however bravely and successfully it may be resisted, OPENS TO US THE SIGHT OF SOME OF OUR HUMAN CAPACITY FOR SIN. The man who dares to laugh at a temptation which he has felt and resisted is not yet wholly safe out of its power. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*) *The apostles' doubt of themselves*:—The form of the question in the original suggests that they expected a negative answer, and might be reproduced in English, "Surely it is not I?" None of them could think that he was the traitor, yet none of them could be sure that he was not. Their Master knew better than they did; and so, from a humble knowledge of what lay in them, coiled and slumbering, but there, they will not meet His words with a contradiction, but with a question. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Need for self-control*:—Do not say, "I know when to stop."

Do not say, "I can go so far; it will not do me any harm." Many a man has said that, and been ruined by it. Do not say, "It is natural to me to have these inclinations and tastes, and there can be no harm in yielding to them." It is perfectly natural for a man to stoop down over the edge of a precipice to gather the flowers that are growing in some cranny in the cliff; and it is as natural for him to topple over, and be smashed to a mummy at the bottom! God gave you your dispositions, and your whole nature under lock and key; keep them so! (*Ibid.*) *Reward of treason:*—Philip, Duke of Austria, paid the ambassadors of Charles IV. (who had betrayed their trust) in counterfeit coin; and when they complained, made reply, that false coin is good enough for false knaves. James I., king of Scotland, was murdered in Perth by Walter, Earl of Athol, in hope to have the crown; and crowned he was indeed, but with a crown of red-hot iron clapped upon his head, being one of the tortures wherewith he ended at once his wicked days and devices. And Guy Gawkes, that Spanish pioneer, should have received his reward of five hundred pounds at an appointed place in Surrey, but instead thereof, he had been paid home with a brace of bullets for his good service, if justice had not come in with a halter by way of prevention. Thus traitors have always become odious, though the treason were commodious. (*Spencer.*) *Apostates:*—In the long line of portraits of the Doges, in the palace at Venice, one space is empty, and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason against the State, Marino Falieri was beheaded, and his image as far as possible blotted from remembrance. As we regarded the singular memorial we thought of Judas and Demas, and then, as we heard in spirit the Master's warning word, "One of you shall betray Me," we asked within our soul the solemn question, "Lord, is it I?" Every one's eye rests longer on the one dark vacancy than upon any one of the many fine portraits of the merchant monarchs; and so the apostates of the Church are far more frequently the theme of the world's talk than the thousands of good men and true who adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Hence the more need of care on the part of those of us whose portraits are publicly exhibited as saints, lest we should one day be painted out of the Church's gallery, and our persons only remembered as having been detestable hypocrites. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Treachery, audacity, and hypocrisy:*—We have here an example of fixed determination to do evil, unshaken by the clearest knowledge that it is evil. Judas heard his crime described in its own ugly reality. He heard his fate proclaimed by lips of absolute love and truth; and notwithstanding both, he comes unmoved and unshaken with his question. The dogged determination in the man, that dares to see his evil stripped naked and is not ashamed, is even more dreadful than the hypocrisy and sleek simulation of friendship in his face. Most men turn away with horror from even the sins that they are willing to do, when they are put plainly and bluntly before them. We have two sets of names for wrong things; one of which we apply to our brethren's sins and the other to the same sins in ourselves. What I do is "prudence," what you do of the same sort is "covetousness;" what I do is "sowing my wild oats," what you do is "immorality" and "dissipation;" what I do is "generous living," what you do is "drunkenness" and "gluttony;" what I do is "righteous indignation," what you do is "passionate anger." And so you may go the whole round of evil. Very bad are the men who can look at their deed, described in its own inherent deformity, and yet say, "Yes, that *is* it, and I am going to do it." "One of you shall betray Me." Yes, *I* will betray you." It must have taken something to look into the Master's face, and keep the fixed purpose steady. This obstinate condition of dogged determination to do a wrong thing, knowing it to be a wrong thing, is a condition to which all evil steadily tends. We may not come to it in this world, but we are getting towards it in regard of the special wrong deeds and desires that we cherish and commit. And when a man has once reached the point of saying to evil, "Be thou my good," then he is a "devil," in the true meaning of the word; and wherever he is, he is in hell! (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Supper with the twelve:*—On the eve of the crucifixion Jesus sat down to supper with the twelve, in the room which had been provided and prepared for them. I. A picture of THE POVERTY OF JESUS ON THE EVE OF DISCHARGING THE GREATEST DEBT EVER OWED BY MAN. He must borrow a room and accept the hospitality of a stranger. But in a moral sense he was rich and able to atone for the sins of men. We must not judge the worth of a person by outward circumstances. II. A picture of THE CALMNESS OF JESUS ON THE EVE OF ENDURING THE GREATEST ANGUISH EVER BORNE BY MAN. With calmness he sat down with the twelve on the eve of the greatest

suffering. III. A picture of THE FRIENDLESSNESS OF JESUS ON THE EVE OF EXPERIENCING THE GREATEST DESERTION EVER KNOWN BY MAN. He sat down with the very men who were to forsake him; but He utters no word of stern rebuke. (*F. W. Brown.*) *Christ foretelling the treachery of Judas*:—I. THERE IS THE PREDICTION and it discovers to us—1. The close and constant view which the Lord Jesus seems to have taken of His final sufferings. 2. The naturalness of our Lord's mind; by this I mean its resemblance to our own minds. He has our inward nature. He felt treachery. 3. The exceeding tenderness of Christ. He cared for the love of the men around Him. 4. The wonderful self-denial of our Lord. He did not treat Judas differently from the other disciples, though so long false. II. THE EFFECT PRODUCED ON THE DISCIPLES BY THIS PREDICTION. 1. Their simple faith in their Lord's prediction. 2. Their warm love for Christ. 3. Their great self-distrust. (*C. Bradley.*) *Is it I?*—When the wind is rising it is good for each ship at sea to look to its own ropes and sails, and not stand gazing to see how ready the other ships are to meet it. We all feel that we would rather hear a man asking about himself anxiously than to see him so sure of himself that the question never occurred to him. We should be surer of his standing firm if we saw that he knew he was in danger of a fall. Now, all this is illustrated in Christ's disciples. (*Phillips Brooks.*) *Judas rebuked by Christ*:—You have here an account of how our Lord, whilst partaking of the last supper with His disciples, predicted His betrayal. The disciples were greatly moved by the declaration: it is a good sign when we are less suspicious of others than of ourselves—"Lord, is it I?" I. We regard the sayings of our Lord at this time as uttered with SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JUDAS, WITH THE MERCIFUL DESIGN OF WARNING HIM OF THE ENORMITY OF HIS PROJECTED CRIME, and thus, if possible, of withholding him from its commission. It is easy to see an adaptation between the words used by Christ and the feelings which may have been working in Judas. "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him." Judas may have thought that he was helping forward the work of the Messiah; the crucifixion was a determined thing. "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." Judas was free in his treachery, acted from his own will, in obedience to his depraved passions, as if there had been no Divine foreknowledge. Oh! the vanity of the thought that God ever places us under a necessity of sinning, or that because our sins may turn to His glory they will not also issue in our shame. II. Let us now glance at another delusion to which it is likely that Judas gave indulgence; this is the delusion as to THE CONSEQUENCES, THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN BEING EXAGGERATED. There is such energy in conscience that it would hardly let a man run on flagrant acts of sin if there were not some drug by which it were lulled. It may be that Judas could hardly persuade himself that a Being so beneficent as Christ, whom he had seen healing the sick, could lay aside the graciousness of His nature, and avenge a wrong by surrendering the evil doer to interminable woe. But our Lord's words meet this delusion—"It had been good for that man if he had not been born." We expect to find Judas overawed by this saying. III. IT REVEALS HIS UTTER MORAL HARDNESS. Christ had said, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." At this saying Judas asks, "Lord, is it I?" Numbers bear themselves proudly against Christ and His gospel and go forth from the very sanctuary, with the words of condemnation in their ears, to do precisely the things by which that sentence is incurred. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Vers. 26–29. **And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it.**—*Relation of the Holy Communion to Christ*:—The bread and cup are His body and blood, because they are causes instrumental, upon the receipt whereof the participation of His body and blood ensueth. 'Every cause is in the effect which groweth from it. Our souls and bodies quickened to eternal life are effects, the cause whereof is the person of Christ; His body and blood are the true well-spring out of which this life floweth. . . . What merit, force, or virtue soever there is in His sacrificed body and blood we freely, fully, and wholly have by this sacrament; and because the sacrament itself, being but a corruptible and earthly creature, must needs be thought an unlikely instrument to work so admirable effects in men, we are therefore to rest ourselves altogether upon the strength of His glorious power, who is able and will bring to pass that the bread and cup which He giveth us shall be truly the thing He promiseth. (*R. Hooker, D.D.*) *The Eucharist the great feast of the Church*:—I. A true feast—for the nourishment of the spiritual life. II. A sacred feast—sanctifying from all carnal enjoyment. III. A covenant feast—sealing redemption. IV. A love feast—uniting the redeemed. V. A supper feast—

fore-festival of death, of the end of all things, of the coming of Christ. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Sacrificial aspect of Christ's death shown in the Lord's Supper*:—This rite shows us what Christ thought, and would have us think, of His death. By it He points out the moment of His whole career which He desires that men should remember. Not His words of tenderness and wisdom; not His miracles, amazing and gracious as these were; not the flawless beauty of His character, though it touches all hearts, and wins the most rugged to love and the most degraded to hope; but the moment in which He gave His life is that which He would imprint for ever on the memory of the world. And not only so, but in the rite He distinctly tells us in what aspect He would have that death remembered. Not as the tragic end of a noble career which might be hallowed by tears such as are shed over a martyr's ashes; not as the crowning proof of love; not as the supreme act of patient forgiveness; but as a death for us, in which, as by the blood of the sacrifice, is secured the remission of sins. And not only so, but the double symbol in the Lord's Supper—whilst in some respects the bread and wine speak the same truths, and certainly point to the same cross—has in each of its parts special lessons entrusted to it, and special truths to proclaim. The bread and the wine both say, "Remember Me and My death." Taken in conjunction they point to the death as violent; taken separately they each suggest various aspects of it, and of the blessings that will flow to us therefrom. I. A Divine treaty or covenant. II. The forgiveness of sins. III. A life infused. IV. A festal gladness. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The New Testament: God's covenants with His people*:—Ancient Israel had lived for nearly 2000 years under the charter of their national existence, which was given on Sinai amidst thunderings and lightnings (Exod. xix. 5, &c.). And that covenant, or agreement, or treaty, on the part of God was ratified by a solemn act, in which the blood of the sacrifice, divided into two portions, was sprinkled, half upon the altar, and the other half, after their acceptance of the conditions and obligations of the covenant, on the people who had pledged themselves to obedience. And now here is a Galilean peasant, in a borrowed upper room, within four-and-twenty hours of His ignominious death, which might seem to blast all His work, who steps forward and says, "I put away that ancient covenant which knits this nation to God. It is antiquated. I am the true offering and sacrifice, by the blood of which, sprinkled on altar and on people, a new covenant, built upon better promises, shall henceforth be." What a tremendous piece of audacity, except on the one hypothesis that He who spake was indeed the Word of God, and that He was making that which Himself had established of old to give way to that which He establishes now. The new covenant, which Christ seals in His blood, is the charter, the better charter, under the conditions of which the whole world may find a salvation which dwarfs all the deliverances of the past. Between us and the infinite Divine nature there is established a firm and unmoveable agreement. He has limited Himself by the utterance of a faithful word, and we can now come to Him with His own promise, and cast it down before Him, and say, "Thou hast spoken, and Thou art bound to fulfil it." We have a covenant; God has shown us what He is going to do, and has thereby pledged Himself to the performance. (*Ibid.*) *The Lord's Supper*:—I. The NATURE of the institution. It is a supper—strictly and essentially in its own particular nature it is nothing else. Was apparently in connection with another supper, and it seemed to be almost a part of that other supper. The supper was significant and emblematic—a representation of something else. II. The OBJECT and design. The death of Christ is brought before us. The death of Christ as an offering for sin is brought before us. The death of Christ as the seal of the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son is brought before us. III. The OBSERVANCE of the rite. Just as simple as its nature and object. The frequency of reception is left open. The posture may be considered indifferent. The positive directions and the actual practice of our Lord. (*C. Molyneux.*) *The last supper*:—I. The TIME OF THE INSTITUTION. 1. During the feast of the Passover. Christ the true Passover (Exod. xii. 3, 6. 7, and others; with John i. 29; Rev. v. 6). 2. On the eve of His being offered. The meaning and purpose of the Passover lamb transferred to Jesus, and the sense widened. That for the Jews only, this for the true Israel of God, &c. II. THE METHOD OF THE INSTITUTION. 1. With thanksgiving. 2. The bread—broken, distributed, eaten. Christ the bread of life. Received by faith. 3. The wine. *All* were to drink it. The blood of Christ shed for the remission of sin. 4. They sung a hymn—left the table with joy and thankfulness. III. THE PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTION. 1. To supersede the Jewish Passover. 2. A memorial feast.

No less binding upon Christians than any other law of Christ. A dying command. Sacredness of last words. 3. A bond of union among Christians, and public acknowledgment of indebtedness to and faith in Christ. (*J. C. Gray.*) *The Passover feast:*—Relate the history of this feast. I. THE PASSOVER FEAST COMMEMORATED A GREAT DELIVERANCE. 1. A deliverance from what? From Egyptian bondage—the destroying angel—God's judgment upon sin. 2. How was this deliverance effected? 3. Why was this deliverance commemorated every year? II. THE PASSOVER FEAST POINTED TO A GREATER DELIVERANCE. 1. A deliverance from what? From a worse bondage than that of Egypt, &c. (John viii. 34; Peter ii. 19). And from a judgment more terrible than came upon the first-born (Rom. ii. 3, 5, 8; Matt. xxv. 41). 2. How was this greater deliverance to be effected? Also by the blood of the Lamb (1 Peter i. 18, 19; Rev. v. 8, 9). Who is this Lamb? (John i. 29; Col. i. 13, 14; Heb. ix. 12, 14). We must come to Christ and have heart sprinkled (Heb. x. 19, 22; 1 Peter i. 2). Each must have his own sin put away, &c. 3. How did the yearly feast point to this greater deliverance? Would show how deliverance from death could only be by death of another (1 Cor. v. 7). III. CHRIST INSTITUTED THE LORD'S SUPPER TO COMMEMORATE THIS GREATER DELIVERANCE. In the Lord's Supper two things done—1. We commemorate Christ's death for us. 2. We feed upon Him by faith. (*E. Stock.*) *The Lord's Supper:*—Nature and design. I. A COMMEMORATION. Includes—(1) Adoration. Adoration due to God in fashion of a man. It is this that makes Him the central point of the universe, to whom all eyes are turned. (2) Gratitude. The benefits—deliverance from hell, power of Satan, and sin; restoration to the favour and fellowship of God; fellowship with Christ, including participation with His life and glory. The cost at which these benefits were secured—Christ's humiliation and suffering. II. A COMMUNION. 1. An act and means of participation. We participate in His body and blood, *i.e.*, of their sacrificial virtue. 2. The effect of this makes us one with Him; one body. Illustration from the Jewish rites. In this ordinance our union with Christ and with each other is far more intimate. III. CONSECRATION. We cannot commemorate Christ as our Saviour without thereby acknowledging ourselves to be His—the purchase of His blood, and devoted to His service. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *The institution and observance of the Lord's Supper:*—I. A REMEMBRANCE of the atonement of Christ. 1. How much He suffered. 2. How well He suffered. 3. How patiently He suffered. II. A PROCLAMATION of the atonement of Christ. III. A PARTICIPATION in the atonement of Christ. 1. Great facilities granted. 2. A direct communication from Christ to His people. (*B. Noel, M.A.*) *The new wine of the kingdom:*—I. THE WORDS OF THE SAVIOUR AS THEY REGARD THE ACT IN WHICH HIMSELF AND HIS FOLLOWERS WERE THEN ENGAGED. They were drinking of "the fruit," or, more properly, "the product" of the vine. Not a mere ordinary social communion, but in direct connection with the Passover. Christ did not design to honour a Jewish rite as commemorating a national deliverance, but as typical, holding a relationship to Him and the economy of which He was the head. 1. That the Lord Jesus led His followers to regard the Passover as being representative of His mediatorial sufferings and death. 2. The Saviour led His followers to consider the Passover as originating an ordinance to be perpetuated for important purposes throughout all the ages of the Christian Church. II. The words of the Saviour as they regard THE EVENTS HE TAUGHT HIS FOLLOWERS TO ANTICIPATE. 1. An event of approaching separation—"I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine until" a certain period afterwards-named; He and His disciples were bound to part. 2. An event of ultimate re-union—"When I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 3. All the followers of the Saviour shall be brought to "the Father's kingdom." 4. The mediation of Jesus Christ, of which the Paschal rite is to be regarded as a permanent and symbolical pledge, is of such a nature as to secure that all those who have possessed a personal interest in that mediatorial work shall be brought into a state of glorious redemption in the bright worlds which lie beyond the grave. 5. The followers of the Saviour shall possess unspeakable and everlasting joy. The drinking of wine indicates the fruition of all delight. 6. The pleasures which are to be enjoyed by the followers of the Saviour in the Father's kingdom are especially to be regarded as associated with His presence. How pre-eminently in the New Testament is the presence of Christ set forth as constituting the happiness of the celestial world (John xii. 26). Learn (1) How vast and wonderful is the love of Christ to man. (2) The vast importance of being numbered amongst the followers of Christ ourselves. (*J. Parsons.*) *The new covenant:*—I. The new covenant of forgiveness and life. On God's side is pledged forgiveness, remission of sins,

sustained acceptance. On man's side is pledged the obedience of faith. Christ, as mediator for man, receives God's pledge; and, as mediator for God, He receives man's pledge. As representative for man, He offers to God the perfect obedience, and pledges us to a like obedience; as representative for God, He brings and gives to us forgiveness and life, pledging God therein. II. The blood which seals the covenant. The blood represents the yielding or taking of life. 1. In surrendering His life, Christ sealed our pledge that we will give our life to God in all holy obedience. 2. In giving His blood, His life, for us, as it were, to eat, He gives us the strength to keep our pledge. III. The wine that recalls to mind and renews the covenant. God does not need to be reminded of His pledge, but frail, forgetful, busy-minded man does. (*Selected.*) *Christ's own account of His blood-shedding*:—I. WHOSE BLOOD WAS THIS? "My blood." It is a man, who sits at that table with others, not an angel. But He is also the living God. II. BY WHOM WAS THIS BLOOD SHED? 1. Himself, to speak with deepest reverence. Jesus shed His own blood—was the offerer as well as the sacrifice. He freely laid down His life. 2. In some respects the principal party in this mysterious blood-shedding, even the holy loving Father, as it is written, "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;" "This commandment have I received of My Father;" "The cup which My Father hath given Me." 3. We, believers in Jesus. Our sins were the guilty cause. III. TO WHAT END AND ISSUE WAS THIS BLOOD-SHEDDING? "For the remission of sins." Our Lord singles out from all the benefits of redemption the remission of sins, not only because it is that which stands most intimately related to His blood-shedding, but because it is the foundation of all, carrying the others along with it by necessary consequence (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34). To what effect as well as design? A sure salvation for a great multitude whom no man can number. (*C. J. Brown, D.D.*) *Substitution*:—Let me mention here a circumstance in the last days of the distinguished Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, who, at an extreme age, but in full possession of all his rare mental powers, was brought to know the Saviour. He said, "I never used to be able to understand what these good people meant when they spoke of so much blood, the blood. But I understand it now; it's just substitution." Ay, that it is, in one word, "substitution;" "My blood shed for many for the remission of sins;" Christ's blood instead of ours; Christ's death for our eternal death; Christ "made a curse, that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law." Once, in conversation, my beloved friend, Dr. Duncan, expressed it thus in his terse way, "A religion of blood is God's appointed religion for a sinner, for the wages of sin is death." (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 30.—**And when they had sung an hymn.**—*The parting hymn*:—Our Lord commemorated the Passover as His countrymen were wont to do; and we may justly conclude that He sung what they were used to sing in finishing the solemn celebration. When the Passover was instituted on the night of the destruction of the firstborn of the Egyptians, various forms and practices were enjoined (Exod. xii.). But in after times, especially in those of our Saviour, when traditions came to their height, numerous circumstances were added to the celebration, so that the original rites formed but a small part of what were practised by the Jews. And learned men have well observed that Christ commemorated the Passover without rejecting such customs as could not distinctly plead the authority of the law. For instance, the Jews altered the posture in which it was eaten. Also wine came to be taken as well as unleavened bread. In like manner, with regard to the singing of a hymn or psalm, there is nothing said of this in Exodus. Yet the hundred and thirteenth and five following psalms were selected. I. We observe that our Lord, by conforming to certain customs of the Jews in the eating of the Passover, GAVE HIS SANCTION TO CEREMONIES WHICH MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PLEAD A DIVINE INSTITUTION. We venture to take our Lord's conduct with regard to the ceremonies at the Passover as establishing the authority of the Church to ordain and alter ceremonies and rites, and as strongly condemning those who would make mere ceremonies the excuse for disunion. Our Lord conformed to customs and alterations for which no Divine warrant could be produced, and against which specious objections could have been advanced. We agree, therefore, that the Church is not bound to chapter and verse for any ceremony she may enjoin. The apostles might have said, "What an unnatural moment for singing joyous hymns," as they grew sorrowful at the Lord's departure. But they kept to the ordinances of the Church. II. We may perhaps SAY THAT IT WAS WITH THE SINGING OF A HYMN THAT CHRIST PREPARED HIMSELF FOR HIS UNKNOWN AGONY. They were joyous hymns in which they joined. Was it

a strange preparation for the Mount of Olives thus to commemorate the mercies and chant the praises of God? We should join praise with prayer and recount God's mercies when face to face with new trials. For many, like the captives in Babylon, hang their harps upon the willows, when they find themselves in a strange land; whereas, if they would sing "One of the songs of Zion" it would remind of home and encourage them to expect deliverance. Paul and Silas sang in the prison. We may fairly say that the power of singing has not been sufficiently considered as one of the Creator's gifts to His creatures, and therefore intended to be used for His glory. Singing, like music, has been too much given up by the Church to the world. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Music not merely a human invention*:—We are too apt to regard music as a human art, or invention, just because men make certain musical instruments, and compose certain musical pieces. And hence there are Christians who would banish music from the public worship of God, as though unsuited to, or unworthy of, so high and illustrious an employment. But it is forgotten, as has been observed by a well-known writer, that the principles of harmony are in the elements of nature, that, "the element of air was as certainly ordained to give us harmonious sounds in due measure, as to give respiration to the lungs." God has given us "music in the air as He hath given us wine in the grape;" leaving it to man to draw forth the rich melody, as well as to extract the inspiriting juice, but designing that both should be employed to His glory, and used in His service. (*Ibid.*) *Song more marvellous than speech*:—But, to quote again from the writer already referred to, "the faculty, by which the voice forms musical sounds, is as wonderful as the flexure of the organs of speech in the articulation of words." Considered as the result of certain mechanical arrangements, singing is perhaps even more marvellous than speaking, or gives a stronger witness to the skill and the power of the Creator. This is not the place for bringing proof of such assertion; but they who have considered the human throat as a musical instrument, and have examined, on this supposition, its structure and capacity, declare that it presents "such a refinement on mechanism as exceeds all description." And we are not to doubt that God gave this faculty to man, that he might employ it on His praises. (*Ibid.*) *The spiritual benefit of improved psalmody*:—I do not merely mean that there is a humanizing power in music, and that the poor, taught to sing, are likely to be less wild, and less prone to disorder, and therefore more accessible to the ministrations of religion. Not, indeed, that I would make no account for this, for I thoroughly believe that, in improving the tastes of a people, you are doing much for their moral advancement. I like to see our cottagers encouraged to train the rose and the honeysuckle round their doors, and our weavers, as is often the fact, dividing their attention between their looms and their carnations; for the man who can take care of a flower, and who is all alive to its beauty, is far less likely than another, who has no delight in such recreations, to give himself up to gross lusts and habits. But, independently on this, if singing were generally taught, the psalmody in our churches could not fail to be generally improved. And I am quite sure that this could not take place without, by the blessing of God, a great spiritual benefit. (*Ibid.*) *The closing hymn*:—1. It bears testimony to the inspiration of Christian song. 2. It bears testimony to the comfort of Christian song. 3. It bears testimony to the brotherhood of Christian song. 4. This act bears testimony to the power of song. Consider the nature of this hymn. Jesus kept the Passover. He conformed to the Jewish custom. They use the hundred and thirteenth psalm, and five following psalms. 1. It was a song of praise. 2. It was a song of victory. 3. It was a song of joy. (*J. A. Gray.*) *The hymn of the Eucharist*:—In some respects this is one of the most remarkable statements in the life of our Saviour. Jesus sang. What was the subject of their song? The presumption is strong that they sung one of the inspired psalms. 1. In these words there is a fearful meaning. They went out to the scene of agony. 2. Is it not a fair conclusion, that sacred song adapts itself to seasons of the deepest grief? Songs of praise are not to be intermitted or silenced by seasons of great affliction. 3. That our emotions are increased or relieved by due utterance. 4. The particular mention of this hymn by two of the Evangelists, amidst the very record of our Lord's death, shows clearly that sacred praise harmonises well with all the facts and all the doctrines of the atoning work. What can be a stronger argument for the authority and fitness of sacred song, in connection with sacramental communions! There is greatly needed a revival of the spirit of worship. (*J. W. Alexander, D.D.*) *The memorable hymn*:—I. THE FACT THAT JESUS SANG AT SUCH A TIME AS THIS. What does He teach us by it? 1. My religion is one of

happiness and joy. 2. Our Lord's complete fulfilment of the law is even more worthy of our attention. It was customary when the Passover was held, to sing, and this is the main reason why the Saviour did so. 3. The holy absorption of the Saviour's soul in His Father's will. 4. His whole-heartedness in the work He was about to do. II. THE SINGING OF THE DISCIPLES. Like true Jews they joined in the national song. Israel had good cause to sing at the Passover. What shall I say of those who are the Lord's spiritually redeemed? III. HOW EARNESTLY I DESIRE YOU TO "SING A HYMN." Let your hearts be brimming with the essence of praise. "What hymn shall we sing?" Many sorts of hymns were sung in the olden time; look down the list, and you will scarce find one which will not suit us now—the war song, the pastoral, the festive songs, the love song, &c. IV. What shall THE TUNE be? The tune must have all the parts of music. It must be very soft, sweet, strong, &c. V. WHO SHALL SING THIS HYMN? All the Father's children. They only can. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 33–35. **Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.**—*Enthusiasm and its dangers:*—I. THE CONFIDENCE OF INEXPERIENCE, AIDED BY LACK OF IMAGINATION. How often is this repeated before our eyes! Castles in the air are built by inexperienced virtue, to be demolished, alas! at the first touch of the realities of vice. The country lad who has been brought up in a Christian home, and is coming up to some great business house in London, makes vigorous protestations of what he will, and will not, do in a sphere of life, of the surroundings of which he can, as yet, form no true idea whatever; the emigrant, who is looking forward to spend his days in a young colony, where the whole apparatus of Christian and civilized life is as yet in its infancy, or is wanting altogether, makes plans of a situation, of which he cannot at all as yet, from the nature of the case, take the measure; the candidate for holy orders, who anticipates his responsibilities from afar, gathering them from books and from intercourse with clergymen, makes resolutions which he finds have to be revised by the light of altogether unforeseen experiences. II. AN INSUFFICIENT SENSE OF THE POWER OF NEW FORMS OF TEMPTATION. A man living in a comparatively private position is exemplary. His little failures do but serve to set forth the sterling worth of his general character. He seems to be marked out for some promotion. All predict that he will be a great success, since he has shown on a small scale excellencies which will certainly distinguish him, and will adorn a larger sphere. He is promoted, and he turns out a hopeless failure. "How extraordinary!" cries out the world. "Who could have anticipated this?" exclaim his friends. And yet the explanation may be a very simple one. He may have been brought, by the change of circumstances, for the first time in his life, under the influence of a temptation hitherto unknown to him. He may have been tempted in his earlier years by appeals to avarice, illicit desires, or personal vanity; but never, as yet, has he felt the pressure of the fear of man. In that place of prominence he, for the first time, feels the fear of a mass of human opinion which he does not in his conscience and his heart respect, but which he fears only because it is a mass. And this fear is too much for him, too much for his sense of justice, too much for his consistency and his former self. Alas! that new temptation has found a weak place in his moral nature; it has sprung a leak in him; and the disappointment is as keen to-day as the expectations of yesterday were unduly sanguine. III. ST. PETER'S OVER-CONFIDENCE WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DUE IN PART TO HIS NATURAL TEMPERAMENT, AND TO HIS RELIANCE ON IT. A sanguine impetuosity was the basis of his character. In this instance, there was probably a mixture of these dispositions—genuine love of our Lord, stirred to vehemence by the recent defection of Judas, combined with eagerness, the product of temperament. The exact proportions of the combinations we know not; but, at any rate, nature had more to do with his language than grace. And while grace is trustworthy in times of trial, nature may be expected to give way. An instance of this confusion between grace and nature is to be found in the enthusiasm which led to the Crusades. No well-informed and fair-minded man can question the genuine love of our Lord Jesus Christ, which filled such men as Peter the Hermit, and still more that great teacher and writer, St. Bernard. They exerted, these men, some seven centuries ago, an influence upon the populations of Central Europe, to which the modern world affords absolutely no sort of parallel, and at their voice thousands of men, in all ranks of life, left their homes to rescue, if it might be, the sacred soil on which the Redeemer had lived and died, from the hands of the infidel. Who can doubt that of these not a few were animated by a love

which is always noble—that of giving the best they had to give from their lives to the God who had made and redeemed them. But alas! who can doubt that many, perhaps a larger multitude, were really impelled by very different considerations which gathered round this central idea, and seemed to receive from it some sort of consecration, and that a love of adventure, a love of reputation, a desire to escape from the troublous times at home, the ambitious hope of acquiring influence or power which might be of use elsewhere than in Palestine, which might found or consolidate a dynasty, also entered into the sum of moral forces, which precipitated the crusading hosts on the coasts of Syria? And how many a crusader could analyse, with any approach to accuracy, the motives which swayed him in an enterprise where there was, indeed, so much of the smoke and dust of earth to obscure the love and light of heaven? IV. THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM THIS EVENT. 1. Estimate enthusiasm at its proper value. It is the glow of the soul; the lever by which men are raised above their average level and enterprise, and become capable of a goodness and benevolence which would otherwise be beyond them. 2. Measure well our religious language, especially the language of fervour and devotion. When religious language outruns practice or conviction, the general character is weakened. If Peter had said less as they left the supper-room, he might have done better afterwards in the hall of the palace of the high priest. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Fickleness of the human heart:*—In a vessel filled with muddy water, the thickness visibly subsides to the bottom, and leaves the water purer and clearer, until at last it seems perfectly limpid. The slightest motion, however, brings the sediment again to the top, and makes the water thick and turbid as before. Here we have an emblem of the human heart. The heart is full of the mud of sinful lusts and carnal desires, and the consequence is, that no pure water—that is, good and holy thoughts—can flow from it. It is, in truth, a miry pit and slough of sin, in which all sorts of ugly reptiles are bred and crawl. Many a one, however, is deceived by it, and never imagines his heart half so wicked as it really is, because at times its lusts are at rest, and sink, as it were, to the bottom. On such occasions his thoughts appear to be holy and devout, his desires pure and temperate, his words charitable and edifying, and his works useful and Christian. But this lasts only so long as he is not moved; I mean, so long as he is without opportunity or incitement to sin. Let that occur, and worldly lusts rise so thick that his whole thoughts, words, and works show no trace of anything but slime and impurity. This man is meek as long as he is not thwarted; but cross him, and he is like powder, ignited by the smallest spark, and blazing up with a loud report and destructive force. Another is temperate so long as he has no social companions; a third chaste, while the eyes of men are upon him. (*Scriver.*) *Dangers of impulsiveness:*—I. Prone to overestimate self, and underrate others—"though all men—yet not I." II. Natural instability—frequent reactions—can *do*, but not *wait*. III. Violence and rapidity of its changes. IV. Readiness with which it takes its character from immediately surrounding circumstances. Learn: 1. Let the cool and prudent be gentle in judging of the more fiery. 2. Let the impulsive take warning from this example. 3. Let the man who repents some sin of haste, take encouragement and hope. (*Analyst.*) I. No strength of attachment to Jesus can justify such confident promises of fidelity, made without dependence upon Him. II. That all promises to adhere to Him should be made relying on Him for aid. III. That we little know how feeble we are till we are tried. IV. That Christians may be left to great and disgraceful sins to show them their weakness. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Peter's self-confidence:*—It is a common remark that in the absence of danger all men are heroes. Self-distrust does not enter into our calculations. Presuming upon the strength and permanence of present emotion, we hurl defiance at danger, and challenge circumstances to shake our magnanimity. Peter was not alone in this boast, but his conduct was marked by a more signal exhibition, both of self-confidence and of frailty, than that of his fellow-disciples. Fully, however, to estimate his fall—I. Look at some of THE CONCOMITANT CIRCUMSTANCES by which his offence was aggravated. 1. He was one of the three disciples whom Jesus honoured with a peculiar intimacy. 2. He appears to have had an earlier and a stronger conviction of our Saviour's Messiahship than his brother disciples (Matt. xvi. 13–17). 3. The particular crisis at which his offence was committed. Almost immediately after another of the twelve had betrayed Him, and when, humanly speaking, his Master stood most in need of his support. II. These facts serve to illustrate the extent of his self-deception, and to impress more forcibly this most important lesson, that NO REASONABLE DEPENDENCE IS TO BE PLACED ON OUR MERE UNTRIED FEELINGS AND DE

SOLUTIONS; BUT THAT THE ONLY SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE WE CAN POSSESS OF THE GENUINENESS AND STABILITY OF OUR RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES, IS THAT WHICH OUR CONDUCT AFFORDS. When Peter protested his fidelity, his constancy had not been put to the test. His character rendered him in an especial degree liable to this species of self-deception, still, his case may be selected as a striking illustration of the fallaciousness of mere untried feelings and resolutions, as a satisfactory evidence of religious character, and of the folly and danger of trusting to them as any security for future conduct. Few things are more common. Let us not mistake passion for principle (John xiv. 21; 1 John v. 3). (*J. H. Smith.*) *Protesting too much:*—When the subtle and ambitious John, of Gischala, pursuing his own dark course, as it is traced in the "History of the Jews," joined outwardly the party of Arianus, and was active beyond others in council and camp, he yet kept up a secret correspondence with the Zealots, to whom he betrayed all the movements of the assailants. "To conceal this secret he redoubled his assiduities, and became so extravagant in his protestations of fidelity to Arianus and his party, that he completely overacted his part, and incurred suspicion." His intended dupes began gradually to look with a jealous eye on their too obsequious, most obedient, and most devoted servant. (*F. Jacox.*) *Hawthorne* remarks that Italian asseverations of any questionable fact, though uttered with rare earnestness of manner, never vouch for themselves as coming from any depth, like roots drawn out of the substance of the soul, with some of the soil clinging to them. Their energy expends itself in exclamation. The vaulting ambition of their hyperboles overleaps itself, and falls on the other side. *Truth not in need of an oath:*—Reality cares not to be tricked out with too taking an outside; and deceit, when she intends to cozen, studies disguise. Least of all should we be taken with swearing asseverations. Truth needs not the varnish of an oath to make her plainness credited. (*Owen Feltham.*) *Lie following lie:*—Lie engenders lie. Once committed, the liar has to go on in his course of lying. It is the penalty of his transgression, or one of the penalties. To the habitual liar, bronzed and hardened in the custom, till custom becomes second nature, the penalty may seem no very terrible price to pay. To him, on the other hand, who, without deliberate intent, and against his innermost will, is overtaken with such a fault, the generative power of a first lie to beget others, the necessity of supporting the first by a second and a third, is a retribution keenly to be felt, while penitently owned to be most just. (*F. Jacox.*)

Vers. 36–39. **A place called Gethsemane.**—*The language and tone befitting our prayers to God:*—To a thoughtful and inquiring mind, nothing will be more manifest than the decorum of our Saviour's addresses to the throne of grace. He is never betrayed into flights and ecstasies; never uses any phrase which is not marked by the strictest rules of soberness and truth. In His agony in the garden, when, if ever, the mind of an afflicted and sorrowful man, overwhelmed with grief, and preparing for trial and for death, might be expected to break forth into piteous cries and strong phrases, there is not one word which betrays the slightest excess. His soul is wrung with pain. He is very sorrowful. He is sorrowful even unto death. His agony is, perhaps, unspeakable; but not one impassioned cry, not one indecorous expression, not one familiar word, escapes his lips. His prayer is such as befits a son who honours his father, and who seems to have ever present to his mind the dignity of that parent. Now compare this with the prayers of ignorant and uneducated men—with the loud cry, the coarse phrases, the vehement gesticulations, the monstrous apostrophes they employ; above all, with the familiar way in which they speak of God and address themselves to Him, and judge between them and Jesus Christ. Jesus came to set us an example, as well in what He said as in what He did. He taught us how to pray. He showed on this great occasion, an occasion which none beside will ever experience, what is to be the tone and manner of our addresses to God. He was dignified in the midst of His distress. His holy father was an object of the devoutest reverence, so devout that He never presumes either then, or at any time, to use familiar language to Him. His prayer was such that it might have been listened to by the greatest prince or the profoundest scholar, yet it was a prayer so simple that any one can use it. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, is suitable to the majesty of heaven and the weakness of man. He never descends to low phrases and conversational terms, nor forgets, for one moment, that He is in intercourse with the Father of spirits. (*George Wray, M.A.*) *Submission to the Divine will:*—Payson was asked, when under great bodily affliction, if he could see any particular reason for the dispen-

sation. "No," he replied; "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand; God's will is the very perfection of all reason." *Duty of submission*:—I know no duty in religion more generally agreed on, nor more justly required by God Almighty, than a perfect submission to His will in all things; nor do I think any disposition of mind can either please Him more, or become us better, than that of being satisfied with all He gives, and contented with all He takes away. None, I am sure, can be of more honour to God, nor of more ease to ourselves. For if we consider Him as our Maker, we cannot contend with Him; if as our Father, we ought not to distrust Him; so that we may be confident, whatever He does is intended for our good; and whatever happens that we interpret otherwise, yet we can get nothing by repining, nor save anything by resisting. (*Sir Wm. Temple.*) "My will, not thine, be done," turned Paradise into a desert. "Thy will, not mine be done," turned the desert into Paradise, and made Gethsemane the gate of heaven. (*E. de Pressensé, D.D.*) *A visit to Gethsemane*:—The interest attached to the events belonging to the course of our Redeemer becomes more touching and more absorbing as they advance towards the close, &c. I. WHAT WAS THE "PLACE CALLED GETHSEMANE?" There were reasons why this garden should be selected, at once obvious and important. Knowing what He had to undergo, the Lord Jesus wanted privacy; the disciple who was to betray Him knew the place, &c. II. THE EMOTION OF WHICH THE "PLACE CALLED GETHSEMANE" WAS THE SCENE. It was the emotion of sorrow. 1. Its intensity. Formerly His sorrow had been chastened and subdued, while now it burst forth irrepressibly and without reserve. Presented in the Evangelical narratives. 2. Its cause. The solitude of the cause of the Saviour's emotion, is exclusively this, that He was not only a martyr, but a Mediator, and that He suffered as an expiation on behalf of human sin. He was feeling the immense and terrible weight of propitiation. 3. Its relief and end. Support conveyed as an answer to His prayers, through the ministration of an angel, invigorating Him for the endurance of the final and fearful crisis which was before Him. He is enthroned in the loftiest elevation. III. THE IMPRESSIONS WHICH OUR RESORT TO THE "PLACE CALLED GETHSEMANE" OUGHT TO SECURE. 1. The enormous evil and heinousness of sin. 2. The amazing condescension and love of the Lord Jesus. 3. The duty of entire reliance upon the Saviour's work, and entire consecration to the Saviour's service. For that reliance, genuine and implicit faith is what is required—faith being the instrument of applying to whole perfection of His work, &c. Who can do other than recognize at once the obligation and the privilege of entire consecration? (*J. Parsons.*) *The soul-sorrow of Jesus*:—I. THAT THE BODILY SUFFERINGS OF JESUS, however acute and protracted, COULD NOT CONSTITUTE A SUFFICIENT ATONEMENT FOR SIN. Nor meet the demands of a violated law. The bodily suffering is no adequate compensation for the evil committed. The soul is the chief sinner. The sufferings of Christ in His body could not be a sufficient atonement for sin because they did not exhaust the curse pronounced by the law against transgression. II. THE SEVERITY OF THE MEDIATOR'S SORROW. When He made His soul an offering for sin. 1. He suffered much from the temptations by which He was assailed. 2. From the ingratitude and malignity of man. 3. The soul-sorrow of Christ was produced by the sensible withholding of all comforting communication from heaven, and by the feeling of forsakenness in the hour of distress. 4. The sorrow of the Redeemer's soul rose to its height when he did actually endure the wrath of God due to our sins. (*J. Macnaughton.*) *The representative human conflict*:—Our Savour's conflict in Gethsemane was a representative conflict, and it reveals to us the meaning of human life, and the struggle through which we must pass. I. There are only two wills in the world—God's will, and man's will. II. The blessedness of man, the creature, must lie in the harmonious working together of these two wills. III. These two wills are at present in antagonism. IV. How can these two wills be brought together into harmony? Answer—I. Not by any changing of the perfect will of God. 2. Man's will is wrong, imperfect, misguided, it may be changed, it ought to be changed, it must be changed. Here is the proper first sphere of a redeeming work. What shall change it? The truth as it is in Jesus. The work wrought out for us by Jesus. The grace won for us by Jesus. The constraining of the love of Jesus. The power of the risen and living Jesus. (*Selected.*) *The soul-passion of Christ*:—What is the explanation we are to give of this passage in our Lord's life? One explanation which has been offered is that Gethsemane witnessed a last and more desperate assault of the evil One; but for this the Bible gives no clear warrant. Certainly, the evil One, after his great defeat on the mountain of the

Temptation, is said to have departed from our Lord "for a season," an expression which seems to imply that he afterwards returned; but, so far as the text of Scripture can guide us, he returned to assail not the Workman but the work. What took place in Gethsemane is totally unlike the scene in the Temptation. At the Temptation, our Lord is throughout calm, firm, majestic. He repels each successive assault of the tempter with a word of power. The prince of this world came, and had nothing in Him. But in Gethsemane He is overcome by that, whatever it was, which pressed on Him. He is meek, prostrate, unnerved, dependent (as it seems) on the sympathy and nearness of those whom He had taught and led. There He resists and vanquishes with tranquil strength a personal opponent; here He sinks as if in fear and bewilderment to the very earth, as though a prey to some inward sense of desolation and collapse. His own words, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," point to some great mental trouble; and if He was suffering from a mental trouble, what, may we dare to ask, was its provoking cause? I. WAS IT NOT, FIRST OF ALL, AN APPREHENSION, DISTINCT, VIVID, AND OVERPOWERING, OF WHAT WAS PRESENTLY COMING? In Gethsemane, by an act of His will, our Lord opened upon His human soul a full view and apprehension of the impending sufferings of His passion and death; and the apprehension was itself an agony. The whole scene, the succession of scenes, passed before His mental eye; and as He gazes on it, a heart sickness—outcome and proof of His true Humanity—seizes on Him, and He shrinks back in dread from this dark and complex vision of pain. II. HE WAS, SO TO SPEAK, MENTALLY ROBING HIMSELF FOR THE GREAT SACRIFICE—laying upon His sinless soul the sins of a guilty world. To us, indeed, the burden of sin is as natural as the clothes we wear; but to Him the touch of that which we take so easily was an agony, even in its lightest form; and when we think of the accumulated guilt of all the ages clinging around and most intimately present to Him, can we wonder that His bodily nature gave way, that His Passion seemed to have been upon Him before its time, and that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." (*Canon Liddon.*) *The Christian's Gethsemane:*—Surely He did not address these words, at once so imperative and so plaintive, to His apostle alone. They were words for all time, warning us not so to remember Calvary as to forget Gethsemane. Good indeed it is to retire to this inmost sanctuary of the human soul, to retire from a world of men, a world which chiefly fixes its eye on the outward and the material, and which passes its years in struggles and efforts that often leave no more traces upon anything that really lasts, then do the busy little children on the seashore, who diligently pile up their sand castles in face of the rising tide. The soul of Jesus in Gethsemane was, above all things, in contact with realities, but they are the realities of the world of spirits at the least not one whit less real than the stones and the gases of the world of matter. The soul of Jesus in Gethsemane was engaged in a fearful struggle, but it was a struggle with issues reaching not into the next few weeks or years of some puny human life here below, but into the most distant vistas of the eternal world. It is not at all times that even good Christians can enter into the meaning of this solemn scene, but there are mental trials which interpret it to us, and which in turn are by it (if we will) transfigured into heavenly blessings. I. THERE IS THE INWARD CONFLICT WHICH OFTEN PRECEDES OUR UNDERTAKING HARD OR UNWELCOME DUTY OR SACRIFICE. The eye measures the effort required, the length and degree of endurance which must be attempted ere the work is really done; and, as the eye traverses the field before it, all the quick sensibilities of feeling start up and rehearse their parts by anticipation, and cling to and clog and embarrass the will, holding it back from the road of duty. Struggles such as this between inclination and duty may be at times sorrowful to the soul, even unto death. When they come on you, brace yourselves by watching and praying with Jesus in Gethsemane, that you may learn to say with Him, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." II. THERE ARE FORMS OF DOUBT RESPECTING GOD'S GOODNESS AND PROVIDENCE, WHICH ARE A GREAT TROUBLE AT TIMES. Not self-caused doubts, but embarrassments which beset earnest and devout souls under stress of great sorrow or calamity. The best remedy for these is to kneel in spirit side by side with Jesus in Gethsemane; it is prayer such as His was that struggles under a darkened heaven into the light beyond. III. DESOLATENESS OF SOUL, MAKING GOD'S SERVICE DISTASTEFUL. Prayer becomes insipid and unwelcome, duty is an effort against the grain, the temper is dejected. Tempted to give up all in disgust, and let things take their chance for time or eternity. They who experience this can but kneel in Gethsemane with the prayer, "O, my Father, let this cup pass from me; never-

theless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." IV. THE APPROACH OF DEATH. This may indeed come upon us suddenly as a thief in the night, but may also be ushered in, as it generally is, by a preface of weakened health and lingering sickness. In many cases it has happened that at the very beginning of an illness which was to end with life, a clear presentiment of this has been graciously vouchsafed. "I was sitting at luncheon," said one of the best of Christ's servants in this generation, "and I suddenly felt as never before: I felt that something had given way. I knew what it meant, what it must mean. I went up into my room; I prayed God that He would enable me to bear what I knew was before me, and would at the last receive me for His own Son's sake." It was the close of a life as bright as it was beautiful, in which there was much to leave behind—warm and affectionate friends, and an abundance of those highest satisfactions which come with constant and unselfish occupation; but it was the summons to another world, and as such it was obeyed. Death is always awful, and the first gaze at the break-up of all that we have hitherto called life must ever have about it a touch of agony. And yet, if Jesus in Gethsemane is our Shepherd, surely we shall lack nothing; yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil, for He is with us who has gone before, His rod and His staff comfort us. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's agony in the garden:*—I. WE DWELL MORE ON THE BODILY ANGUISH OF OUR LORD THAN THE MENTAL. We figure to ourselves the external woes of which flesh was the subject rather than those griefs which were within the soul. We must not forget that others besides Christ have died the most cruel deaths with fortitude. The bodily sufferings of Christ were but an inconsiderable part of His endurances. It was in soul rather than in body that our Saviour made atonement for transgression. You must be aware that anguish of soul more than of the body is the everlasting portion which is to be awarded to sinners; so we may expect that the soul-agony of a surety or substitute would be felt more than the bodily. Indeed, in the garden there was no bodily suffering, no spear, nails. II. EXCEEDING SORROWFUL UNTO DEATH. The soul cannot die, yet so exceeding was Christ's sorrow that He could speak of it as nothing less than actual death. The soul was the sin-offering. 1. We would have you be aware of the enormous cost at which you have been ransomed. 2. It gives preciousness to the means of grace thus to consider them as brought into being by the agonies of the Redeemer. Will you trifle with them? 3. Having spoken not only of the exceeding sorrowfulness of Christ's soul, but of the satisfaction which that sorrowfulness yields, I would not conclude without a vision of His glorious triumphs. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Divine sorrow:*—I. THE CAUSES OF HIS SORROW. 1. That gloom may have been the sense of the near approach of death with all the dread misgivings which beset the spirit in that supreme hour. 2. It may have been the sense of loneliness, of the ingratitude, the failure of His disciples and countrymen. 3. Or it was the sense of the load of human wickedness entering into His soul, so as almost to take possession of it. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." These troubled His soul. 4. This scene is the silent protest against the misery of wrong-doing, against the exceeding sinfulness of sin. II. THE GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW AND IN WHAT SPIRIT WE OUGHT TO PRAY. There is something higher in the efficacy and in the answer of prayer than the mere demanding and receiving the special blessings for which we ask. The cup did not pass from Him; but in two ways His prayer was granted. 1. In the heavenly strength that was given to Him to bear all the sorrows laid upon Him. The very act of prayer gives strength, will open our souls to supporting angels. 2. Not the substitution of the will of Christ for the will of the Eternal God, but the substitution of the will of the Eternal God for the will of His most dearly beloved Son. Great as is the will, holy as are the desires, Divine as are the aspirations that go up from earth, there is something greater, holier, Diviner yet; and that is the will that rules the universe, the mind which embraces within its scope the past, the present, and the future, this world and the next, the seen and the unseen. Without the agony, without the cross, Christianity and Christendom would not have been. If any act or event in the world's history was essential to its onward progress, essential to the elevation and purification of the individual man, it was the anguish which this night represents to us. This is the apparent conflict, but real unity of the sorrows of Gethsemane and Calvary with the perfect wisdom and mercy of the Supreme Intelligence. It is this conflict and this unity which lend such a breathless interest to the whole story of this week, which breathes at once the pathos and the triumph, the grief and the joy, through its example and its doctrine, through all its facts and all its poetry, through all its stirring music

and all its famous pictures. And it is a conflict and a unity which still in its measures continue, and shall continue, as long as the will of humanity struggles and toils on earth to accomplish the will of Divinity. Not our will, but God's will be done. Not our will, for we know not what is best for us. We still see as through a glass very darkly, the end is not yet visible. But God's will be done, for He knows our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking. His will, His supreme will in nature and in grace, let us learn to know; and having learned, to do it. Thy will be done. Make Thy will our will. Make Thy love our love. Make Thy strength perfect in our weakness, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Prayer*:—I. THE RIGHT OF PETITION. We infer it to be a right. 1. Because it is a necessity of our nature. Prayer is a necessity of our humanity rather than a duty. The necessity to (1) that of sympathy; (2) the necessity of escaping the sense of a crushing fate. 2. We base this request on our privilege as children—"My Father." 3. Christ used it as a right, therefore we may. You cannot help praying if God's Spirit is in yours. II. ERRONEOUS NOTIONS OF WHAT PRAYER IS. They are contained in that conception which He negatived, "As I will." A common conception of prayer is, that it is the means by which the wish of man determines the will of God. The text says clearly, "*Not* as I will." The wish of man does not determine the will of God. Try this conception by four tests. 1. By its incompatibility with the fact that this universe is a system of laws. 2. Try it by fact. 3. Try it by the prejudicial results of such a belief. Gives unworthy ideas of God. Consider the danger of vanity and supineness resulting from the fulfilment of our desires as a necessity. 4. It would be most dangerous as a criterion of our spiritual state if we think that answered prayer is a proof of grace. We shall be unreasonably depressed and elated when we do or do not get what we wish. III. THE TRUE EFFICACY OF PRAYER—"As Thou wilt." All prayer is to change the will human into submission to the will Divine. Hence we conclude—(1) That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wish, in changing the passionate desire into still submission, is no true prayer; (2) That life is most holy in which there is least of petition and desire, and most of waiting upon God; in which petition often passes into thanksgiving. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Prayer to seek God's will, not man's wish*:—Practically then, I say, Pray as He did, till prayer makes you cease to pray. Pray till prayer makes you forget your own wish, and leave it or merge it in God's will. The Divine wisdom has given us prayer, not as a means whereby to obtain the good things of earth, but as a means whereby we learn to do without them; not as a means whereby we escape evil, but as a means whereby we become strong to meet it. "There appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." That was the true reply to His prayer. (*Ibid.*) *Submission a progress*:—Let us come into the presence of the Suppliant—this most human, yet most Divine Person, who is wrestling here in an agony even more spiritual than mortal. It is night. Christ has left the guest-chamber. He has crossed the brook Kedron. He has entered a garden, oftentimes His resort during His visits to Jerusalem, at the foot of the slope of Olivet. He has come hither to pray. Such prayer must be secret. He leaves His disciples at the entrance. Even secret prayer may be the better for having friends near. So with a touching union of love and humility He entreats His three disciples to watch with Him. See the example of suffering which is here set before us in Christ. I. That all sorrow, all suffering, even if it be anguish, IS A CUP. It is something definite, of a certain measure. It is of the Father's mingling; the cup of medicinal love. II. Concerning this cup itself YOU MAY PRAY. There is not the distress upon earth as to which we ought not to pray. III. But HOW PRAY. 1. As to a Father. 2. Again with an "If." You must recognize the possible impossibility. 3. With an earnest confession of the comparative value of two wills—your will and God's. Jesus *went away the second time, and prayed.* And what was this second prayer? "*O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.*" This second prayer asks not at all for the removal of the cup. The first was prayer with submission; the second is submission without even prayer. Here is an example, set us by our Lord, of a progressive, growing submission to the mighty hand of God. I do not mean that our Lord had to learn, in the garden of Gethsemane, a lesson of obedience unknown before. How was Christ made perfect, but in the sense of a transition from disobedience to obedience. Yet, thus, in a constant development of obedience under a course of increasing difficulty. The earthly life of Christ was a perpetual going forward. "*Let this cup pass.*" Was it not an added trial that the Saviour, like an apostle (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9) had asked

relief, and not been answered? Beyond the submission of the will lies the silencing of the will; beyond the desire to have only if God will, the desire that God only may will, whether I have or not. All of us have wishes, strong impulses of the will towards this and that; it is a part of our nature. By what steps shall they pass unto our final good? 1. We must turn them into prayers. Everything evil will refuse that test. You cannot turn a sinful wish into prayer. 2. The next step is not only to pray your wishes, but to pray them in a spirit of submission. 3. Then nothing remains but the act of submission, pure, simple, unconditional, absolute. No longer, "*Let this cup pass*," but "If this cup *may not pass, Thy will be done.*" All this I leave to Thee; I ask not; I desire not; I pray not longer concerning it, *only* Thy will be done. (*C. J. Vaughan, D.D.*) *The figure of the cup*:—Do we not use the same kind of language ourselves, having still no such thought as that the cup of anguish we speak of, or pray to be taken away, is a judicial infliction? This figure of the cup is used in Scripture for all kinds of experience, whether joyful or painful. Thus we have "the cup of salvation," "the cup of consolation," "the cup of trembling," "of fury," "of astonishment," "of desolation." Whatever God sends upon man to be deeply felt, and by whatever kind of providence, whether benignant, or disciplinary, or retributive, is called his cup. (*Horace Bushnell.*) *Jesus praying*:—There are several instructive features in our Saviour's prayer in His hour of trial. 1. It was lonely prayer. He withdrew even from His three favoured disciples. Believer, be much in solitary prayer, especially in times of trial. 2. It was humble prayer. Luke says He knelt, but another evangelist says He "fell on His face." Where, then, must be thy place, thou humble servant of the great Master? What dust and ashes should cover thy head? Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of prevalence with God unless we abase ourselves that He may exalt us in due time. 3. It was filial prayer—"Abba, Father." You will find it a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. You have no rights as a subject, you have forfeited them by your treason. 4. It was persevering prayer. He prayed three times. Cease not until you prevail. 5. It was the prayer of resignation—"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Gethsemane*:—I. Gethsemane suggests our blessed Redeemer's longing for human sympathy. "Tarry ye here and watch with Me." It is a purely human feeling. II. Reminds us of the sacredness of human sorrow and Divine communion. III. Reveals the overwhelming depth and fulness of the Redeemer's sorrow. Reminds us of the will of Christ yielded to the will of the Father. IV. Has its lessons and influences for all our hearts. How it condemns sin! How it reveals the chiefest human virtue, and the power by which it may be attained! How it brings the Father close to our hearts in their sorrow and extremity! (*W. H. Davison.*) *The prayer in Gethsemane*:—I. The occasion of these words. II. The matter of these words. 1. The person to whom He makes His address. 2. The matter of His request. 3. The manner or earnestness of it. 4. The submission of it. Enforce two things: I. There is an aversion in human nature from the pangs and bitterness of death. II. Notwithstanding that, there are grounds of submission to the will of God in it. (*E. Stillingfleet.*) *The Father's cup*:—It is a Father that gives the cup. 1. A Father who knows what is fittest to be given us. 2. A Father who stands by His children to help and assist them. 3. A Father who will abundantly reward the taking of what He gives. (*Ibid.*) *Our Lord's example of resignation*:—To show how the Son of God exercised this virtue here upon earth. 1. We all desire the conveniences of life, and to be above dependence. For our sakes He became poor, and never complained on that account. 2. Hard labour attended with weariness is disagreeable. Our Saviour's life, during His ministry, was a life of hardship and fatigue. 3. Hunger and thirst, when long endured, are enemies to our nature, and put us to violent uneasiness till they are satisfied. These our Lord often suffered. 4. To those who have the instructions of others committed to their care, it is agreeable to meet with persons teachable and of good capacities, and tiresome to inform slow understandings. 5. Return of baseness and treachery from our intimates whom we have loaded with benefits, are most grievous to be borne, and will wring from the mildest temper complaints. Even to Judas, Jesus showed great lenity. 6. A good man, whose office it is to instruct others in religion, will be grieved when his charitable labours are lost, and he hath to do with stubborn offenders, who are deaf to all reproofs and admonitions. 7. To be injured in our reputation, and exposed to malicious calumny, is a great trial of human patience. This our Saviour endured. 8. To see multitudes involved in a great calamity is a grief to a

charitable man. 9. Future evils, when we see them coming and are sure we cannot escape them, torment us near if not quite as much as when they are present. 10. Men love life and are unwilling to lose it. Most painful and ignominious was the death which Christ endured. (*J. Jortin.*) *Inducements to resignation*:—1. A belief in the goodness of God. 2. The reward in heaven which we may secure. 3. The behaviour of our Lord which we should be anxious to imitate. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's agony*:—In the garden Christ is exhibited to us in a two-fold character—as our surety and as our example. As our surety, suffering for us, and as our example, teaching us how to suffer. I. Our surety. 1. How great were the sufferings of the Redeemer, and what was their true character. 2. How terrible the wrath of God is. 3. How great the guilt of sin is. 4. How great is the love of the Father and of the Son for sinners. II. Our example. From it we learn—1. That our being severely afflicted is no proof that we are not the children of God. 2. That it is not sinful to shrink from affliction or suffering of any kind, and to plead exemption from it. 3. The duty of submission to the will of God even under the greatest trials. 4. The efficacy of prayer in bringing support and comfort under affliction. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *Storms beat round mountain souls*:—It has been said by a great poet, that great characters and great souls are like mountains—they always attract the storms; upon their heads break the thunders, and around their bare tops flash the lightnings and the seeming wrath of God. Nevertheless, they form a shelter for the plains beneath them. That marvellous saying finds an illustration in the lowliest, saddest soul the world has ever had living in it—the Lord Christ. Higher than all men, around His head seemed to beat the very storms of sin; yet beneath the shelter of His great, consoling, sustaining spirit, what lowly people, what humble souls, what poor babes as to wisdom, what sucklings as to the world's truth, have gained their life in this world and eternal rest in God. (*George Dawson.*) *The broken will*:—Man must be thrown down that his will may be broken; and his will must be broken that God may reign within him. The will of God in man is life eternal. (*Ibid.*) *Falling on His face*:—His great life lies before us, that we may strive to follow Him; and then, though falling on our faces as He fell, we may find ourselves able to rise up as He did. For in rising, He laid down His own will and took God's will in its place. (*Ibid.*) *God's providence an argument for submission*:—His providence is comprehensive and complete; no unforeseen accidents in the freest and most contingent things, no unvoluntary obstruction in the most necessary things can break the entireness, or discompose the order of His providence. How exactly and easily does He manage and over-rule all things? The whole world is His house, and all the successive generations of men His family; some are His sons, and by voluntary subjection; others His slaves, and by just constraint fulfil His pleasure. 'Twas the saying of a wise king, instructed by experience, that the art of government was like the laborious travail of a weaver, that requires the attention of the mind and the activity of the body; the eyes, hands, and feet are all in exercise. And how often is the contexture of human councils, though woven with great care, yet unexpectedly broke? So many cross accidents interpose, so many emergencies beyond all prevention start up, that frustrate the designs and hopes of the most potent rulers of this world. But God disposes all things with more facility than one of us can move a grain of sand. (*W. Bates.*) *Emblem of providence*:—The sun applies its quickening influences for the production and growth of a single plant, as particularly as if there were no other things in the world to receive them; yet at the same time it passes from sign to sign in the heavens, changes the scenes of the elements, produces new seasons, and its active and prolific heat forms and transforms whatsoever is changed in nature. This is a fit resemblance of the universal and special operations of Divine providence. (*Ibid.*) *Present comforts in affliction*:—The gracious soul has a taste and sight how "good the Lord is," as an earnest of the fulness of joy in heaven. Hope brings some leaves of the tree of life to refresh us with their fragrancy; but love, of its fruits to strengthen us. As transplanted fruits, where the soil is defective and the sun less favourable, are not of that beauty and goodness as in their original country; so heavenly joys in this life are inferior in their degree to those of the blessed above, but they are very reviving. (*Ibid.*) *Resignation*:—The entire resignation of our wills to the disposing will of God is the indispensable duty of Christians under the sharpest afflictions. I. What is consistent with this resignation? 1. An earnest deprecation of an impending judgment is reconcilable with our submission to the pleasure of God, declared by the event. 2. A mournful sense of afflictions sent from God, is consistent with a dutiful resignation of our-

selves to His will. II. What is included in the resignment of ourselves to God in times of affliction. 1. The understanding approves the severest dispensations of Providence to be good, that is, for reasons, though sometimes unsearchable, yet always righteous, and for gracious ends to the saints. 2. This resignment principally consists in the consent and subjection of the will to the orders of heaven. 3. The duty of resignation consists in the composure of the affections to a just measure and temper, when under the sharpest discipline. III. The reasons to convince us of this duty of resigning ourselves and all our interests to God. 1. The first argument arises from God's original supreme right in our persons, and all things we enjoy. 2. The righteousness of God in all His ways, if duly considered, will compose the afflicted spirit to quiet and humble submission. 3. His power is immense and uncontrollable, and it is a vain attempt to contend with Him, as if the eternal order of His decrees could be altered or broken. 4. His paternal love in sending afflictions is a sufficient argument to win our compliance with His will. (1) All His sons are under the discipline of the rod; and who would be so unhappy as to be exempted from that number for all the prosperity in the world? (2) Chastisement is the effect of His parental love. (*Ibid.*) *Comforts in trial*:—The historian tells of a clear vein of water that springs from Mongibel, that great furnace, that always sends forth smoke or flames, yet is as cool as if it distilled from a snowy mountain. Thus the saints in the fiery trial have been often refreshed with Divine comforts, and such humble submissions and gracious thanksgivings have proceeded from their lips, as have been very comfortable to those about them. (*Ibid.*) *Man's evil nature*:—Proud dust is apt to fly in God's face upon every motion of the afflicting passions; and by the resistance of self-will He is provoked to more severity. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 40–45. **Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.**—*Christian caution*:—Who sleeps by a magazine of gunpowder needs to take care even of sparks. Who walks on ice, let him not go star-gazing, but look to his feet, and take care of falling. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation," is a warning which no good man should disregard. (*Sunday Teacher's Treasury.*) *Watching unto prayer*:—When an archer shoots his arrow at a mark, he likes to go and see whether he has hit it, or how near he has come to it. When you have written and sent off a letter to a friend, you expect some day that the postman will be knocking at the door with an answer. When a child asks his father for something, he looks in his face, even before he speaks, to see if he is pleased, and reads acceptance in his eyes. But it is to be greatly feared that many people feel, when their prayers are over, as if they had quite done with them; their only concern was to get them said. An old heathen poet speaks of Jupiter throwing certain prayers to the winds—dispersing them in empty air. It is sad to think that we so often do that for ourselves. What would you think of a man who had written and folded and sealed and addressed a letter flinging it out into the street, and thinking no more about it? Sailors in foundering ships sometimes commit notes in sealed bottles to the waves, for the chance of their being some day washed on some shore. Sir John Franklin's companions among the snows, and Captain Allen Gardiner dying of hunger in his cave, wrote words they could not be sure any one would ever read. But we do not need to think of our prayers as random messages. We should therefore look for reply to them, and watch to get it. (*Dr. Edmond.*) *How to treat temptation*:—A sentinel posted on the walls, when he discerns a hostile party advancing, does not attempt to make head against them himself, but informs his commanding officer of the enemy's approach, and leaves him to take the proper measure against the foe. So the Christian does not attempt to fight temptation in his own strength. His watchfulness lies in observing its approach, and in telling God of it by prayer. (*W. Mason.*) *Watch and pray—danger lurking in trifles*:—Not only (says Manton) do great sins ruin the soul, but lesser faults will do the same. Dallying with temptation leads to sad consequences. Cæsar was killed with bodkins. A dagger aimed at the heart will give as deadly a wound as a huge two-handed sword, and a little sin unrepented of will be as fatal as a gross transgression. Brutus and Cassius and the rest of the conspirators could not have more surely ended Cæsar's life with spears than they did with daggers. Death can hide in a drop, and ride in a breath of air. Our greatest dangers lie hidden in little things. Milton represents thousands of evil spirits as crowded into one hall; and truly the least sin may be a very pandemonium, in which a host of evils may be concealed—a populous hive of mischiefs, each one

storing death. Believer, though thou be a little Cæsar in thine own sphere, beware of the bodkins of thine enemies. Watch and pray, lest thou fall by little and little. Lord, save me from sins which call themselves little. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All sins dangerous:*—All consciences, like all stomachs, are not alike. How many do we see digest those sins with ease, which others cannot get down with struggling. One strains at a gnat, while another swallows a camel. He that will keep clear of great sins must make conscience of all. I will think no sin little, because the least endangers my soul; and it is all one whether I sell my Saviour for thirty pence with Judas, or for half I am worth with Ananias; whether I go to hell for one sin, or for many. (*Bishop Henshaw.*) *Conflict of flesh and spirit:*—Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, as he was passing on the way, espied a boy with a bird tied in a string to a stone; the bird was still taking wing to fly away, but the stone kept her down. The holy man made good use of this sight, and, bursting into tears, said, "Even so it is betwixt the flesh and the spirit; the spirit is willing to mount upwards in heavenly thoughts and contemplation, but the flesh keeps it down, and, if possible, would not admit of the least thought of heaven. (*Spencer.*) *Conflict of the spirit with the flesh:*—Man is a trinity consisting of body, soul, and spirit. The word *soul*, in the language of Scripture, is not used in its modern significance. It stands for that part of our nature which we have in common with the brutes that perish. The *spirit* likewise in the language of both Old and New Testaments stands for that intelligent nature in man which the brutes have not. The spirit is the seat of the will, for it is written, "the spirit is willing." The spirit is the perceptive and reflective faculty in man, for "no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him." The text suggests to us that though the spirit of man be illumined by the Spirit of God, the weakness of the flesh may bear him down. The word "flesh," in scriptural language, means something quite different from "body." It points to the nature of man as endowed with all its wondrous adaptations to the world in which he lives, which adaptations indeed supply his strongest temptation to forget God. Satan goeth about with muffled feet, seeking whom he may devour. As in the natural world there are subtle influences at work, in the power of electricity for example, which we can measure but cannot see, so there are angels bad as well as good, the one ministering to that minding of the flesh which is death, the others to that minding of the spirit which is life and peace. Heavenly influences begin with the spirit, affect the lower or soulish nature, and through it regulate the actions of the body. (*J. G. Pilkington.*) *Sleep on now, &c.:*—Luther reads the words indicatively, and by way of question, thus: Ah! do ye now sleep and take your rest? Will ye, with Solomon's drunkard, sleep upon a mast-pole? take a nap upon a weather-cock? Thus this heavenly Eagle, though loving His young ones dearly, yet pricks and beats them out of the nest. The best (as bees) are killed with the honey of flattery, but quickened with the vinegar of reproof. (*John Trapp.*) *The willing spirit and the weak flesh:*—I. A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRISTIAN—a willing spirit. 1. This is true of every one of Christ's real disciples on earth. 2. We must set no bounds to the degree of the Christian's willingness. 3. Christ constantly tested it. "Sell all that thou hast." II. THE CHRISTIAN'S INFIRMITY. "The flesh is weak." 1. True in prayer. 2. True in Bible reading. 3. True in Christian effort. 4. True in our losses and afflictions. 5. We must expect to experience more and more of this weakness of our mortal nature as life progresses. III. THE COMPASSION OF OUR LORD FOR THE CHRISTIAN UNDER HIS INFIRMITY. Rebuke is soon followed by compassion. He was now overwhelmed with misery; but suffering did not make Him selfish. IV. THE CONDUCT WE ARE TO PURSUE UNDER OUR INFIRMITIES. Are we to allow the weak flesh to do as it will? We are to watch and pray. (*C. Bradley.*) *The sentinel and the arsenal:*—I. THE CHRISTIAN IS A SENTINEL; HIS CAPTAIN IS CHRIST; AND THE WORD OF COMMAND IS "WATCH." 1. To be watchful implies wakefulness. 2. Watchfulness implies discrimination. A sentinel must distinguish between an enemy and a friend. 3. A sentinel will scrutinize and test the character. II. IT IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO ENGAGE A SENTINEL TO WATCH AGAINST THE INVASION OF THE FOE: nor is it enough that he be faithful, and give the signal of alarm when needed. The arsenal is necessary; without this the sentinel would be weak and useless. "But in Me is thy help found." III. THE INSEPARABLE RELATION OF WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER. Thus are we saved from *entering* into temptation, since where a man is fully in it, there is an end of watching, and an indisposition to pray. (*G. H. Jackson.*) *Watching with Christ:*—I shall not follow this history further, except to develop this single fact—the need which our

God has of our affection, and our sympathy, and our presence with Him. I know not how it is with you, but it is just this that makes me love God. It is just this need of being loved in God, and just this sense of loneliness without it, that calls forth my affection for Him. Power may be venerable, and wisdom may be admirable; but only affection is lovable. It is a marvel, if it be true—and blessed be God, it is true—that while we can do nothing to the Divine stature, and while we can do nothing to the Divine wisdom, it is in the power of a heart that knows how to love, to do much for the Divine happiness. For we are not to say that God is perfect in the sense that He can never feel any more. That is carrying philosophy to insanity. Every heart that loves God makes Him experience a Divine gladness. Every soul that lifts itself up into the presence of God with adoration of love makes Him happier. And now, further, is there not a relationship of this scene to our relations in this life, and to our experiences? Is Christ still upon earth in any such sense that it may be said that we are watching with Him here? I remark, that Christ's life is going on in this world; that it is developing here, I had almost said in some respects more wonderfully than in heaven itself. In other words, the next representation is, that Christ has mingled His spirit with the hearts of the race; that by His life and example He is teaching men. And, above all, by His spiritual influences, Christ is germinating in the race His own nature, and is bound to carry the race above its animal conditions, and into the transcendent sphere where He Himself is. Wherever, then, in all the earth, there are those who need guidance; wherever there are those who need instruction; wherever there are those who are seeking the upward way, and looking about for some one to guide them—there the Saviour is with them. He, then, is watching with Christ, if these be truths, who watches with the Saviour in his earthly ministrations. Those who are in the midst of the glare and growth of material things in this life, and identify themselves, notwithstanding, with the interior, with the spiritual, with the religious affairs of men, may fitly be said to be watching with Christ. Still further, those especially who are watching as Christ taught that we should watch, are those who watch for the souls of men, and not for Christ alone. A man can watch with Christ in his own experiences, as well as in the experiences of others. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Watchfulness and prayer:*—As all war is to be carried on partly by our own strength and partly by that of allies and auxiliaries called in to our aid and assistance, so in this Christian warfare the things which properly answer those two are watchfulness and prayer: forasmuch as by watchfulness we exert and employ our own strength, and by prayer we engage God's; and if ever victory and success attend us in these encounters, these two must join forces, heaven and earth must be confederate, and where they are so, the devil himself, as strong as he is, and as invincible a monarch as he would be thought to be, may yet be forced to go off with a *pluribus impar*, and to quit the field with a frustration and a baffle. (*R. South, D.D.*) *Watching:*—I. Imports a strong, lively, abiding sense and persuasion of the exceeding greatness of the evil, which we watch and contend against. II. Imports a diligent consideration and survey of our own strengths and weaknesses compared with those of our enemy. III. Watchfulness implies a close and thorough consideration of the several ways by which temptation has at any time actually prevailed either upon ourselves or others. 1. For himself. Every man should know the plagues of his own heart, and what false steps he has made in the several turns and periods of his Christian course, by what means he fell, and upon what rocks he split. 2. Let the watchful Christian carry his eye from himself to others, and observe with what trick and artifice the tempter has practised upon them. IV. Watchfulness implies a continual, actual intention of mind upon the high concern and danger which is before us, in opposition to sloth, idleness, and remissness. V. Watching implies a constant and severe temperance in opposition to all the jollities of revelling and intemperance. (*Ibid.*) *Prayer in time of temptation:*—It is not in the power of man to secure or defend himself against temptation, something above him must do it for him, as well as very often by him; and prayer is that blessed messenger between heaven and earth, holding a correspondence with both worlds, and by a happy intercourse and sure conveyance carrying up the necessities of the one, and bringing down the bounties of the other. To render prayer prevalent and effectual, there are required to it these two qualifications: 1. Fervency or importunity. 2. Constancy or perseverance. Men too often divide between watching and prayer, and so use and rely upon these duties separately, which can do nothing but in conjunction. For watchfulness without prayer is presumption, and prayer without watchfulness is a

mockery. By the first a man invades God's part in this great work, and by the latter he neglects his own. Prayer not assisted by practice is laziness, and contradicted by practice is hypocrisy; it is indeed of mighty force and use within its proper compass, but it was never designed to supply the room of watchfulness, or to make wish stand in the stead of endeavour. (*Ibid.*) *Preparing for temptation*:—Wise combatants will measure swords before they engage. And a discreet person will learn his own weaknesses rather by self-reflection than by experience. For to know one's self weak only by being conquered, is doubtless the worst sort of conviction. (*Ibid.*) *Danger of sleep in times of temptation*:—Another instance I have met with in story of a certain general, who going about his camp in the night, and finding the watch fast asleep upon the ground, nails him down to the place where he lay with his own sword, using this expression withal, "I found him dead, and I left him so." (*Ibid.*) *Lip-devotion*:—Lip-devotion will not serve the turn. It undervalues the very things it prays for. It is indeed the begging of a denial, and shall certainly be answered in what it begs. (*Ibid.*) *Spirit willing, flesh weak*:—I. Give an explication of the words. II. Show that our present state is imperfect, and there will always be defects—defects in our spiritual frame, defects in our obedience, defects in our approaches to God in our religious duties. III. If the spirit be willing, and our infirmities are truly lamented, and we watch and pray against them, God will graciously accept us, approve of our sincere desires and endeavours, and pardon our failings. IV. That this grace of God and the Redeemer is matter of great comfort to the sincere Christian, a support to him under a sense of his weakness and unworthiness, and an encouragement to engage in solemn duties, particularly in the celebration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, with readiness and cheerfulness, and without amazing, distracting dread and terror. (*John Whitty.*) *Prayer*:—I. Explain the nature of prayer, and set it in its true light, by stripping it of all foreign and superfluous circumstances. In order to understand the nature of prayer, let us take notice that the inward acts of mind and heart exerted in it, from which the outward expressions should flow, and by which they should be animated, are principally these three following: 1. A lively and intimate persuasion that we are utterly insufficient for our own happiness, and that we depend upon our Maker for all we possess here or hope to enjoy hereafter. 2. The second act of the soul exerted in prayer, is the lifting it up with the utmost ardour to that greatest and best of beings who brought us into life, and assigned us our station in it. 3. The third act of mind is a firm belief and assured trust in that God to whom we pray, and on whom we depend. II. Vindicate prayer from the objections commonly urged against it. 1. That an omniscient God already knows what we want before we ask it. Answer: The real design of prayer is, in the first place, to express, under a lively impression of the presence of God, the sense we have of our dependence upon Him: and, in the second place, to express our earnest desires of having all those sentiments and pious dispositions which it is proper for us to entertain and cultivate. 2. That since God is infinite in goodness, He is always disposed to bestow on His creatures whatever is proper for them, and, since He is infinite in wisdom, He will always choose the fittest times and best manner of bestowing. Answer: Prayer is not designed to move the affections of God, it works its effect on us, as it contributes to change the temper of our minds. 3. Prayer can be of no importance, for all things are already fixed by an unalterable decree of God. Answer: None ever maintained that God hath determined events to happen without any means, and prayers are the proper means of obtaining spiritual blessings. III. The advantages which arise from the sincere and steadfast performance of this duty. 1. As a break in our worldly life. 2. As inspiring us with the love, and animating us to the practice, of every virtue. 3. Putting us into the best frame and situation of mind for receiving the influences of heavenly light and grace. 4. Raising the human soul to an uncommon pitch of grandeur and elevation. 5. Giving a wonderful strength and firmness to the soul which is under the full power and influence of it. Since, then, prayer is a reasonable thing in itself, it must be both our duty and our interest to continue instant in it. (*W. Leechman.*) *Entering into temptation*:—To tempt is in general no more than to try, and a state of temptation is a state of trial; to pray therefore that we may not be put into a state of temptation, is to pray ourselves out of this world, which was designed by God for a state of trial in order to another world. Therefore, when we pray not to be led into temptation, the meaning is, that God by His wise providence would keep us from such trials as, according to the ordinary measures of grace, we should hardly be able to withstand.

For, although it be possible for those to whom God gives extraordinary assistance, not only to resist the temptation, but to triumph over it, and to shake off temptations as St. Paul did the viper from his hand, yet, considering the frailty of human nature, and that God is not obliged to give assistance in difficult cases, it is a wise and becoming petition for us to our heavenly Father, that He would not lead us in this manner into temptation. (*E. Stillingfleet.*) *The attractions of two worlds* :—It is the love of this world, that is, of the riches and honours of it, which make the sins of ambition and covetousness so plausible and prevailing among those who profess to believe another world. Their souls are like a piece of iron between two loadstones of an unequal magnitude and distance; the one is far greater, and hath more force in itself to attract, but it is placed at a far greater distance; the other is much less, but very near, and therefore may more powerfully draw, than that which is more forcible but farther off. (*Ibid.*) *Importance of resolution* :—One of the best means in the world to withstand temptations to sin, because—1. It keeps the mind steady and fixed, and therefore ready to resist the temptation when it comes. 2. Because it takes off the false colours and appearances of things; for everything may be represented plausibly to an irresolute mind. (*Ibid.*) *Sins of will and sins of infirmity* :—By what certain rules may we proceed to judge what sins are wilful and presumptuous, and what are sins of infirmity, or such as come from the weakness of the flesh. We have two ways to judge by. 1. From the nature of moral actions. 2. From the Scriptures, declaring what sins are inconsistent with the state of salvation. For there are two sorts of infirmities: 1. Such as belong to particular actions. 2. Such as belong to our state and condition. There are three things which do very much alter and discriminate the nature of moral actions. 1. The choice and consent of the will. 2. The time and deliberation about it. 3. The manner of committing it. (*Ibid.*) *What is watchfulness?*—It is a constant care of ourselves and actions. We walk as it were upon precipices, and therefore had need to look to our standing, when we see persons falling on every side. (*Ibid.*) *The defence of prayer* :—Prayer, when duly performed, not only diverts, and raises, and composes the mind, and so breaks the force of a present temptation, but when a close siege is laid, it keeps the passage open for supplies from heaven, and brings down those supports which may enable us to endure. (*Ibid.*) *Sins of infirmity* :—I. WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURE SENSE OF INFIRMITY? 1. The state of human nature is such as to be liable to many pains, diseases, and at last to death. In this sense Christ is said to bear our infirmities, being by the law of His nature subject to the like weakness—hunger, thirst, sleep, dread of pain. 2. Men are not more weak in their bodies than in their minds, nor more exposed to bodily pains than to the impressions of sin, which is our spiritual disease. 3. Next to this general sense of infirmity comes the particular infirmities included in it. It is urged in defence that these passions are natural; also that they are inherent. That a natural passion has the same author with nature, and belongs to us as we are men, therefore not to be avoided. None of these have infirmity enough to be an excuse for sin. II. WHAT SORT OF SINS THEY ARE WHICH WILL ADMIT OF AN EXCUSE BECAUSE OF THE INFIRMITY FROM WHICH THEY PROCEED. There is an imperfection in the obedience of the best of men—coldness in devotion, wandering thoughts, which is a weakness to be forgiven. The one way to entitle us to the plea is by endeavouring sincerely and universally to obey the will of God. (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*) *The disciples in Gethsemane* :—I. THE NEED OF REBUKE. II. The method of Christ; rebuke is TEMPERED AND LIMITED. The flesh is to be rebuked for its weakness, the spirit commended and strengthened for its willingness. Had Christ been of the spirit of some He would have allowed no such palliation of their weakness. How Christ put His knowledge of man into the other side of the balance—"He knew what was in man." Imagine the disappointment with which the disciples awoke to find that their firm resolves had vanished. These words of Christ show rather His intense appreciativeness of all the concealed willingness of men than any desire to set their failure in aggravated form. He used His knowledge for their help, not hurt. He sees the redeeming brightness. Foster willingness of spirit. III. Lastly, what a strengthened and rightly directed will can do; how it can rise above the flesh. We see it in worldly pursuits. How eagerly a man will pursue an idea when it masters his will. The ideal religious life is just a new ambition with Divine help to reach it. (*C. J. Proctor.*) *Temptation* :—I. The SOURCES of temptation. 1. Temperament and disposition. 2. The circumstances with which a man is surrounded and the training under which he has been brought up. II. Passing from the sources of temptation, let me speak of THE NECESSITY OF WATCHING

AGAINST IT. 1. One reason is our ignorance of self. 2. Watchfulness is needed because the trial of man's character is life-long. 3. Watchfulness of spirit will effect much, but it will be greatly helped if combined with a spirit of devotion. It gives him strength which in one sense is his own, but in a truer and higher sense is not his own. A sense of religious responsibility to God strengthens the sense of right against wrong. When he is resisting temptation he is not fighting single-handed, but has the eternal law and will of God on his side. In every encounter it helps a man mightily to know that he is not single. (*A. Watson, D.D.*) *Watch our strength*:—Men may be on their guard against their infirmities, but unwary where they deem themselves strong. And just as every reader of history is familiar with stories which tell how fortresses and castles were taken by the enemy, not on their weak and well-guarded side, but on the side where they were deemed impregnable, and where watching was thought useless, so has it been a thousand times in the history of the human mind and life. The faithful Abraham fell into distrust; the meek Moses was ruffled in spirit; the wise Solomon was overreached by acts which he might have withstood; the courageous Peter, even when warned by Christ, was drawn into an act of cowardice. So we often see it in common life. We see the man of strong understanding thrown off his guard, and doing foolish things; the man of integrity, by some impulse, turned aside from the straight path. (*Ibid.*) *Christian vigilance*:—I. To show the IMPORTANCE OF AND NECESSITY of Christian vigilance. From—1. The commands and exhortations of Scripture. 2. The deceitfulness and depravity of the human heart. The illusions it practices on itself. Like an ingenious advocate whose object is to colour and recommend a bad cause, it employs the most deceitful sophistry; and sin is artfully pleaded for on the various grounds of constitution, custom, expediency, and necessity. 3. The temptations to which we are exposed. (1) The temptations of the world. (2) Satan. 4. The sins into which many of the people of God have fallen through its neglect. Noah, David, Hezekiah, and Peter. No dependence can be placed in elevated station, piety, or experience. Adam fell when all was beautiful. 5. Review your own experience and see the need for vigilance. II. The NATURE OF THE DUTY enjoined. 1. A deep and abiding conviction of danger. 2. A diligent use of appointed means. Avoid all occasions of sin; watch the beginnings of sin; watch your besetting sin; watch your thoughts; watch your company; watch your pursuits; watch in dependence upon God. III. The PERSONS ON WHOM THIS DUTY OUGHT ESPECIALLY TO BE ENFORCED. 1. To ministers and all who occupy official stations in the Church of God. 2. It applies to the aged. They are not beyond the reach of temptation. 3. It applies to the young. 4. It applies to heads of families. IV. To ENFORCE THE OBSERVANCE OF THIS DUTY. 1. Think of the salvation of the soul. 2. Think of the consequences resulting from the neglect of this duty. 3. Think of the glory of God. (*T. H. Walker.*) *Watch the occasions of sin*:—Avoid all occasions of sin. Boston justly remarks, that, "as one who carries gunpowder would not wish to be where sparks are flying, lest he should be destroyed; so should we carefully avoid such places and company as may lead into sin." (*Ibid.*) *Watch the beginnings of sin*:—All sin proceeds by rapid and beguiling steps; and when its influence is once yielded to, who can determine all the possible declinations from rectitude which may afterwards follow? In its first approach it may seem altogether harmless; it may be nothing more than thought. The spark may seem to be harmless; but it shall enkindle a conflagration that shall resist, by its violence, the united wisdom and power of man. The shell may seem to be insignificant, but it contains a substance which, when matured, shall be "a serpent in the path, or adder by the way, that biteth the horse's heel, so that the rider thereof falleth backward." The rill that steals silently over the sod may appear trivial; but it shall multiply its waters, until it mocks the man who shall say, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed." (*Ibid.*) *Christ's consideration for the weakness of His followers*:—Applying the subject to ourselves. I. IS THE SPIRIT WILLING? Are we willing, in the sense of being resolved, and bent upon doing God's will, following after holiness, and showing sympathy with Christ by bearing the cross for His sake? Yet—II. THE FLESH MAY BE WEAK. 1. In religious exercises. 2. In the tasks and duties of our Christian life. 3. Most of all in suffering and trial. III. THE COMFORT AND USE OF CHRIST'S GRACIOUS SAYING TO US IN SUCH TIMES AS THESE. 1. It is a word of kind apology. 2. There is a tone of warning in it. 3. Our duty therefore is to do our utmost to keep awake and to maintain communion with our Lord. "Watch and pray." IV. Look forward to a better life. (*T. G. Horton.*)

Vers. 47–52. **And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?**—*The last pleading of love:*—I. The PATIENCE of Christ's love. The betrayer in the very instant of his treason has that changeless tenderness lingering around him, and that merciful hand beckoning to him still. Sin is mighty, but it cannot make God cease to love us. II. The PLEADING of Christ's patient love. There is an appeal to the traitor's heart, and an appeal to his conscience. Christ would have him think of the relations that have so long subsisted between them, and of the real nature of the deed he was doing. The sharp question is meant to wake up his conscience. All our evils are betrayals of Christ, and all our betrayals of Christ are sins against a perfect friendship and an unvaried goodness. We too have sat at His table, heard His wisdom, had a place in His heart. It is the constant effort of the love of Christ to get us to say to ourselves the real name of what we are about. "Wherefore art thou come?" Almost all actions have a better and a worse side, prudence is called selfishness; we are clever men of business, he a rogue. It is, therefore, the office of love to force us to look at the thing as it is. He must begin with rebukes that He may advance to blessing. III. The possible REJECTION of the pleading of Christ's patient love. We can resist His pleadings. It is easily done. Judas merely held his peace—no more. Silence is sufficient. Non-submission is rebellion. The appeal of Christ's love hardens where it does not soften. The sun either scatters the summer morning mists, or it rolls them into heavier folds, from whose livid depths the lightning is flashing by mid-day. That silence was probably the silence of a man whose conscience was convicted while his will was unchanged. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *God's love embraces the worst man:*—As the sunshine pours down as willingly and abundantly on filth and dunghills, as on gold that glitters in its beam, and jewels that flash back its lustre, so the light and warmth of that unsetting and unexhausted source of life pours down on "the unthankful and on the good." The great ocean clasps some black and barren crag that frowns against it, as closely as with its waves it kisses some fair strand enamelled with flowers and fragrant with perfumes. So that sea of love in which we live, and move, and have our being, encircles the worst with abundant flow. He Himself sets us the pattern, which to imitate is to be the children of "our Father which is in heaven," in that He loves His enemies, blessing them that curse, and doing good to them that hate. (*Ibid.*) *Man may reject the Divine love:*—We cannot cease to be the objects of His love, but we can refuse to be the recipients of its most precious gifts. We can bar our hearts against it. Then, of what avail is it to us? To go back to an earlier illustration, the sunshine pours down and floods a world, what does that matter to us if we have fastened up shutters on all our windows, and barred every crevice through which the streaming gladness can find its way? We shall grope at noontide as in the dark, within our gloomy houses, while our neighbours have light in theirs. What matters it though we float in the great ocean of the Divine love, if with pitch and canvas we have carefully closed every aperture at which the flood can enter? A hermetically closed jar, plunged in the Atlantic, will be as dry inside as if it were lying on the sand of the desert. It is possible to perish of thirst within sight of the fountain. It is possible to separate ourselves from the love of God, not to separate the love of God from ourselves. (*Ibid.*) *Judas, why made a disciple:*—But why did Christ choose Judas as a disciple, knowing him a wicked man? 1. To teach us that He will tolerate in the Church militant evil men, and no society among men so small, so holy, but some will creep in. 2. To show His humility and patience in admitting to His board and bread so vile a person, yea, to dip his hand in the same dish. 3. To accomplish the ancient prophecy, that his familiar friend, and he that eats bread with Him, that went up to the house of God with Him as a friend, he should lift up his hand against Him (Psa. lv. 13, 14.) (*Thomas Taylor.*) *Perishing by the sword if we use the sword:*—Human vengeance will produce its own punishment. Resist, and you will be resisted. Treat men unkindly and they will treat you unkindly. But, on the other hand, be gentle and you will rule. Be willing to bear injuries and you will triumph. Believe in martyrdom. Let martyrdom be possible. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Christ is the great fulfilment of that beatitude; and His example is here before us, consistent to the end. (*Dean Howson.*)

Ver. 53. **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father?**—*War opposed to the precepts and spirit of Christianity:*—Show that war is opposed to the spirit of Christianity. I. OFFER SUCH REASONS AS PROVE THIS. 1. The toleration of war under the New Testament dispensation is contrary to what Christianity was ex-

pected to be by the prophet who foretold the coming of the Messiah, and by the Church of the Jews, to whom they were sent (Isa. ii.; ix. 6; Zech. ix. 9, 10). 2. The advent of the Saviour was attended with revelations which indicated peace. The angels sang of peace on earth. 3. The doctrine which Christ taught condemns war (Matt. v. 3-9, &c.) 4. The example of Christ teaches the same truth. His life was unresisting. 5. War originates in a passion which Christianity condemns. 6. It can only be carried on by the use of those means which Christianity must condemn. II. ANSWERS OBJECTIONS. 1. It is said that war was allowable under the Old Testament dispensation, that therefore it cannot be wrong in the abstract. 2. It is said that the predictions of the New Testament foretell wars in the course of Christianity through the world. 3. It is said that the civil magistrate shall not bear the sword in vain. 4. It is said that to argue in favour of these principles is a proof of cowardice and imbecility. 5. What will be the consequences if men act in this way? III. MAKE A FEW REFLECTIONS. 1. It calls for a close examination of the subject. 2. It is the duty of parents to be careful in training up their children. 3. I would urge that no professor of Christianity should think of bearing arms. (*N. M. Harry.*) *The willing surrender*:—"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The glory of Christ is in His willing surrender of that which be onged to Him, and which He might have always had and enjoyed. The multitude whom the chief priests had sent was arresting Jesus. Then one of His disciples drew the sword. Jesus bade him put his sword into its place again. He tells His eager followers that if He wants He can protect Himself. "Thinkest thou," &c. The helpless prisoner looked up and saw the air thick with angels hurrying to His relief. A word from Him and they would have been His warriors. He had the power, but would not use it. The nobleness of this surrender of Jesus; no man becomes really noble who has not its repetition in himself. To give up some precious thing which is legitimately yours; to shut your eyes upon visions of glory, or safety, or luxury, which you might make your own without blame, that is one of the marks of nobleness. The man who is taking all that he has a right to take in life is always touched with a shade of baseness. Let us study the nobleness of voluntary surrender. I. WE WANT TO FEEL HOW DEFINITE AND DISTINCT IT IS. There are base imitations of it. There are two kinds of renunciation of things which have this origin in unworthy motives. 1. The first is the renunciation which comes from idleness or lack of spirit. There will always be people who might be rich, learned, famous, who despise these things simply because of the trouble they involve. The surrender they make is a loss not a gain; it has nothing in common with the Divine relinquishment of Jesus. 2. The second of the two base forms of voluntary surrender is what we may call the ascetic form. It includes the renunciation of legitimate enjoyments, that we may be chastened by disappointment. Now turn back to Jesus. When He said, "I will not call the angels," it was no pusillanimous submitting to His fate; nor was it any unnatural submitting of Himself to suffering that He might be cultivated and purified, or that the release from suffering when it came might be more sweet. It was the quiet surrender of what was His, because He could not have it and yet do His work and save the world. No man in this world has a right to all his rights. Here is really the key to the question of voluntary abstinence from certain innocent indulgences for the sake of others. Voluntariness lies at the root of it all. We talk of the glory of resignation to the inevitable; but the true glory is in resignation to the inevitable. To stand unchained, with perfect power to go away, and so standing to let the fire creep up to the heart—that is the truer heroism. Christ knew what it was to gain the life He lost, to have the thing that He surrendered. When He refused to call the angels to His help, the strength which was the meaning of the angels was surely entering into Him, and making Him ready for the battle which He was just about to fight. (*P. Brooks, D.D.*) *Self-surrender under the influence of a higher purpose*:—When a man who might be rich deliberately gives up the chance of wealth that he may be a scholar, men whose object in life is wealth, and who know that he has the same power to get wealth which they have if he should give himself to its pursuit, must honour him and feel the influence of his renunciation. It is not laziness, for he goes to work harder than any of them. It is not asceticism, for he has no foolish sweeping abuse of wealth with which to insult his fellow-men's intelligence. It is not incapacity, for he is as bright as the brightest. It is simply the power of a higher purpose. It is the calm, manly, uncomplaining choice to do this greater thing, and to surrender whatever would hinder the doing of it most faithfully and well. The man goes off into his study, and thinks that nobody sees him—

indeed, does not think for a moment whether anybody is seeing him or not; but his life and such lives as his are the salt of the society in which they live. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 56. **Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.**—*The causes, signs, evils, and cure of backsliding*:—I. Its causes. 1. Opposition and fear of injury from those who are the enemies of religion. 2. A too frequent and uniform conformity and intercourse with the world. 3. Self-confidence in spiritual gifts and attainments. 4. A neglect of the private duties of religion. II. Its signs. 1. It is testified by signs which do not amount to that flagrant and public departure from the gospel which frequently is displayed. (1) A relinquishment of public labour in the church; (2) an irregular attendance upon public ordinances; (3) a spirit of inattention and carelessness under these ordinances; (4) an indulgence in social life of useless conversation. 2. Signs which do amount to a positive and public departure from the religion of the cross. III. Its evils. 1. As they affect the individuals themselves. 2. As they affect the Church. (1) They discourage others just setting forth in the way of religion; (2) they lead others to sin; (3) they cause mockery of religion. IV. The cure. 1. Call to mind the times of former devotedness. 2. Contemplate the intense guilt of the act. 3. Resolve to forsake the transgression by which it has been brought about. 4. Connect all our convictions and emotions with prayer for the influence of the Holy Spirit. (*J. Parsons.*) *Apostasy*:—Here we see four things. I. Base ingratitude. 1. They had received special favours from Him. 2. They were under the greater obligation. 3. Tendency of gratitude to bind to benefactor. II. Rash impulsiveness, probably roused by (1) disappointment; (2) alarm. III. Involuntary influence. One fled, then all fled. This should (1) act as incentive to become thoroughly sound in character; (2) make us cautious as to associations we form. IV. False policy. Doing wrong to save the body (1) injures the soul; (2) endangers it. Learn—(*a*) importance of cherishing a practical impression of our obligations to Christ; (*b*) of cultivating the habit of acting from intelligent conviction; (*c*) of habitually realizing the principle, that the path of duty is the path of safety. (*Homilist.*) *Fickle friends*:—The bees were haunting the flowering trees in crowds, humming among the branches, and gathering honey in the flowers. Said Gotthold, "Here is an image of temporal prosperity. So long as there is blossom on the trees, and honey in the blossom, the bees will frequent them in crowds, and fill the place with their music; but when the blossom is over, and the honey gone, they too will disappear. The same happens in the world, among men. In the abodes of fortune and pleasure, friends will be found in plenty, but when fortune flys away, they depart along with it. Temporal gain is the world's honey, and the allurement with which you may entice it whithersoever you will; but where the gain terminates, there likewise do the love and friendship of the world stop. For this reason let all good men be advised to fly to Christ crucified, who never forsakes in their distress those who truly seek Him." *The sin of apostasy*:—Disheartened by the extraordinary dangers and difficulties of their enterprize, a Roman army lost courage, and resolved on a retreat. The general reasoned with his soldiers. Expostulating with them, he appealed to their love of country, to their honour, and to their oaths. By all that could revive a fainting heart he sought to animate their courage and shake their disgraceful resolution. Much they trusted, admired, loved him; but his appeals were all in vain. They were not to be moved; and, carried away as by a panic, they faced round to retreat. At this juncture they were forcing a mountain-pass, and had just cleared a gorge where the road, between two stupendous rocks on one side and the foaming river on the other, was but a footpath broad enough for the step of a single man. As a last resort he laid himself down there, saying, "If you will retreat, it is over this body you go, trampling me to death beneath your feet." No foot advanced. The flight was arrested. His soldiers could face the foe, but they could not mangle beneath their feet one who loved them, and who had often led their ranks to victory, sharing like a common soldier all the hardships of the campaign, and ever foremost in the fight. The sight was one to inspire them with decision. Hesitating no longer to advance, they wheeled round to resume their march; deeming it better to meet sufferings, and endure even death itself, than to trample under foot their devoted and patriotic leader. Their hearts recoiled from such an outrage. But for such as have named the name of Christ not to depart from iniquity, for such as have enlisted under His banner to go back to the world, for such as have renounced sin to return to its pleasures, involves a greater crime. A more touching spectacle bars our return. Jesus, as it were, lays

Himself down on our path; nor can any become backsliders, and return to the practice and pleasure of sin, without trampling Him under their feet. (*T. Guthrie*, (*D.D.*)

Vers. 57, 58. **But Peter followed Him afar off.**—*Danger of following Jesus afar off*:—I. WHAT INDUCED THE APOSTLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AFAR OF. It was fear of men, of the evil which might fall upon him. He might persuade himself that he could render no help to his Master. Compare the attachment of Ruth to Naomi. The apostle had some affection for Christ, or he would not have followed at all. The only safety is in following fully. Thus Peter's self-confidence was rebuked. II. WHO WERE THE COMPANIONS WITH WHOM THE APOSTLE SAT DOWN? AND WHAT WAS HIS DANGER IN DOING SO? He was in company hostile to Jesus, but did not resent their hostility. He did not side with his Lord. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." There was a gradual descent in the fall of the apostle. He was first alarmed, and consulted his safety by flight; then he followed Jesus, but afar off; then he entered into the palace; then he sat down among the servants; then he listened without rebuke to their scoffs against Jesus; then he denied that he was a disciple; then he denied with oaths and curses. One step led to another. III. WHAT WAS THE APOSTLE'S STATE OF MIND WHEN HE WENT INTO THE HIGH PRIEST'S PALACE? AND HOW DID THIS EXPOSE HIM TO THE DANGER OF FALLING UNDER TEMPTATION? He went in to *see* the end. Peter was not resolved how he would act. He might think that Christ would avow Himself; put forth His omnipotent power; or that he would acknowledge Jesus. He was in a state of mind easily to be overcome by temptation. He wanted to make his attachment for Christ such as to secure his own safety. (*T. Stark.*) *Following Christ afar off*:—I. THE SYMPTOMS OF FOLLOWING CHRIST AFAR OFF. 1. A gradual departure from Him. The first step was self-confidence; the second step was an ignorant zeal for Christ and the use of carnal weapons in His cause. The next step was an abandonment of the cause he had espoused—"Then all the disciples forsook Him." 2. A disinclination to commune with Him. 3. Indifference to meet Him at public ordinances. 4. An attempt to stretch Christian liberty to the utmost. II. THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF FOLLOWING CHRIST AFAR OFF. 1. Such a course grows worse and worse. 2. Such a state brings its own punishment. 3. Such a course is unspeakably offensive to Jesus Christ. III. SOME OF THE REMEDIES FOR THIS STATE OF MIND. Consider—1. Whom you follow. 2. The obligations you are under to follow the Lord closely. 3. What advantages you derive from following Him closely. 4. Who has promised to help you to follow Him. 5. If the consequences of following Christ afar off be so dreadful, what must be the consequence of not following Him at all. (*J. Sherman.*)

Ver. 63. **But Jesus held His peace.**—*Silence the best reply to slander*:—It is reported of Titus Vespasian, that when any one spake ill of him he was wont to say that he was above false reports; and if they were true, he had more reason to be angry with himself than the relator. And the good Emperor Theodosius commanded that no man should be punished who spoke against him: for, what was spoken slightly, said he, was to be laughed at; what spitefully, to be pardoned; what angrily, to be pitied; and what truly, he would thank him for. Oh, that there were but such a frame of spirit in this carping age of ours, wherein men, like tinder, are ready to take fire upon the least spark that falls, to quarrel sometimes on the most inoffensive word that can be spoken; whereas the best way is to be silent. *Silence sometimes the wisest policy*:—A courtier in the retinue of Alexander the Great paid a visit to the studio of Apelles, the celebrated painter, and was received with the consideration due to his rank. This excited his vanity and talkativeness, which, unhappily, sallied forth upon the fine art in questions exposing his own ignorance. Apelles interrupted him at length in an undertone: "Do you see those boys that are grinding my colours? While you were silent they admired you, dazzled with the splendour of the purple and gold with which your habit glitters; but ever since you began to talk about what you do not understand, they have done nothing but laugh at you." *The silence of Jesus*:—We learn that there may often be prudence, wisdom, dignity, and power. I. It will appear evident that the silence of our Saviour in the midst of His enemies was THE MOST EFFECTUAL AND SUITABLE REPLY which He could have made to their accusations. These accusations were false and frivolous. His life and doctrine had been a sufficient reply. No verbal defence could have been so powerful. II. No VERBAL

DEFENCE WOULD HAVE AVAILED HIM ANYTHING with those who were determined to procure His condemnation. It was not for Him to join in a war of words; His last hours should be tranquil. How solemnly His silence rebukes the vociferation of the priests and populace. III. There are seasons and occasions when SILENCE FOR OURSELVES MAY BE BETTER THAN SPEECH, sharper than argument, more effectual than verbal reply. 1. When our characters are attacked. If we are so happy as to own a life which can defend us, let us be silent that the life may speak. 2. Silence is often the best reproof of profane conversation. 3. It is often the only reproof of mere locquacity. 4. We are apt to talk too much, and lay too much stress on talking. (*P. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *The silence of Jesus*:—I. PREJUDICE, whatever be its source, gets nothing out of the Scriptures. II. Habitual indulgence in SIN will also prevent us from getting any answer to our inquiries from Scripture. The Herods of to-day get no answer from Christ. III. The influence of SCEPTICISM makes the Scriptures silent. Pilate did not believe there was any truth, and if there was it could not be known. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *The silence of Christ*:—I. ON ONE OCCASION CHRIST WAS SILENT IN THE PRESENCE OF AN OVERWHELMING SORROW. The Canaanitish woman, "He answered her not a word." This was a touching case. This was the silence of love. Sometimes Christ is silent at the beginning of the Christian life; sometimes at its close. II. ON ANOTHER OCCASION CHRIST WAS SILENT IN THE PRESENCE OF CAPTIOUS INQUIRERS. The woman taken in adultery. This was a critical moment. This was the silence of reserve. There are many occasions in life when silence is golden. Some men are naturally of a quiet disposition. III. ON ANOTHER OCCASION CHRIST WAS SILENT IN THE PRESENCE OF PERSONAL SUFFERING. When arrested. This was a remarkable scene. 1. The time. 2. Place. 3. Persons. This was the silence of submission. (*J. T. Woodhouse.*) *The silence of Christ*:—I. It was WONDERFUL. He could, by a word, have made the world tremble; judge and witnesses fall dead before Him. Why was He silent? He came not to be His own advocate, but ours. II. His silence was full of suffering, suffering that was vicarious and expiatory. All who are great sufferers endure most at times when one hears no sound from their lips. It is a relief to pain to cry out. III. It was OMINOUS. It foreshadowed ills. His silence said, "What more can I do unto My vineyard?" It is an appalling sign when Christ ceases to plead with us. IV. Christ was INSPIRED, and thus full of INSTRUCTION. 1. Take the doctrine of our Lord's Deity. This is established by a mass of evidence, but there is no stronger proof of it than the silence of Christ. 2. Apply it to the authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures, that against which the destructive criticism of our day is making such fierce attacks, and what an argument we find. 3. Apply His silence to the perpetuity of the Sabbath law, and with what force it speaks. V. Christ's silence was BEAUTIFUL. Difficult to restrain malice before enemies. VI. It is EXEMPLARY. Self-imposed silence often a duty. 1. Because of the perils of speech. 2. Because of the blessings of the discipline of silence. (*J. T. Blackburn.*)

Vers. 69–75. **Now Peter sat without in the palace.**—*The fall of Peter*:—One of the most melancholy instances of depravity ever committed. But a little while before so confident, seated at the table of the Lord, &c. Draw from it important practical uses. I. The danger of self-confidence—"Let him that thinketh," &c. Rely on God for strength. II. The highest favours, the most exalted privileges, do not secure us from the danger of falling into sin. III. When a man *begins* to sin his fall from one act to another is easy, perhaps almost certain. The downward road of crime is easy. IV. True repentance is deep, thorough, bitter. V. A look from Jesus—a look of mingled affection, pity, and reproof—produces bitter sorrow for sin. *Him* we injure by our crimes, &c. VI. When we fall into temptation, let us seek the place of solitude, and pour out our sorrows before God. VII. Real Christians may be suffered to go far astray. To show them their weakness, &c. VIII. Yet though a Christian *may* be suffered to go astray, yet he who should, from this example of Peter, think he might lawfully do it, or who should *resolve* to do it, thinking that he might, like Peter, weep and repent, would give evidence that he knew nothing of the grace of God. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Peter's recovery*:—Let us lay to heart some of the most important lessons of this subject. I. Let no Christian rely on his disposition or feeling for safety from falling. II. Let no Christian rely upon his past conduct as a safeguard. III. Let no Christian presume to trust in conscience to keep him right in the hour of danger. IV. Learn to realize

the bitter memory of good words which came too late. (*F. Skerry.*) *Peter's repentance*:—I. SOME OF THE REASONS OF ST. PETER'S DENIAL. 1. Fear. 2. Self-confidence. II. THE REPENTANCE OF ST. PETER. The compassionatism of the Man of Sorrows. He looked upon Peter. Memory acts in cases of repentance. (*W. D. Herwood.*) *Peter and Judas*:—I. Peter's sorrow arose from a sense of the guilt of his conduct, but Judas' from a perception of the consequences of his conduct. II. Peter's sorrow was full of hope, but Judas' was full of despair. III. Peter's sorrow drove him nearer to God, but Judas' drove him further from God. IV. Peter's sorrow developed his Christian manhood, but Judas' became an element of sharp retribution. Repent or perish. (*J. W. Mays, M.A.*) *The denying disciple*:—I. Who? Peter, the confessor of the Christ of God, &c. II. Whom? III. What? IV. When? V. Where? VI. How? Three times, after being warned, through fear of a woman, &c. (*Dr. Bonar.*) *Skill required to keep up a lie*:—A Spanish proverb declares that "for an honest man half his wits is enough, while the whole are too little for a knave;" the ways, that is, as Archbishop Trench expounds the adage, of truth and uprightness, are so simple and plain, that a little wit is abundantly sufficient for those who walk in them; whereas the ways of falsehood and fraud are so perplexed and tangled, that sooner or later all the wit of the cleverest rogue will not preserve him from being entangled therein—a truth often wonderfully confirmed in the lives of evil men. (*F. Jacox.*) *Telling a lie a big task*:—He who tells a lie is not sensible how great a task he undertakes; for he must be forced to invent twenty more to maintain that one. (*Dean Swift.*) *Occasional relapse compatible with spiritual advance*:—As an illustration of this law in the kingdom of grace, consider the movement of the tide, when it is coming in. It is movement upon the whole. The water is sure to cover that dry beach in two or three hours' time, and to float that stranded sea-weed; but it is not a movement without relapses. Each wave, I suppose, gains a little ground, but each wave falls back as soon as it has plashed upon the shore. Even so in the Christian life, there may be a forward movement on the whole, consistently with many relapses, though this assertion requires to be guarded by the observation that the relapses must be such as proceed from infirmity, and not from malice prepense. Deliberate, habitual sin cannot possibly consist with spiritual growth; but the shaking of a man's steadfastness by a sudden tornado of temptation (which was St. Peter's case) may do so. The great question is whether, after each such fall, the will recovers its spring and elasticity, and makes a fresh start with new and more fervent prayers and resolve. Indeed the making many fresh starts after relapses of infirmity is a hopeful sign of growth. In order to any great attainment in spiritual life, there must be an indomitable resolve to try and try again, and still to begin anew amidst much failure and discouragement. On warm, dewy mornings in the spring, vegetation makes a shoot; and when we rise and throw open the window, we mark that the may is blossoming in the hedgerows. And those periods when a man can say, "I lost myself sadly yesterday in temper or in talk, but I know that my crucified Lord took upon Him those sins and answered for them, and to-day I will earnestly strive against them in the strength of His Spirit invoked into my soul by earnest prayer;" these are warm, dewy mornings of the soul, when the spiritual life within us sprouts and blossoms apace. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *The old nature reasserting itself*:—The old fisherman of Galilee, it would seem, in days gone by, had been a man who used strong language. Since He had been a disciple of Christ he had learned to control his language. Three years' intercourse with Christ had done much for him, but it had not done all. The "old man" was still alive and strong. The "new man" was very weak in Peter just at this time. The "old man" had risen up against the "new man." The old nature in Peter was fighting against the Christ that was within him; and if the Lord had not just at that worst moment turned and looked upon Peter, the issue might have been more disastrous than it was. Then Peter saw what he had done—he had been stabbing his Master to the very heart—driving a nail into His cross, and piercing Him with another spear! (*H. Bonar, D.D.*)

## CHAPTER XXVII.

**Vers. 1–10. Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned.**—*Judas and the priests—end of evil association* :—Men join hand in hand for a wicked object, out of which they hope for common profit. For a while the alliance lasts, and evil seems to have power of coherence as well as good. But conflicting interests arise, and then the nature of the union is apparent. Sin began by severing the bond between man and his Maker, and what other bond can henceforth have any permanence? If left to do its will, it would disintegrate God's universe into atoms of selfishness. Observe here—I. JUDAS, AND THE STATE OF MIND TO WHICH HE IS BROUGHT. He begins in the guilt of selfishness, and ends in its utter solitude. 1. Separation from human companionship. (*a*) From Christ and the apostles. After his act of treachery was committed, he felt as if a bridge were broken behind him. He had no more part nor lot in the circle of which he had been a member. (*b*) From his employers and accomplices. Here again, he is alone. He has served their purpose, and is thrown away like a broken tool. 2. Self-desertion. He can no longer keep company with his own thoughts. Backward, forward, upward, his sin meets him wherever he turns, and his feeling is that which the poet has given to the apostate angel, "Me miserable, which way shall I fly!" 3. Deserted by the tempter and the bribe. He has no pleasure in the thing he coveted. The silver, which was so dear, eats his flesh as it were fire, and he casts it from him like a viper that has stung the hand. So does the devil ever cheat the sinner of the substance for a shadow, and then robs him of that, or changes it into a frightful spectre from which he would escape if he could. 4. Separation between the soul and God. That which is reviving light to others is to him consuming fire, and he seeks flight from God as a relief and escape. Remorse only hardens. The heart of stone may be crushed and remain stone in its every fragment; it can only be melted when the love of God is suffered to shine on it. But when it refuses to admit that love, what can be done? For a time this awful isolation may not seem so terrible as it is. Other things may be put in the place of God—friendships, occupations, and pleasure. But when these pass, as pass they must, and perish like flowers on the edge of a gulf, the awful depth of the chasm will be seen. When fold after fold which now closes the eye of the soul is torn off, and it is compelled to look on eternal realities, how will it stand the gaze? II. THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND THEIR CONDUCT. 1. Their disregard for their instrument when their purpose is gained. How differently would Judas have been treated, had he gone to Christ! If any friendship is to be formed that will stand us in stead in the hour of trial, it need not be sought among bad men consorting for unprincipled ends. The first stress will lay bare the hollow of such friendships, and show what bitter enemies confront one another when wicked men are separated by selfish purposes. 2. Their attempt to shake off the responsibility of the common act. One of the punishments in concerted sin is mutual recrimination, and the weakest are denied not only pity but ordinary justice. 3. Their taunt. A sneer at his being too late in coming to the knowledge of Christ's innocence. This view of the matter should have suggested itself earlier. Infinitely better to meet the ridicule of sinners for not joining them, and to keep a good conscience, than to end by being subjected to their taunts with the bitter knowledge that they are deserved! (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Judas, which had betrayed Him: treachery against a Friend* :—I am going to put before you the behaviour of Judas in a purely human point of view; no narrow view of the question, but that which most concerns us. I would have you look to his dishonourable betrayal of his Friend. Put out of sight, then, the crucifixion of the Son of God; for this does not strictly belong to Judas: this truth Judas never learnt. Put out of sight, also, the whole transcendent scheme of redemption: Judas knew nothing of this. But Jesus was his Friend. Day by day he had lived with Jesus. Day by day he had heard Him speak, "Who spake as never man spake." Day by day he had seen the ineffable grace of the Son of Man. Truth had dwelt with him, and had not won his allegiance. Love had dwelt with him, and had failed to touch his heart. Purity and holiness had gradually unveiled their glories in his presence, and he had looked aside, and been proof to their loveliness. Jesus had been his Friend. The Incarnate Son of God had dwelt upon earth, not merely to promise heaven, but to be that heaven which He promised; not merely to judge and reward hereafter, but to be in each believer—Life. This was what was presented to the eyes and heart of Judas—the glories of a present immortality of

purity and love; glories veiled indeed, but not unseen by watchful loving eyes. Jesus was his Friend. And we must observe that Judas was thoroughly aware of what was true and good, and perfectly conscious, as far as a broad, general choice went, of the surpassing excellence of Him with whom he lived. (*E. Thring, M.A.*) *Dissatisfaction of Judas*:—Might not Judas have sung care away, now that he had both the bag and the price of blood, but he must come and betray himself. Whiles he played alone, he won all; but soon after, his own wickedness corrected him, and his backslidings reproved him (Jer. ii. 19). Sin will surely prove evil and bitter, when the bottom of the bag is once turned upward. A man may have the stone who feels no fit of it. The devil deals with men as the panther does with the beasts: he hides his deformed head, till his sweet scent have drawn them into his danger. Till we have sinned, Satan is a parasite; when we have sinned, he is a tyrant. But it is good to consider that of Bernard: "At the Day of Judgment a pure conscience shall better bestead one than a full purse. (*John Trapp.*) *Revulsion of feeling after sin is committed*:—What an awful difference there is in the look of a sin before you do it and afterwards! Before I do it, the thing to be gained seems so attractive, and the transgression that gains it seems so comparatively insignificant. Yes! and when I have done, the two alter places; the thing that I win by it seems so contemptible! Thirty pieces of silver! pitch them over the Temple enclosure and get rid of them! The thing that I win by it seems so insignificant; and the thing that I did to win them dilates into such awful magnitude! For instance, suppose you or I do anything that we know to be wrong, tempted to it by a momentary indulgence of some mere animal impulse. By the very nature of the case that dies in its satisfaction, and the desire dies along with it. We do not want it any more, when once we have got it. It lasts but a moment and is past; then we are left alone with the thought of the thing that we have done. When we get the prize of our wrong-doing we find out that it is not as all-satisfying as we expected it would be. Most of our earthly aims are like that. The chase is a great deal more than the hare. Or, as George Herbert has it, "Nothing between two dishes." A splendid service of silver plate, and when you take the cover off there is nothing in it. It is that old story over again, of the veiled prophet who wooed and won the hearts of foolish maidens, and when he had them in his power in the inner chamber removed the silver veil that they had looked upon with love, and showed hideous features that struck despair into their hearts. Every wrong thing that you do, big or little, will be like some of those hollow images of the gods that one hears of in barbarous temples: looked at in front, fair; but when you get behind them you find a hollow, full of dust and spiders' webs and unclean things. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Gradual downfall of Judas*:—It is clear that he had no intention whatever of committing so terrible a crime as the consequences showed it to be. Alas! what a fearful, gradual downfall there must have been since the moment when the sweetness of the Word of Life first made him give up all to follow Christ! How day by day little dishonourable choices must have been made, with an uneasy conscience, before he arrived at the deep dishonour of the betrayal! How, whilst his companions were gradually putting away their delusions, and seeing more clearly, and clinging more strongly, he was gradually separating from them too; acting the part of the tempter sometimes—as when we find him taking the lead in complaining of the waste of ointment—but nevertheless having less in common with them every day, as they became nearer to Jesus and he became more distant. (*E. Thring, M.A.*) *Iscariot's confession*:—The man who has wronged another proverbially finds it harder to forgive than he who suffered the wrong; and the heavier the wrong the more reluctant is he to admit that it had no justification. He seeks to justify himself by depreciating the character of the neighbour to whom the wrong has been done; he sets himself to think of him as badly as he can, to speak even worse of him than he thinks, that he may thus in some degree shift the burden of guilt on to other shoulders than his own. Judas, therefore, had every motive to think and speak of Jesus the worst he could. He was in the habit, too, of glossing over his sins, of inventing better motives for them than they would bear. If he could have found any fault in the Man Christ Jesus, and, much more, if he had seen in Him anything worthy of death, would he not have clutched at it now, and proclaimed it, that he might thus justify himself to the world? Nay, if he could have fixed on a single point in the character and life of Jesus on which to hang so much as a suspicion, would he not have dwelt on it, and exaggerated it, and woven from it at least some thin disguise for his own perfidy and shame? We may be very sure that the Son of Man was verily innocent

when it is Judas who pronounces Him innocent. And we may also be sure that there was much that was genuine in the repentance of the man who, by acknowledging the innocence of his Victim, brought the whole weight of his deed upon himself. "The instruments of darkness," who, "to win us to our harm," often throw a false colour of virtue round the sins to which they tempt us, must indeed have lost their power with Judas when, seeing what he had done, he publicly confessed that it was innocent blood he had betrayed, and so left himself without palliation or excuse. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) "*See thou to that:*"—The tools of more respectable sinners are flung away as soon as they are done with. These three, Judas, the priests, and Pilate, suggest to us a threefold way in which conscience is perverted. I. Judas — the AGONY OF CONSCIENCE. I see nothing in Scripture to bear out the hypothesis that his motives were mistaken zeal; he was a man of a low, earthly nature, who became a follower of Christ, thinking that He was to prove a Messiah of the vulgar type. The sudden revulsion of feeling which followed upon the accomplished act; not like the words of a man who had acted on mistaken love. What an awful difference there is between the look of sin before you do it and afterwards; before, attractive and insignificant; after, contemptible. Here is hell, a conscience without hope of pardon. You cannot think too blackly of your sins, but you may think too exclusively of them. II. Pilate—THE SHUFFLINGS OF A HALF-AWAKENED CONSCIENCE. Here, then, we get once more a vivid picture that may remind us of what, alas! we all know in our own experience, how a man's conscience may be clear-sighted enough to discern, and vocal enough to declare, that a certain thing is wrong, but not strong enough to restrain from doing it. Conscience has a voice and an eye; alas! it has no hands. It shares the weakness of all law, it cannot get itself executed. Men will climb over a fence, although the board that says "Trespassers will be prosecuted," is staring them in the face in capital letters at the very place where they jump. Your conscience is a king without an army, a judge without officers. "If it had authority, as it has the power, it would govern the world," but as things are, it is reduced to issuing vain edicts and to saying, "Thou shalt not!" and if you turn round and say "I will, though," then conscience has no more that it can do. And then, here, too, is an illustration of one of the commonest of the ways by which we try to slip our necks out of the collar, and to get rid of the responsibilities that really belong to us. "See ye to it" does not avail to put Pilate's crime on the priests' shoulders. Men take part in evil, and each thinks himself innocent, because he has companions. Half a dozen men carry a burden together; none of them fancies that he is carrying it. It is like the case of turning out a platoon of soldiers to shoot a mutineer—nobody knows whose bullet killed him, and nobody feels himself guilty; but there the man lies dead, and it was somebody that did it. So corporations, churches, societies, and nations do things that individuals would not do, and each man of them wipes his mouth, and says, "I have done no harm." And even when we sin alone we are clever at finding scapegoats. III. And so, lastly, we have here another group still—the priests and people. They represent for us the torpor and misdirection of conscience. "Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children." They were perfectly ready to take the burden upon themselves. They thought that they were "doing God service" when they slew God's Messenger. They had no perception of the beauty and gentleness of Christ's character. They believed Him to be a blasphemer, and they believed it to be a solemn religious duty to slay Him then and there. Were they to blame because they slew a blasphemer? According to Jewish law—no! They were to blame because they had brought themselves into such a moral condition that that was all they thought of and saw in Jesus Christ. With their awful words they stand before us, as perhaps the crowning instances in Scripture history of the possible torpor which may paralyze consciences. The habit of sinning will lull a conscience far more than anything else. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Conscience needs revelation:*—And it is quite possible that a man may have no prick of conscience and yet have done a very wrong thing. So we want, as it seems to me, something outside of ourselves that shall not be affected by our variations. Conscience is like the light on the binnacle of a ship. It tosses up and down along with the vessel. We want a steady light yonder on that headland, on the fixed solid earth, which shall not heave with the heaving wave, nor vary at all. Conscience speaks lowest when it ought to speak loudest. The worst man is least troubled by his conscience. It is like a lamp that goes out in the thickest darkness. Therefore we need, as I believe, a revelation of truth and goodness and beauty outside of ourselves to which we may bring our consciences, that

they may be enlightened and set right. We want a standard like the standard weights and measures that are kept in the Tower of London, to which all the people in the little country villages may send up their yard measures, and their pound weights, and find out if they are just and true. We want a Bible, and we want a Christ to tell us what is duty, as well as to make it possible for us to do it. (*Ibid.*) *The remorse of Judas on the condemnation of Christ* :—You will observe the testimony which Judas bears to Christ and His religion. Had Christ been a deceiver Judas would have been aware of it; how valuable his testimony would have been against our Lord. Yet it is evident Judas had nothing to communicate. It is evident from the narrative of the evangelists that the devil had much to do with the treachery of Judas. In no case has Satan power over the individual except as that individual shall furnish him with advantages. It was the unrestrained covetousness of Judas which opened an access to the tempter. We must not excuse ourselves by accusing the devil; but it is distinctly said that he "put into the heart of Judas Iscariot," &c. How Satan succeeded in working up Judas to this treachery? I. We may give it as in a high degree probable that the devil suggested to Judas that by placing Christ in the hands of His enemies he should ONLY AFFORD HIM AN OPPORTUNITY OF SHOWING HIS POWER BY DEFEATING THEIR MALICE. How easy for the traitor to argue "No harm but good will arise from the betrayal; he would actually be doing Christ a service!" In this way professing Christians comply with the customs of the world, fancying that they will disarm prejudice and recommend piety. Satan dealt with Judas as a man with a conscience that had to be pacified. II. We may also suppose that, in place of suggesting to Judas the probability that Jesus would escape, SATAN PLIED HIM WITH THE CERTAINTY THAT JESUS WAS TO DIE. The prophecies attested this. Your treachery is needful, and so cannot be criminal. Men imagine that if their sins contribute to God's fixed purpose they cannot be guilty. The purpose would have been accomplished without the sin. III. There is something very affecting in the fact THAT JUDAS GAVE HIMSELF UP TO DESPAIR ON SEEING THAT JESUS WAS GIVEN OVER TO DEATH. The moment a sinner is brought to see his own work in Christ's death, then is the moment for showing him his life in Christ's work. Only feel that we crucify Christ, and we are ready for being told that Christ was crucified for us. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Refusing a legacy* :—I. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE LACK OF CONSCIENCE ON THE PART OF THE PROFESSEDLY RELIGIOUS IS SEEN IN THE TREATMENT OF A GUILTY SOUL. They consulted about the money, but not the man. They ought to have rejoiced in the confession of Judas, and that he had time to save Jesus and himself. They discard their tool. We have frequently seen men of good position and of high moral principles associate on equal terms with those below them for civil or political purposes. The priests could not make him shoulder all the guilt. II. THE SCHEMES OF THE CONSCIENCELESS TO GET RID OF AN UNWELCOME LEGACY. Says one, "Pity to waste the money;" says another, "Never mind the past, it will serve a good end now." "Cast it into the Kedron." "Melt it over again, and thus get out the stain." "Buy the potter's parcel of ground." "Good suggestion," was the murmur. This will secure conscience and personal advantage at the same time. How conscientious were these unprincipled men. III. HOW DIRECT SIN AND CONSCIENCELESS SCHEMING ARE OVERRULED BY CHRIST. His betrayal causes a cemetery to be provided for the stranger and outcast; thus it is turned to good effect. (*F. Hastings.*) *The repentance of Judas* :—I. WHEREIN IT RESEMBLED TRUE REPENTANCE. 1. It was similar to true repentance in that conviction of sin from which it sprung. 2. In the open acknowledgment of guilt to which his convictions led him. 3. In the deep sorrow with which his repentance was accompanied. 4. In the self-condemnation with which the repentance of Judas was attended. 5. His extreme anxiety to counteract the evil consequences of his crime, and his entire renunciation of its fruits. II. WHEREIN IT DIFFERED FROM IT. 1. It differed from it in its origin. It had its origin in the natural conscience, not in the grace of God. 2. In the object of his sorrow. Judas repented not of his crime, but of its consequences. 3. In its extent. It was of a partial nature. 4. In its results. This shows—1. That we may bear very close resemblance to the disciples of Christ, and yet remain still in the number of His enemies, and share their condemnation. 2. That a profession of attachment to Christ aggravates the guilt of sin, and renders an indulgence in it peculiarly dangerous. 3. No man can be a gainer by sin. (*C. Bradley.*) *The unconverted warned by the remorse of the lost* :—I. THE SINNER IN THE NEXT WORLD WILL KNOW THE CHARACTER OF SIN AS JUDAS KNEW IT. Now men do not judge of sin aright, their imagination is dazzled by its charms. As soon as the sin is committed its promise

is found to be delusive. II. THIS WILL LEAD HIM TO HATE SIN AND EVERYTHING CONNECTED WITH IT. Now he loves it. He will hate it because of its consequences. He will hate the gains and pleasures that once allured him. As Judas hated the priests, the sinner will hate his evil comrades. Judas disliked the thought of the happiness of his fellow disciples; the sinner will know that he might have had joy. With what feelings will he regard *himself?* (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) I. THE CONDUCT AND CHARACTER OF JUDAS. His object not malice but avarice. II. THE CONDUCT OF THE HIGH PRIESTS AND ELDERS. 1. Judas could not endure his own reflections. Compare the unfeeling spirit with which these men treat this conscience-stricken sinner with the love of the Saviour for the sinner. 2. The delusion which sometimes occupies the minds of the ungodly—"It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury," &c. They who care not for innocent blood, who care not for the remorse of their victim, are very careful about God's *treasury*. Thus Satan deludes men. (1) See what is in man. (2) See what dreadful havoc one lust can make on a promising character. 3. How good a work to pluck men out of the hands of Satan. (*G. J. Noel.*) *The betrayer:*—I. HIS CHARACTER. 1. He occupied a very high position. 2. He enjoyed great privileges. 3. He committed a great crime. Trace this sin—the plot, &c. 4. He deeply repented. His repentance was real, distressing, &c. 5. He made restitution. 6. He despaired of mercy. II. EDUCE FROM THIS SUBJECT SOME LESSONS OF INSTRUCTION. We learn—1. That we may possess great privileges, make a blazing profession, and fill a high office, and still have no real piety. 2. That whatever amount of repentance a man may possess, in the absence of faith in Christ the soul will perish. 3. That there is tremendous power in a guilty conscience to inflict punishment. Cain, David, Herod, Judas, penitents. 4. The danger of indulging in the sin of covetousness. 5. That the atonement alone presents the only remedy that will meet all the deep-felt necessities of a guilty conscience. (*A. Weston.*) *The repentance and suicide of Judas:*—There are many principles underlying this tragedy. I. That the repentance of Judas was occasioned by the new aspect which his sin assumed. II. That, the delusion dispelled, two faculties of the mind urged him to confession and restitution—memory and reason. III. That alliances based on sin are utterly hollow and worthless. IV. That sin brings in its train the most maddening remorse and despair. (*E. T. Carrier.*) *The true confessor and the false:*—I. Examples of FALSE CONFESSION. Its falsehood consisted in this—It was constrained, selfish, superficial, impulsive, temporary. Beware! II. Examples of TRUE CONFESSION. In true confession we take our proper place; we come to see sin somewhat as God sees it. (*Dr. Bonar.*) *The repentance of Judas:*—The history of Judas was written for our admonition, and is full of instruction to all. 1. How totally unprepared he seems to have been for the terrible results of his treachery. The condemnation of Jesus was an event on which he had not calculated. He was horror-struck and confounded with the unforeseen consequences of his villainy. No man, when consenting to temptation, can possibly tell how much evil may be involved in the sinful act which he contemplates, or determine the results in which it shall issue. 2. To what excesses of wickedness a man may be hurried, who is yet far from being hardened in iniquity. It was not any malignant or revengeful feeling which he entertained against our Lord, but the promptings of avarice only, that determined Judas to the perpetration of his immoral crime. The ungovernable grief and horror that seized him manifests that he was not hardened in iniquity. The sense of virtue and shame was far from being extinct. But there was the wretched greed of lucre in his soul. Constantly assailed by this temptation, he gradually yielded. Hence the danger of encouraging a disposition to covetousness, and of listening to temptation of whatever kind. 3. The tranciency of sinful pleasures. It was night when he received the reward of iniquity, but when morning came then came repentance too. How many such extreme cases are there! 4. How dearly the pleasures of sin are purchased. 5. The sort of sympathy a man may expect from his accomplices in iniquity. 6. How the sense of guilt may operate. He was brought to repentance, but it was a very different kind of repentance from that which he purposed coming to. The sense of guilt may take either of two very different forms—"godly sorrow" or the "sorrow of the world." Look at Judas, and beware! Precisely the same purposes as many are entertaining beguiled him onwards, until at length it surprised him with the repentance of despair. Conclusion: Make repentance a voluntary act. Repent *now!* (*J. H. Smith.*) *What is that to us?—Responsibility not to be shaken off:*—Though they might disown responsibility, they could not destroy it. A man may stop his chronometer in the night, but he cannot arrest the sunrise. As long as men are in the pursuit

of an object, they may be able, with the aid of passion, to stifle conscience; but when the object is reached, and the value deliberately counted, conscience can begin to strike the balance. The heat and halo of the chase are over, and the net result can be reckoned, at least on one side; the miserable gain, if not the infinite loss. So it is with the betrayer, and so it must be, by and by, with those who hired him. They may meanwhile outbrave Judas, but they have to meet God. And, let us think of it—the poisoned arrow a man uses may wound himself. The sneer is always on the way to the remorse. They have both the same hard bitterness in them—the same want of God's love. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *The devil tempts to despair*:—The craft of the devil is often displayed in representing a sin to which we are tempted as trifling, but after we have committed it as so great that there is no help for us in God. (*Ayguan.*) *Manner of Iscariot's death*:—Objectors have represented the statement in this text as inconsistent with that in Acts i. 18, where he is said to have "purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." But these passages do not necessarily contradict each other. Matthew does not say that Judas, after having hanged himself, did not fall to the ground; nor, on the contrary, does Luke say that Judas did not hang himself before he fell to the ground; and unless the writers affirm the reality of the events which they respectively mention in such a way as to assert or imply that if the one event be true the other must be false, it is obvious that they do not contradict each other. Of the precise relation of the two events in question to each other we have no information, and can affirm nothing with certainty. Some intermediate circumstance connected the one with the other as parts of the same transaction, but that circumstance has not been recorded. It is conjectured that Judas may have hung himself on the edge of a precipice near the valley of Hinnom, and that the rope breaking by which he was suspended, he fell to the earth and was dashed to pieces. As I stood in this valley, and looked up to the rocky heights which hang over it on the south side of Jerusalem, I felt that the proposed explanation was a perfectly natural one; I was more than ever satisfied with it. I measured the precipitous, almost perpendicular walls, in different places, and found the height to be variously forty, thirty-six, thirty-three, thirty, and twenty-five feet. At the bottom of these precipices are rocky ledges, on which a person would fall from above, and in that case not only would life be destroyed, but the body almost inevitably bruised and mangled. (*H. B. Hackett, D.D.*) *Iscariot's motive for suicide*:—One of the most learned and compassionate fathers of the early Church, Origen, reports and argues for what seems to have been a not uncommon belief in those early days, viz., that Judas was moved to hang himself by some confused thought that, beyond the veil, in the life to come, he might meet his Master once more, and cast himself at His feet, confessing his guilt, and imploring pardon for his sin. That, however, is only a tradition, though surely many of us would be glad to know that it was something more. But he must be dull and hard indeed who does not feel that in that loathing of himself and of his guilt, which made life intolerable to him, there is some proof that Iscariot was not altogether sold under sin. (*S. Cox, D.D.*) *The mixture of good and bad in Judas*:—We are too hard in our thoughts of Judas if we hold him to have been an utterly graceless, abandoned, and irredeemable reprobate; and above all, we are too hard and narrow in our thoughts of Christ if we suppose even the sin of Judas to have put him for ever beyond the pale of mercy. Judas was once a babe, such as we all have been, and had a mother who loved him, and built bright hopes upon him. Probably, too, he had a father who led him to school and to synagogue, and trained him carefully in the Hebrew wisdom and piety. He shot up into a steady and thrifty young man—not addicting himself to vicious and spendthrift courses, but rather displaying a mind unusually open to religious impressions. We can trace in him some touch of the character of his ancestor, Jacob; the same by no means infrequent combination of religious susceptibilities and aspirations with a determination to do well in the world, the same preference of crafty and subtle expedients for securing his ends over the frank and downright methods of which Esau is one type, and Peter another. Two souls, two natures, were at strife in the man, as they were also in Jacob; the one subtle, grasping, money-loving, the other keen to discern the value of things unseen and eternal, and to pursue them. And for a time, as we all know, the better nature conquered. When he heard the call of Christ, all that was noble, and unselfish, and aspiring in the man rose up to welcome Him and to respond to His call. He was not a thief and a traitor when he became an apostle; nor when he went out

into the cities and villages of Galilee, without staff or scrip, preaching the kingdom of heaven; nor when he returned to his Master rejoicing that even devils were subject unto him. Goodness, honour, devotion, self-sacrifice, were not unknown to him then. Let us remember what there was of good in him once, what there was of good in him even to the end: for no man who is capable of repentance is wholly and irredeemably bad; and let us not be overhard in our thoughts of him, nor unjust even to his tainted memory. The medieval Church had a legend which shows that even in those dark stern days men had glimpses of a light which many among us have not caught even yet. The legend was that, for the sake of one good and kindly deed performed in the days of his innocency, Judas was let out of hell once in every thousand years, and allowed to cool and refresh himself amid the eternal snows of some high mountain for a whole day. But we know that while he was still true to Christ he must have wrought many good and kindly deeds; and if he still suffers the punishment of the evil deeds he did, are we to believe he does not also, in some mysterious way, receive the due reward of his good deeds. *Ibid.*) *Passion is stronger than the fear of death:*—The dread of death is universal and instinctive; and yet how many rush into its arms! Suicide is a most impressive fact in this connection. The disappointed lover, the discouraged adventurer, the suspected clerk, the child wounded in its self-love or fearful of punishment, faces the great enemy and invites his blow. Every now and then the community is shocked by suicides so unprovoked and so frequent as almost to persuade us that the natural fear of death is passing away. The inconsistency is easily explained. Bacon says there is no passion that will not overmaster the terror of death. For passion is thoughtless; occupied wholly with an immediate suffering it makes no estimate of any other kind of pain; absorbed in an instantaneous sorrow it takes no other sorrow into account. The mind entertains but one passion at a time, whether it be joy or fear. But men are not always or generally under the influence of passion. Ordinary life is calm, calculating, considerate, and it is to ordinary life that death is terrible. It is the thought of death that is terrible, not death. Death is gentle, peaceful, painless; instead of bringing suffering it brings an end of suffering. It is misery's cure. Where death is, agony is not. The processes of death are all friendly. The near aspect of death is gracious. There is a picture somewhere of a frightful face, livid and ghastly, which the beholder gazes on with horror, and would turn away from, but for a hideous fascination that not only rivets his attention, but draws him closer to it. On approaching the picture the hideousness disappears, and the face is that of an angel. It is a picture of death, and the artist's object was to impress the idea that the terror of death is an apprehension. Death is an ordinance of nature, directed by beneficent laws to beneficent ends. (*O. B. Frothingham.*) *The field of blood.*—*Site of Aceldama:*—The "field of blood" is now shown on the steep south face of the valley or ravine of Hinnom, near its east end, on a narrow plateau, more than half way up the hill side. Its modern name is Hak-ed-damne. It is separated by no inclosure; a few venerable olive-trees occupy part of it, and the rest is covered by a ruined square edifice—half built, half excavated—which, perhaps originally a church, was in Maundrell's time in use as a charnel-house. It was believed in the middle ages that the soil of this place had the power of very rapidly consuming bodies buried in it, and in consequence either of this or of the sanctity of the spot, great quantities of the earth were taken away; amongst others by the Pisan Crusaders, in 1218, for their Campo Santo at Pisa, and by the Empress Helena, for that at Rome. Besides the charnel-house, there are several large hollows in the ground, which may have been caused by such excavations. The formation of the hill is cretaceous, and it is well known that chalk is always favourable to the rapid decay of animal matter. (*Dr. Smith.*) *Origin of name:*—The article τοῦ expresses a particular field known by that name; so called from having been used by a potter, no doubt to dig clay for his wares. Thus several villages in England have the prefix Potter, probably from part of the ground having been formerly occupied for potteries—*e.g.*, Pottersbury, Northamptonshire. So the field at Athens, appropriated as a cemetery for those who fell in the service of their country, was called Ceramicus, from having been formerly used for brickmaking. This, of course, would make a field unfit for tillage, though good enough for a burying-ground, hence the smallness of the price. (*Bloomfield.*) *The repentance of Judas:*—If you ask how he repented, I think he repented as most usurers repent, upon their death-beds. There is a shame of sin, and guilt of conscience, and fear of judgment, even in the reprobate, which is a foretaste of hell, which the wicked feel; even as

the peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost is a foretaste of heaven, which the godly feel before they come thither. So Judas was displeased with the ugliness of his treachery, and had a misshapen sorrow, like a bear's whelp, but without any conversion to God, or hope of mercy, or prayer for pardon, or purpose to amend. Only he felt a guilt, a shame and anguish in his heart, which was rather a punishment of sin than a repentance for his sin, and a preparative for hell which he was going unto. For hardness of heart and despairing of mercy are sins, and punishment for sins too; but true repentance is such a sorrow for one sin as breedeth a dislike of all sins, and moveth to pray, and resolveth to amend; which falleth upon none but the elect. (*Henry Smith.*) *A gnawing conscience:*—There is a warning conscience and a gnawing conscience. The warning conscience cometh before sin; the gnawing conscience followeth after sin. The warning conscience is often lulled asleep; but the gnawing conscience wakeneth her again. If there be any hell in this world, they which feel the worm of conscience gnawing upon their hearts may truly say that they have felt the torments of hell. Who can express that man's horror but himself? Nay, what horrors are there which he cannot express himself? Sorrows are met in his soul at a feast; and fear, thought, and anguish divide his soul between them. All the furies of hell leap upon his heart like a stage. Thought calleth to fear, fear whistleth to horror, horror beckoneth to despair and saith, "Come, help me to torment this sinner." (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 11–14. **And Jesus stood before the governor.**—*Pontius Pilate:*—The trial of Christ is a part of His humiliation; He who shall judge the nations stands to be judged of another. He who is "life" expects the sentence of death. The Eternal Word keeps silence. I. In speaking of the CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF PILATE, we desire to bring him before you, as far as possible, as a man. He has won a terrible pre-eminence among the sons of Adam. Every child is taught to say that its Lord was crucified "under Pontius Pilate." It is a mistake to suppose that these instruments of our Lord's sufferings were men of astounding depravity. Pilate was not of this class. He was a reluctant agent in these events. He was induced simply by expediency. Indifference to religion can issue in deeds as unpardonable as utter violation of its spirit. Again and again, on a narrower stage, has been acted over that scene of criminal irresolution, resisted impulses, and weak concession to the fear of man. I. Consider THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD TOWARDS PILATE. We are sometimes tempted to think that they were in very hard case, who, like Pilate, were involved in events so peculiar as were all things connected with Christ's life on earth, that it must have been a great trial of faith to recognize a present God in Jesus as He stood before Pilate. The answer is twofold: First, Pilate's guilt did not lie in this, that he condemned the Son of God, but that without evidence, against his own convictions, he condemned an innocent man,—that to gratify the mob, he prostituted his high office. The fact that the prisoner was God in the flesh, only enters into the question of his guilt, so far as he might, if he would, have known Him. But, secondly, it is evident that Pilate was in a remarkable degree held back from his sin. It has been observed, that the Saviour appears to have exercised the most marked grace towards all who were concerned in His final agony. In Pilate's instance, every possible way consistent with his free-will seems to have been tried, in order to save him from consummating his guilt. Such was the long silence of Christ at the beginning. It is clear from the Gospels, that there was in the whole of our Lord's demeanour an almost supernatural dignity. No words dropped from His lips; He declined, *i.e.*, to plead before an authority inferior to His own, insomuch, it is said, that "Pilate marvelled." And when, after Pilate had uttered the fatal words, "Take ye Him and crucify Him," yet another appeal was made to his conscience. The Jews triumphantly responded, "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." This open and undisguised claim to superhuman rank, did for a moment startle the wavering judge: "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid." Again, it may be, there recurred to his mind the feelings of involuntary awe inspired from the beginning by his mysterious prisoner; thoughts glanced across him, that there might be more than he surmised in the events in which he bore a part; "that Just Man," against whom no charge could be substantiated, and of whose miraculous power tidings so strange had reached his ears, might be (as old records told there had been in former times), at least a messenger of Deity. Hence his earnest question to our Lord, "Whence art Thou?" Throughout that dread scene of judgment there seems not to have been a moment when

Pilate might not have been saved for ever. Again and again he was all but delivered from blood-guiltiness. (*J. R. Woodford, M.A.*) *The sufferings of Christ under Pontius Pilate:*—I. THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE UNDER WHOSE ADMINISTRATION HE SUFFERED. Pilate's name intimately interwoven with the history of Christ's sufferings; mentioned more than twenty times. The elements which composed his character were contradictory. He had good qualities, but associated with bad principles. 1. He was influenced by the fear of man. 2. He had a sordid regard to place and power. 3. He discovers a servile love of human applause. 4. The sequel of his history is affecting and instructive; the thing he dreaded came, he lost the favour of the emperor. II. THE PECULIAR NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THOSE SUFFERINGS WHICH HE ENDURED. Look at the sufferings of Christ. 1. In their visible form. 2. Their moral design. III. THE LESSONS THEY TEACH. 1. The infinite evil of sin. 2. The unbounded love of Jesus. 3. The full compatibility between the irreversible decrees of God and the freedom of man's agency, and the culpability of man's transgression. 4. The true ground of hope for the self-accusing sinner. 5. What a provision of comfort for the suffering Christian. 6. The fear of man bringeth a snare. (*G. Clayton.*) *The silence of Jesus:*—He had never been slow of speech when He could bless the sons of men, but He would not say a single word for Himself. "Never man spake like this Man," and never man was silent like Him. 1. Was this singular silence the index of His perfect self-sacrifice? Did it show that He would not utter a word to stay the slaughter of His sacred person, which He had dedicated as an offering for us? 2. Was this silence a type of the defencelessness of sin? Nothing can be said in palliation or excuse of human guilt; and therefore He who bore its whole weight stood speechless before His judge. 3. Is not patient silence the best reply to a gainsaying world? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The anvil breaks a host of hammers by quietly bearing the blows. 4. Did not the silent Lamb of God furnish us with a grand example of wisdom? Where every word was occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to afford no fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will, ere long, overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and finds silence to be its wisdom. 5. Our Lord, by His silence, furnished a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy (Isa. liii. 7). By His quiet He conclusively proved Himself to be the true Lamb of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Vers. 15–18. **Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ.**—*The release of Barabbas:*—I. It illustrates THE EVASION OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. We always admire courage in the abstract. Look at the position of Pilate! "I must sentence, gentlemen, you choose the culprit." We may be doing this same thing. How often we allow others to determine our duty. "If my wife would be religious I would." "Will you go if I will?" Alone you must die and give an account to God. II. THE CONTROLLING POWER OF PREJUDICE OVER MORAL APPROBATION. They were to forget all the munificence of Jesus because He outraged their prejudices. III. The choice of Barabbas in the end EXALTS THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLES WHICH UNDERLIE THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD. The eternal plan of God is carried out in the death of Jesus. IV. THE ATTITUDE OF BARABBAS. Suppose he had refused release on the ground that it was not possible for him to live by the death of another. Some reject the substitution of Christ for themselves. (*R. Jeffery, D.D.*) *Releasing prisoners:*—No trace of this custom is found in the Talmud. But the release of prisoners was usual at certain festivals at Rome, and at Athens during the Panathenaic festival prisoners enjoyed temporary liberty. It is not, therefore, improbable that Herod the Great, who certainly familiarized the Jews with other usages of Greece and Rome, introduced this custom, and that the Roman governor, finding the custom established and gratifying to the Jews, in accordance with Roman practice, retained the observance of it. (*A. Carr, M.A.*)

Ver. 19. **His wife sent unto him saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man.**—*Pilate's wife:*—I. The testimony of women to Christ. II. The testimony of dreams to Christ. III. The testimony of suffering to Christ—"Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things," &c. The wife failed; but it was well to have tried. (*G. T. Coster.*) *The dream of Pilate's wife:*—I. Let us observe her dream as a sign that various obstacles are placed in the way of completing sin. II. Let us observe the dream as a sign that continu-

ance in sin depends upon injustice done to Jesus Christ. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *It is easier to do right than wrong*:—Is there one of you who would seriously maintain that it is easier to drive a horse and cart over a steep embankment than it is to drive along the road on the top of the embankment? Oh yes, you say, the former is easier! It is but a plunge, and you have done it. But then, you must consider how many obstacles you have to overcome before you can take the plunge, and these obstacles make it a harder thing to go over than to go along the road. The beaten road says: "I am the way; you must not leave me." You will have to overcome the obstacle which that clear statement raises. "There is certain danger to limb and life"—you will have to overcome the obstacle which respect for your own safety raises. "The horse, if it has been properly driven, will back off from sharp descent." You will have to overcome the obstacle which the animal raises. Putting together the forces which are exerted by such matters, you will acknowledge that it is not fair to say that it is easier to drive over a precipice than it is to drive along the road which skirts its summit. Just so is it with us in life. Right and wrong solicit us. It may appear more easy to submit to the representations of evil impulses than to those of good; but, however it may appear, remember that before you can yield to the former you must have cast off the restraint of a law of God; you must have stifled your desires to be truly happy; you must have broken away from the influences which proceed from those of your friends who stand in awe of the Christ of God. (*Ibid.*) *The warning word to be welcomed*:—Put not this word from you. If—to use one of Dr. Payson's illustrations—you should see at this moment a very fine, an almost invisible, thread coming down from heaven and attaching itself to you, and knew it came from God, what would you do? Would you dare to thrust it away? Now, this word of appeal is like such a thread. It is weak and frail, and you can easily brush it away. But will you? No! Welcome it, and it will enlarge and strengthen itself until it becomes a golden thread to bind you to that just Man—the Saviour—and to bind you for ever. (*G. T. Coster.*) *Pilate's wife*:—The wickedness of Pilate forced him to assume all the appearance of weakness. How striking the testimony given by enemies to our Lord; He is to die as a malefactor with the judge's verdict in His favour. I. THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF CONSCIENCE WAS NOT DORMANT IN PILATE, BUT ON THE CONTRARY ACTED WITH FAITHFULNESS AND VIGOUR. Whatever the sensuality and tyranny of this Roman he had not succeeded in silencing conscience. The enormity of his sin is also enhanced by the warning he received through his wife. II. WE CONSIDER GOD AS ACTING UPON PILATE TO DETER HIM FROM COMMITTING A GREAT CRIME, AND THEREFORE TO LEAVE HIM WITHOUT EXCUSE IN THE COMMISSION. God has nothing to do with causing the wicked actions he overrules. No man can take refuge in God's foreknowledge of his sins, as having made them unavoidable. It left Pilate as free as if there had been no foreknowledge. III. How the method used by God was EMINENTLY FITTED TO PREVAIL WITH PILATE, and how it cut off all excuse when he gave up Jesus to the multitude. It may seem singular that the vision was to Pilate's wife, and not to Pilate himself. Would not the admonition have been more likely to prevail if directly conveyed to him? But to please his wife may have been a motive in addition to obedience to the vision. God took this course because the Roman governor was probably most accessible through his affections. It is far from an unfrequent thing that God causes His warnings to be conveyed through the channel of the affections. One member of the family is saved in order to impress another. If this does not succeed, there remains no more likely method. Let not men think it would be better if they were acted upon directly by the gospel. IV. How greatly it increased the criminality of Pilate THAT THE MESSAGE OF HIS WIFE REACHED HIM AT THE VERY MOMENT OF HIS TAKING HIS PLACE ON THE JUDGMENT SEAT. It was precisely when his convictions were urging him to release Christ, that there came to him a testimony to His innocence. When men are tempted God sends seasonable aids and disposes events for their strength and victory. The whole judicature of conscience is constructed on the principle of counsel being given at the precise moment when temptation is urgent. It remonstrates at the moment the bait allures. What a scene will it be when this Roman stands forth to answer for himself at the tribunal of Christ. How changed their condition. Christ will then be in glory and power. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

Ver. 20. **And destroy Jesus.**—*The cruel purpose*:—Moral beauty generally admired, &c. None more lovely than "Jesus," and yet He was envied, hated, persecuted, and crucified. I. THE EFFORTS TO DESTROY JESUS (Matt. ii. 1–17; Luke iv. 28). In the

final conspiracy hired Judas, &c. (ch. xxviii). Though put to death, He rose, &c. Since then, Jews, &c., have laboured to destroy Him. II. WHY HAVE THEY SOUGHT TO DESTROY JESUS? 1. Not on account of the viciousness of His life. 2. Nor His opposition to law and order. 3. Nor the evil tendency of His doctrines. 4. Nor the injury He did by His influence (Matt. xxvii. 4; Luke xxiii. 14; Matt. xxvii. 19). It was—1. Enmity to the truth. 2. Envy of His goodness. 3. Hatred of His person. 4. Love of wickedness. III. HOW THEY HAVE FAILED TO DESTROY JESUS. Herod, Jews, Pilate, though they killed Him. He rose, &c. He lived on in His body, the Church. Trace the history of those destructive attempts down to Strauss and Renan, &c. Jesus is Divine, and cannot be destroyed. "He shall live," &c. (Psa. lxxii. 15–18). His titles. The enemies of Jesus shall be destroyed. The nations that will not serve Him shall perish. So individuals. Learn:—1. The baseness of the human heart to try to destroy Jesus. 2. Our obvious duty and interest to accept and honour Christ. 3. He should have our hearts and lives. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *Satanic policy defeated:*—I. THE DESTRUCTIBLE JESUS. To what extent could the purpose of the foes of Jesus succeed? They might succeed in disparaging His character and station before men. Maliciously assaulting the person of Jesus—to this Jesus had long been subjected. Restraining His personal freedom. Silencing His tongue. The torture they applied to His feelings. His crucifixion. Suggestions: In that it was possible for Jesus to die, lies the very basis of our redemption. In the death of Jesus, promises of the deepest import to our race were accomplished. In the death of Jesus lay His most sublime victory for men. II. THE INDESTRUCTIBLE JESUS. The purpose of Jesus's assailants was an entire and egregious failure. The very body of Jesus recovers its vitality. The Deity that was within the destructible temple they could not touch. They could not frustrate or retard His designs. The violent death of Jesus did not secure the permanence of the old Jewish establishment. Nor did it lead to the destruction of the New Kingdom, or to the dethronement of Jesus. Conclusion: Show who are in sympathy with this unholy purpose, and who are in living sympathy with the Indestructible Jesus. (*Anon.*)

Vers. 21–23. **They said, Barabbas.**—*The choice—Barabbas or Jesus:*—The same choice continues still. All, throughout the whole world, is one choice between God and Satan, Christ and Barabbas. We know not, indeed, what we do; and so, again and again, our blessed Lord intercedes for those who deliver Him to His foes. But whenever a choice is given, if we have but any fear that we are choosing amiss, if we do what we suspect to be wrong or worse, if we say wilfully what we think better unsaid, what do we, in fact, but choose Barabbas? . . . We must in all things make this choice. There is, in everything, a better and a worse, a good and an evil to us. If we choose good, we choose God, Who alone is good, and is in all things good; if we choose evil, we do, in fact, choose the evil one. There are degrees of choice; as there were degrees and steps in the rejection of our Lord. Yet each led on to the next. Each hardens for the next. "No one ever became at once wholly vile," is even a heathen proverb. But there is no safety against making the very worst choice, except in the fixed, conscious purpose, in all things to make the best. The last acts are mostly not in a person's own power. They who compass themselves about with sparks, cannot themselves quench the burning. They who make the first bad choice are often hurried on, whether they will or no. The one choice is manifoldly repeated. The roads part asunder slightly; yet, unmarked, the distance between them is ever widening, until they end in heaven or in hell. Each act of choice is a step toward either. Either we are striking more into the narrow way, or we are parting from it; we are, by God's grace, unbinding the cords by which we are held, or we are binding them tighter. (*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*) *Christ before Pilate—Munkassy's picture:*—The scene is in the pavement or open court before the governor's palace, which was called in the Hebrew tongue Gabbatha, and in which, after all his efforts to wriggle out of the responsibility of dealing with the case, Pilate ultimately gave up Jesus to be crucified. At one end of the court, on a raised bench, and dressed in a white toga, Pilate sits. On either side of him are Jews, each of whom has a marked and special individuality. The two on his left are gazing with intense eagerness at Christ. They are evidently puzzled, and know not what to make of the mysterious prisoner. On his right, standing on one of the seats, and with his back against the wall, is a Scribe, whose countenance is expressive of uttermost contempt; and just in front of this haughty fellow are some Pharisees, one of whom is on his feet, and passionately urging that Jesus should be put to death,

presumably on the ground that, if Pilate should let Him go, he would make it evident that he was not Cæsar's friend. Before them again is a usurer, fat and self-satisfied, clearly taking great comfort to himself in the assurance that, however the matter may be settled, his well-filled money-bags will be undisturbed. Beyond him stands the Christ, in a robe of seamless white, and with His wrists firmly bound; while behind, kept in place by a Roman soldier, standing with his back to the spectator, and making a barricade with his spear, which he holds horizontally, is a motley group of on-lookers, not unlike that which we may see any day in one of our criminal courts. Of these, one more furious than the rest is wildly gesticulating, and crying, as we may judge from his whole attitude, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" and another, a little to the Saviour's left, but in the second row behind Him, is leaning forward with mockery in his leering look, and making almost as if he would spit upon the Saintly One. There is but one really compassionate face in the crowd, and that is the face of a woman who, with an infant in her arms, most fitly represents those gentle daughters of Jerusalem who followed Jesus to Calvary with tears. Then, over the heads of the on-lookers, and out of the upper part of the doorway into the court, we get a glimpse of the quiet light of the morning as it sleeps upon the walls and turrets of the adjacent buildings. All these figures are so distinctly seen that you feel you could recognize them again if you met them anywhere; and a strange sense of reality comes upon you as you look at them, so that you forget that they are only painted, and imagine that you are gazing on living and breathing men. But, as you sit awhile and look on, you gradually lose all consciousness of the presence of the mere on-lookers, and find your interest concentrated on these two white-robed ones, as if they were the only figures before you. The pose of the Christ is admirable. It is repose blended with dignity; self-possession rising into majesty. There is no agitation or confusion; no fear or misgiving; but, instead, the calm nobleness of Him Who has just been saying, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." The face alone disappoints. The eyes, which look so steadily at Pilate as if they were looking him through, seem to me to be cold, keen, and condemnatory, rather than compassionate and sad. They have not in them that deep well of tenderness out of which came the tears which He shed over Jerusalem, and which we expect to see in them when He is looking at the hopeless struggle of a soul which will not accept His aid. . . . The Pilate is well-nigh faultless. Here is a great, strong man, the representative of the mightiest empire the world has ever seen, with a head indicating intellectual force, and a face, especially in its lower part, suggestive of sensual indulgence. There is ordinarily no want of firmness in him, as we may see from the general set of his features; but now there is in his countenance a marvellous mixture of humiliation and irresolution. He cannot lift his eyes to meet the gaze of Christ; and while one of his hands is nervously clutching at his robe, he is looking sadly into the other, whose fingers, even as we look at them, almost seem to twitch with perplexed irresolution. He is clearly pondering for himself the question which, a few moments before, he had addressed to the multitude, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" He is annoyed that the case has been brought to him at all, and as he feels himself drifting on, against his own better judgment, toward yielding to the clamour of the multitude, he falls mightily in his own conceit, and begins to despise himself. He would at that moment give, oh, how much! to be rid of the responsibility of dealing with the Christ, but he cannot evade it; and so he sits there, drifting on to what he knows is a wrong decision, the very incarnation of the feeling which his own national poet described when he said, "I see and approve the better course; I follow the worse." Thus, as we look at these two, we begin to discover that it was not so much Christ that was before Pilate as Pilate that was before Christ. His was the testing experience. His was the trial; his, too, alas! was the degradation; and at that coming day, when the places shall be reversed, when Christ shall be on the judgment seat, and Pilate at the bar, there will still be that deep self-condemnation which the painter here has fixed upon his countenance. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

Ver. 22. **What shall I do then with Jesus?**—*The question that must be answered:*—Perhaps we all feel more or less a certain satisfaction that we have not, as Pilate had, to make that terrible decision which, with the limited knowledge of that day, we might have made as he did. Nevertheless, this question which Pilate asked, and which he answered so fatally, is a question which we have, every one of us, still to answer. It is far more awful for us

than it was for Pilate. We have to answer it with a full knowledge of what Jesus was and is. We have to answer it, aided by the light of centuries streaming upon that Divine face. So long as Christ is popular, so long as being with Him means going on safely with a rejoicing, happy multitude, there is no doubt or difficulty as to what we will do with Christ. We will gladly follow Him. But oh! brothers, there come awful moments in every experience—the Passion Week of each life—when the Christ stands pleading before your soul. A wild, frenzied mob of passions, prejudices, indulgences, sins, raise their murderous clamour, and demand that we shall give Him up; that we shall take into our favour some other popular idol, and each of us has then to answer the question, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" (*T. T. Shore, M.A.*) *Our treatment of Jesus*:—This is no dried or withered question, but one that throbs with warm and quick pulses in the heart of each one. We must do something with Jesus. He is here. What shall it be? I. You can let Him stand without a word of recognition. But surely your sense of common courtesy will not allow that. II. You can thrust Him back from your heart, and tell Him to stand aside. But surely you will not. Even Pilate treated Him better than that. III. You can look on Him merely as an optician to help blind eyes, or an aurist to retune deaf ears, a friend, a good friend, a helpful companion, a cheerful passenger on shipboard. Yet what good will all that do you? Surely He is something more. IV. You can take Him into your heart. That is the best thing you can do with Him, and the only safe thing. Trust Him. Love Him. What more could He do, than He has done, for you? (*T. de Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The changed question*:—The question will, after a while, change, and it will not be any longer, "What shall we do with Jesus?" but "What will Jesus do with us?" Ring all the bells of eternity at the burning of a world! On that day, what do you think Christ will do with us? Why, He will say, "There is that man whom I called, that woman whose soul I importuned; but they would not any of My ways. I gave them innumerable opportunities of salvation. They rejected them all. Depart. I never knew you!" Blessed be God, that day has not come. Halt, ye destinies of eternity, and give one more chance! (*Ibid.*) *What shall we do with Jesus?* I. SOME KIND OF ANSWER MUST BE GIVEN TO THIS QUESTION. 1. It cannot be evaded. You must answer it. 2. Jesus Christ is offered to you as a means of salvation, &c., and you are free to accept or reject; but one of these two things you must do. 3. We know how Pilate answered this question. 4. This is the great question of the age. 5. It is a personal question. II. CONSIDER SOME OF THE ANSWERS THAT have been given to this question. 1. Some answer it by placing themselves in direct opposition to Christ, they give it a bold negative, they deny His Divinity, His gospel, and His claims. 2. Others give an answer that seems more respectful: they say, "Probably His claims are well founded; but association with Him would involve separation from friends and pursuits we love—we will do without Him," &c. 3. Others give a somewhat imposing reply, but think they need not be too intimate with Him, &c. 4. Others admit His claims but delay their decision. 5. Others accept Him as their Guide and Saviour, &c. III. THE ANSWER GOD EXPECTS US TO GIVE. Welcome Him to our hearts. Love Him supremely. Obey Him fully. Serve Him faithfully and constantly. (*S. Smith.*) *What will you do with Jesus?*—I remember a young man in New York city, whose father I knew. He was a great prodigal, and had broken his mother's heart, and brought her down to the grave in sorrow. Every night he was out carousing with boon companions. The father's heart was just broken too, and one night a few weeks after the mother's death the young man was just starting out; the old man said, "My son, I want one favour of you. I would like you to stay at home and spend one night with me." The young man said he did not want to stay, it was so gloomy. "But," said the father, "will you not stay and gratify your aged father? You know your conduct killed your poor mother. My boy, won't you say?" The old man pleaded with him, and just begged him to stay, but the boy said, "No, I am not going to stay at home." The old father put forth one more effort to save his prodigal boy, and he threw himself down before him in the hall. What did that boy do? He just leaped over the body, and went out to join his comrades. There is not one of you but would say, "That was an ungrateful wretch, not fit to live." Ah, sinner, what would you do with Christ in such a case? Why, many of you, I believe, if He were to throw Himself down before you and plead with you, you would step right over Him. And now, sinner, what will you do with Christ? Will you send back the insulting message that you do not want Christ to rule over you. Oh, may God forbid

it, and this very night may there be hundreds who shall receive Him. (*D. L. Moody*).

Ver. 24. **When Pilate saw that he could pervail nothing.**—*Pilate a type of self-justifying rejectors of the gospel*:—Observe the resemblance in his evasive pleas. 1. Assuming that the matter presented had no claims on him—"Take *ye* Him." 2. Substituting a favourable opinion of Christ for a decision—"I find in Him no fault at all." "I have the highest regard for the Christian religion," say some. 3. Assuming that it was out of his power to decide—"And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction he sent Him to Herod" (Luke xxiii. 7). A law is in the way, perhaps the Divine decree: the law of inherited corruption. 4. Proposing a compromise—"I will therefore *chastise* Him and release Him." With Christ in some things quiets conscience. 5. Surrendering the rights of judgment—"What shall I do with Jesus?" I submit the case to your decision. 6. Turning censor—"Why, what evil hath He done?" (*S. V. McCorkle.*) *Pilate and his modern imitators*:—I. Whoever does wickedness through others is not less wicked than they, but more. Pilate was no less guilty because the Jews hated and condemned Christ first. As soon as he said to them, "Take Him; see ye to it," he did all that was necessary to make him a partaker in their villainy. II. Evil which many men commit is not distributively borne. If a thousand men commit a murder, each man is not guilty of one thousandth part of that murder; but of the whole. III. Evil actions are not less guilty because they are done for reasons of state. Pilate sacrificed Christ from political considerations. IV. Wickedness which a man can prevent, and which he does not prevent, inculpates him. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Better to be a Puritan than a Pilate*:—There is another point. This makes me a Puritan. I had rather be a Puritan than a Pilate. What is a Pilate? A Pilate is one of those courtly gentlemen, polished, tasteful expert, who is not disturbed nor warped by convictions in over-measure; who looks upon all moral qualities as a gambler looks upon cards, which he shuffles, and plays according to the exigency of his game—and one just as easy as another. A Pilate is a man who believes in letting things have their own way. "Do not sacrifice yourself. Do not get in the way of a movement. Do the best thing. Live in peace with your time. Be not like the fool, who stands in his own light. Maintain good appearances—that is profitable. See to it that you do not go too far, one way or another. Study the interest of Number One all through. And, whatever comes, see that you come out uppermost. Do not be gross, brutal, fanatical—that is not profitable. Preserve your balance. See that you keep your eye on the chances. If they go this way, you go with them far enough to reap them. If they go the other way, go with them. Do not be too scrupulous. Be just enough so to gain your ends. Use men, use events, use everything that is profitable. Do not use your conscience too much!" This is the language of the Pilates of our day. Those men who ride astride of the times, and of administrations, and of policies; those men who are polished, cold, calculating, speculating—these are the Pirates—the *Pilates*, I mean! It was a blunder of the lip, but, after all, it hit right! (*Ibid.*) *Lessons from the incidents*:—1. Men have not always that strict regard to justice and honour, that might be reasonably expected from their stations and characters. II. Truth and innocence are frequently overpowered by numbers, and oppressed by noise and tumult. III. A party spirit does oftentimes hurry men to the most fatal extremities. (*William West.*)

Ver. 25. **His blood be on us.**—*God taking self-cursers at their word*:—God said Amen to this woeful curse, which cleaves close to them and their posterity, as a girdle to their loins, soaking as oil into their bones to this very day. Thirty-eight years after this fearful imprecation, in the same place, and close by the same tribunal where they thus cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children," historians tell us that Herod, wanting money, demanded of the Jews so much out of their treasury as would pay for the making of a water-course. But the Jews, supposing it a needless work, not only denied him, but gave him outragcous and spiteful speeches, tumultuously flocked about him, and with great clamours pressed upon him, even as he was in his seat. Whereupon, to prevent mischief, he sent to his soldiers to apparel themselves like citizens, and under their gowns to bring with them a dagger or poniard, and mingle themselves amongst the multitude; which they did, observing who they were that made the greatest uproar. And when Herod gave the sign, they fell upon them, and slew a great multitude. Many also, for fear of loss or danger, killed themselves; besides others, which seeing this

massacre, suspecting treason among themselves, fell one upon another. What a dispersed and despised people they are ever since! exiled, as it were, out of the world, by the common consent of all nations, for their inexpiable guilt. And beware by their example, of wishing evil to ourselves or others, as our desperate God-damn-me's do at every third word almost, and God will undoubtedly take them at their words, as He did those wretches that wished they might die in the wilderness (Numb. xiv. 28). As He did John Peters, the cruel keeper of Newgate in Queen Mary's days; who commonly, when he would affirm anything, were it true or false, used to say, "If it be not true, I pray God, I rot ere I die;" and he had his desire. So had Sir Gervase Ellowais, lieutenant of the Tower, hanged in our remembrance on Tower-hill, for being accessory to the poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury: who being upon the gallows, confessed it was just upon him, for that he had oft in his playing of cards and dice wished that he might be hanged if it were not so-and-so. In the year 1551, the devil in a visible shape lifted up a cursing woman into the air in Germany; and therehence threw her down in the view of many people, and brake her neck. Another brought her daughter to Luther, entreating his prayers for her, for that she was possessed by the devil, upon her cursing of her. For when she had said in a rage against her daughter, "The devil take thee," he took possession of her accordingly. The same author relates a like sad story of a stubborn son, cursed by his father, who wished he might never stir alive from the place he stood in, and he stirred not for three years. Cursing men are cursed men. Seest thou another suffer shipwreck, look to thy tackling. (*J. Trapp.*) *His blood be on us and on our children*:—I. Consider the daring impiety and wickedness of thus calling down on themselves the blood of Christ. II. Consider the heavy wrath of God which fell on them. In the destruction of Jerusalem. 1. We gather an awful warning from this history. The fulfilment in the Jew of God's righteous anger. 2. It establishes the perfect innocence of the condemned Saviour. The destruction of the Jewish nation was God's seal to the perfect righteousness of Him whom they put to death. 3. This fearful vengeance upon the Jewish nation stands also as an evidence of the truth of the gospel. 4. We have also a moral evidence of the truth of the scriptures in the whole Jewish nation. God hath kept them separate from the nations. 5. Learn to pity and pray for all who do not know the Lord Jesus. (*J. Pratt.*) *The responsibility of blood*:—Can we bring this blood upon ourselves? The murderers of Christ may be amongst ourselves. The means of blessing perverted into a curse. The means of blessing is the blood of Jesus Christ, prefigured by sacrifice. Blood *provided* must be blood *imputed*. His blood be on us—this is our salvation. Blood provided, imputed, accepted. It was sin that compassed His death. You then who knowingly continue in sin have identified yourselves with the enemies who killed our Lord. His blood is on you. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*). *The horrid imprecation of the Jews*:—I. The aggravating circumstances with which the imprecation was attended, and the solemnity, unanimity, and warmth with which it was expressed. II. The wonderful manner with which it was accomplished, in the destruction of the city and nation of the Jews. III. The justice of God vindicated, in respect to these sufferers. His wisdom, by making them, in their *destruction*, an irrefragable proof of our Saviour's Divine mission; and in their *dispersion*, a means of propagating those Divine oracles that foretold and described him. IV. Inferences to be deduced—1. To abstain from all rash and horrid imprecations, and to aim at simplicity of speech, as well as sincerity of heart, and integrity of manners. 2. To admire the inscrutable methods of God's providence, in bringing about the salvation of sinners; and making the scandal of the cross turn to its greatest advantage. 3. To attribute the infidelity of those men to a judicial blindness, who live where the gospel of Christ is professed, and yet shut their eyes against the light of it. 4. To be fearful of despising the mercies of God, and falling into that sin, by which God's peculiar people forfeited His protection and favour. (*F. Atterbury.*)

Vers. 29–31. **And when they had platted a crown of thorns.**—*Mocked of the soldiers*:—The shameful spectacle! What element of scorn is lacking? Roman soldiers mocking a supposed rival of Cæsar are sure to go to the utmost lengths in their derision. The spectacle is as cruel as it is derisive. Thorns and rough blows accentuate mockeries and scoffs. Roman legionaries were the brutalized instruments of a race noted for its ignorance of all tenderness; they wrought cruelties with a singular zest, being most at home in amusements of the most cruel kind. I. HERE LEARN A LESSON FOR YOUR HEART. 1. See what sin deserved. All laid on Him. (*a*) Ridicule for its folly. (*b*) Scorn for its pretensions. (*c*) Shame for its

audacity. 2. See how low your Saviour stooped for your sake. (*a*) Made the substitute for foolish, sinful man; and treated as such. (*b*) Scoffed at by soldiers of meanest grade. (*c*) Made a puppet for men who play the fool. 3. See how your Redeemer loved you. He bears immeasurable contempt, in silence, to the bitter end. 4. See the grand facts behind the scorn. (*a*) He is a King in very surety. (*b*) Glorified by conquering earth's sorrow. (*c*) Rules by weakness. (*d*) Makes men bow the knee. (*e*) True Monarch of the Jews. 5. See that you honour and love Him in proportion to this shame and mockery. The more vile He has made Himself for us, the more dear He ought to be to us. II. A LESSON FOR THE CONSCIENCE. 1. Jesus may still be mocked. (*a*) By deriding His people. (*b*) By despising His doctrine. (*c*) By resolves never fulfilled. (*d*) By beliefs never obeyed. (*e*) By professions never justified. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The crown of thorns:*—According to the Rabbis and the botanists, there would seem to have been from twenty to twenty-five different species of thorny plants growing in Palestine; and different writers have, according to their own judgment or fancies, selected one and another of these plants as the peculiar thorns which were used upon this occasion. But why select one thorn out of many? He bore not one grief, but all; any and every thorn will suffice; the very dubiousness as to the peculiar species yields us instruction. It may well be that more than one kind of thorn was platted in that crown: at any rate sin has so thickly strewn the earth with thorns and thistles that there was no difficulty in finding the materials, even as there was no scarcity of griefs wherewith to chasten Him every morning and make Him a mourner all His days. The soldiers may have used pliant boughs of the acacia or shittim tree, that unrotting wood of which many of the sacred tables and vessels of the sanctuary were made; and, therefore, significantly used if such was the case. It may have been true, as the old writers generally consider, that the plant was the *spina Christi*, for it has many small and sharp spines, and its green leaves would have made a wreath such as those with which generals and emperors were crowned after a battle. But we will leave the matter; it was a crown of thorns which pierced His head, and caused Him suffering as well as shame, and that suffices us. (*Ibid.*) *The Christian's crown, not gold but thorns:*—That thorn crown cures us of desire for the vain glories of the world, it dims all human pomp and glory till it turns to smoke. It takes the glitter from your gold, and the lustre from your gems, and the beauty from all your dainty gewgaws, to see that no imperial purple can equal the glory of His blood, no gems can rival His thorns. Show and parade cease to attract the soul, when once the superlative excellencies of the dying Saviour have been discerned by the enlightened eye. Who seeks for ease when he has seen the Lord Christ? If Christ wears a crown of thorns, shall we covet a crown of laurel? Even the fierce Crusader, when he entered into Jerusalem and was elected king, had sense enough to say, "I will not wear a crown of gold in the same city where my Saviour wore a crown of thorns." Why should we desire, like feather-bed soldiers, to have everything arranged for our ease and pleasure? Why this reclining upon couches, when Jesus hangs on a cross? Why this soft raiment, when He is naked? Why these luxuries, when He is barbarously entreated? Thus the thorn crown cures us at once of the vain glory of the world, and of our own selfish love of ease. The world's minstrel may cry, "Ho, boy, come hither, and crown me with rosebuds!" but the voluptuary's request is not for us. For us neither delights of the flesh nor the pride of life can have charms while the Man of Sorrows is in view. For us it remains to suffer and to labour, till the King shall bid us share His rest. (*Ibid.*) *Crowned with thorns:*—I. The crown of thorns was placed upon the brow of our Divine Redeemer in derision of His true kingly dignity. It suggests the world's general treatment of His claims. Herod's question—"Art Thou a King?" Christ claims this supremacy on the ground of His Divine fulness and sufficiency as our Redeeming God. II. The crown of thorns reminds us of kingship over suffering, or the passive perfection of the Lord Jesus. III. Of the disappointments which are inseparable from the earthly and the seen. (*C. H. Davison.*) *The crown of thorns:*—1. A striking exhibition of the intense love of Christ to guilty man. 2. The profound depth of His abasement. 3. The development of the nature of that kingdom which Christ came into this world to establish. 4. There is a description of the character, tendency, and issue of the affliction of the righteous. Afflictions prick and tear, but suffering is a crown. 5. An affecting image of the reality, extent, and the permanence of the dominion of Christ. (*J. Clayton.*) *The thorn crown:*—I. SEE WHAT THAT AGE MUST HAVE SUNK TO. We test forces in depravity by their resistance of good. Rome decadent! Do you know its wealth,

armies, &c. It was withal corrupt, dying. II. SEE WHAT A LIMITED POWER CHRIST'S ENEMIES HAVE. They can put thorns on His head, but none on His heart. How calm in all His sorrow. The keenest physical agony is little felt in the joyous sense of triumphant love for others. III. SEE WHAT SUFFERING LOVE CAN DO. IV. SEE WHAT IS THE SIN OF THE WORLD TO-DAY. Our rebellion is a crown of thorns on his heart. V. SEE THE ALTERED VERDICT OF THE AGES. The crown was then a mockery, now a royal symbol. Learn (1) never to be carried away by a mere temporary judgment; (2) what a contrast we have in the glorious vision of the Apocalypse, "On His head were many crowns." (*W. M. Statham.*) *The crown of thorns*:—The crown of thorns symbolized—I. That Christ was about to bear the CURSE for sinful man. Thorns were part of the original curse upon the soil. II. That Christ was about to endure PAIN for sinful man. The piercing thorns were harbingers of the cruel spear and nails. III. That Christ was about to CONQUER death for dying man. Christ was crowned before He came to the cross; undesignedly indicating His victory. (*F. W. Brown.*)

Vers. 32. **Him they compelled to bear His cross.**—*Simon bearing the cross*:—I. We may derive from this narrative A CONFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH. It was in accordance with the customs of the country; the correspondence is minute. Not compassion towards Christ that His cross was carried. II. An affecting ILLUSTRATION OF OUR SAVIOUR'S LOVE. 1. The preliminary sufferings were marked by severity. 2. The preliminary sufferings were marked by ignominy. III. We may see AN INCITEMENT TO CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE. 1. To self-denial. 2. To observance of the public ordinances of religion. (*R. Brodie, M.A.*) *Simon the Cyrenian*:—I. It is interesting to remark THAT THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ANCIENT PROPHECY SEEMS OFTEN TO HAVE HUNG UPON A THREAD, so that the least thing, a thought, a word, might have sufficed to prevent its occurrence. The marvel is that the enemies of Christ were not more on the alert than to allow things to be done which they could see were evidences of His Messiahship. How easy for them to have taken care that vinegar and gall should not be given Him on the cross. It is a striking proof of the certainty with which God can reckon on every working of the human mind. Isaac was a type of Christ; he carried the wood on which he was to be sacrificed. This type was fulfilled when our Lord was led forth carrying His cross. This was the better Isaac, bearing the wood for the burnt-offering. Yet how near was the prophecy to being defeated! It was only for a part of the way that Christ carried the cross. II. WHAT INDUCED THE FIERCE AND BRUTAL SOLDIERS TO GRANT THE REDEEMER THIS LITTLE INDULGENCE, and relieve Him for a time of the burden of the cross. They probably feared, from the exhausted condition of our Lord, that death would ensue before He reached Calvary. This an incidental notice which shows us how great were the endurances of the Mediator. This incident shows us that Christ was as sensitive to bodily pain as we are. III. THE INCIDENT SYMBOLICAL. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." He teaches His disciples that they must bear the same cross as Himself. St. Paul says:—"I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh," &c. There is no greater mistake than to represent it as an easy thing to attain eternal life; the bearing the cross is the indispensable condition of wearing the crown. Many a cross is of our own manufacture, the consequence of our sin; these are not the cross which was laid upon Simon, and which had first been on Christ. "They are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name"—so we read of the apostles. The offence of the cross has not ceased. The followers of Christ gain nothing by those compromises which may be made in hopes of conciliating the world. You will make it all the heavier by avoiding it when it lies in the clear path of duty. But take comfort: the cross was carried by Christ before it was carried by Simon. And is this all that was typically represented by the laying of the cross on Simon the Cyrenian? Indeed we ought never to press a type too far: it is easy, by indulging the imagination, to injure or bring into discredit the whole of the figurative lesson. Yet there is one thing more which we would venture to advance, though we may not speak with the same confidence as when asserting that Christ taught by action, as He had before taught by word, that His disciples must suffer with Him, if they ever hope to reign. We have already mentioned our inability to ascertain any particulars respecting Simon, or even to determine whether he were a Jew or a Pagan. Many of the ancient fathers suppose him to have been a Pagan, and consider that, in being made to bear the cross after Christ, He typified the conversion of idolatrous nations which either have been or will be brought to

a profession of faith in our Lord. And there are no such reasons against this opinion as can require its rejection, nor such even as can show that the weight of probability is on the opposite side. We must be therefore at liberty to entertain the opinion, and, at least, to point out the inferences which would follow on supposition of its truth. But once let it be considered that Simon was a Pagan, and our text becomes one of those bright, prophetic lines which shoot through centuries of gloom, giving promise of a morning, if they cannot scatter night. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The cross to be borne gladly*:—Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, conversing with Mr. Gurney, made the following remarks:—"Should you see a poor maniac knocking his head against a wall, and beating out his brains, you would not be angry with him, however he might taunt you. You would pity him from your very soul; you would direct all your energies to save him from destruction. So it will be with you: the world will mock and trample on you: a man shall come, and, as it were, slap you on the face. You rub your face and say, 'This is strange work; I like it not, sir.' Never mind, I say, this is your evidence; it turns to you for a testimony. If you were of the world, the world would love its own, but now you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Many years ago, when I was an object of much contempt and derision in this university, I strolled forth one day, buffeted and afflicted, with my little Testament in my hand. I prayed earnestly to my God, that He would comfort me with some cordial from His word, and that, on opening the Book I might find some text which should sustain me. The first text which caught my eye was this: 'They found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to bear His cross.' You know Simon is the same name as Simeon. What a world of instruction was here—what a blessed hint for my encouragement! To have the cross laid upon me, that I might bear it after Jesus—what a privilege! It was enough. Now I could leap and sing for joy as one whom Jesus was honouring with a participation in His sufferings. My dear brother, we must not mind a little suffering. When I am getting through a hedge, if my head and shoulders are safely through, I can bear the pricking of my legs."

Ver. 33–37. **And they crucified Him, and parted His garments, casting lots.**—*The watch by the cross*:—The thought of those who with tender heart watch by the cross of Jesus. I. The first thought concerns the visible tragic elements of the scene. II. The contemplation of the sufferer, His character, and His works. III. The Divine permission of these atrocities. IV. What a plenitude of grace there is in this Divine provision. (*J. H. Davison.*) I. The spectacle. 1. There was that which all might see. 2. There was that which only enlightened and quickened minds can see. II. The spectators and their various emotions. Of the spectators some were—1. Bad. 2. Hopeful. 3. Good. (*Anon.*) *Christ crucified*:—I. The PROCESS of the crucifixion. 1. The preliminary by which it was preceded. 2. The act itself. 3. The explanation by which the act was accompanied. II. The DESIGNS of the crucifixion. 1. It was the accomplishment of a Divine purpose. 2. In order to offer an all-sufficient atonement for human sin. 3. In order that it might found for our Lord an exalted mediatorial empire. III. The CONCLUSIONS which the crucifixion should leave on the hearts of those who contemplate it. 1. To esteem supremely the love from which it emanated. 2. To repent humbly of the transgressions it was necessary to pardon. 3. To repose implicitly upon the merit by which it is signalized. 4. To avow zealously the cause with which it is identified. (*J. Parsons.*) *Crucifixion*:—I. What they did to Him. "They crucified Him." II. How He conducted Himself under it. III. The results of all this. 1. A great consternation did befall the universe at this crucifixion. 2. It gave to the church its sublimest and most central theme. 3. It established a city of refuge for guilty men. 4. It was the opening of a fountain for the washing away of sin. 5. It was the stretching forth of a mighty hand to help, comfort, and deliver in every time of need. 6. It gave to the believing soul a pillow on which to lie down and die in peace. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Gambling*:—That is the Bible's picture of gamblers. What is gambling? It is neither begging nor stealing, but it resembles both in that it consists in getting money from another for which you have rendered no honest equivalent. The winner of a bet has rendered no service at all to the country or to the individual; and ought to feel a sense of theft. Do you ask where is God's commandment against it? "In its results scored deeply on the character of gamblers." The love of gaming springs from the love of excitement that is in our nature. It unfits a man for life's duties. It is strange how uniformly no good comes of it. It has been disallowed by all ethical and religious teachers. (*B. J. Snell,*

*M.A.*) *Gambling unproductive of wealth*:—In honest business you give an equivalent for so much received. It may be a service, or it may be the result of service. The farmer gives his farm produce, the result of his toil; the mechanic renders his skill; the pilot his knowledge of the channel; the lawyer his acute knowledge required to navigate channels more intricate. In any one of these cases money is earned by the performance of actual service, and in every case the body politic is the richer for the service. But gambling is unproductive, the wealth of the whole body is not increased. The only result is the circulation of moneys, and even that is a questionable benefit seeing that the cash is but transferred from the pocket of the fools to the pocket of the knaves, always with a contingent reversion to the publican. The community is no more enriched by the mere circulation of gold than the level of a pool is raised by a tempest blowing upon it; gain in one direction is balanced by loss in another. (*Ibid.*) *The excitement of gambling*:—The love of gaming springs from the love of excitement that is in our nature. This has existed always and everywhere. Tacitus says that the ancient Germans would stake their property and even their life on the throw of the dice-box. The typical Asiatic will risk child or wife on the turn of a die or the fighting of a game-cock. Civilization does not seem to diminish the fascination of gambling. And excitement, so long as it is within bounds, is healthful, bracing, and necessary; beyond these bounds (which no man can well define for another), it is exhausting and destructive. At first a man bets to gain a new sensation, a certain thrill of the nerves; to repeat the pleasant thrill an increased dose is necessary. The sensation itself palls; it must be intensified. The process itself is luring, and at last it heats every part of the mind like an oven. It is notorious that the passion grows; no more experiments need to be tried in that direction, vivisection could not demonstrate it more amply. The winnings that come so easily are not so much the gifts of fortune as they are the baits of misfortune that lead on to beggary. Nice distinctions are drawn between "playing" and gambling. Play is harmless so long as it is play; but "playing" is a seed that comes up "gambling." It is a dangerous seed to play with. Not drunkenness itself is as hard to cure as is the gambling mania when it has once enthralled a man; he cares only for it—every passion is absorbed into that one intense consuming lust. The day lags heavy on his hands without it, all other pursuits are tasteless; he is only alive when he is gaming, and then the very dregs of his soul are stirred into fearful activity. (*Ibid.*) *The watchers round the cross*:—Note the varied types of watchers around the cross. 1. The careless watch of the soldiers. 2. The jealous watch of the enemies. 3. The anxious watch of the women. 4. The wondering watch of angels on high. (*Anon.*) *The blind watchers at the cross*:—These rude soldiers had doubtless joined with their comrades in the coarse mockery which preceded the sad procession to Calvary; and then they had to do the rough work of the executioners, fastening the sufferers to the rude wooden crosses, lifting these with their burden, fixing them into the ground, then parting the raiment. And when all that is done they sit stolidly down to take their ease at the foot of the cross, and idly to wait, with eyes that look and see nothing, until the sufferers die. A strange picture! I. How IGNORANT MEN ARE OF THE REAL MEANING AND OUTCOME OF WHAT THEY DO. Think of what a corporal's guard of rough English soldiers, out in Northern India, would think if they were bade to hang a native charged with rebellion against the British Government. So much, and no more did these men know of what they were doing. And so with us all. No man knows the real meaning, the possible issue and outcome of a great deal in our lives. If we are wise, we will let results alone, and just take care that our motive is right. II. RESPONSIBILITY IS LIMITED BY KNOWLEDGE. These men were ignorant of what they were doing, and therefore guiltless. God *weighs*, not *counts*, our actions. III. IT IS POSSIBLE TO LOOK AT CHRIST ON THE CROSS AND SEE NOTHING. For half a day there these soldiers sat, and it was but a dying Jew they saw—one of three. They were the unmoved witnesses of God manifest in the flesh, dying on the cross for the whole world, and for them. Their ignorance made them blind. Let us all pray to have our ignorance and blindness removed, our hearts softened by the sight of Christ crucified for us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Ver. 38. **Two thieves crucified with Him.**—*Jesus between two robbers*:—I. The moral condition of these men BEFORE CRUCIFIXION—Robbers. They are also called "malefactors." At the earlier stage of the proceedings these two men were equally depraved. II. The moral condition of these men AFTER THEY WERE AFFIXED TO THE CROSS. In the case of one—1. There was a beholding of the crucified Jesus. 2. There

was a perception of his own sinfulness and of the purity of Christ. 3. There is a prayer for a participation in all that Christ has to offer. 4. His acceptance promised by Jesus. The other sinner mocks our Lord. The men the same at first, but now how changed the condition of one. III. THE POSITION THESE TWO ROBBERS OCCUPIED IN RESPECT TO CHRIST. 1. Christ is placed on the central cross. He was first suspended on the cross by the cruel malignity of men. 2. That Christ's sufferings were for all men. He was crucified between two, not on one side. 3. These robbers were the representative men of the world. 4. You may perish with Christ close beside you. (*G. Venables.*) *The three crosses*:—I. There may be the same outward circumstances where there is the greatest inward diversity. II. We have no choice as to the fact of suffering: our choice refers only to its nature. Each has his own cross: Christ was not without one. The wicked have their woes. 1. The sufferings of the good are consoled. 2. The sufferings of the good are limited—"For a season." III. The means used for Christ's disgrace promote His glory. Satan was wounded by his own weapon: and the robber designed to insult our Lord was saved. Thus temptation is turned to good ends. (*T. R. Stevenson.*) *Christ dying amid thieves*:—There then are the two stories (of the thieves and of Jesus). See how far apart they begin. One in the innocence of perfect holiness; the other in the blackest wickedness. And then see how they meet at last. As when a black and turbid stream goes hurrying towards a cavern's gloom, into which it is destined to plunge itself out of sight, and just before it reaches its dark doom, a pure fresh river that was born among the snows in the sunlight on the mountain's top, and has sung its way down through flowers, drops its quiet, transparent waters down into the tumultuous current, and shares its plunge, so the pure holiness of Christ fell into the stream of human wickedness, and shared its fate. (*Phillips Brooks.*) *The penitent thief*:—The different effects the judgments of God have upon the minds of men. The wisdom of God in setting the examples of His justice and mercy so near together, and has taught us to fear without despair, and to hope without presumption. What would the dying sinner give to have his Saviour so near him in his last moments. I. Let us see the CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH DISTINGUISH IT FROM THAT OF THE DYING CHRISTIAN. 1. In all this there may be nothing resembling a death-bed repentance. The dying thief seems to have heard and known much about the character of Christ: he had elsewhere learnt His dignity and was persuaded of the truth of His mission. And what is this to them who have no desire to lie down Christians upon their death-beds, though they would willingly go off penitents. 2. Suppose this great work were begun and finished on the cross, yet it cannot be drawn into example by Christian sinners; because the conversion of a Jew or a heathen is one thing, and the repentance of a Christian another. 3. The profligate life of this unconverted sinner was not attended with such aggravated circumstances as the sins of Christians are. He sinned against the light of nature and reason only. The greater his weakness was, the fitter object for mercy was he. Not the same excuses for Christians. II. But there are OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES FIT TO BE OBSERVED WHICH RENDER A DEATH-BED REPENTANCE VERY INSECURE AFD DANGEROUS, though we should allow it all the hopes which have been raised from the case before us. 1. He that sins in hopes of repentance at last, may sin so far as to grow hardened and obdurate, and incapable of repentance when the time comes. Nor is it in your own power to sin to what degree you please; habits grow insensibly. There is more reason to fear that sin indulged will get the better of you, than you of it. 2. Could you preserve your resolutions of repentance, yet still it is not in your own power to secure an opportunity to execute them. The thief on the cross died by the hand of justice, knew how long he had to live; he had no pretence to defer his repentance. 3. His death not being the effect of disease, but of the judge's sentence, he brought with him to the cross, which you may call his death-bed, a sound body and mind. He had his senses perfectly, his reason fresh, and was capable of faith and acts of devotion. How different is the case of the languishing sinner. How can one know His Saviour who cannot know even his own brother at such a time. (*T. Sherlock, D.D.*)

Vers. 39, 40. **He saved others; Himself He cannot save.**—*He saved others, Himself He cannot save*:—I. The incontestible fact—"He saved others." Let us bring forth witnesses: Angels, healed men and women. II. Himself He cannot save. He is Divine. The world was made by Him; yet Himself He cannot save. The acts of unlimited providence are ascribed to Him—"He sustaineth all things by the word of His power." "Himself He cannot save." The resurrection of the dead,

administration of judgment are ascribed to Him. "Himself He cannot save." The power to save Himself is demonstrated in those very acts by which He "saved others." The devils were subject to Him. "No man taketh my life from Me, I lay it down of Myself." III. However paradoxical all this may seem, I must proceed to ESTABLISH THE MOMENTOUS TRUTH ignorantly expressed in those words. In its literal sense it was false; Jesus was not destitute of physical power to save Himself; in its theological sense it was true. There was no original necessity that the Son of God must die; He might have left the race to perish. The necessity of the death of Jesus was founded—1. In the purpose and foreordination of God. 2. On the fulfilment which that event gives to the predictions of sacred Scripture. 3. To fulfil the typical representations by which, under the Mosaic law, it had been prefigured. 4. In order to verify His own declarations. 5. As a sacrificial atonement for the sins of the world. 6. In order to the effusion of the Holy Spirit. 7. Even in order to the perfection of His example. Learn: 1. The affecting display which our subject presents of the love of Christ. 2. The glorious and certain effects of the Redeemer's sufferings. 3. I conjure you to seek a personal interest in the important benefits of the Saviour's death. 4. Let it be the theme of your meditation and the confirmation of your faith. (*J. Bowers.*) *Success in apparent failure*:—Christ seems a failure. Thus His enemies asserted and His friends seemed to admit it. Where they right? I. WHAT IS SUCCESS? 1. Certainly not that which is merely in appearance strong, beautiful, or prosperous, for inwardly it may be quite different. The ship on the waters may be beautiful to look at, but if made of inferior material is not a success. 2. Not that which is good merely for the time being. The finest house built on a sand-hill has its ruin beneath it. 3. Nor is it a necessary element of success, that it should confer aught of benefit or reward upon him who has brought it about. The highest favour often comes after death. 4. Nor is any result, however magnificent, obtained on doubtful principles worthy of this royal title. God and His laws are against it. Success is that good purpose which hath been conducted upon right principles to a prosperous and durable completion. II. CHRIST WE CLAIM WAS AND IS A SUCCESS. 1. His purpose was good—to "save His people from their sins." 2. His purpose was conducted upon pure and holy principles. 3. Though small in its beginnings His purpose is evidently intended to prosper. His influence has been steadily increasing. 4. His success is always durable. III. HENCE THE PHARISEES ERRED. They mistook the dawn of success for the clouds of a coming failure. The causes that led them to the error. 1. The bad habit of looking only at the outside of things. They were quick to see a colour or a cloth, but not a principle. 2. Because they judged results by what *they* wanted instead of by what *He* wanted. They wanted a temporal Messiah, He a spiritual. 3. Because they deemed success a matter of thirty or forty years instead of all time. 4. They could not understand His leaving self out of view. The omnipotence of love exceeds mere physical almightiness. (*W. W. Walker.*) *The Saviour of all but Himself*:—I. WHAT THEY DEEMED HE COULD DO. "Himself He cannot save." 1. He could. It was not in the power of man. 2. He could not. He would fulfil the Scripture. II. WHAT THEY ALLOWED HE COULD DO. (*S. H. Simpson.*) When originally spoken. I. Implied a critical position. II. Expressed a mistaken view of religion. The men who saw the Saviour dying thought exclusively of the present; were more concerned for pain and physical deprivation than for sin; argued from self-love to the salvation of others. III. Witnessed unconsciously to the principle of atonement. A moral necessity compelled Him to die: the righteousness of God had to be vindicated; He could only save others (in the deeper sense of the word) by self-sacrifice. The great question with us all now should be, not "Could He save Himself?" or "Could He save others?" but, "*Has He saved us*—has He enfranchised us from self?" (*A. F. Muir, M.A.*) *Self-sacrifice*:—Many voices from Calvary; all significant. I. A GREAT TRUTH. Truer word never uttered. Who meant by "others"? Whoever referred to, the words true. This His work day by day. All ages shall declare that this testimony of enemies was true. II. A FALSEHOOD. He could save Himself. Did the speakers know their words were false? III. A latent truth. Concealed from the men who proclaimed it. A power at work within Christ which made it impossible for Him to save Himself. Impossibility seen in whatever way we regard His death. As a martyr, example, victim of sin, substitute for sin, He could not save Himself. Conclusion: The death of Christ a lesson of self-sacrifice. The highest rule in the world—that of Christ. His Spirit's rule who could not save Himself. Is the cross of Christ such a power in our lives as to lead us in daily life to feel and to show that though we can, yet we

cannot? Appeal to men to yield themselves to Him who gave Himself for them. (*J. M. Blackie, LL.B.*) *He saved others, Himself He cannot save.—Necessity of the cross*:—These men only needed to alter one letter to be grandly and gloriously right. If, instead of "cannot," they had said "will not," they would have grasped the very heart of the power, and the very central brightness of the glory of Christianity. "He saved others;" and just because He saves others, Himself He *will* not, and, in a real sense, "He *cannot*, save." . . . It was His own will, and no outward necessity, that fastened Him to the cross; and that will was kept steadfast and immoveable by nothing else but His love: He Himself fixed the iron chain which bound Him. He Himself made the "cannot." It was His love that made it impossible He should relinquish the task; therefore His steely will, like a strong spring constantly working, kept Him close up against the sharp edge of the knife that cut into His very heart's life. Though there were outward powers that seemed to knit Him there, and though to the eye of sense the taunt of the priests might be true, "Himself He cannot save,"—the inmost verity of that cross is, "No man taketh My life from Me, I lay it down of Myself, because I love and will save the world." . . . Yet a Divine necessity for the cross there was. No saving of men from any evil can be effective but at the cost of self-sacrifice. The lamp burns out in the very act of giving light. So that, while on the one side there is necessity, on the other there is free, willing submission. It was not high priests, Pilate, soldiers, nails, that fastened Jesus to the cross. He was bound there by the cords of love, and by the bands of his own infinitely merciful purpose. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *He saved others, Himself He cannot save*:—I. The confession made by the bitterest enemies of the Lord Jesus. They had long tried falsehood, now they admit the truth—"He saved others." But we may go back to the earlier eras in proof of this assertion. It was He that saved Lot; the Egyptians from bondage; the people out of Babylon. He is able to save others to the uttermost of human guilt, to the uttermost of human life, to the uttermost of human time. How it comes to pass that He who saved others, could not save Himself? It was not for want of power, for He had all power in heaven and earth. It was not through any deadness to a feeling of pain; for his sensibilities were keen. It was not from any ignorance of the issue. The answer is, "He came to seek and to save, &c." The inability to save Himself was not physical. I. It arose from the nature of the work he had undertaken. Without shedding of blood was no remission. If others were to be saved Christ must die. II. The everlasting purpose of the Father was another reason why He could not save Himself. III. The Saviour's free undertaking of the office of a Priest and Victim and Redeemer brought Him into the condition that while He saved others Himself He could not save. He pledged Himself to go through with the amazing work of redemption, even though hell oppose. IV. Vhe glory and honour of God made it the only alternative that while He saved others, Himself He could not save. V. The love that He bore to us is another reason of the truth of the text. Learn: 1. The inseparable connection that subsists between the sacrifice of Jesus and the salvation of His people. 2. Deduce the length, height, depth of the love of Jesus. 3. What a fearful and obnoxious thing is sin. 4. What must be the great theme of the gospel ministry. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Ver. 45. **There was darkness over all the land.**—*Good Friday and its lessons*:—A dark shadow belongs to the best of things. I. The first lesson is patience and perseverance. We must be patient with others if they stumble in the darkness, if they do not at once find their way towards the truth. II. The darkness of Good Friday is a likeness of the opposition which each one of us ought to be, and will be, called upon to face, in doing his duty. III. The darkness of the dismal tragedy of the crucifixion reminds us of the consoling truth that failures are not perpetual failures. Good Friday was outwardly a failure; the Easter morn was its complete success. (*Dean Stanley.*) *A sermon suggested by an eclipse of the sun*:—The infidel has attempted to impugn its credibility. He has urged: "Why we do not read of it in profane history?" 1. That, according to the evangelical history, the darkness may not have extended beyond the limits of Judea. If this be true it would not be observed in Greece, Italy, or any other country beyond Judea. 2. The historical accounts of that period, especially of matters then occurring in Judea, are, if we except those of the New Testament, very scanty indeed. 3. The policy of both Jews and Gentiles who were opposed to Christianity, was to suppress facts that might tend to record it. 4. It is assuming what cannot be proved when it is said that this event is not named by other than Christian

writers. Most of the works of that time have perished; and Tertullian, in his apology for the Christian religion, addressed to the magistates of the empire and to the Senate of Rome, appeals as having this miraculous darkness preserved in their archives. I. THIS DARKNESS AS INDICATING THE AGENCY WHICH THEN PREDOMINATED. Sin was then prevailing over holiness. II. This darkness as indicating THE CRIME WHICH WAS THEN PERPETRATED. III. This darkness as indicating THE SUFFERINGS WHICH WERE THEN ENDURED. IV. This darkness as indicating THE EVILS WHICH WERE THEN REMOVED. V. This darkness as indicating THE JUDGMENTS THAT WERE THEN INCURRED. (*W. Urwick, D.D.*)

Ver. 46. **My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?**—*The forsaken Christ*:—THE DESERTION ITSELF IS PLAIN. "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Then He felt Himself to be forsaken? The Divine nature could not be separated from the human; He was eternally God. Nor could the Father be separated from the Son in the Divine Godhead, since that in affection and will He was insolubly one. Nor could the Father forsake the Son in any sense that He ceased to love and uphold Him; for at that moment Christ was accomplishing that act of holy obedience worthiest of the admiration of Deity. I. THERE REMAIN THREE SENSES IN WHICH IT MIGHT BE SAID THAT HE WAS DESERTED OF HIS FATHER. 1. In the first place, it might be said that He bore at that moment the wrath of God on account of our sins. How could the Almighty, as He loved His Son, convey to the mind of Christ a sense of that wrath which was not real? 2. In the sense that God forbore to interfere on Christ's behalf to terminate those sufferings, and rescue Him from the hands of His enemies. But many saints have endured as great physical sufferings without complaint. 3. That our Lord was suffered in this hour of anguish to be left destitute of the sense of His Father's love, and care, and protection. There is a close connection between mind and body; so that when the body is languishing in pain, the mind contracts a sensibility as keen, and shudders at the approach of the least suffering, which in a state of health it would meet unmoved. But there was far more than this in Christ. The comunications which God makes to the minds of His people are directly from Himself; this he is free to give or withdraw. I suppose that on this occasion our Saviour had it withdrawn. It is clear that however pious, however convinced of acceptance with God, there can be a state of mind in which a Christian may be deprived of the present sense of the Being of God; and that this will inflict great misery. II. OUR SAVIOUR'S COMPLAINT UNDER THE DESERTION. Our Lord made no complaint of the nails and spear, but is now urged to lament. 1. Consider the nature of that sorrow which our Lord at this time experienced. Love is a great source of misery or happiness; the former if withdrawn. If so in human objects, how much more as regards Divine. 2. The complaint of these words—"Why hast Thou?" He was forsaken by His disciples, but now forsaken by His best Friend, and at a moment when He most needs consolation and help. The Almighty thus marks His view of sin. Christ hung upon the cross that we might never be forsaken by God. Every ungodly person is advancing to that sentence, "Depart from Me," &c. 3. That God may desert for a moment in the same sense, and in that sense alone, those whom He still loves and upholds. There is nothing in the relationship of a child of God to prevent that experience, and it may be a requisite discipline, by which sin is embittered. (*B. Noel, M.A.*) *The Redeemer's desertion*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THE REDEEMER'S LANGUAGE. 1. It does not mean that the Godhead of Christ was separated from His manhood, so that His humanity alone was present on the cross. 2. The language is not that of murmuring. 3. It is not indicative of distrust. 4. It is not that of despair. All sensible comfort is eclipsed. II. SOME OF THE GREAT DESIGNS TO BE EFFECTED THROUGH THIS DESERTION. 1. The punishment due to the sins of the people was herein endured. 2. The manifestation of God's regard for the honour of His law. 3. That He might be like unto His people in all things. 4. The brightest pattern of confidence in God. 5. To enable Him to enter upon His mediatorial glory. (*J. R. Mackenzie.*) *The despairing cry of Jesus on the cross*:—I. The surroundings of the sufferer uttering this wail of distress. II. What is the import of this lamentation of Jesus. 1. It is not the result of any corporeal pain being endured. There are two primary causes for this cry. (1) In a manner beyond finite comprehension God then withheld from His dying Son, as the latest and most appalling ingredient of His atoning sufferings, a cloudless consciousness of His supporting presence. (2) Track His public ministry and He is never found murmuring as to His Father's absence. In

demonstration of his moral fidelity Daniel went down into the den of lions; but God was with him. Jesus Christ, the purest character, was the only one dying for the Father's glory, who could not by possibility secure a consciousness of the Divine presence and favour amidst His pains. 2. This seeming abandonment of His suffering Son was the crowning manifestation of God's wrath against sin. Christ was man's representative at Calvary. The cross at the ninth hour of gloom is the loftiest observatory from which men look at sin. 3. The value at which God rates a human soul is seen in this cry, and the responsibility of the unsaved. (*S. V. Leech, D.D.*) *Victory in desertion:*—Thus the will of Jesus, in the very moment when His faith seems about to yield, is finally triumphant. It has no feeling now to support it, no beatific vision to absorb it. It stands naked in His soul and tortured, as He stood naked and scourged before Pilate. Pure and simple and surrounded by fire, it declares for God. The sacrifice ascends in the cry, "My God." The cry comes not out of happiness, out of peace, out of hope. Not even out of suffering comes that cry. It was a cry in desolation, but it came out of faith. It is the last voice of truth, speaking when it can but cry. The divine horror of that moment is unfathomable by human soul. It was blackness of darkness. And yet He would believe. Yet He would hold fast. God was His God yet. "My God"—and in the cry came forth the victory, and all was over soon. Of the peace that followed that cry, the peace of a perfect soul, large as the universe, pure as light, ardent as life, victorious for God and His brethren, He Himself alone can ever know the breadth and length, and depth and height. (*G. Macdonald, LL.D.*) *Reasons for Christ's desertion:*—He does not even say "My Father," the term of endearment, but employs the sterner word, as though more fully to express the desolation which He feels. We may not, however, understand these words as though they signified that the union of the Godhead and the Manhood was at this time dissolved; that could never be. The union between the Father and the Son could never be severed, though for a while the vision of the eternal Presence of God was removed from our Lord's human nature. Let us try to discover why it was ordained that this terrible desertion should take place. 1. It was no doubt designed in order to prevent our supposing that the indissoluble union of the Godhead with the Manhood in our Lord's Person would interfere with His suffering, to the full, the agony of death as Man. It was for our sakes, that we might be established in the true faith concerning Himself. 2. Hence we gather from it that it was not only possible for Him to suffer, but that He really did suffer as none ever did before or since. His martyrs in their hour of trial were strengthened and refreshed by spiritual consolations, but He would die the very bitterest death, bereft of all. 3. From our Lord's privation of all sensible comfort we may learn somewhat concerning the sinfulness of sin. One drop, indeed, of that precious blood would have been enough to save the world from the punishment of sin, and from its power, but He would pay the full price, and drink the cup of sorrow to the very dregs. 4. In the abandonment of Christ we may learn, if we will, what our deserts would be if we were dealt with only in rigid justice. He was forsaken that we might never be forsaken. He was left to suffer the loss of all consolation in order the more fully to convince us of the greatness of His love. 5. How very terrible it must be to be deprived for ever (as the finally reprobate will be) of the presence of God. (*J. E. Vaux, M.A.*) *Comfort not the measure of grace:*—Take heed thou thinkest not grace decays because thy comfort withdraws. . . . Did ever faith triumph more than in our Saviour crying thus! Here faith was at its meridian when it was midnight in respect of joy. Possibly thou comest from an ordinance, and bringest not home with thee those sheaves of comfort thou used to do, and therefore concluded, grace acted not in thee as formerly. Truly, if thou hast nothing else to go by, thou mayest wrong the grace of God in thee exceedingly; because thy comfort is extrinsical to thy duty, a boon which God may give or not, yea, doth give to the weak, and deny to the strong. The traveller may go as fast, and ride as much ground, when the sun doth not shine as when it doth, though indeed he goes not so merrily on his journey; nay, sometimes he makes the more haste; the warm sun makes him sometimes to lie down and loiter, but when dark and cold he puts on with more speed. Some graces thrive best (like some flowers) in the shade, such as humility and dependence on God. (*W. Gurnall.*) *God's comfort may be withdrawn, but not His presence:*—Sometimes God takes away from a Christian His comfort, but He never takes away His sustaining presence. You know the difference between sunshine and daylight. A Christian has God's daylight in his soul when he may not have sunlight; that is, he has enough to light

him, but not enough to cheer and comfort him. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The true sense of this cry*:—Two reasons why Christ chose to express Himself on this occasion in the language of David. 1. That the Jews might call to mind the great resemblance between His case and that of this illustrious king and prophet. 2. This psalm was allowed to belong to the Messiah, and to have its ultimate completion in Him. I. Consider the style Christ makes use of in addressing Himself to God—"My God, My God." This seems to denote His innocence, His choice of God for His God, and His filial trust and confidence in Him. II. In what sense was Christ forsaken by God in His passion? 1. Are we to believe that God was angry with His well-beloved Son? 2. If God was not angry, might not the Son apprehend that He was, or at least doubt of the continuance of His Father's love to Him? III. The reasons of God's thus forsaking His beloved Son. 1. To add the greater perfection to His example. 2. To increase the perfection of His atonement. 3. To contribute to the perfection of His priesthood. 4. To render His triumph the more glorious. Two reflections: 1. How should this endear the Redeemer of the world to us, who was willing to suffer such things for our sakes. 2. This part of the history of our Saviour's passion carries in it a great deal of instruction and consolation to His faithful disciples when they are in like circumstances with Him. (*Henry Grove.*) *The Hebrew term, "Forsaken"*:—In the Hebrew way of speaking, God is said to leave or forsake any person when He suffers him to fall into great calamities, and to lie under great miseries, and does not help him out of them; and therefore Zion, being long afflicted, is brought in by the Prophet Isaiah (ch. lxix. 14) thus complaining: "The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me." And the psalmist, as he is frequent in this complaint, so does he manifestly explain himself in the words following the complaint of his being forsaken: "Why art Thou far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" (*Whitby.*) *Christ forsaken*:—I. That Christ, being in extremity, was forsaken. II. Being forsaken, He was very sensible of it, and from sensibleness complains, pouring out His soul into the bosom of the Father. III. He not only complains, but believes certainly that His Father will help Him. IV. And to strengthen His faith the more, He puts it forth in prayer, the fire of faith in His heart kindled into a flame of prayer. (*R. Sibbs.*) *The forsaking itself*:—I. In what sense was Christ forsaken? II. In what parts He was forsaken. III. Upon what ground He was forsaken. And IV. To what end all this forsaking of Christ was. Christ was forsaken in regard of His present comfort and joy, and He positively felt the wrath and fury of the Almighty, whose just displeasure seized upon His soul for sin, *as our surety*. (*Ibid.*) *A true human experience*:—Without this last trial of all, the temptations of our Master had not been so full as the human cup could hold; there would have been one region through which *we* had to pass wherein we might call aloud upon our Captain-Brother, and there would be no voice or hearing: He had avoided the fatal spot. (*George Macdonald.*) *God withdrawn*:—This is the faith of the Son of God. God withdrew, as it were, that the perfect will of the Son might arise and go forth to find the will of the Father. (*Ibid.*) *The cry a model cry*:—Troubled soul, will thou His will. Say to Him, "My God, I am very dull, and low, and hard; but Thou art wise, and high, and tender, and Thou art my God. I am Thy child, forsake me not." Then fold the arms of thy faith, and wait in quietness until light goes up in thy darkness. Fold the arms of thy faith, I say, but not of thy action. Bethink thee of something that thou oughtest to do, and go and do it, if it be but the sweeping of a room, or the preparing of a meal, or a visit to a friend. Heed not Thy feelings. Do thy work. (*Ibid.*) *Significance of small cries*:—The pennant at the mast-head is a small thing, yet it shows plainly which way the wind blows. A cloud no bigger than a man's hand is a small thing, yet it may show the approach of a mighty storm. The swallow is a little bird, and yet it shows that summer is come. So is it with man. A look, a sigh, a half-uttered word, a broken sentence, may show more of what is passing within than a long speech. So it was with the dying Saviour. These few troubled words tell more than volumes of divinity. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *The Eloi*:—I. The completeness of Christ's obedience. 1. Words of obedience. 2. Words of faith. 3. Words of love. II. The infinity of Christ's sufferings. 1. He suffered much from His enemies. (*a*) He suffered in all parts of His body; (*b*) He suffered in all His offices; (*c*) He suffered from all sorts of men; (*d*) He suffered much from the devil. 2. He suffered much from those he afterwards saved. 3. From His own disciples. 4. From His Father. Three things show the infinity of His sufferings. 1. Who

it was that forsook Him. 2. Who it was that was forsaken. 3. What God did to Him—forsook Him. III. Answer the Saviour's "Why?" Because He was the surety of sinners, and stood in their room. 1. He had agreed with His Father, before all worlds, to stand and suffer in the place of sinners. 2. He set His face to it. 3. He knew that either He or the whole world must suffer. (*Ibid.*) *The desertion*:—I. These words do not imply, on the part of the Father, an entire and perpetual abandonment of His Son. II. These words do not imply, on the part of the Son, any discontent or rebellion against His Father. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *God forsakes only for sin*:—I venture to lay down this as a fundamental principle—an axiom, it may almost be called—that God never forsakes any one but for one cause, and that cause, sin. He must have seen sin *in* Christ, or *on* Him. He must have seen real or imputed sin to warrant His acting towards Him as He did. There is no way of accounting for the sufferings of the Son of God—from His incarnation to His death, from the manger to the grave, from His cradle to His cross—but on the supposition of His being, in the eye of justice and the law, a sinner, the sin-bearer, the sinner's substitute. Except on the grand principle of an atonement, all this is unaccountable. (*Ibid.*) *Christ our surety*:—Christ took not the desert of punishment upon Him (from any fault in Himself), He took whatsoever was *penal* upon Him, but not *culpable*. As He was our surety, so He everyway discharged our debt, being bound over to all judgments and punishments for us. (*R. Sibbs.*) I. WHAT WAS CHRIST'S DESERTION? I shall for more distinctness, handle it negatively and affirmatively. First—Negatively. 1. It was not a desertion in appearance and conceit only, but real. We often mistake God's dispensations. God may be out of sight and yet we not out of mind. When the dam is abroad for meat the young brood in the nest is not forsaken. The children cry as if the mother were totally gone when she is employed about necessary business for their welfare (Isa. xlix. 14. 15). So we think that we are cut off when God is about to help and deliver us (Psa. xxxi. 22). Surely when our affections towards God are seen by mourning for His absence, He is not wholly gone; His room is kept warm for Him till He come again. We mistake God's dispensations when we judge that a forsaking which is but an emptying us of all carnal dependence (Psa. xciv. 18, 19). He is near many times when we think Him afar off; as Christ was to His disciples when their eyes were withheld that they knew Him not, but thought Him yet lying in the grave (St. Luke xxiv. 16). But this cannot be imagined of Christ, who could not be mistaken. If He complained of desertion, surely He felt it. II. THOUGH IT WERE REAL, THE DESERTION MUST BE UNDERSTOOD SO AS MAY STAND WITH THE DIGNITY OF HIS PERSON AND OFFICE. Therefore—(1) There was no separation of the Father from the Son; this would make a change in the unity of the Divine essence (St. John x. 30). This eternal union of the Father and Son always remained. (2) There was no dissolution of the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, for the human nature which was once assumed was never after dismissed or laid aside. III. The love of God to Him ceased not. We read (St. John iii. 35). IV. His personal holiness was not abated or lessened. The Lord Jesus was "full of grace and truth" (St. John i. 4). Neither His nature nor His office could permit an abatement of holiness (Heb. vii. 26). The Son of God might fall into misery, which is a natural evil, and so become the object of pity, not of blame; but not into sin, which is a moral evil, a blot and a blemish. V. God's assistance and sustaining grace was not wholly withdrawn, for the Lord saith of Him (Isa. xlii. 1). The power, presence, and providence of God was ever with Him, to sustain Him in His difficult enterprise. Secondly—Positively. 1. GOD'S DESERTION OF US OR ANY CREATURE MAY BE UNDERSTOOD WITH A RESPECT TO HIS COMMUNICATING HIMSELF TO US. We have a twofold apprehension of God—as a holy and happy being: and when He doth communicate Himself to any reasonable creature it is either in a way of holiness or in a way of happiness. These two have such a respect to one another, that He never gives felicity and glory without holiness (Heb. xii. 14). And a holy creature can never be utterly and finally miserable. He may sometimes give holiness without happiness, as when for a while He leaveth the sanctified whom He will try and exercise under the cross—or in a state of sorrow and affliction. Now apply this to Christ. It is blasphemy to say that Christ lost any degree of His holiness, for He was always pure and holy, and that most perfectly and exactly. Therefore He was deserted only as to His felicity, and that but for a short time. 2. THE FELICITY OF CHRIST MAY BE CONSIDERED EITHER AS TO HIS OUTWARD AND BODILY ESTATE, OR ELSE TO HIS INWARD MAN OR

THE ESTATE OF HIS SOUL. (1) Some say His desertion was nothing else but His being left to the will and power of His enemies to crucify Him, and that He was then deserted when His Divine nature suspended the exercise of His omnipotency so far as to deliver up His body to a reproachful death. (*a*) Why should Christ complain of that so bitterly, which He did so readily and willingly undergo, and might so easily have prevented. (*b*) If we look merely to bodily pains and sufferings certainly others have endured as much if not more; as the thieves that were crucified with Him lived longer in their torments, and the good thief did not complain that he was forsaken of God. (*c*) It would follow that every holy man that is persecuted and left to the will of his enemies, might be said to be forsaken of God, which is contrary to Paul's holy boasting (2 Cor. iv. 9). (*d*) This desertion was a punishment one part or degree of the abasement of the Son of God, and so belongeth to the whole nature that was to be abased, not only to His body, but His soul (Isa. liii. 10). (2) As to the felicity of His inward estate, the state of His soul. Christ carried about His heaven with Him, and never wanted sensible consolation, spiritual suavity, the comfortable effects of the Divine presence, till now they were withdrawn that He might be capable of suffering the whole punishments of sins. 1. I will show how this sort of desertion is—Possible. The union of the two natures remaining; for us the Divine nature gave up the body to death, so the soul to desertion. Christ, as God, is the fountain of life (Psa. xxxvi. 9). And yet Christ could die. The Divinity remained united to the flesh, and yet the flesh might die; so it remained united to the soul, and yet the soul might want comfort. There is a partial, temporal desertion, when God for a moment hideth His face from His people (Isa. liv. 7). This is so far from being contrary to the dignity of Christ's nature that it is necessary to His office for many reasons. 2. That it is grievous. This was an incomparable loss to Christ. (1) Partly because it was more natural to Him to enjoy that comfort and solace than it can be to any creature. To put out a candle is no great matter, but to have the sun eclipsed, which is the fountain of light, that sets the world a wondering. (2) Partly because He had more to lose than we have. The greater the enjoyment, the greater the loss or want. We lose drops, He an ocean. (3) Partly because he knew how to value the comfort of the union, having a pure understanding and heavenly affections. God's children count one day in His presence better than a thousand (Psa. lxxxiv. 10). One glimpse of His love more than all the world (Psa. iv. 7). (4) Partly because He had so near an interest and relation to God (Prov. viii. 30). (5) Partly from the nature of Christ's desertion. It was penal. There was nothing in Christ's person to occasion a desertion, but much in His office; so He was to give body for body and soul for soul. And this was a part of the satisfaction. He was beloved as a son, forsaken as our Mediator and Surety. Why was Christ forsaken? Answer. With respect to the office which He had taken upon Himself. This desertion of Christ carrieth a suitableness and respect to our sin, our punishment, and our blessedness. 1. Our sin. Christ is forsaken to satisfy and make amends for our wilful desertion of God (Jer. ii. 13). Now we that forsook God deserved to be forsaken by God, therefore what we had merited by our sins, Christ endured as our Mediator. It is strange to consider what small things draw us off from God. This is the first degeneracy and disease of mankind that a trifle will prompt us to forsake God, as a little thing will make a stone run down hill; it is its natural motion. 2. It carries a full respect to the punishment appointed for sin (Gal. iii. 13). It is true the accidentals of punishment Christ suffered not. As—(1) To the place, He was not in hell. It was not necessary that Christ should descend to the hell of the damned. One that is bound as a surety for another, needs not go into prison provided that he pay the debts. (2) For the time of continuance. The damned must bear the wrath of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice of God. Therefore they must lie by it world without end. Christ hath made an infinite satisfaction in a finite time. He bore the wrath of God in a few hours, which would overwhelm the creature. Christ did not bear the eternity of wrath, but only the extremity of it; intensive, not extensive. The eternity of the punishment ariseth from the weakness of the creature, who cannot overcome this evil and get out of it. (3) There is another thing unavoidably attending the pains of the second death in reprobates, and that is desperation, an utter hopelessness of any good (Heb. x. 27). 3. With respect to our blessedness, which is to live with God for ever in heaven. Christ was forsaken that there might be no longer any separation between us and God. Application: 1. How different are they from the Spirit of Christ that can brook God's absence without any remorse or complaint? 2. It informeth us of the grievousness

of sin. It is no easy matter to reconcile sinners to God, it cost Christ a life of sorrows, and afterwards a painful and accursed death, and in that death, loss of actual comfort, and an amazing sense of the wrath of God. 3. The greatness of our obligation to Christ, who omitted no kind of sufferings which might conduce to the expiation of sin. 4. The infiniteness of God's mercy, who appointed such a degree of Christ's sufferings—as in it He gives us the greatest ground of hope to invite us the more to submit to His terms. (*T. Manton.*)

Ver. 48-49. **And gave Him to drink.**—*The relenting crucifier:*—No ill motive could have prompted this relief of thirst. I. The relenting crucifier may have wished TO CONCEAL HIS INTEREST IN CHRIST. It is not uncommon for those who are really convinced upon the subject of religion to use arts to conceal their feelings. Or the man may only have acted a prudent part: He concealed his interest for safety, while he gave Him a proof of his compassion. II. The relenting crucifier may have been A SINCERE INQUIRER. Learn: 1. Christ on the cross for our sins is reduced to such extremity that the most common act of humanity is grateful to Him. 2. Christ will one day behold each of us in the same need of compassion and help in which we have now contemplated Him. (*N. Adams, D.D.*) *Mistaken teachers:*—The cavelling Jewish teachers aptly illustrate the attitude of many modern critics of Christ and Christianity. 1. They are alike mistaken in the nature and meaning of the supernatural in connection with revelation, as, in their views of prophecy, miracles and providence. 2. They are alike mistaken as to the methods of securing truth. "Let be, let us see," &c. 3. They are alike mistaken in waiting for other signs, when the most stupendous sign of the centuries is hanging before them. 4. They alike make their greatest mistake in substituting eye for heart, experiment for faith, the intellectual for the spiritual. Lessons: These mistakes, in all ages, lead to the same results, viz.: 1. To increased blindness of spiritual vision. 2. To an increased opposition to Christ in feeling and desire. 3. To an increased difficulty in coming to the truth as revealed in the gospel. 4. To an increased guilt. Inference: If men would avoid these unhappy outcomes, they must avoid the mistakes leading thereto. (*J. M. Allis.*)

Vers. 50-53. **Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost.**—*Seven wonders:*—There were seven wonders which made the death of Christ exceedingly remarkable. I. Over His head was written an inscription in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." That there should be a distinct recognition of His kingship over the Jewish people has ever been regarded as one of the most remarkable splendours of the Saviour's death. Typical of His sovereignty over the entire Church, which is but the prelude to His sovereignty over all worlds. Is He King in your heart? II. The conversion of the thief (Luke xxiii.). See here the majesty of Christ as a Saviour, even in His misery as an atonement. What the thief saw about Christ let us all endeavour to see—His almighty power to save. God hath laid help upon One that is mighty. Trust Him only and fully. III. The total darkness at noon-day made a fitting cavern into which Christ might retire. A picture of Christ's tremendous power. Your darkness is never so black as His. IV. The rending of the veil. An eminent type of the departure of God from the symbolical dispensation. It was all over now. Now there was no veil between man and God. The dying Saviour rends away for ever every impediment which shuts us out from the Most High. V. The earthquake. Here we see Christ's lordship over the world. The Lord of Providence. VI. The resurrection of certain of the saints. How I should like to know something about them! They were representative men; they arose as specimens of the way in which all the saints shall in their due time arise. VII. The confession of the centurion. A picture of Christ's convincing power. I hope we have felt this convincing power—it lies in the doctrine of the cross. The unrecorded wonder connected with the cross of Christ is that when we hear of it our hearts do not break, and that our dead souls do not rise. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Prodigies attending the Crucifixion:*—I. THE GREAT EVENT OF THE SAVIOUR'S DEATH. 1. That this great event did take place we have abundant testimony—(1) Profane testimony. (2) The testimony of the early Christians. (3) The testimony of the inspired writers. 2. The design of His death. (1) To atone for the world (2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Heb. x. 12; John i. 29-36; Heb. vii. 27). (2) To procure for the guilty, pardon of sin (Heb. ix. 22; Matt. xxvi. 28; Rom. iii. 25). Withheld from the unforgiving, the

unbelieving, the impenitent (Matt. xi. 26; John vii. 21, 24; Luke xiii. 2–5). (3) To procure the Holy Ghost to quicken dead sinners, &c. (4) To exhibit to the world the amazing love of God. II. THE EMBLEMATICAL AND AWFUL PRODIGIES THAT ATTENDED THAT EVENT. Christ had been charged as an imposter; how important that this testimony should be borne just at this time! 1. The darkness. Dionysius, a heathen, who observed the darkness, declared that it portended something extraordinary, and exclaimed, "Either nature is deploring, or the God of nature suffers." 2. "The veil of the temple was rent." Signifies: The abolition of the Jewish economy; that the mysteries of that dispensation were now explained; that the way of access to God was open to all believers. 3. "The earth did quake." The shaking of the moral world then, since, now, &c. 4. "The rocks rent." Emblems of the hard hearts that should be broken by Christ's death. 5. "Graves were opened," &c. Signifying that the dead in sin should be raised to a life of righteousness; that Christ had won a victory over death; that the saints of the early ages had an interest in the work of Christ; that there shall be a general resurrection of the dead. III. THE CLAIMS IT HAS UPON US. 1. It claims our attention. 2. Our faith. 3. Our affections. 4. Our zeal. (*J. Weston.*) *Effects of the death of Christ*:—I. The CIRCUMSTANCES attendant on the Saviour's death claim our attention and they attest His Divine character. "The earth did quake." The death of Christ shook the moral world and shakes it still. "The rocks rent." Emblems of the hard flinty hearts that should be subdued by the power of Christ's death. "Graves were opened," as if to denote that the hidden things of darkness should be revealed. II. THE MANNER IN WHICH THESE STRIKING EVENTS SHOULD INFLUENCE US. 1. They should confirm us in the dignity of His character. We should reflect upon the power of His death. 3. We should search for these effects upon ourselves. (*Dr. Cope.*) I. THE FACT OF THE SAVIOUR'S DEATH. 1. Christ died according to the appointment of the Divine counsels. 2. This design of God was announced in prophecy. 3. The particular manner of our Lord's death. II. THE SIGNIFICATION OF THOSE AWFUL PRODIGIES BY WHICH HIS DEATH WAS ATTENDED. 1. Of the whole of them. So many testimonies to the Messiahship of Jesus, and approbations of His work. 1. "The veil of the temple was rent"—(1) That the ceremonial arrangements of the Jewish economy were about to be abolished; (2) That the way of access is opened to all believers in God; (3) That the mysteries peculiar to the Mosaic economy were now displayed and explained. 2. "The earth did quake." (1) Another emblem of the destruction of the Jewish system. (2) How God expressed His wrath at the scenes now transacting. 3. "The graves were opened." (1) It showed that Christ achieved a victory over death. (2) That the saints of the early ages had an interest in the work of the Redeemer. (3) That there should be a general resurrection of the dead. III. THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND ITS PRODIGIES OUGHT TO POSSESS OVER THE HUMAN MIND. 1. Frequent contemplation on His death. 2. Pungent sorrow for the cause which produced His death. 3. Cordial faith in His merits. 4. Grateful thanksgiving to God for the scenes which have been unfolded. (*J. Parsons.*) *Miracles of Calvary*:—I. Miracle evinced itself in the great victim of Calvary. In the voluntary surrender of His life. Christ had power over His own life; and, not depending on the operation of nature's laws, He could dismiss the spirit, or retain it at His pleasure. II. Miracle as it evinced itself in the circumstances attending the crucifixion. (1) The miraculous facts, darkness, earthquake, rent veil, graves burst open. (2) The design of this miraculous interposition. (*a*) These miracles constituted a Divine attestation to the Messiah, even in the hour of forsaking and death. (*b*) The prodigies of Calvary served to betoken the more dread conflict and terrifying darkness of the Saviour's soul in the hour of atonement. (*c*) In the rending of the veil we are taught that the Mosaic institutions were henceforth to be superseded, the objects which they symbolized being now accomplished. (*d*) We see in these miracles the trophies and the earnest of the Redeemer's triumphs. (*John Ely.*) *Yielding up the Ghost*:—It does not appear that the special agonies which the Saviour's mental sufferings created produced death prematurely; for there does not seem to have been a paroxysm producing convulsion, nor does death appear to have been the effect of mere exhaustion: the calm which succeeded the sufferer's exclamation under Divine forsakings forbids the former conclusion; the vigour of His dying shout forbids the latter. (*Ibid.*) *Reasons for these miracles*:—In respect of—1. The Sufferer dying. 2. The creatures obeying. 3. The Jews persecuting. 4. The women beholding. 5. The disciples forsaking. (*Thos. Adams.*) *Divine testimonials to Jesus*:—1. The dream of

Pilate's wife. II. The darkness of the sky. III. The rending of the veil of the temple. IV. The earthquake at Calvary. V. The rising of the dead. (*N. Lardner.*) *The mysterious resurrections*:—I. The place where this resurrection happened. II. Who were raised. III. The time when they were raised. IV. To whom they appeared. V. Whether they soon after ascended up to heaven, or died again. VI. The truth of this history. VII. The use of this extraordinary event. Reflections: 1. We may perceive a great agreement between the life and the death of Jesus. 2. It cannot but be pleasing to observe the mildness of all the wonderful works performed by Christ and done in His favour. (3) The testimonials given to Jesus should induce us to show Him all honour and reverence. 4. Let these meditations inspire us with courage and resolution in the profession of His name. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 51. **And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain.**—*The rent veil*:—I. The event as literally recorded. II. The event in its spiritual significancy. What did the veil represent? The human nature of Christ, which was now suffering for sin. The veil of sin which separated between God and us. The abolition of Jewish ordinances. The removal of all distinctions between the Jewish and Gentile nations. III. The effects it should produce upon us. Reverence for the person and work of Christ. Confidence in His offering. How to present all our services to God. The necessity of the veil of sin being removed from our hearts. That the veil of our mortal flesh must be rent before we can enter the holiest of all. (*J. Burns, D.D.*) *The rent veil*:—I. The INTIMATIONS CONVEYED thereby. 1. That the ceremonial dispensation was now abolished. Into the holy place none were permitted to enter but the high priest alone, and he but once a year, and only then with the blood of the annual atonement. But now it is exposed to public view. The design of its institution having been accomplished, God Himself has thrown it open, thereby intimating that it is of no further use, but that another way of propitiating Him is established. 2. That the barrier between Jew and Gentile is thrown down. The offerings presented in the holy place were for the Jewish people only. But now an atonement has been made for the whole world. 3. That the way to the holiest of all is opened. The way into the holy place was with the blood and incense; the way to heaven is through the blood and intercession of Christ, who has not only abolished separation, but brought life and immortality to light. The mists which hung over the future have been dissipated by the rising of the sun of righteousness, who has shed life, fertility, and beauty over the entire prospect. II. The ENCOURAGEMENT AFFORDED thereby. In the rending of the veil we have exhibited—1. The gracious designs of God concerning us. He would have us no longer to be on the outside of the temple, "far off" from Him. He would have us freed from all the evils of separation; He would have us enjoy all the pleasures that are at His right hand for evermore. This event ought to teach us—2. Frequently to approach within the veil. There is nothing to hinder our approach; we are not confined to stated periods; the more frequently we come the more welcome we shall be. 3. Let us place all our confidence within the veil. Let us have the anchor of our hope there, sure and steadfast; thither the Forerunner has entered. (*Pulpit Outlines.*) *The rending of the veil*:—I. AS A MIRACLE ATTESTING THE DIVINITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. II. AS A SYMBOL OF THE PUTTING AWAY OF THE LEVITICAL DISPENSATION. 1. There were many things about this veil which made it a very exquisite and beautiful type of the religion then existing. It was beautiful for appearance. Was there ever a system of worship that was more beautiful, more awe-inspiring, or more touching? On the outside of the veil there were pictured the things which really existed inside. 2. While the veil was very suggestive it was yet very obscure—it was one through which the glory streamed, and which, by and by, was to be broken down. This rending of the veil was, on the part of God, the glorious "AMEN" which the Father gave to the life of Christ. III. AS SETTING FORTH SOME OF THE GREAT OBJECTS AND RESULTS OF THE ATONEMENT. 1. It set forth the body of Christ, as the Apostle Paul tells us. 2. It gave men the truth about the old Levitical dispensation. It finished it, but did not abrogate it. 3. It is through the rent veil that a way was opened into the holy of holies. You can only get to the mercy-seat through the rent veil. It is through the rent veil that the Holy Spirit descends. The way is open to everybody. In the old dispensation only the high priest could go into the holiest once a year, and in a particular manner. Blessed be God, it is not so now! There is no veil now—nothing to keep you away. If there is a veil, you weave it with your own hands; it is in your own hearts. (*S. Coley.*) *Christ the only way to the Father*:—

Theodore Parker, in one of his books, so flashingly bright with genius, but so awfully dark with infidelity, daringly asks why we cannot go ourselves before the All-Father, and speak to Him for ourselves, without talking by attorney, and whining about our Brother's name! Ah, he has made a great mistake. No, no; you can never get into that holiest place but through the rent veil, and you will be shut out for ever if you try to go in any other way. It is through Christ, and through Christ alone, that we can get access to the Father. I am glad to leave my case with Jesus. I am glad to go to the Father through my Saviour, and to use His name, which is ever fragrant with merit; but if any man shall go without that name, and should choose to stand on the ground of bare justice, he will get justice, and he will not get any mercy. (*Ibid.*) *The Divinity of Judaism*:—I should like you to notice that the very way in which God put away Hebraism, at the same time marked its Divinity. Supposing an Act of Parliament were passed in this year of the reign of Queen Victoria to repeal a law that was made in the time of Charles I.—do you not see that the very Act which would repeal the law would acknowledge that it was a law? for Parliament never repeals that which is not law, but the very form of repeal is itself an endorsement. So when God by a miracle repealed Hebraism, it was as if He had said that up to that moment it had been Divine. Thus, you see, in this way Christianity links on with Judaism, and you are not to think that the New Testament throws any slur or slight upon the old dispensation. In fact, I should think that the Jews would have been quite right in keeping on their services if it had not been that God, by miracles, had put them away; for it was by miracle that He had instituted them, and it wanted the same authority to repeal as it did to enact. (*Ibid.*) *The veil rent in twain*:—I. THE EVENT RECORDED. It meant broadly the end of the age of shadows; the end of the childhood's stage in man's education. II. THE SPECIAL RELATION OF THE RENDING OF THE VEIL TO THE EVENT WHICH IT ILLUSTRATED. The deep meaning is that it was rent at the crucifixion: it fixes our thoughts upon that death as the end of the incarnate life. III. THE LIGHT WHICH THIS SIGN FORECASTS ON THE EXPERIENCE, THE HISTORY, AND THE DESTINY OF MANKIND. 1. It proclaims that man as man has access to the heavenly temple. 2. That the powers of the world to come have entered into and possessed man and his world. The human is not an outer dependency but an inner province of the heavenly kingdom. 3. The final overthrow and abolition of death. The angel of death advances through the veil to meet us, to repay our tears with glories. (*J. B. Brown, B.A.*)

Ver. 54. **Truly this was the Son of God.**—*Homage of reason and conscience to the facts of the Christian religion*:—Men's hearts often harden in proportion to the privileges they enjoy. Hence heathens look on the affecting scene in a different state of mind than the Jews. They were nearer the kingdom of heaven. I. We have in this declaration A TESTIMONY TO THE IMPRESSIVE CHARACTER OF THOSE GREAT HISTORICAL FACTS WHICH WERE CONNECTED WITH THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY. These facts are the basis of Christianity. Familiarity with them may tend to rob them of their greatness. It is so with the wonders of nature; the sun ceases to astonish us. It is with the first impression produced by these events that we have to do. The centurion and his band were not predisposed to attach any peculiar sanctity to these events. They had no previous knowledge as to the meaning of them. They had been educated in the paganism of the Romans; they worshipped many gods. They may have seen that the Jews adored no images, that they paid respect to the Temple as the house of their one God. This knowledge of Judaism may have prepared this centurion to use language different from that of the pagan idolatry. This Roman officer would appear to have had every opportunity of becoming acquainted with the things which happened at this time at Jerusalem. Natural and civil history are full of remarkable events. They are to be viewed in general relation to the sinfulness of man; they may at the same time be traced to natural causes. But the events which attracted the attention of the centurion were of a different order. It was a solitary occurrence in the history of the world. The like had never happened before. There was a remarkable response and sympathy between the natural and moral world of human life. The course of nature is generally indifferent to the facts of human life; the moon shines on the wreck. But here nature seems roused from her general apathy to human affairs. Well might such extraordinary events convince men that more was going on than met the eye—that the sufferer was no ordinary Person. The prelude of events to the cross might deepen the impression. II. PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT FROM THEIR

TESTIMONY. I regard their testimony as the homage of reason and conscience to the general truth of the Christian religion. All they had seen manifested that Jesus was the Son of God. What a depth of meaning in these words to us. 1. The glory of the Son of God was more illustrious by the very humiliation which attended His course. 2. In what light does "this was the Son of God" exhibit man's moral view and the evil of sin. 3. If the Son of God must thus become a public spectacle of suffering and death, in order to exhibit the method by which it seems good to the Sovereign Will of God that sinners should approach Him; let us rejoice in the Father's love, and in the Saviour's love, Who became obedient unto the death of the cross. 4. How solid is the ground on which the guilty may apply for pardon. 5. The Saviour justly claims the hearts and obedience of all. (*J. Hoppus, LL.D.*)

Vers. 57–60. **There came a rich man of Arimathæa.**—*Joseph of Arimathæa:*—I. The burial of Jesus by Joseph and his friend is an interesting illustration of faith. He accepted the evidence that Jesus was Christ. The popular fury had not affected his faith. Calm and dignified in his faith, he respectfully makes his request to Pilate. When we believe with all the heart we shall not be hindered by great difficulties from professing Christ. II. In the conduct of Joseph we have an illustration of MORAL COURAGE AND DECISION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER. It exposed any man to loss of reputation to favour one who was subject to crucifixion. III. The conduct of Joseph is an illustration of THE POWER WHICH ARDENT LOVE FOR CHRIST HAS ON THE LIFE AND CONDUCT. Here was the secret of his courage, the hiding of its power. He loved Christ. IV. The grace of God CAN PREVAIL OVER HINDRANCES TO FAITH AND CHRISTIAN ZEAL IN THE CHARACTERS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF MEN. It is remarkable that the two men who performed this courageous act were men once timid and cautious. God can place us in circumstances where our faith can suddenly acquire the force of years. We naturally like men at once to declare for Christ, like the morning star which glows in the sun-rising. Some are like St. John, constant from first to last. V. The REWARD which Joseph had for his conduct. There in his tomb life and immortality were brought to light. The builder of the Pyramids is not to be compared for fame to the owner of that tomb. Every one of us has his own peculiar opportunity of showing his attachment to Christ. (*N. Adams, D.D.*) *The burial of Jesus:*—There has been no time to get a bier, or it is felt that the distance is so short that it is not needed. That body, however, has the best bier of all—the hands of true affection to lift it and carry it across to the new tomb which waits to receive it. The feet let us assign to Joseph, the body to Nicodemus, and that regal head with those closed eyes, over whom the shadows of the resurrection are already flitting, let us lay it on the breast of the beloved disciple John, who, possibly, was present standing with the Galilean women. The last service which Jesus ever needed at the hands of men it has been their privilege to render. For this service shall we not honour them, and forget that they were once secret disciples? Yea, verily; what they thus did for the Lord's burial shall be told for a memorial of them, wherever this gospel of the kingdom is preached. (*Dr. Hanna.*) *A remarkable funeral:*—I. The corpse—It is "the body of Jesus." II. The undertaker—"A rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph." III. The preparations he made for the burial—He first "begged" the body, &c. IV. The time of the funeral—Evening. V. The mourners—No hired ones. (*American Hom. Review.*) *The burial of Jesus:*—I. THE SEPULCHRE. 1. Its situation—in a garden. Preaching of a new life arising from decay and death. In all human gardens of domestic and social joy, there is death. 2. It was a new tomb. The true consecration of the great world—sepulchre. 3. It was a rich man's tomb. Jesus has been in many rich men's *homes* and hearts since. Yet the aim of "many rich" seems to be, to bury Jesus—fashion, form, &c. 4. Hewn out of a rock. The strength of the tomb collateral proof of genuineness of resurrection. II. THE MOURNERS. 1. Their characters suggestive. 2. Their number very small—a mere handful. More rejoicers than mourners. Very few of the disciples, but He is present at the death of every disciple. 3. Their grief intense. The Magdalene had lost her Saviour; the Virgin her Son; the rest a dear Friend. III. THE INTERMENT. 1. Hurried. 2. Costly. More was spent upon Jesus at His burial than at any time before. 3. Vigilance of His enemies; they cannot leave even His sepulchre alone. The seal and the guard. Their unintended testimony to the reality of the resurrection. Learn: 1. Christ entered the grave to rob it of its gloom. 2. Rejoice in a living Saviour—not hide Him out of sight. (*J. C. Gray.*)

Vers. 62–66. **Command therefore that the sepulchre be made secure.**—*The Jew and the Roman watching the sepulchre*:—I. This passage of sacred history illustrates the truth that God has "made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." "There is no counsel, nor wisdom, nor understanding against the Lord." II. Some Christians are chosen of God to display by their great trials His power and wisdom, as Christ was by His death and burial and resurrection. III. Bad men should be objects of pity rather than of fear or anger. IV. Everything relating to the resurrection of Christ is unspeakably interesting for this reason, "He was raised again for our justification." (*N. Adams, D.D.*) *Sabbath-breaking*:—It is a poetical justice that they who have so often accused the Saviour of Sabbath-breaking, now themselves finally desecrate this day. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Anxiety on account of Christ, even when dead*:—It is a common proverb, "Dead men bite not." But here Christ, though dead and buried, bites and beats hard upon these evil men's consciences. They could not rest the whole night before, for fear He should get out of the grave some way, and so create them further trouble. Scipio appointed his sepulchre to be so placed, as his image standing upon it might look directly towards Africa, that being dead, he might still be a terror to the Carthaginians. And Cadwallo, an ancient king of this island, commanded his dead body to be embalmed and put into a brazen image, and so set upon a brazen horse over Ludgate for a terror to the Saxons. It is well-known that Zisca, that brave Bohemian, charged his Taborites to flay his corpse, and head a drum with his skin; the sound whereof, as oft as the enemies heard, they should be appalled and put to flight. And our Edward I. adjured his son and nobles that if he died in his journey into Scotland, they should carry his corpse about with them, and not suffer it to be interred till they had vanquished the usurper and subdued the country. Something like to this the prophet Isaiah foretelleth of our Saviour (and we see it here accomplished), when he saith, "In that day the root of Jesse shall stand up for an ensign to the people, and even his rest (or, as some read it, his sepulchre) shall be glorious (Isa. xi. 10). There are that think that these words, "The day that followed the day of the preparation," are put ironically, or by way of a jest against the hypocritical sabbatism of the high priests, who would so workday-like, beg the body, seal the sepulchre, and set the watch on that Sabbath, for the which they seemed to prepare so devoutly before it came. (*John Trapp.*) *Unavailing precautions*:—Now they seemed to dance upon Christ's grave, as thinking themselves cock-sure of Him. So did those bloody tyrants of the primitive times make no other reckoning, but to raze out the name of Christ from under heaven. Therefore, also, they did not only constitute laws and proclamations against Christians, but did engrave the same laws in tables of brass, meaning to make all things firm for ever and a day. But He that sat in heaven, and said, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion," laughed at them; Jehovah had them in derision. Look how Daniel was innocently condemned, cast into the lions' den, had the door sealed upon him, and, to see to, no hope or means of life was left him; and yet, by God's good providence, he came forth untouched, and was made a greater man than before. So our blessed Saviour was innocently condemned, cast into the grave, sealed up among the dead, and to common judgment left as out of mind; yet early in the morning, at the time appointed by the power of His Deity, He raised Himself from death, and gloriously triumphed over it and hell. (*Ibid.*)

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

**VER. 1. In the end of the Sabbath.**—*The meaning and memories of Sunday*:—Let us consider some of the religious principles which have given and preserved this holy day to us. I. "The first day of the week" is a DAY OF MIGHTY MEMORIES—memories that we cannot let die. 1. The celebration of the Lord's Day has never lost sight of that precious fact in all revelation and religion—the creation of the world and of man, and consequently all the claim of God's law upon our conscience, and of God's goodness on our gratitude. The main idea of the Sabbatic rest is that man should occasionally lift his eyes from the clouds of earth and gaze into the face of his Creator. 2. "The first day of the week" is full of the memories of redemption. 3. "The first day of the week" is the great memorial of the giving of the Holy

Spirit of God to man. It is the memorial of the beginning of that great work in human nature by which it becomes like Christ, and is made one with God—the incarnation of the Holy Ghost. II. "The first day of the week" IS A DAY OF HAPPY AND NOBLE ASSOCIATIONS. It is rich in memories of the past great acts of God, but it comes down burdened with all the brightest and most beautiful thoughts of earth; great revivals of human friendships; great, stirring conflicts with evil; the great, prosperous changes and revolutions of nations—the deliverance of untold millions from the slavery of sin and the power of death; have all left their impress upon it. III. It is a day of HOLY ANTICIPATIONS. Memory is blessed; but what would men do without hope. The "first day of the week" predicts perpetually the Sabbath of God's love—the end of conflict, the light of heaven. IV. It is a day of HOLY DUTIES. It is the *first* day of the week, not the last, the day of activity, not of indolent repose. This day will lend a meaning to your other days. "Hallow God's Sabbaths." (*H. R. Reynolds, B.A.*) *The day of resurrection:*—Philip Henry used to call the Lord's Day the queen of days, the pearl of the week, and observed it accordingly. His common salutation of his family or friends on the Lord's Day in the morning, was that of the primitive Christians—"The Lord is risen, He is risen indeed;" making it his chief business on that day to celebrate the memory of Christ's resurrection; and he would say sometimes, "Every Lord's Day is a true Christian's Easter Day."

Vers. 2–4. **And behold, there was a great earthquake.**—*The earthquake trumpet:*—An earthquake was a royal trumpet to proclaim this victory, the greatest that ever was obtained against an enemy. The deep murmur and hollow sound which came from beneath the earth gave notice at one blast to heaven, and hell, and to all Judea, that the Son of God about that instant (as I do verily believe) did break the gates of brass, and smite the bars of death in sunder. (*Bishop Hacket.*) *Six reasons for the earthquake:*—I. It makes us conceit that there was a great struggling, and a combat between Christ and death. II. It betokens what noise and tumult there shall be in all the elements at the last and great resurrection. III. It signifies that the majesty of the Lord was upon the earth to defend His people. IV. The anger of the Lord did roar out of the earth against those Jews who thought to prevail that death should devour him, against Pilate that allowed his seal to this conspiracy, and against the soldiers that watched the sepulchre. V. Because the consciences of these evil men were only wounded, and no other harm done by the earthquake, therefore, some say, the place round about did rather dance for joy than quake for trembling. VI. Is allegorical, and thus in brief, that our hearts must be shaken and inwardly troubled with compunction and repentance before we believe steadfastly in the resurrection of Jesus. (*Ibid.*) *Keepers like dead men:*—The sentinels were not "as dead men" long; and when they woke, they found the tomb empty, and the tenant gone. Thoughts of the spirit-land and impressions of reverence were not in their world; the shock they had received woke no thought or question, but sheer physical terror only. As horses are frightened in the flashes of the tempest, and the wild things of the woods are suddenly tame in the blow of any tremendous flood or fire; so these strong human animals were cowed by the lightning from an angel's face. They would have been dauntless amidst the shock of battle and the din of arms, but they were dumb before a being who was not of flesh and blood. White as the dead, they at once burst into the presence of their masters and told all. (*Charles Stanford, D.D.*)

Ver. 5. **And the angel answered and said unto the women.**—*Fears dispelled:*—Why should not the seekers of Jesus fear? I. Because in seeking Him, they have an evidence that He has sought them, and found them, and touched their hearts. II. They that seek Christ should rejoice; for in seeking they shall certainly find. III. In finding Christ, they find everything suited to banish their fears. Christ has magnified the law. Sin taken away that troubles the conscience; death disarmed of his sting; the grave of its terrors; the dominion of Satan destroyed. IV. Nothing shall finally separate them who have sought and found Christ (Rom. viii. 38, 39). (*H. Foster.*) *An Easter thought for those who are seeking Jesus:*—Never had women more cause to fear than these helpless creatures, who came forth with trembling steps, but loving hearts, to the sepulchre of the crucified Christ. Most blessed then to them must have been the angel's words, "Fear not." They speak to *us* as much as to the women at the sepulchre, &c. Light streams forth upon us in this passage from three dis-

tinct sources. I. From THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. 1. They were women, who from their sex were naturally timid, and had in themselves nothing to enable them to face a supernatural appearance, or any of the terrors of such a scene as we have here. The doctrine of inherent weakness. 2. From the emphatic word "YE," the most important instruction is to be derived. "Ye" are Jesus' friends; no cause for fear have "ye." Full of teaching to those, who, weak, frightened, sorrowful, are seeking Jesus. Also to His true disciples, however weak, &c. They stand in the power of their relationship to Christ, and need desire no more. II. FROM THE WORK IN WHICH THEY WERE ENGAGED. There was—1. Loving personal search. They are blessed indeed who are thus seeking after Christ; like these women, they want to get to Himself. 2. Loving service. 3. Entire devotion to one rejected by the world. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *The women's visit to the grave of Jesus*:—I. The gloomy approach. Characterized by visible grief, secret hope, timid faith. II. The wonderful experience. The anticipated difficulty removed. The unexpected vision. The overpowering fear. The consoling exhortation. III. The joyous return. Mingled emotions leading to rapid movement. The blessed meeting by the way. The salutation and commission. (*E. W. Wilson.*) *The women-friends of Jesus*:—1. Women, though weak, are capable of religious offices. No understanding so weak, but it may believe; no body so weak, but it may do something in some calling. 2. These women were early in their religious work, they began betimes. 3. As they were early and forward, so were they earnest and sedulous. 4. Upon what their devotion was carried; upon things which could not entirely be done; yet God accepted their devotion. Where the root and substance of the work is piety, God pretermits many times errors in circumstance. (*John Donne.*)

Vers. 6, 7. **He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.**—*The open sepulchre a seal of redemption*:—I. The place which the angel bade the women come and see was an open, EMPTY TOMB. Earth is the place of tombs. There is no tomb in heaven; no silent grave in hell. Every grave of earth will yet be empty. II. MOMENTOUS TRUTHS were uttered from the open, empty tomb where the Lord had lain. 1. The first voice proclaims the evil and the power of sin. Sin dug for Death all his graves. Sin has slain the Beloved of the Lord. 2. The second voice proclaims redemption from sin. The open grave of Christ is a three-fold sign of (1) acceptance; (2) liberty; and (3) life. III. There are some holy LESSONS which men may learn as they linger by the Redeemer's open, empty tomb. 1. Come and see the place where the Lord lay, and learn a lesson of penitence for sin. 2. Come and see the place where the Lord lay, and learn a lesson of love to Him. The grave of loved ones has a strange fascination. 3. Come and see the place where the Lord lay, and realize your union with Him and nearness to Him. 4. Come and be in alliance with those who honour Christ. 5. Behold He is alive for evermore. (*D. Rose, M.A.*) *Easter morning*:—1. Standing where the Lord lay I am impressed with the fact that mortuary honours cannot atone for wrongs to the living. 2. That floral and sculptural ornamentation are appropriate for the place of the dead. Christ was buried in a garden. 3. I am impresssd with the dignity of private and unpretending obsequies. Funeral pageantry is not necessary. 4. I am impressed with the fact that you cannot keep the dead down. The seal of the Sanhedrin, soldiers, cannot keep Christ in the crypt. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *The great argument of the resurrection*:—1. The resurrection of Christ considered in relation to Himself as the promised Saviour of men. 2. The resurrection of Christ in relation to the comfort and service of His immediate friends and disciples. 3. The resurrection of Christ from the dead viewed in relation to the enemies of our Lord. 4. The resurrection of Christ considered in its relation to the religious life and experience of believers. 5. The resurrection of our Lord considered in relation to the thoughts and feelings of Christians when contemplating death. (*T. Lloyd.*) *The resurrection of our Lord—the fact and its consequences*:—I. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we affirm to be a FACT. 1. Were the apostles deceived? 2. If not deceived, did they wilfully proclaim a falsehood? II. Note some of its CONSEQUENCES. 1. The resurrection furnishes the only positive proof of our immortality. 2. It also assures us of our redemption, and this gives definite hope for the future. 3. It assures us of the redemption of the body. (*H. Ward.*) *The risen Saviour*:—I. This declaration proclaims THE ACTUAL RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. A fact established by the clearest evidence. II. This language expresses several FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS. 1. The humiliation of Christ. 2. The infinite love of God. 3. The Divine faithfulness. 4. The Divine sovereignty. 5. Christ's

triumph over all His enemies and ours. 6. The certain and glorious pledge of the perfecting of salvation. (*Pulpit Themes.*) *Watching for the resurrection:*—As the flowers wait for the spring, and the yellow corn waits for the summer, and the stars wait for the morning, and as Lazarus waited in sweet silence for the voice of Jesus to awake him out of sleep, so do the blessed dead wait for the resurrection. (*G. W. M'Crec.*) *The proofs of the resurrection of Christ:*—I. PRESUMPTIVE OR CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE. 1. The precaution of the Jews. 2. The departure of Jesus from the sepulchre. 3. The change which took place in the apostles after this event. II. THE TESTIMONY OF CREDIBLE WITNESSES. 1. The sufficiency of evidence depends upon the number of the witnesses, their qualifications, and their information. 2. Their competency being established, now examine their credibility. Their testimony was honest, prominent, explicit, and constant. III. DIVINE TESTIMONY. The Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ's resurrection. 1. By the predictions of the prophets. 2. By the miracles of the apostles. 3. By the success of the gospel. (*T. Gibson. M.A.*) *The resurrection of Christ:*—I. LET US LOOK AT IT AS A FACT ESTABLISHED BY RELIABLE EVIDENCE. "He is risen." 1. In order to a true resurrection we must first have it clearly established that at the time of His burial He was really dead. The soldiers found Jesus already dead. He was buried in a new tomb; hence no other body could have been substituted for that of our Lord. Nicodemus, Joseph of Aremathæa, and the women who assisted at His burial are witnesses of His death. 2. The testimony of those who saw our Lord alive after His resurrection. II. But passing from the fact itself, let us consider its relation to the Saviour's former utterances, "He is risen, *as He said*" (John ii. 18–21; Matt. xii. 40; Matt. xvi. 21; Matt. xvii. 22). Christ perilled His whole Deity and Messiahship on His resurrection. There is a three-fold attestation in this wondrous event. 1. It proved Him to be a prophet, a miracle-worker, and it threw back its authenticating light on everything said and done by Him during His earthly ministry. Thus we learn to view the resurrection of our Lord as the foundation of our faith. Take this chapter out of the gospel and all others are worthless. Two influences—1. Hope through life—"God hath begotten us unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 2. An influence of comfort in bereavement and death coming from this theme. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *A living hope awakened by the resurrection of Christ:*—Mark the expression a "lively" or living hope. The expectation of perfected salvation which the believer cherishes is not contented with indifference or inactivity. It is a living, not a dying or dead thing, and it animates him to most earnest efforts after the attainment of the object to which it looks. A ship's crew have been forced to leave a sinking vessel and commit themselves in an open and frail boat to the mercy of the ocean. They do not know that they shall be picked up, but they have an intense desire to be delivered and a vague hope that they shall be. Day passes after day. Their scanty stock of provisions is almost exhausted, the water is entirely spent, and hope in them is all but dead, so that every energy within them is paralyzed. But lo! far away on the dim horizon a sail appears, and in a moment the hope that seemed ready to expire is quickened into activity. First they raise a faint but thankful cheer; then they uplift any sort of a flag they can extemporize as a signal of distress; then they take to the oars and summon up the remnant of their strength, if by any means they may near the vessel's course, and attract the attention of those who man her. What a difference one short hour has made in those worn and haggard men! A little while ago they were ready to perish, but now they are all activity, for the sight of that far-off sail has begotten them to a "living hope." So Christ's resurrection brings living hope to the sinner's heart. (*Ibid.*) *Come see the place where the Lord lay:*—I. And be assured that He is risen from the dead. II. And behold the completion of human redemption. III. And view it with penitential grief. IV. Ye who love Him, learn to view without fear your own final resting-place, and rejoice in the assurance that His resurrection is the pledge and type of your own. Adore Him for the love which led him to sleep in the sepulchre that you might rise and partake of His glory for ever. (*J. Johnson, M.A.*) *The empty sepulchre:*—"Come and see the place where the Lord lay." 1. It is a garden. 2. It is a garden with a grave in it. The world has no unmingled cup of sweet to offer. Because that tomb is empty and Christ is risen there need be no blight without a blessing, no sorrow without a joy, &c. 3. It is a new tomb where never man was laid. 4. You can see by its size, its position, its adornments, that it belongs to a family possessed of wealth—it is a grave of the rich. Fulfilment of prophecy—Isa. liii. 9. 5. The

heavy stone, which brawny arms had rolled against its entrance, making it fast, and setting a seal on it, is rolled away. The finger of God touches the mighty incubus and it moves. 6. And find the sepulchre empty. Christ is risen! (1) The seal of truth is put upon all He said and did. God would have never raised a pretender. (2) The offering of Jesus for the sins of men is hereby accepted. (3) He has Divine life in Himself, and the same Spirit that raised up Jesus from death and the dark can raise up dead souls. This is the true power of His resurrection. Are we risen with Christ? (4) A pledge of His power and purpose to raise again from the dominion of the grave the bodies of the race He hath redeemed. Comfort for the bereaved. (5) Then He hath also ascended up into glory, He hath taken possession of His inheritance, and is the forerunner of the saints. "Opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." Think of departed loved ones emerged from the ruins of the tomb, &c. (6) Then He lives to-day to be our Friend and Guide and Helper. How much we need Him, &c. Christian, gird up your loins afresh! Yours is a living faith in a living Saviour. Sinner! He is risen. What then? Then He is that man whom God hath ordained to judge the world. (*J. J. Wray.*) *A new tomb where never man was yet laid*:—Why? For this reason: The fact of Christ's resurrection is at the basis of Christianity. Our whole religion must stand or fall with the coming to life again of the Man Jesus. "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." God hath therefore hedged it round with special tokens, evidences which may well hush the doubter and strike the sceptic dumb. In the Old Testament we read that contact with the sacred dust of the Prophet Elisha did once raise a man to life; and a Jewish superstition invested the bones of their holier heroes with a similar power. Had this been an old and much-used grave, the enemies of Jesus would have been quick to suggest *that* as the cause of the resurrection. So Providence provides a new tomb, where never man was laid. Again, old tombs and ancient sepulchres often had secret passages, subterranean avenues, and connections with each other and the outer world. How ready would the unbelievers have been to suggest that by such secret means the body had been carried off by His disciples and interred elsewhere! Hence it is a new tomb, cut in the face of the solid rock, one only means of entrance and of exit, watched and tended by the Roman guard. (*Ibid.*) *The place where the Lord lay is*:—I. A place of instruction. 1. The fact of His resurrection. 2. What is the significance of the fact? It means that the atonement is complete. II. A place of life. Christ's life assures us of life for the body and soul of man. III. A place of comfort—"Fear not ye." IV. A place of hope. (*D. Merson, B.D.*) *Jesus has lighted up the grave*:—It is said that the Romans had a practice of lighting up their tombs. In Essex a tomb was once opened, when a lamp was found in the corner, and a chair near it indicating the rank of the tomb-tenant; and it is recorded that fifteen hundred years after the death of Tullia, Cicero's daughter, her tomb, which was accidentally opened, was found illuminated with a lamp. It was but a glimmering light, the rays of which were confined to the catacomb walls. But the light Christ sheds upon the grave falls upon the vista of eternity. You can now stoop, look in, and see immortality beyond. (*Blacket's "Young Men's Class."*) *Death and resurrection of Christ*:—Lend me your imaginations for a minute, while I endeavour to picture a scene. Christ had paid the price—the full price: that price was presented before the Father's judgment-seat. He looked at it, and was content. But as it was a solemn matter, it was not hurried over. Three days were taken, that the ransom-price might be counted out; and its value fully estimated. The angels looked, and admired. The "spirits of the just" came and examined it, and wondered, and were delighted. The very devils in hell could only express their satisfaction by biting their iron bonds, and sullenly keeping silence, because they had not a word to speak against the sacrifice of Christ. The three days passed away, and the atonement was fully accepted. Then the angel came from heaven—swift as the lightning flash—he descended from the spheres of the blessed, into this lower earth, and he came into the prison-house, in which the Saviour's body slept; for, mark, His body had been kept in the prison till God ratified His atonement and accepted it—He was lying there a hostage for His people. The angel came, and spake to the keeper of the prison, one called Grim Death, and said to him, "Let that captive go free." Death was sitting on his throne of skulls, with a huge iron key at his girdle of iron: and he laughed, and said, "Aha! thousands and thousands of the race of Adam have passed the portals of this prison-house; but none of them have ever been delivered. That key has been once turned in its wards by destiny; and no mortal power can ever turn it

back again, and draw the bolts from their resting-places." Then the angel showed to him Heaven's own warrant, and Death turned pale. The angel grasped the key —unlocked the prison door, and stepped in. There slept the Royal Captive—the Divine hostage. And the angel cried, "Arise, Thou Sleeper! Put off Thy garments of death. Shake Thyself from the dust, and put on Thy beautiful garments." The Master arose. He unwound the napkin, and laid it by itself. He took off His graveclothes and laid them by themselves, to show He was in no hurry, that all was done legally, and therefore orderly. He did not dash His prison-walls aside to come out; but came out by legal process, just as He had entered in. He seemed to express Himself as Paul did, "No, verily, let them come themselves, and fetch Me out." So was the Master set at liberty—by heaven's own officer, who came from heaven to give Him just liberty — God's proof that He had done all that was necessary. Thou Lamb of God! I see Thee rising from Thy tomb in splendour ineffable, dazzling the eyes of the guards and making them flee away in terror. And when I see Thee risen from the dead, I see myself accepted, and all Thy dying redeemed people fully delivered. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 8. **And they departed quickly from the sepulchre.**—*Joy in the morning:*— Just as a man who has travelled in the dark, looks back at break of day from some lofty eminence on the way that he has gone, and admires the beauty and magnificence of objects that he passed, aware only of their existence and not their claims, or even deeming them objects of fear and not of delight, so the disciples, when enlightened from above, recalled the scenes and events of their Master's life, and rejoiced in much which at the time they had not understood. Thus was it especially with the death and departure of Christ. They were to His followers like the fabled statue of Memnon, which sent forth sounds, mournful in the night, but melodious at the rising of the sun: when God's morning light arose, how sweet the notes those facts, once only sad, emitted. (*A. J. Morris.*) *Sorrow ministering to joy:*—It is said that gardeners sometimes, when they would bring a rose to richer flowering, deprive it for a season of light and moisture. Silent and dark it stands, dropping one fading leaf after another, and seeming to go down patiently to death. But when every leaf is dropped, and the plant stands stripped to the uttermost, a new life is even then working in the buds, from which shall spring a tender foliage and a brighter wealth of flowers. So often, in celestial gardening, every leaf of earthly joy must drop, before a new and Divine bloom visits the soul. (*Mrs. H. B. Stowe.*) *Joy the shadow of sorrow:*—In this world full often our joys are only the tender shadows which our sorrows cast. (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Vers. 9, 10. **And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.**—*How the risen Christ is seen:*—It is not supposed that the impartial Christ, or the Christianity of His gospel, literally prefers one sex to the other. But He respects the nature of each, and does not abrogate the laws of that nature. To that one, therefore, that has the clearer spiritual eyesight, Christ will disclose the first radiancy of His glory. In that sex that loves most, and therefore, suffers most, and is perhaps capable of sinning most, He finds the faith-faculty most ready to recognize Him, and on that, therefore—as if in a kind of compensation for the first sin, and the tender sensitiveness to all injury—He bestows the blessing of the earliest benediction of His resurrection voice. The general destinction thus drawn between the sexes reappears, in its measure, between individuals of each of the two; and there is thus a similar advance of clearness in the other succeeding manifestations. The circle gradually enlarges from the solitary Mary to a great company of men as they are gradually prepared to see and believe. I. This is the certification afforded by our Saviour's resurrection TO THE FACT OF HIS DIVINITY. "They came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him." They worshipped, and He did not check it. Was He not the one that teaches of what their worship is? The resurrection had transfigured, and as it were had divinized all his mortal signs. It had never been heard before that a man lifted himself, by his own will, out of the grave, and asserted his superiority to all the forces of destruction. Surely here must be nothing less than the Creator's majesty. In the glorified form the "Son of God" stood revealed not less than the "Son of Man." They worshipped Him. Place beside this truth another. These faithful believers were not believers in a one-sided or ultra-spiritualism—"They *held Him by the feet*, and worshipped Him." Here were two signs of a living faith, the touch and the bended knees. Both were welcome to Him who knows every secret spring of the

soul's strength, and who replaces the dead formalism of the Law with the vital forms of a spiritual kingdom. Again, a supreme value is set here, for the Christian life, on the Saviour's personal presence. To the Church for eighteen hundred years it has been spiritual, not corporeal, yet literal and real. Men of action and thought, if you do not feel anything real about this I know not how to reason with you about it. We can only tell you what we have seen or felt. Those institutions and movements in the world, however active and religious, seem to have no permanent life in them, which are without this living conscious connection with the person and presence of Christ, so as to draw their constant supplies of power from Him. They seem like streams, however full, which run from a cistern and not from the fountain in the hills. He does not say to them "All hail." I am sure that Christ is with me and has for me all the power and love I need; He lives greatly in me and for me. As it was then, so now; they who are spiritually best prepared by affliction, earnestness, sympathy, with the spirit of His life and laws, and by love for Him, have the clearest and earliest disclosures of His Deified presence. (*Bishop Huntingdon*). *Meeting with Jesus*:—All that concerns our Lord after His resurrection is calm and happy. A French writer calls the forty days on earth, "The life of Jesus Christ in glory"; truly it was glory as full as earth could then bear. His tomb was empty, and consequently the disciples' griefs would have been over, had they fully understood what that vacant grave meant. Then was their choicest time for living fellowship with their risen Lord, and He did not fail to grant them the privilege on many memorable occasions. Since our Lord is risen, we also may have happy communion with Him. These are days in which we may expect Him to manifest Himself to us spiritually, as He did for forty days to the disciples coporeally. Let us not be satisfied unless it is often said of us, "Jesus met them." I. IN THE WAY OF SERVICE JESUS MEETS US—"As they went to tell," &c. 1. He may come at other times, as He did to those who visited the sepulchre, to those walking out to Emmaus, to others fishing, and to the eleven assembled for mutual consolation. 2. He is likeliest to come when we are doing His work, since (*a*) we are then most awake, and most able to see Him; (*b*) we are then in special need of Him; (*c*) we are then most in accord with Him. 3. But, come when Jesus may, it will be a blessed visitation, worthy to be prefaced by a "Behold!" Oh, that he would come *now!* II. WHEN JESUS MEETS US HE HAS EVER A GOOD WORD FOR US. The fittest motto for resurrection fellowship is "All hail!" 1. A word of salutation. 2. A word of benediction. 3. A word of gratulation. 4. A word of pacification. III. WHEN JESUS MEETS US IT BECOMES US TO AROUSE OURSELVES. We ought at such times to be like the disciples, who were—1. All alive with hopeful energy. "They came." In eager haste they drew near to Him. What life it would put into preachers and hearers if the Lord Jesus would manifestly appear unto them! Dulness flees when Jesus is seen. 2. All aglow with happy excitement. They "held Him by the feet," hardly knowing what they did, but enraptured with the sight of Him. 3. All ardent with reverent love. They "worshipped Him." What heartiness they threw into that lowly adoration! 4. All amazed at His glory. They were prostrate, and began to fear. 5. All afraid lest they should lose their bliss. They grasped Him, and held Him by the feet. IV. FROM SUCH A MEETING WE SHOULD GO ON A FURTHER ERRAND. 1. We must not plead spiritual absorption as an excuse for inactivity, but must "go" at our Lord's bidding. 2. We must seek the good of others, because of their relation to our Lord. He says, "Tell *My brethren*." 3. We must communicate what our Lord has imparted—"Go, *tell*." 4. We must encourage our brethren by the assurance that joy, similar to ours, awaits them—"There shall *they* see Me." Thus shall we best realize and retain the choice benefits of intercourse with the Lord. Not only for ourselves, but mainly for the benefit of others, are we to behold our Lord. Then let us go to holy work hoping to meet Jesus as we go. Let us go to more holy work when we have met Him. Let us labour to abide in Him, looking for His promised appearing, and exhorting others to do the same. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

**Vers. 11–15. Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away.**—*The chief priests' story*:—I. Let us begin with an EXACT UNDERSTANDING of the whole story at once. II. Coolly and dispassionately it becomes us to WEIGH THE TALE, therefore, on its merits. 1. In the very outset the antecedent improbability of particulars crushes it. How came a trained watch all to sleep? 2. The immediate followers of Jesus had no motive to steal the body of their Lord. 3. They had no

concerted plan to do any such thing. 4. The Jews never told this tale in any judicial audience or court, so that it could be subject to cross-examination. Stealing was a capital crime, yet none of the disciples were ever arrested. 5. There was awful risk to the soldiers if this story was true. Death was the penalty of a Roman sentinel asleep at his post. 6. The inherent impossibility of the act itself. 7. Then what could have been done with the body after the disciples had got it in possession? The resurrection of Jesus is more than a fact; it is a doctrine; and takes all the other Christian doctrines in its train. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *An arrant Jewish fable*:—For indeed this text is a mere romancy, as arrant a Jewish fable as ever was told; a conspiracy so full of rotten fictions that nothing is true in it all, but that it is a conspiracy, that it is a fiction. I. Then we must bolt out the confederates. II. The way of confederacy is by putting a forged tale in the soldiers' mouths. III. The plot is collaterally against the disciples for being breakers-up of graves and robbers of the dead. IV. The main intended contrivance was to discredit the true doctrine of our Saviour's resurrection. V. Handle the improbability of all, of what contradictions the plot consists, never to be pieced together. (*Bishop Hacket.*) *The Roman soldiers and the Jewish rulers*:—Show the falsehood and improbability of the report, "His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept." I. It is very unlikely that a guard of Roman soldiers should sleep upon duty. II. The absurdity of this report is manifest from itself, for men cannot say what is done when they are asleep. III. If the guard of soldiers had fallen asleep as they were watching at the sepulchre, they must have awaked if any attempt had been made to steal the body. IV. The remaining of the burial clothes affords proof that the body was not removed by friends or other men. Whoever came upon such a design would have been in a hurry, and would have executed their design with all possible expedition, whereas here are marks of leisure and composure. V. It is not conceivable that the stealing away, or the clandestine removal, of the body of Jesus could answer any purpose whatever; therefore it was not thought of nor attempted by any. VI. There does not appear anywhere in this history any intimation of the disciples expecting the resurrection of Jesus; therefore they did not contrive any account of His being risen, nor had they beforehand any thought of it till they had more than sufficient evidence of that event. VII. This saying of the guard must have been false, forasmuch as no punishment was inflicted on any for taking away the body. VIII. It remains, therefore, that the testimony of the disciples of Jesus concerning the resurrection is true and credible. (*N. Lardner.*) *Human unscrupulousness*:—Some of the particulars of the negotiation between the chief priests and elders on the one hand, with the guards on the other hand, shall be the subject of our meditation. I. Looking at the heads of the Church and the heads of the people, it might be concluded that from such a source nothing could flow that was not consistent with religion and "honour." Wherever a lack of principle and high-toned feeling might be found, it would assuredly not be found in the reverend fathers who were the ornaments of that Church which dated back to the days of the patriarchs and prophets. The "elders," too. These were the "princes" of the people and the heads of family associations. Their rank, their education, their hereditary civil privileges and consequent authority, their judicial relations to the people—all these circumstances were of a kind to justify the expectation that their words and their deeds would be not only wise and constitutional, but also free from all injustice, narrowness, meanness, low cunning, corruption, and heartlessness. Where among the Jewish laity were pure principles, lofty aims, commanding virtue, strict integrity, general greatness of character to be looked for if not in these the aristocracy of the nation? II. These distinguished men took steps, which legally were allowed, to gain one greatly-desired object of their lives, namely, the death of Christ. How much nefariousness was employed by them in arranging and completing their murderous scheme so as to bring it within constitutional limits it is not our design at present to inquire. All the help that was possible by law they secured. The governor by courtesy gave them permission to use a guard of soldiers to further their plans. The captive Lord, doubly captive for a time, rose from the dead. The military watchers told "the things" which had come to pass to the "sacred" and "noble" men under whose brief authority they acted. Supposing these had doubted the truth of the affirmations made by the soldiers, what, in that case, was the course suggested by their doubts? It was clearly that of inquiry—patient, careful, fair inquiry. Try the temper of the man. Ask him if it be true, as some say it is, that not many days since he sat down to meat with unwashen hands? What an active volcano of sacerdotal indignation! Did you think there

were beneath that dignified and quiet exterior such force and fire as this half-implied imputation against his ceremonial goodness has stirred into activity? Is it not a mystery that this saintly-mannered man should be one of those who, having "taken counsel," advised that "large money" should be given to the soldiers to declare deliberately a thing to be true which both he and they knew to be entirely false! Yet he did all this, and did it without an apparent hesitancy or even the smallest sign of compunction or self-reproach. "Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept." III. Then as to the agents paid to commit the sin. There was, it must be allowed, a very great conventional and accidental disparity between the parties. These soldiers were, most probably, of the "lowest order." They were uneducated. The military life had not helped to improve in them either mind, heart, or manners. Add to these things the facts that they were nationally Gentiles and religiously pagan. Were they, however, on these accounts to be used as mere matter—tools to be handled without a thought about their consciences or their moral responsibilities? Might they be used as landlords sometimes use tenantry? or as manufacturers use their "hands?" or as some among the "upper classes" use their dependent tradespeople and menials? Was it right to treat them as having neither part nor lot in the interests of truth and goodness? The Jews had been taught that God was "mindful" of "man." The high priests and elders in Jerusalem knew no man had a right to "sell" the truth, whatever his condition in life, his nationality, or his degree of knowledge. It is not to be much wondered at that the soldiers "took the money and did as they were taught." Was not the cause of condemnation unspeakably greater in the bribers than in the bribed? We are verging upon days which will be trying days to the followers of Christ. They will be intensely exciting days, and, as such, likely to throw mind and conscience off the even balance. Can it by any casuistry be shown that to use station, money, learning, or other power at command, for the purpose of inducing a man to do or to say what is contrary to his belief is an act of "righteousness," and that it will help to exalt a nation? Let us show that we are prepared to encourage political conviction, and even to aid those around us to become fully persuaded in their own minds that we honour men not because they think as we think, but because they fairly and at some cost of time, effort, feeling, try to learn what is true, and have the disposition and the will to do what they believe to be right. Such a spirit and such a bearing on our part will help to make the nation "righteous," will also aid in healthfully drawing class nearer to class, and will greatly assist in counteracting and in hastening the expulsion of the diabolical spirit, which in every age, under varying conditions, has made its appearance—the spirit which bargains that for so much money there shall be so much lying. (*T. Lloyd.*)

Vers. 16–20. **Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee.**—*On the mountain:*—I. IS THE WORLD'S NEED ANY LESS NOW THAN IT WAS THEN? The needs of the human soul are still unsupplied by any material satisfactions. The conscience of the world is still troubled with the old problem, "How shall man be just with God." If the gospel be withheld from the knowledge of mankind the problem remains insoluble. The misery of man is great upon him still. "Go ye therefore," &c. Tell men that God loves them. Such is the great commission. 1. Look at its universality. 2. Look at its intellectual character, "Go *teach* all nations." The gospel is an appeal to human intelligence. 3. Consider its gentleness. The Divine condescension in act of bending down to reach men, disciple them. II. ARE THE ENCOURAGEMENTS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO PUT THEMSELVES INSTANTLY IN A WAY OF OBEDIENCE TO THIS LAST COMMAND IN ANY DEGREE LESS THAN THEY WERE AT FIRST? The followers of Christ had heavenly power on their side then. Has it waned? "Go," even if you doubt. Once before our Lord had seen the world and its kingdoms "from a high mountain." The race shall enter into the kingdoms of the world. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*)

Ver 17. **But some doubted.**—*Doubts:*—I. PHILOSOPHIC doubts. All men are not philosophers, and cannot reason as Descartes did from self to all outside. We must accept some axioms without proof. II. RATIONALISTIC doubts. The withholding faith in spite of evidence. They mistake the use of reason in matters of faith. Men act upon three propositions in determining what is right. 1. That is right which we think to be right. 2. There is no telling what right is. 3. That there is a final arbiter. The objections of the rationalists are based on foregone conclusions. 1.

It is declared *a priori* that the Infinite cannot be a person. 2. That nature is uniform. These are urged against the Bible. But miracles have been wrought. Will a man stand on the wharf as the steamboat is departing and declare that steam is an absurdity? III. SPIRITUAL doubts. Such are pestered with fears of a different kind. 1. They believe that death is a crisis. 2. That the soul is guilty. Are *we* pardoned? 3. Some are troubled by the doctrine of election. (*F. L. Patton, D.D.*) *Religious doubts*:—1. There is a sense in which Christianity is accountable for the doubts with which it is often assailed. It fosters the spirit of thoughtfulness, inquiry, of mental activity. There are bodily states—of liver and stomach—that may contribute to affect us with temporary gloom of doubt. There are states of the social atmosphere that may contribute to affect us in the same way; when the general air is charged with doubt, we can hardly help being affected by it. Some doubts are the sign of mental quickening. But we must be careful to distinguish these from those resulting from moral deterioration and decline. What used to be a beautiful certainty has paled away in the mist, not, though, under research, but through too much business care; it has come upon him like a change of weather in the night. Sometimes, again, it is a deeper understanding, or a more vivid perception of one particular link, that renders us doubtful in relation to other things. We must be careful in yielding too readily to the apparent inevitable destructiveness of a truth that has burst upon us with new and fascinating power. The contradiction may be a temporary illusion. Again, men often come to doubt what they have ceased to require so urgently as they did; wanting it less, they believe it less. (*S. A. Tipple.*) *Doubts and fears*:—I. FROM WHENCE ARISE THOSE DOUBTS AND FEARS SO DISTRESSING TO MANY? Many fruitful sources from whence they spring. 1. Sin is often the cause. Inward foes, &c. 2. Carelessness will often lead to uncertainty and doubt. 3. Disobedience, neglected duty, &c. 4. Worldliness necessarily produces them. 5. Seasons of temptation are often seasons of doubt. "Satan worries whom he cannot devour with a malicious joy." 6. Ignorance is perhaps the most fruitful source. Ignorance of what is written was evidently the cause of doubt here. How many appear not to understand (Psa. ciii. 12; Rom. viii. 1; John x. 28, &c.). Salvation is a present certain reality (Eph. ii. 8, i. 7; Heb. x. 14). It may be ignorance as to the work of the Holy Spirit. Losing sight of Christ, many become taken up with feelings and self. II. THEIR BANEFUL INFLUENCE. They by no means prove a state of high spirituality. 1. Doubts dishonour God; rob Him of the praise that is due to Him. 2. Mar our comfort. 3. Weaken our strength for service, conflict, and devotion. 4. They chill our affection. 5. They stunt our spiritual growth. 6. Unfit us to witness for Christ. 7. Influence others unfavourably. III. THEIR REMEDY. As faith is a fruit of the ever-blessed Spirit, no assurance can be obtained but from the same Divine source. 1. Look and get away from self. 2. Study the sacred word more. 3. Live nearer the Lord. 4. Seek to have a more simple, child-like faith—faith that takes God at His word; that raises no cavilling questions; that lives above circumstances, appearances, and feelings, even upon "Thus saith the Lord." (*G. Cobb.*) *Scepticism*:—I. DOUBTING IN MATTERS OF RELIGION. Doubt which arises from ignorance. Doubts which mark the course of inquiry. Doubts which indicate moral perversity. Doubts about our personal religion. II. THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF DOUBTING IN MATTERS OF RELIGION. It is no apology for indifference. It ought to stimulate inquiry. It contains an element of belief—doubt, not denial. It may be an ultimate benefit. 1. Christianity is not doubtful because it has been doubted. 2. Its truths are so great that occasional doubting is not wonderful. 3. All classes of doubters should not be treated with indiscriminate harshness. 4. There are broad marks of distinction between the doubts of the saint and of the sinner. (*D. Young, D.D.*) *Doubt not to abandon truth*:—When the ship shakes, do not throw yourself into the sea. When storms of doubt assault spiritual truths, do not abandon yourself to the wild evil of the world that "cannot rest." The ship rolls in the wind, but by the wind advances. (*T. Lynch.*) We must not let go manifest truths because we cannot answer all questions about them. (*J. Collier.*) *Some doubted*:—1. You hesitate because you are measuring by human standards and taking your level from nature. 2. You want more proof than God is pleased to give. 3. You judge that God should do something extraordinary. 4. Your faith depends upon what is rare and accidental. 5. Perhaps an interval of carelessness has dimmed the moral eye. 6. There was some temptation to doubt. 7. To God it is no little thing to be doubted by His child. 8. I feel sure that some who have doubted are now in heaven. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Good doubting*:—He does not doubt wisely

who, though stopping short of being an accomplished unbeliever, allows doubt to get ahead of belief; who does not, in fact, make believing his object, using the power and right of doubting only to preserve him against premature and crude and false conclusions The truth-loving man will read and search, and think, and, let me add, pray, with the view to enlarge, and build, and beautify such a home for his soul as we are reminded of by the words of Solomon. "Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands;" and "wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars." I believe in the palace-home of wisdom, with its seven pillars. But what home for the soul will the mere habit of doubting—and especially of doubting, for doubting sake—ever build, and what would be the pillars thereof? (*H. H. Dobney.*)

**Ver. 18. All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.**—*The prerogative of the Saviour:*—I. THE PREROGATIVE ITSELF. 1. Its nature—"power." This means authority and ability. 2. Its extent—"all." 3. Its acquisition—"given." II. VIEW IT IN REFERENCE TO HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER. When an individual obtains elevation we are anxious to know something of his qualities. We would not wish an ignorant, unfaithful, impatient, unmerciful man to possess power. Christ gave Himself for us; power in good hands. III. HIS PREROGATIVE IN REFERENCE TO HIS ENEMIES. IV. IN REFERENCE TO THE SAINTS. (*W. Jay.*) *Christ's power beneficent:*—Had Cornelius Winter obtained an income of ten thousand a-year, he would not have been the better for it. But many others would; and I know—being then under his care—that when he had an addition of two hundred a-year to his small income, it was no advantage to him; he never added one article to his dress, or one dish to his table, or one ornament to his dwelling. If Howard—the apostle of compassion—had obtained all the power of the late Napoleon, oh! how many millions would have been blessed! How grievous it is to see a cold-blooded, selfish wretch rising up in life, and prospering! for you know that his power will be only a capacity to insult, to strip, to oppress, to grind the faces of the poor. But how delightful it is to see a man of tenderness and generosity rising! for you know that his increased power will be a capacity to teach the ignorant, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to cause the widow's heart to sing for joy, and to bring down blessings upon the heads of those who are ready to perish. But what was a Winter, and what was a Howard, to the Friend of sinners! Their hearts were no better than ice or iron, compared to His. Ah! Christians, we here find that power, absolute power, is placed just where it should be placed—where it is safe, where it is beneficent, where it will be glorious. (*Ibid.*) *The power and authority of Christ:*—I. An account of the extent of our Saviour's power; that He is invested with all power, both in heaven and earth. II. A declaration of the original of that unlimited power and authority. "All power," saith He, "is given Me," that is, from the Father. III. The commission He thereupon grants His disciples—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." IV. The doctrine which all nations were to be taught, and into which they were to be baptized. V. The practice of those who were to be baptized into this faith—"teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." VI. The promise of effectual assistance to the disciples sent forth upon this commission—"And lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (*S. Clarke.*) *The undelegated rule and perpetual presence of Christ in His Church:*—I. The Lord Jesus Christ is THE SOURCE OF ALL AUTHORITY. II. THE DUTY OF THOSE COMMISSIONED BY CHRIST. To teach, not to sacrifice. To baptize. III. The SPECIAL PROMISE which is to animate Christ's true disciples. (*R. Hibbs, M.A.*) *Spiritual power the great want of the Church:*—Oh! how we want "all power" now. We all have our theories of the condition of the Church just now. I do not know what yours may be. Mine is not very bright, but I have this one belief in my soul, that what is wanted most of all is one great revival of spiritual life—one wonderful downpour of the grace of God from heaven to flood all the churches. It seems to me we get something like the barges and the vessels down yonder at London Bridge when the tide is out. There they lie in the mud. There are gangs of men, but they cannot get at these vessels and barges. What is to be done? Now, will you great engineers tell me how much horse power, how much steam power you want? There is nothing wanted but the tide. When the tide rises every barge begins to walk like a thing of life, and every vessel can readily receive its cargo and go out to sea in due time. When the heavenly tides of spiritual blessing begin to come up nothing can withstand them. What a glorious time it was when Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley were going up and down this land like twin seraphim, burning everywhere

with the Divine flame, and carrying everywhere the Divine life. Can this be done again? Can the masses of the people be raised? Can we raise those that are sunk in ignorance and degradation? Do you think it cannot be done? It must be done. It shall be done. And this is the reason why we expect it: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." He can find another student in Oxford; He can find another potboy in Gloucester; He can find some one somewhere upon whom He can pour out His Holy Spirit, and send Him forth to preach with a tongue of fire that shall wake up the churches, and startle the world. Let us cry to God that it may be so. But we must first deeply feel the necessity of it, and rejoice that this necessity is met by the text: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." (*Ibid.*) *Power on earth*:—What do we mean by "power" on earth? The politician will answer you, the statesman, the preacher, the orator. It is influence, the ability to turn men to one's own will, to check, curb, turn, and use them, change their natures, and make them subjects and servants in body, soul, and spirit. That is power; something very different from the brute-force of a Samson or a Cæsar, and far higher. Still, Cæsar, in the organized government of Rome, did possess very considerable power, to which the world was obedient, whether through love or fear. And another such power there was—the ancient idol-worship of Rome and Greece. By these Satan held empire over the world. Two powers they were; yet in our Lord's time so closely connected as to be almost one and the same. The Roman Emperor was the universal ruler. The religions of Roman, Greek, and Barbarian differed in little but the names of their false gods. The Jew alone, though subject to the Roman, maintained his belief in the One God, Creator, and Almighty. Thus the Roman empire and the Roman heathenism were but as one power against all other religions. And who was coming forward, thus claiming a new power, to be alone supreme in the world? Who came to overthrow the ancient, mighty, all-but-universal idolatry—the very perfection of empire to the statesman of that day, the very perfection of religion to the lovers of a gorgeous ceremonial, and the indulgers of human pride and selfish passion? Who came to be King and God? One whose public execution was written in the Roman records. One who preached humility as the only true greatness, who substituted penitence and self-denial for the indulgence of flesh and spirit. A Jew, too, of all races the most despised by Roman and Barbarian alike. . . . The cause of Christ to the shrewdest human calculation must have looked simply hopeless; His claim to any power whatever a silly boast. Force His followers could not, might not, use. Argument they might; and then they came at once face to face with death. Yet the disciples went forth preaching Christ crucified, and risen again as the life of the world. It was not an attractive doctrine, nor an easy morality, that they preached. There was offered no earthly gain, or pleasure, or honour. And yet old Rome left her idols to worship Jesus; her emperors became Christians; the power of the world fell; the religion of the world was changed. (*W. Michell, M.A.*) *Christ's universal dominion*:—I. THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH CHRIST ADMINISTERS THIS PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT. 1. It pertains to Him as the Eternal Word, by whose immediate agency the worlds were produced. 2. As the second Adam—both Son of man and Son of God. 3. By virtue of His Father's grant. 4. Acquired through suffering and death. 5. Necessary to His government of the Church. II. THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH FLOW FROM THIS MOMENTOUS TRUTH. 1. It gives unity to history. 2. It explains to us the intermingling of mercy with providence. 3. It gives wealth of consolation to the Christian. (*B. M. Palmer, D.D.*) *The universal dominion of Christ, the foundation of the commission which His ministers receive, and His promised presence their encouragement in fulfilling it*:—I. THE UNIVERSAL DOMINION OF CHRIST HERE ASSERTED—"All power," &c. The word "power" in our language is ambiguous. Sometimes it signifies ability or capacity, and sometimes rightful authority. In both these senses it is true of Christ; He has both the ability to act and the authority to warrant His acting. 1. That as a Divine Person the Saviour has all power inherent in Himself. 2. In virtue of office, the power here spoken of is delegated to Christ—"All power is given," &c. 3. This power and authority extend to universal nature. 4. This power is deposited in Christ as the Head of the Church, and to be exercised for her benefit. 5. This power is to be exercised in the destruction of all who do not submit to it. II. THE COMMISSION GIVEN BY CHRIST TO HIS MINISTERS IN VIRTUE OF THAT POWER WITH WHICH HE IS INVESTED. 1. That it is only to those who are called by God, and qualified for His service, that this commission is given. 2. This commission extends to all nations as regards the persons to be benefited by it. 3. It embraces all that the Saviour has made known

in His word. III. To CONSIDER THE ENCOURAGEMENTS AFFORDED TO THE AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTY. 1. Christ is with His Church and people always; not His essential but gracious presence. 2. A particular call to notice this truth, "I am with you always." How highly is Jesus exalted. (*R. McIndoe.*)

Ver. 19. **Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.**—*A plea for missions*:—There are many lessons in these words. 1. A lesson as to the result of death. Some thought that death had taken all "power" from Christ. They that follow Christ as well as the Master are not robbed by death; but on the other side of it they say, "Power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." 2. The reward of labour. The reward of toil is a call to a wider task, to conquer the world for Christ. 3. The cure of doubt. "But some doubted. And Jesus said, Go ye, and preach the gospel." I. THE LARGENESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S PURPOSE—"Go ye, and teach all nations." What an amplitude there is in the gaze of Christ. What a reach in His merciful design. Calvary has not robbed Him of His love. With the freshness of the resurrection power upon Him, He bids men to look at mankind and conquer the world for Him. Our hearts are wofully small, and the little heart projects its littleness into everything at which it looks. From this littleness of hope and faith lift up yourself to the dream of the Saviour. His eye has never rested upon the man of whom He despaired. II. THE LOWLY METHODS WHICH CHRIST ADOPTS—"Go ye, therefore." The instrumentality is weak only in our conception of it. Christ knows what the gospel will effect. Christ is a true force, and can touch the heart. He knows the power of the cross in its very gentleness. He chose *men* to preach it. He knew the weakness of the twelve; He also knew the power there is in each one of us; He knew the power of sympathy to enter the soul. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENTS TO OBEY THE SAVIOUR'S CALL—"All power is given unto Me." "Lo, I am with you always." ERROR says, "All power is given unto me." Sin, death, say the same. But truth says, "All power is given unto Christ." All things work together on behalf of the gospel. IV. How THIS CHARGE HAS BEEN OBEYED. (*R. Glover.*) *Each church contributing to the mission-plan of God*:—It has been a constant joy to me that from year to year this church has been one of its affluents; and as the Amazon does not disdain any side-stream which rolls its treasure into the bosom of that ocean river, so every single church, every side-stream, is not disdained that rolls its golden sands into this great movement which is the river of God that is fertilizing the whole globe. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The work of the Church*:—I. The NATURE of the work which Christ has entrusted to His Church. 1. Work of spiritual enlightenment. 2. Work of ingathering into His Church. Manifold, yet one. Let us arouse ourselves to the duty of gathering all suitable persons into its fellowship. 3. Work of incitement to holiness. As holiness is characteristic of God, so it ought to be of His people. Thus the work is rapidly sketched by the Redeemer. II. The EXTENT of the work Christ has committed to His Church. Christ's preaching prepared the way for the doctrine of universal brotherhood. No people, near or remote, are to be neglected. This distinguishes Christianity from all other systems of religion. It is not *let them come if they will* and receive the gospel, but *go forth*, leave all, and proclaim the gospel, &c. III. The ENCOURAGEMENTS to the work which Christ has entrusted to His Church. There are many discouragements in the execution of this commission. "The kings of the earth have set themselves together," &c. 1. The power of Christ. We have *might* as well as *right* on our side. 2. The presence of Christ. (*A. A. Southerns.*) I. A great TRUTH was revealed—"All power," &c. II. A great TRUST was imparted. 1. They were to make disciples of all nations. 2. They were to administer the ordinance of Christian Baptism. 3. They were to instruct their converts in the mind and will of the great Master and Saviour. "Who is sufficient for these things?" III. A great promise. (*J. R. Thompson.*) *The great commission*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE COMMAND. 1. It gives authority for missionary undertakings. 2. Obedience to it is a test of a disciple's love. 3. Connected with the Saviour's promise—"I am with you." 4. It is binding until Jesus comes again. II. WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT IS DERIVED FROM IT? I. Encouragement as to God's purposes concerning our fallen world. 2. That human instrumentality is appointed for the furtherance of God's purposes. 3. This explains the opposition we meet with in doing God's work: Satan is the god of this world. 4. We may reckon on our Master's sympathy. 5. We have a certain hope of final success. (*W. Tidman, M.A.*) *The great commission*:—A church, even of five hundred, represented by

eleven unknown and inexperienced workmen, looked a very poor engine with which to convert the world, but the least thing became a mighty thing in the service of a mighty agent. I. The first point to be considered in this great charter of missionary enterprize was THAT THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY WORK REPOSED UPON CHRIST'S ELEVATION TO SUPREME COMMAND. 1. On the eve of His mortal shame, when His feelings seemed to lie at the lowest, He still knew that the Father had given all things into His hands; and after the resurrection, within a few days of His ascension, He claimed it as a gift given to His crowned mediatorship—all power in heaven and in earth. The sphere in which He had been thus constituted rightful Master was the whole universe; as stated by the eloquent apostle, it extended "far above all principalities, and powers," &c. It is on this universal range of lawful control held now by Jesus in virtue of His office, that the world-wide missionary activity of His Church depends. Christ's rule was the basis of their mission. It was only when He was on the point of ascending to the throne above the heavens that He revoked His former restriction, which was, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not;" but now, in the room of that revoked restriction, He issued His commission to His ambassadors in the widest terms, "Go ye now and convert all the nations." This gave the legal authorization to their missionary enterprize, justifying the missionary in setting aside the edicts of magistrates, and braving their threats of persecution. 2. What was the work to which Jesus committed His Church in this authoritative fashion? The word translated "teach" in the text would read better "disciple"; the apostles were to be the representation to other men in other lands of that same spiritual process which had passed upon themselves. The two processes which made up conversion were discriminated as baptizing and teaching. Christ first brought His disciples to that point at which they were willing to accept Him by a public profession and a symbolic sacrament, and then built up their Christian life in knowledge and service. What he had done for them He desired them to do for others. To do the work of baptizing and teaching required a combination of qualities which were very rarely blended in a single character. It was necessary to combine enthusiasm with patience, faith with labour; the former for the first, the latter for the second, stage in the Christianizing process. In the glorious warfare in which we are engaged there is room for every temperament. All are soldiers. II. THE CHURCH'S MISSIONARY SUCCESS DEPENDS UPON THE SPIRITUAL SUPPORT AND PRESENCE OF THE LORD JESUS. 1. The results of mission labour ought to be less discouraging than they sometimes seem to be. The friends of missions are too prone to credit the disparaging representations made by their enemies. They speak of this great enterprize, more than they need do, in a tone of apology. 2. We are living near the beginning of what might be called the third great missionary era—and what might prove to be the last age of Christian propagandism. 3. The conversion of the world is the task for which the Church of this country has girt itself. Much has already been accomplished, and on the ground of natural likelihood alone—to say nothing at all of Divine promises—the conversion of the world to Christianity began to appear to the candid eye of an onlooker but a mere question of time. 4. The promised presence of Christ has not failed. 5. Let us throw ourselves with new heart and soul into this most cheering and hopeful of all enterprizes. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *The great command:*—The command to teach all nations implies—1. That Christianity is a universal religion; not merely one of the religions of the world from which, with others, we, in this later day, are to select an eclectic or universal religion. 2. That it is adapted to all nations and all classes (Rom. i. 6), a claim which history has abundantly justified, but which was urged by early opponents as a conclusive objection to it. 3. That not a natural development, but obedience to the principles inculcated by Jesus Christ, constitutes the secret of true civilization among all nations, and thus that Christian missions are the mother of civilization. 4. That from all nations the members of Christ's Church triumphant are to be gathered to God by obedience to this commission. (*L. Abbott.*) *The great commission:*—I. The time of it, or the occasion and circumstances under which it was given. II. The obligation of it, or the authority by which it is enforced. III. The extent of it, or the sphere of its operation. IV. The nature of it, or the message to be communicated. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *The false and the true universalism:*—This incident—the concluding one of Christ's earthly sojourn—is extremely valuable, among other reasons, as bringing forward what may be called the universal element in Christianity. There is a false universalism, and dangerous as false, and common, too, as dangerous. How to meet it? Not, surely, by running into

an opposite extreme of exclusiveness, but by exhibiting the *true* universalism. For there is a valid universalism in the gospel, and what is it? Not Christ *in* every man—which is the latest form of error in this matter—but Christ *for* every man. Not Christ at the root of human nature, in some inexplicable way, waiting only to be developed, but Christ at the root of the gospel, waiting only to be received by a simple faith. (*Ibid.*) *Practical missionary zeal:*—The heathen are perishing; they are dying by millions without Christ, and Christ's last commandment to us is, "Go ye, teach all nations:" are you obeying it? "I cannot go," says one, "I have a family and many ties to bind me at home," My dear brother, then, I ask you, Are you going as far as you can? Do you travel to the utmost length of the providential tether which has fastened you where you are? Can you say "Yes"? Then, what are you doing to help others to go? As I was thinking over this discourse, I reflected how very little we were most of us doing towards sending the gospel abroad. We are, as a church, doing a fair share for our heathen at home, and I rejoice at the thought of it; but how much a year do you each give to foreign missions? I wish you would put down in your pocket-book how much you give per annum for missions, and then calculate how much per cent. it is of your income. There let it stand—"Item: Gave to the collection last April . . . 1s." One shilling a year towards the salvation of the world! Perhaps it will run thus—"Item: Income, £5000; annual subscription to mission, £1." How does that look? I cannot read your hearts, but I could read your pocket-books and work a sum in proportion. I suggest that you do it yourselves, while I also take a look at my own expenditure. Let us all see what more can be done for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The slow progress of Christianity:*—Now one of the laws which God has arranged, and which He observes is this—the higher the form of life, the longer it is in coming to the fulness of its power, to maturity and perfection. For instance, a child continues helpless longer, and takes far more time and care to rear and train than does the offspring of any one of the lower animals. It is even so among these lower animals themselves, for "the lion has a longer infancy than the sheep, and the sagacious elephant than either." Take, again, a more abstract illustration. For example, how rapidly does a man's physical life grow and develop compared with his mental or moral. So, too, with society: shops grow faster than schools, and a nation, as our own has done, may progress in a most marked manner in the region of politics or commerce, and yet, like our own again, lag sadly behind in the matter of education. Besides, how much more is education than the diffusion of information or the quickening of intelligence? Is there not the difficult task of upbuilding character, and, alas! how marked often is the discrepancy between the intellectual standard and the moral tone? Thus the law runs: the higher the goal to be gained or the good to be sought, the slower is the race or the individual in its pursuit, the longer in its attainment. In the light of this law, we at once see that it is just what might be expected, that Christianity, as the highest possible form or principle of life, should be, speaking of it as a whole, the most gradual in its progress and realization, and, further, that it is according to all nature and analogy that Christianity, as the grandest and most delicate order of life, should be at once the most sensitive to the unfavourable touch of man, as well as the soonest subject to the prejudicial effects of his mistakes or defects. (*J. T. Stannard.*) **Baptizing them.**—*Christian baptism:*—I. THE COMMAND—to make disciples of all nations. 1. They preached the gospel. 2. They baptized the proselytes. (1) Proselytes were baptized without delay—"that same day" (Acts ii. 41; Acts viii. 26, 40). (2) They administered baptism with water. This was symbolical of the renewing influences of the Holy Ghost. (3) Apostolic baptism was administered "in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." 3. The apostles taught the baptized persons to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT. "Lo, I am with you," &c. 1. This encouragement was intended primarily and especially for the apostles. 2. It was intended also for all other ministers and teachers in every age. (1) Ministers still need the gracious assurance of their Lord. (2) Baptism teaches parents what things they should teach their children. (*H. March.*) *Significance of the form of baptism:*—I. This form of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost may refer to their authority as giving rise to this institution. II. It may refer to the whole scheme of Christian doctrine, which centres in the discoveries that are made us concerning the sacred Three. III. It refers to the distinct dedication to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is required as to all that are baptized, which the ancients

reckoned to be signified by the triune immersion that was commonly used among them. (*Edward Calamy.*) *The form of baptism*:—I. By being baptized in the name of God, can be meant no less than entering into covenant with a person, as God; professing faith in Him as such; enlisting one's self into His service; and vowing all obedience and submission to Him. II. What has Scripture revealed at large concerning the Divinity of the three names into which we are baptized? 1. Concerning the Divinity of the Father there is no dispute. 2. Divine titles are given to the Son in Holy Scripture. 3. The Holy Spirit is described as the immediate author and worker of miracles. The very same things are said in different places of Scripture of all the three Divine Persons, and the very same actions are ascribed to them. III. What interest have we in the doctrine of the Trinity? 1. Many regard this as a speculative doctrine only. 2. Our religion is founded upon it. For what is Christianity but a manifestation of the three Divine persons, as engaged in the great work of man's redemption, begun, continued, and to be ended by them, in their several relations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, Three Persons, One God? If there be no Son of God, where is our Redemption? If there be no Holy Spirit, where is our sanctification? Without both, where is our salvation? (*Bishop Horne.*) *Christian baptism*:—Baptism is a religious rite, which was generally practised before our Saviour instituted it; for the Gentiles, in their solemn acts of devotion, made use of sprinkling and ablutions, and the Jews baptized all proselytes to their religion. To explain this part of our religion we must consider—I. What that belief is which qualifies persons for baptism. II. What is the end and design of baptism. III. What is meant by being baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. IV. How baptism is to be performed. (*J. Jortin.*) **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**—*The doctrine of the Trinity practically considered*:—I. Let me remind you that the scriptural Trinity implies THAT GOD IS ONE. The trinity of our faith means a distinction of persons within one common indivisible Divine nature. It implies, therefore, at its base, that the Divine nature is one and indivisible. For this reason God revealed the essential oneness of His being *first*; and it was only after many centuries that Jesus could disclose to His disciples the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." On polytheistic soil no such revelation could have been intelligible; it was to monotheistic Israel that it was made. The new revelation of a Trinity in God left quite unaltered the faith of the apostles that God is one. What is the chief spiritual benefit which we derive from the knowledge of the unity of God? It is the only religious basis for a moral law of perfect and unwavering righteousness. Rival gods, who care each for his own separate interests, and for no other, must neglect moral law in pursuit of their partial ends. You have no central power raised above the contention of inconsistent passions, whose only care is to make for righteousness and the common weal. Throughout the Old Testament there runs a stern denial of all secondary divinities, stern insistence upon one only true God, to whose single will all the wide fields of creation lie subject, and all the nations of men. The single will is righteous. It is the sole source of law; religion becomes the basis of virtue. Thus the Christian doctrine of the Trinity has preserved to us in undiminished power all the moral advantages which Hebrew religion drew from its revelation of the one God. II. WHAT RELIGIOUS ADVANTAGE DO WE REAP FROM THE FRESH CHRISTIAN DISCOVERY OF A TRINITY WITHIN THIS UNITY OF THE DIVINE NATURE? 1. The doctrine of the Trinity has heightened and enriched our conception of the nature of God. Such a Trinity as this leaves room in the Divine nature for the play of such moral affections as would be quite impossible to a mere single or solitary divinity. The lonely Deity whom human intellect, untaught by revelation, is able to fabricate for itself, is one utterly without passion or love till He has externalized Himself in a created world. The outcome of this is pantheism. 2. It affords a basis for those gracious relations which it has pleased God to sustain towards us in the economy of our salvation. These are facts of experience. (*J. O. Dykes, D.D.*) *The mystery of the most blessed Trinity*:—I. IS THE GREATEST HOMAGE OF FAITH. 1. By believing in this mystery we believe in the most incomprehensible of all mysteries, and consequently, we pay God the greatest homage. For I can have no sublimer conception of God than by professing Him absolutely incomprehensible. What else do we know respecting this adorable mystery but that we know nothing? 2. We sacrifice to God the noblest faculty of our nature, our intellect, by believing a mystery, of which we could not have the least idea, before God revealed it to us. II. IS THE MOST SOLID GROUND OF OUR HOPE. Without faith,

no salvation. The most necessary article of faith is the belief in the most blessed Trinity. No one can be saved, except he knows and believes (1) that there are three Persons in one God; and (2) that the second Divine Person became man for us. III. IS THE MOST URGENT MOTIVE OF CHARITY. 1. It is the bond of brotherly love—"keeping the unity of the Spirit," &c. (Eph. iv. 1). 2. It is the model of brotherly love (John xvii. 11; Psa. cxxxii. 1). Peroration: Oh, most adorable Trinity, unite us in this world, that we may be united in heaven," &c. (*Bourdalone.*) *The doctrine of the Trinity considered in relation to practical religion:*—Let us see what simple facts are apparent in this revelation of God, and what service they may render to us in real life. I. THE FATHER. 1. He is the Creator of all things. As such He reveals His wisdom, &c. 2. He is the preserver of all things. 3. He is King of all, bending all to His will, and overruling all by His providence. 4. He is in a peculiar sense the Parent of His spiritual family. II. THE SON. God with us. This is a revelation of the humanity of God, and serves great purposes. It helps us to know and love God, and makes the redemption of man possible. III. THE HOLY GHOST. God within us. His presence is proved by its fruits (Gal. v. 22, 23). (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *The distinctions in the Godhead:*—Divine revelation makes known to us one living and true God, and prohibits all worship being paid to any being except Jehovah. But the phraseology employed obviously presents the one Jehovah under certain distinctions, involving the idea of a plurality in the Godhead. This distinction has been generally denominated the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The doctrine has been controverted in all ages, and numerous are the theories which men have endeavoured to maintain on this deeply profound, and confessedly difficult subject. I. It is obvious that a threefold distinction in Deity is not impossible. We have many symbols of this in nature: the sun—the light and heat thereof; man—body, soul, and spirit. II. The Old Testament writings lead us to this conclusion (Gen. ii. 22, ii. 7; Numb. vi. 24; Psa. xiv. 6, 7, cx. 1, cxxxvi. 1-3; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; Isa. vi. 8, xlii. 1, xlviii. 16, lix. 19, 20). III. The writings of the New Testament exhibit this triune distinction (chap. iii. 16, 17; John xiv. 16, xv. 26; Acts i. 4, 5, v. 30-35, x. 38, xx. 27, 28; Rom. v. 5, 6). IV. The Divine works are ascribed to each of the triune persons. 1. Creation. 2. Inspiration. 3. Holiness. 4. Raising the dead. V. That the essential titles and attributes are given to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 1. Eternity. 2. Omnipresence. 3. Omniscience. 4. Power. 5. Wisdom. Observations: 1. With what reverence and profound veneration we should study the nature and character of God. How awfully sublime is the theme—how utterly incompetent we must be to find it out to perfection — how essentially requisite holy fear and humility of mind in its investigation. 2. We should labour to ascertain the connection between the Divine Persons in the Godhead in the exercise of devotion and worship. We are to come to God through the Son and by the Holy Spirit. We are thus, also, to praise God, and to pray to Him. The Father is chiefly the object of worship, Christ is the way, and by the Spirit we worship Him in spirit and in truth. God our Father—God our Redeemer—God our Comforter and Guide. 3. Divine honours are to be equally given to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let us labour to attain and enjoy love of the Father, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit. (*J. Burns, LL.D.*) *Threefold manifestation of Deity:*—Although we shall never again paint the Almighty as Giotto painted Him, as an old man with white hair in the clouds, with a young man at His side, and a dove flying from beneath His feet; and whilst we shall never again describe God as Athanasius described Him, yet the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity is fundamental, and rests on an impregnable basis. The Unity, the Humanity, and the Affinity or Immanent Deity, these are the root conceptions of all true theology, and these remain. The conception of variety in unity, the many and the one, pervades all life and nature, and is presented to us in man in a trinity of body, mind, and spirit. So Trinity in Unity is in God a diversity of manifestation or function, combined with a unity of life and purpose. We can hardly think of the Almighty in any other way. It is the normal order of thought metaphysically. Let us see. First, our conception of God is vague and indefinite: Creative Force pervading, correlating, co-ordinating all things everywhere. It is the All-Father, the First Person. But the instant we think more closely, our only definite conception proves insensibly anthropomorphic. All power, wisdom, intelligence, love, is, in some sort, human, manifested and transferred to God, but still human in nature and thought; and thus, the Ideal Man, the God under the limitations of humanity, steps forth. This would be so in the order of thought

were there no figure of Jesus in history. We cannot but—we always have made God in our own image, God the Son, or the Second Person. But in prayer and worship He is apprehended as a Spirit only, in communion, in sympathy with ours; then He is God the Holy Ghost, or the Third Person. God the Vague, God the Definite, God the Immanent, that is the inexorable order of thought, and that is the eternal doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. This would be true whether we call ourselves Christians or not. But if you are a Christian, you believe in addition that the Ideal Humanity of God has once in all time been realized, and realized in Jesus. You believe that the eternally human side of God—which was before the Life Divine in Galilee, and will be for ever after it, the life-giving and the love-giving One—that all of Him which could become incarnate did become incarnate—came forth and dwelt amongst us as it has never before or since; that then and there, in the fulness of time, amongst the chosen people and in the holy land 1,900 years ago, a special use of human nature was made for a special purpose, and that we "beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (*H. R. Haweis, M.A.*) *The mystery of the Trinity*:—The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—three distinct Persons: in the Name, not names—one essence. The Holy Ghost is called the finger of God, Christ the hand of the Father. Now, as the finger is in the hand, and the hand on the body, so of one and the same most pure and simple essence is the Father, Son, and Spirit. But, as it was reported of Alanus, when he promised his auditory to discourse the next Sunday more clearly of the Trinity, and to make plain that mystery; while he was studying the point by the seaside, he spied a boy very busy with a little spoon, trudging often between the sea and a small hole he had digged in the ground. Alanus asked him what he meant to do. The boy answered, "I intend to bring all the sea into this pit." Alanus replies, "Why dost thou attempt such impossibilities, and mis-spend thy time?" The boy answered, "So dost thou, Alanus: I shall as soon bring all the sea into this hole, as thou bring all the knowledge of the Trinity into thy head. All is equally possible: we have begun together, we shall finish together; save that of the two my labour hath more hope and possibility of taking effect." I conclude with. It is rashness to search, godliness to believe, safeness to preach, and eternal blessedness to know the Trinity; yet let us know to praise the Trinity in the words of the Church: "Glory be to the Father," &c. And let all answer, "As it was . . . Amen." (*T. Adams.*) *Doctrine of the Trinity: God a mystery to man*:—You have seen a steam threshing-machine at work. You know perhaps how the steam acts upon the machinery, and sets the wheels in motion; but does the little insect that settles on the engine know what you know? Could it be taught? Well, when we try to understand the great God, we are like the fly trying to understand the engine. The being of God is a mystery to us; that is, it is something which we cannot understand. Man is a mystery to a dog or a horse. We can no more hope to understand how God is what He is than a dog or a horse can understand what man is, or what speech and thought and memory are. (*J. E. Vernon, M.A.*) *Belief in the Trinity not against reason though beyond it*:—Though I cannot explain this mystery to you, I think I can show you in nature certain figures whereby we may get some idea of how true the mystery is, though it is beyond our understanding. If I were to shut the window of a room, and cut a slit in the shutter, and put into the slit a piece of glass called a prism, you would see on the wall on the other side of the room a streak of red, yellow, and blue light. If I take the piece of glass away, there is only a streak of white light. Now learned men have found out that all pure white light is made up of red, yellow, and blue light; and by that piece of glass a ray of light can always be separated into the parts which make it up. Now, the red ray is light, the yellow ray is light, the blue ray is light. But the three together make up only one ray of light. Then, again. In your own self you have an image of the Trinity. You are made up of spirit, and soul, and body. Your spirit thinks, it prays, and you say, "I think, I pray." Your spirit is you. If anything pains your body, you say, "I am in pain," speaking now of your body as yourself. Again, your soul is moved by some passion, fear, or love. You speak of your soul as yourself, and say, "I fear," or "I love." Well, here there is the spirit you, the body you, and the soul you; and yet you are not three different creatures, but you—body, soul, and spirit, make up one being, called man. Take another illustration. You know the florin, or two-shilling piece, has a cross of shields on one side. In the corners of that cross are flowers or plants. In the first and fourth are roses, the badge of England. In the second is the thistle, the badge of Scotland. In the third is a little cluster of

clover leaves. The clover leaf, called in Ireland the shamrock, is the badge of Ireland. I will tell you how the Irish obtained the clover leaf as their badge. Long ago, when the Irish were heathens, there came to their shores St. Patrick, to teach them the true Catholic faith. He was brought to the king, and he spoke before him of the religion of Christ. The king listened attentively. But when St. Patrick began to tell him that there was but one God, and yet in that Godhead there were Three Persons, the king stopped him, saying, "I do not understand you. You say the Father is God?" "Yes." "And you say that the Son is God." "Yes." "And you say that the Holy Ghost is God?" "Yes." "Then," said the king, "there must be three Gods." St. Patrick, instead of answering, stooped down and picked a little clover leaf which grew at his feet. The clover leaf, as you know, is made up of three little leaves, joined together by a slim stalk, so that the three leaves make only one leaf. St. Patrick held up only one division of the leaf, and said, "This is a leaf?" "Yes," said the king. He showed the second division of the leaf, and said, "This is a leaf?" "Yes," said the king. He showed the third, saying the same words, and receiving the same reply. Then he held up the whole leaf by its long stalk before the king, and asked, "What is this?" "It is a leaf," replied the king. "So learn from a humble plant the mystery of the Trinity," said the saint. Now all this does not make us any more able to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity; but it at least shows us that, although it is above our reason, it is not contrary to our reason to believe that God is Three Persons and yet but One God. (*J. E. Vernon, M.A.*) *The mystery of the Trinity:*—An ancient writer informs us that when the Egyptians named their greatest God who was over all, they cried thrice, "Darkness! Darkness! Darkness!" In the name of the Father—Darkness; and of the Son—Darkness; and of the Holy Ghost—Darkness! for, however much the mind may strive to penetrate this mystery, it can never attain to its solution. Just as the eye, looking at the sun, sees the overpowering light as a dark ball, being dazzled by its excessive glory, so the eye of the mind perceives only darkness when looking into the infinite splendour of God in Three Persons. We may, indeed, see sundry likenesses here on earth which assist us in believing the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; but they are helps, and helps only, not explanations. Thus, the sun may shine into a glass, and the glass reflect in clear water, and we see three suns—a sun in the heavens, a sun in the glass, and a sun in the water; and this assists us to understand how the Son of God is of the Father, and the Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, and how that each is God, and yet that there are not Three Gods but One God. But, after all, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a matter of faith, and not of reason. We must believe, though we cannot understand. (*S. Baring Gould.*) *Mystery no bar to conviction:*—"Sitting lately," says one, "in a public room at Brighton, where an infidel was haranguing the company upon the absurdities of the Christian religion, I could not but be pleased to see how easily his reasoning pride was put to shame. He quoted those passages, 'I and My Father are one'; 'I in them, and Thou in Me'; and that there are Three Persons in One God. Finding his auditors not disposed to applaud his blasphemy, he turned to one gentleman, and said, with an oath, 'Do you believe such nonsense?' The gentleman replied, 'Tell me how that candle burns.' 'Why,' he answered, 'the tallow, the cotton, and the atmospheric air, produce the light.' 'Then they make one light, do they not?' 'Yes.' 'Will you tell me how they are one in the other, and yet but one light?' 'No, I cannot.' 'But you believe it?' He could not say but that he did. The company instantly made the application, by smiling at his folly; upon which the conversation was changed. This may remind the young and inexperienced that if they believe only what they can explain, they may as well part with their senses; for they are surrounded by the wonderful works of God, whose ways are past finding out."

**Ver. 20. And, lo, I am with you alway.**—*Christ continually present with His Church:*—I. That the Saviour is speaking of MORE THAN THAT PRESENCE, WHICH IS INSEPARABLE FROM THE NATURE OF HIS OWN ESSENTIAL AND ETERNAL GODHEAD. In the case of our Lord the Godhead is so modified by its alliance with the Humanity—modified not in itself, for there no modification would be possible—but in its action upon the Church,—that what is brought into contact with us, is the human sympathy of the Saviour, glorified by its connection with the Deity of His person. II. The fact that communion with the Saviour is MADE POSSIBLE BY THE ADVENT OF THE COMFORTER; that the coming of the Spirit is, to all intents and purposes, a coming of the Saviour to the people who love Him. The

personality that is in Him whom we address, must vibrate to the touch of the personality that is in us,—or else communion will not have taken place. This has been made possible, though Christ is absent in the body, by the advent of the Holy Ghost. No one will be disposed to question that the personality of God can reveal itself to the personality of man without the intervention of a visible form, and without the employment of articulate language. There are modes of fellowship between spirit and spirit with which we are unacquainted, yet real and efficacious. He is said to dwell in the believer. We speak not of grace but of living communication. And where the Spirit comes Christ comes; and where the Spirit and Christ come the Father comes. III. This coming of Christ to His people, precious as it is, is SUITED TO A STATE OF IMPERFECTION AND DISCIPLINE. We look forward to something beyond that which we enjoy now. There was the coming of Christ in the flesh. That passed away. It gave way to the coming by the Spirit. That is better, more spiritual, but insufficient. We look forward to the final, exhaustive coming. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *The present Saviour*:—Some benefits of Christ's perpetual presence with His people, especially when that presence is realized. 1. It is sanctifying. 2. Sustaining. 3. Comforting. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *Christ's parting promise*:—I. THE PROMISE—"I am with you alway." What did Christ mean by this. 1. Can we attach to the words a meaning similar to that conveyed when speaking of the dead. We say that they still live in the hearts of those who knew and loved them. After the lapse of years we can often recall with vividness the features of one departed. 2. Men may live in their works. Is Christ only present as other good men are? We who believe in Christ as a supernatural revelation regard this parting promise as implying infinitely more than this. It meant the indwelling of a Personal energy distinct from any memory of Him. Is it replied that this is incomprehensible; life is incomprehensible. Christ is not a power generated in nature. II. THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE. (*C. M. Short.*) *The presence of Christ*:—1. That presence is spiritual. Not the consecrated host. The believers in the upper room had nothing to appeal to their senses. 2. This presence of Christ consists in something more than there is in His word. Cæsar, Plato are still with us in their words; but there is infinitely more in the presence of Christ. Behind the written word there is the living word, the invisible Saviour who manifests Himself to the heart. 3. This presence is especially promised to the Church, and is the secret of its triumph over infidelity and persecution. 4. But what makes men doubt the presence of Christ in the Church is the sight of the inward state of the Church itself. 5. But what Christ announces to the Church He announces to the individual soul. 6. Affliction may be a proof of the Lord's presence. 7. Is there anything on earth grander than faithful love? "I am with you alway." (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *Christ present, though appearances may seem to the contrary*:—In gloomy winter's day no tree moves its verdant top in our fields; no flower casts its perfume to the winds; everything appears dead in nature. Will you tell me that the sun has not risen? No, although he has disappeared behind a curtain of clouds, he makes his powerful action everywhere felt; and without the sun, which you do not see, there would remain for you only an icy shroud, and the darkness of night. The soul has its winter also, when the Sun of Righteousness no longer sheds on it more than a pale glimmer, when obedience is performed without joy. (*Ibid.*) *Desirableness of Christ's presence*:—I. Christ's presence is exceedingly desirable to the saints. 1. The presence of Christ is an evidence of His love. 2. Christ's presence is attended with the most desirable effects; none can enjoy it without deriving the greatest advantages from it. 3. Present communion with Christ is an earnest of everlasting fruition. II. A seemingly departing Christ may be constrained, as it were, to abide with His people. 1. By the exercise of a lively faith. 2. By fervent prayer. 3. By a suitable conduct towards him. (*B. Beddome.*) *Christ's presence essential*:—Nothing could supply the room of Christ to His Church; not the gospels, though they record His eventful life and death; not the epistles, though they contain the full revelation of His own truth; not ministers, though they are His ambassadors; not ordinances, though they are the channels of grace, and so many meeting places between our souls and Him whom our souls love. None of these, nor all of these together, can be to the Church, in the stead of its own Divine Redeemer and Head. Without His continued presence and aid, the Church would speedily come to an end. People may talk as they please about the omnipotence of truth, and the adaptation of Christianity to man, but in a world like this, hostile to the truth, and alienated from God, no security short of that pre-

sented in the actual indwelling of Christ in His Church, His own kingdom and house, will be sufficient. To this we owe it, that there has been a Church in the world up to this hour; to this we owe it, that there shall be a Church in it to the end of time. (*A. L. R. Foote.*) *The ever-present Saviour:*—1. This is the language of One who had been through the passage of death and known the bitterness of separation. 2. It is difficult to realize this invisible presence; it is more real when realized. It is spiritual, always with us. 3. It conveys the idea that before the mind of the speaker all the days lay ranged in their order to the last. 4. It is an inner presence. 5. Most minds, whatever they be, do beat in fellowship. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The charm of the Divine presence:*—Suppose a friend who combines everything which goes to make your idea of friendship—intellectual, wise, modest, fond, true, good. Suppose such a person just set to your particular taste—in harmony with every thought; his society like a continual strain of music. You lean on his judgment—you are happy in his love. What a bloom on life—what a sunlight—what a charm—what a necessity that person would become to you! But what is that compared to Christ—to a man who has once learned the secret of finding His presence a reality? who knows and loves Him as his own near, dear, loving Saviour—the Brother of his soul—much more than another self. The very fact that He is there—though He did nothing, though there were no actual intercourse, though He were not seen—has an untold spell upon you. Did you never feel what the presence of a very little child would be, though there were not another man in the world? Think of what even a silent presence can be! But it is not silent. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's perpetual presence:*—I. What an insight we have here into the essential nature of Christianity itself, and what a guarantee for its permanence and power. It is something more than an outward revelation of facts, more than a community of brethren: it is a *life*. II. May we not see in this promise the designed preventative against or remedy for certain evils sure to infest and corrode the life of His kingdom. III. It is of the guarantee of the permanence and power of Christianity in Christ's constant presence that I would now speak. The higher the principle of life the longer it is in coming to maturity; but also the surer when maturity is reached. This explains the slow progress of Christianity. (*J. T. Stannard.*) *Christ's presence our stimulus:*—There is a touching fact related in the history of a Highland chief of the noble house of McGregor, who fell wounded by two balls at the battle of Prestonpans. Seeing their chief fall, the clan wavered, and gave the enemy an advantage. The old chieftain, beholding the effects of his disaster, raised himself up on his elbow, while the blood gushed in streams from his wounds, and cried aloud, "I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you, to see you do your duty." These words revived the sinking courage of his brave Highlanders. There was a charm in the fact that they still fought under the eye of their chief. It roused them to put forth their mightiest energies, and they did all that human strength could do to turn and stem the dreadful tide of battle. And is there not a charm to you, O believer, in the fact that you contend in the battle-field of life under the eye of your Saviour? Wherever you are, however you are oppressed by foes, however exhausted by the stern strife with evil, the eye of Christ is fixed most lovingly upon you. (*D. Wise.*) *Christ's presence all-sufficient:*—When Christ saith, "I am with you alway," you may add what you will: to protect you, to direct you, to comfort you, to carry on the work of grace in you, and in the end to crown you with immortality and glory. All this and more is included in this precious promise. (*John Trapp.*) *Presence superior to memory:*—He promises His presence. How different the case would be if He had only said, "The memory of My life and work shall be with you always." What a difference there is between a mere memory and a presence. At first, indeed, when we have just lost a relation or a friend, memory, in its importunity and anguish, seems to be and to do all that a presence could do, perhaps even more. It gathers up the past and heaps it on the present: it crowds into the thoughts of a few minutes the incidents of a lifetime; it has about it a greatness and a vividness which was wanting while its object was still with us. But even a memory decays. That it should do so seems impossible at first. We protest to ourselves and to the world, that it will be as fresh as ever to the last day of our lives. But memory is only an effort of the human mind, while a presence is independent of it; and the human mind has limited powers which are easily exhausted; it cannot always continue on the strain; and so a time comes when the first freshness passes away, and then other thoughts, interests, and occupations crowd in upon us and claim their share of the little all that we have to give. And so, what seems to us to be so fresh and imperishable is already indis-

tinct and faded. Oh, think of any private friend, think of any of the celebrated men whose names were on the lips of every one, and who had died within the last two or three years! At first it seemed as if you might predict with confidence that the world would go on thinking and talking about them for at least a generation; but already, the sure and fatal action of time upon a living memory, however great and striking, is making itself felt; and even in our thoughts about them they are passing rapidly into that world of shadows, where shadows soon die away into the undistinguishable haze and gloom beyond them. It is otherwise with a presence; whether we see the presence or not, we know that it is here. If our friend is in the next room, busily occupied and unable to give us his time just now, still, the knowledge that he is close at hand, and can be applied to if necessary, is itself a comfort and a strength to us; we can go to him if we like. His being here places us in a very different position from that which we should occupy if he had left us; if we could only think of him as having been with us in times past, though really absent now. A presence, I say, is a fact independent of our moods of mind, a fact whether we recognize it or not; and in our Divine Saviour's presence there is indeed a fulness of joy which means hope, work, power, eventual victory. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Christ's presence secures the Church's victory*:—This is a factor in the life and work of Christ's Church with which persons do not reckon who look at her only from the outside, and judge of her strength and prospects as they would judge of any human society. They say that she will die out because this or that force, which has, no doubt, weight in the affairs of men, is for the time being telling heavily against her. If large sections of public feeling, or literature, or the public policy of some great country, or the influence of a new and enterprising philosophy, or the bias of a group of powerful minds are against her, forthwith we hear the cry, "The mission of the apostles is coming to an end; the Church of Christ will presently fail!" Do not be in too great a haste, my friends, about this. You have yet to reckon with a force invisible, and perhaps, as far as you are concerned, unsuspected, but never more real, never more operative than it is at this moment. You have forgotten the Presence of Christ. He did not retreat to heaven when His first apostles died; He promised to be with them to the end of time; He spoke not merely to the eleven men before Him, but to the vast multitude of successors who defiled before His eyes down to the utmost limits of the Christian ages: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world!" With us by His Spirit; with us in the great sacrament of His love; with us amid weaknesses, divisions, failures, disappointments. He is with us still, and it is His Presence which alone sustains His envoys, and which gives to their work whatever it has had, or has, or has to have, of vigour or of permanence. (*Ibid.*)

UNWIN BROTHERS, THE GRESHAM PRESS, CHILWORTH AND LONDON.