THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

ST. JOHN.

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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

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ST. JOHN.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

I. St. John the Apostle.—1. His personality as apprehended by modern students. To most of us the Apostle dwells apart, in a dim, solemn region of mystery. He seems to look out upon us with gentle, dreamy eyes—a man of meditative calmness and repose, intensely intuitional, speaking in words of child-like, mystic simpleness, whose drift and scope baffle our logical methods to apprehend. With a kind of vague intention we are content to call him "the Apostle of Love" while his meaning floats before us in twilight and distance. As our life in God deepens we begin to perceive that, while the image of the Lord mirrors itself in him, as the sky mirrors itself in the depths of the Galilean seas, he is no mere passive and idle recipient of light, no mere reflecting surface, but a great, loving, deeply spiritual soul, all aglow with adoration, and enthusiasm, and delight, and ever-living wonder, absorbed with the Lord, and resting in the calm assurance of His favour. As when one gazes with speculative eye into the star-lit azure, piercing far into its deep immensity, so (spiritually) does this man gaze into the depths of Christ with the gaze of love. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) 2. The circumstances of his early life. His birthplace was probably Bethsaida, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee, the native place also of Peter, Andrew, and Philip. This seems to be a natural inference from his intimate acquaintance with them, and from his being with them (Matt. iv. 18–21; John i. 40). His parents could not have been altogether poor: Zebedee had "hired servants" (Mark i. 20); Salome was one of the women who provided for the Saviour's wants (Matt. xxvii. 56), and who purchased spices to embalm him (Luke xxiii. 55); and our Saviour, when He was dying, commended Mary to the care of John, and requested him to take her to his own house. That Zebedee was in good circumstances, and in a respectable social position, may perhaps also be inferred from the fact that John was known by the high priest (chap. xviii. 15). Under these circumstances, the supposition is natural that the Evangelist had received some education. He is, indeed, enumerated (Acts iv. 13), among the "ignorant," but the Pharisees regarded all persons as such who had not pursued the Rabbinic study of the law, all who were not pupils of the Rabbins. It is probable that from his earliest years he had a religious bent. His mother Salome appears to have been a woman of piety, such was the devotion with which she attached herself to Jesus; her mind, too, was probably occupied with the Messianic hopes, as we infer from the narrative in Matt. xx. 20, from which we gather also her devoted love to her children. Such a mother would be likely to exercise at an early period a hallowed influence on her children, and this would be fostered in John by his mode of life as a fisherman, which often led him to pass the quiet watches of the night on the waters, amid the enchantments of a region resembling that which encircles the Lake of Lucerne. (*Tholuck.*) John inherited, no doubt, a good bodily organization. His parents were not doomed to breathe the impure air of a pent-up city. Their home was out in open nature, amidst the fresh breezes of the hills and of the sea. Their habits were not those of self-indulgence and indolence which generate disease, nor of hard brain work which tends to ener-

vate the system. The work of the muscles and the limbs was their invigorating occupation. The child, thus inheriting a healthful frame, grew up amidst the same invigorating conditions. His early impressions from nature would be large and deep. Our greatness is determined by our ideas and our ideas by our impressions. Small ideas can never make a great man, nor can great ideas grow out of superficial impressions. Large plants must have a deep soil. Hence as a rule a man must be brought up amidst grand scenery to have a grand soul. To John's young eye nature towered in some of her loveliest and most majestic aspects, and spoke, in the rustle of trees, the howl of winds, and the roar of billows, strange and stirring poetry to his soul. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) 3. HIS HISTORY AS A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST. John first appears as a disciple of the Baptist. As such the visions which may have been awakened in his youthful fancy through the suggestions of ancient prophecy must have become more fixed by the rigid tones of the great teacher. In such a state of mind, waiting for the hope of Israel, how welcome must have been the sight of the dove alighting on Christ's head and the voice which proclaimed Him the well-beloved Son of God. But Jesus did not then begin His public ministry; He retired from the gaze of an expecting people to meet and subdue the chief adversary of His mission. To all who recognized Him as their long-looked-for Anointed, this must have been an interval of painful suspense. At length, however, as the Baptist and two of his disciples were standing together, Jesus drew near. A mere hint is sufficient to recall Him to their remembrance. The disciples overhear their master's exclamation: "Lo, the Lamb of God!"—and immediately leaving him they follow Jesus. Nor are they willing to be separated from Him, till they have found out His abode and lived with Him. In this incident is contained the germ of that attachment between Christ and John which expanded with ever-increasing vigour and beauty on earth and is now perfected by the purity and ennobled by the higher association of heaven. In the next scene Jesus meets him on the shores of Tiberias, and calls him to be His constant follower. From this period to the end of the Saviour's ministry all that is known of him is embraced in a few scattered incidents. With Peter and James he was present at the restoration of Jairus's daughter. In the same company he was a witness of the transfiguration. At the last supper John reclined next to Christ, and was looked upon as His bosom friend. It was John's sad privilege to behold the agony of Gethsemane. He fearlessly entered the hall of Pilate, and led in Peter who had been timidly loitering at the door. And how soothing, in the last dark hour of the crucifixion—like the mild beaming of the evening star on the edge of a retiring thundercloud—is that parting interchange of affection as the weeping eye of the beloved disciple meets the agonized yet tender look of the dying Saviour, and that simple charge is given, "Behold thy mother!" When the women reported that the stone had been rolled away from the sepulchre, Peter and John ran thither in company. After the resurrection John went into Galilee, and there meeting Jesus, according to appointment, he followed Him to receive his final instructions and promises. But soon the day of separation came, and Jesus ascended, leaving John and the other disciples to tarry at Jerusalem. (*E. E. Salisbury.*) 4. HIS LIFE SUBSEQUENT TO THE ASCENSION. After the ascension he continued in Jerusalem, at least for a time. Among the brethren at the election of Matthias, and on the Day of Pentecost, he accompanied Peter to the Temple, when the lame man was healed at the Gate Beautiful. Later in the day he was apprehended along with Peter and sent to prison; and on the morrow the two were cited before the Sanhedrim. With Peter he was afterwards despatched to Samaria (Acts viii. 14). It is probable that soon after he withdrew from the metropolis to Galilee with the Virgin, induced to do so, it may be supposed, by the dislike of the latter to remain where her Lord (as well as her son) had been crucified, and by the increasing hostility of the Jews (Acts viii. 1). If this were so, it will explain how, three years after, on the occasion of Paul's first visit, he did not meet with John (Gal. i. 18), whom he first saw fourteen years after (Gal. ii. 9). John, it is believed, had by this time returned to the head-quarters of the Church in Jerusalem, in consequence of the Virgin's death in 48 A.D. Then, having resumed his natural position, he was recognized by St. Paul as one of the "pillars" of the Church. How long he abode here is uncertain. Perhaps he accompanied the Church when it migrated to Pella, before the Roman war, about 67 A.D. In later years, though not till Paul's death, possibly not till the deaths of Timothy and Titus had deprived the churches in Asia Minor of apostolic guidance, he settled at Ephesus. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) 5. CLOSING YEARS. During the period of the labours of the Evangelist in these portions of Asia Minor, he was banished by one of the emperors to Patmos, where,

according to Rev. i. 9, he wrote the Apocalypse. If Irenæus and Eusebius are to be credited, the banishment must have occurred under Domitian (died 96 A.D.). We find in addition in Tertullian, in Jerome, and other writers, an account of John's being taken to Rome under Domitian, of his being cast into a vessel of boiling oil, of his miraculous deliverance from it, and of his being subsequently removed to Patmos. There is an independent testimony that John suffered for the faith, in the fact that Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus (about 200 A.D.), calls him *μάρτυς*, "a martyr." The return from exile is to be dated under Nerva. In the ecclesiastical tradition he appears as the centre of the Church-life in Asia Minor, insomuch, that in the controversies, as for example the one about Easter, and in the struggle with the Gnostics, he is referred to, and frequent mention is made of his disciples and hearers. When he had reached, as Jerome tells us, his extremest old age, he became too feeble to walk to the meetings, and was carried to them by young men. He could no longer say much, but he constantly repeated the words: "Little children, love one another!" When he was asked why he constantly repeated this expression, his answer was: "Because this is the command of the Lord, and because enough is done if but this one thing be done." (*Tholuck.*) 6. DEATH. We are ignorant of the time and circumstances of his death. Conjecture ranges from 89 A.D. to 120 A.D. Chrysostom affirms that he was a hundred years old when he wrote his Gospel, and that he lived full twenty years after. It does not appear that he died by violence, but peacefully upon his bed, most probably in Ephesus, amidst his "little children." One likes to imagine the tranquility of the last scenes, in keeping with the tenor of his life. In all likelihood, his dust lies somewhere amidst the wild jungle that has overspread the neighbourhood. With the setting of "that last Resplendence" the age of common history begins. The churches found it difficult to believe that he had really passed away; the saying had gone abroad among them that he should not die, but should continue until the appearing of the Lord; and so in course of time the legend was framed—that he was not really dead, but only sleeping in his grave. It was not wholly an error; for "he lives and will ever live by his writings, and the future belongs to him even more than the past." (*J. Culross, D.D.*) 7. TRADITIONS. *John and Cerinthus:*—One day as the Apostle was entering the public bath at Ephesus, the Apostle learned that the heretic was within. Immediately he sprang from the place, exclaiming, "Let us flee, lest the house fall upon us, since Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within." Jeremy Taylor pronounces this a good precedent for us, when the case is equal. St. John could discern the spirit of Cerinthus, whose heresy was fundamental, and the Apostle was a person assisted up to infallibility. "And possibly," he adds, "it was done by the whisper of a prophetic spirit and upon a miraculous design; for immediately upon his retreat the bath fell down, and crushed Cerinthus in the ruins." More to the point is the bishop's counsel, that we should not quickly, nor upon slight grounds, nor unworthy instances, call heretic. (*Ibid.*) *The partridge and the hunter:*—In his old age the Apostle used to find pleasure in the attachment of a tamed partridge. One day, as he held it in his bosom and was gently stroking it, a huntsman suddenly approached, and wondering that one so illustrious should take to such a trivial amusement, he asked, "Art thou that John whose singular renown had inspired even me with a great desire to know thee? How then canst thou occupy thyself with an employment so humble?" The Apostle replied, "What is that in thy hand?" He answered, "A bow." "And why dost thou not always carry it bent?" "Because," he answered, "it would in that case lose its strength; and when it was necessary to shoot, it would fail from the too continuous strain." "Then let not this slight and brief relaxation of mine perplex thee," answered the Apostle; "since without it the spirit would flag from the unremitted strain, and fail when the call of duty came." (*John Cassian.*) *St. John and the bandit:*—Visiting a town not far from Ephesus, and assembling with the brethren, he saw in the audience a young man, tall of stature and of noble countenance and ardent spirit. Addressing the pastor of the church, he said: "I commit that young man to thy charge, and call Christ and the Church to witness that I do so." The pastor of the church undertook, and for a time faithfully fulfilled, the charge. He instructed the young man in the faith, and by and by had the joy of receiving him into the church. Subsequently, however, he relaxed his watchfulness, and was led by idle and worthless acquaintances into temptation, and at length, believing salvation hopeless, he fully surrendered himself to evil, and became one of a company of brigands, of whom he was made the chief. Some time after this, John revisited the city, and addressing the pastor of the church, said, "Restore me

now the pledge which I, with the Saviour, entrusted to your charge in the presence of the church." And when he saw that his words were not understood, he added, "I reclaim the young man whose soul I entrusted to thee." The pastor said, with tears, "He is dead." "How?" asked the Apostle: "what death did he die?" "He is dead to God," was the answer; "for he has become evil and reprobate; he was forced to flee for his crimes, and he is now a brigand among our mountains." Immediately the Apostle, obtaining a horse and guide, rode off even as he was to the robber hold, and falling into the hands of the sentinels, required to be led at once to their chief. But when John was led into his presence, he at once fled, overwhelmed with shame. John, forgetting his years, ran after him, crying, "Why, my child, do you flee from me—from me, your father, an unarmed old man? Have compassion on me, my child; do not be afraid. You yet have a hope of life. I will yet give account to Christ for you. If needs be, I will gladly die for you, as Christ died for us. I will lay down my life for you. Stop! Believe, Christ hath sent me." Hearing these words, he first stands still and casts his eyes upon the ground. He next throws away his arms, and commences trembling and weeping bitterly. When the old man approaches he clasps his knees, and with the most vehement agony pleads for forgiveness, baptizing himself anew as it were with his own tears: all this time, however, he conceals his right hand. But the Apostle, pledging himself, with an appeal to God for His truth, that he had obtained forgiveness from the Saviour for him, implores him even on his knees, and the hand he had held back he kisses as if it were cleansed again by his penitence. He finally led him back to the church. Here he pleaded with him earnestly, strove with him in fasting, urged him with monitions, until he was able to restore him to the church—an example of sincere repentance and genuine regeneration. (*From Clement of Alexandria.*)

The pupils of St. John:—Three names are traditionally linked to John's as those of pupils. The first is that of Ignatius—"the disciple of John the Apostle," he is called in the "Martyrdom of Ignatius," "and a man in all respects of apostolic character." Tradition makes him out to have been the little child whom Jesus set as an example of humility amidst the twelve apostles. Hence he was supposed to derive his name of Theophorus—the "God-carried;" though he himself interprets it to mean one who carries God in his heart. He was overseer of the Church of Syrian Antioch, and is said to have suffered martyrdom under Trajan, at Rome, by being thrown to the lions. A large number of writings have been attributed to him, respecting which there has been more controversy than about any ancient Christian writings, if we except the New Testament itself. The second name is Polycarp. Irenæus, who sat at his feet, informs us that he "was instructed by the apostles, and was brought into contact with many who had seen Christ." We learn from Irenæus further that Polycarp was an overseer in the Church at Smyrna by apostolic appointment. When called to swear by the fortune of Cæsar and reproach Christ, that he might save his life, he replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me an injury: how can I blaspheme Him, my King and my Saviour?" From amidst the flames that consumed him he gave thanks, "because Thou hast counted me worthy to have a part in the number of Thy martyrs, in the cup of Thy Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, through the incorruption (imparted) by the Holy Ghost." The third name is that of Papias, an overseer in the Church at Hierapolis, a city of Phrygia, the birthplace of Epictetus. Irenæus speaks of him as an "ancient man," "a hearer of John," and "a companion of Polycarp." He was on terms of intercourse with many who had known the Lord and His apostles. From them he gathered information which he wove into five books, entitled an "Exposition of the Lord's Sayings"—a work which has not come down to us, except some fragments. He seems to have been a man of small mind, a great reader, but a poor thinker. It is to him that the report is traced back that Matthew wrote in Hebrew, and that Mark, in his Gospel, was the mouthpiece of Peter. He too is said to have suffered martyrdom about the same time with Polycarp. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The "Account of the Decease of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist"* (from the apocryphal Acts) tells us that on a Sunday after prayer and the Eucharist he said to Byrrhus, "Take with thee two brethren with baskets and spades and come after me." John walked forth and came to the grave of a Christian brother, and said to the youths, "Dig, my sons, and let the trench be deep." Then he went on conversing and edifying those present, speaking of the majesty of the Messiah, and praying over each of them. When the trench was finished, he suddenly disrobed and cast

his garments like bedclothes in the trench; and, standing in his mantle only, he lifted up his hands and prayed to God, "Receive the soul of Thy John." Then he turned to the East and glorified God, standing full in the light; and said, "Be Thou with me, Jesus the Messiah our Lord." Then he went down into the trench, and saying, "Concord and peace be with you my brethren," he rendered up his spirit rejoicing. *Posthumous legends:*—During his lifetime the saying went abroad that he was not to die, but to form one of the company who "are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." Even his actual passing away did not eradicate this belief. Wild assertions in the course of time were hazarded; such as, that his remains, though sought for, could not be found. Augustine tells of persons in his day who professed to have witnessed the gentle heaving of the turf where he lay, asleep, but not dead, at Ephesus. The notion that he was still alive became almost an article of popular faith in the Middle Ages (not unlike the legend of the Wandering Jew), and in some quarters lingered even later. The English sect of "Seekers," under Cromwell, expected his reappearance as the forerunner of Christ's glorious return. A trace of the notion is still partially visible in the Feast of the Translation of the Body of St. John, observed in the Greek Church. Beza tells of an impostor of his times, burned at Toulouse, who gave himself out to be the Apostle. A specimen of a different class of legends is found in the "Chronicle of John of Brompton." King Edward the Confessor had, after Christ and the Virgin Mary, a special veneration for St. John. One day, returning from his church at Westminster, he was accosted by a pilgrim, who asked of him an alms for the love of God and St. John. The king, who was ever merciful to the poor, immediately drew from his finger a ring, and, unknown to any one, gave it to the beggar. When the king had reigned twenty-four years, it came to pass that two Englishmen, pilgrims, returning to their own country from the Holy Land, were met by one in the habit of a pilgrim, who asked of them concerning their country: and being told they were of England, he said unto them, "When ye shall have arrived in your own country, go to King Edward, and salute him in my name: say to him that I thank him for the alms which he bestowed on me in a certain street in Westminster; for there, on a certain day, as I begged of him an alms, he bestowed on me this ring, which till now I have preserved, and ye shall carry it back to him, saying that in six months from this time he shall quit the world and come and remain with me for ever." The pilgrims, being astounded, said, "Who art thou? and where is thy dwelling?" And he answered, saying, "I am John the Evangelist. Edward your king is my friend, and for the sanctity of his life I hold him dear. Go now therefore, deliver to him this message and this ring, and I will pray to God for him. The king received the tidings joyfully and feasted the messengers royally. Then he set himself to prepare for his departure out of this world. On the eve of the Nativity 1066, he fell sick, and on the eve of the Epiphany following he died. The ring he gave to the Abbot of Westminster to be for ever preserved among the relics there. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) 8. HIS CHARACTER. *As the disciple whom Jesus loved:*—The whole sum of his character is contained in the single fact that he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Once understand that, from whatever causes, no obstacle intervened between him and that one Divine object, which from the earliest dawn of youth to the last years of extreme old age was ever impressing itself deeper and deeper into his inmost soul, and his whole work on earth is at once accounted for. Whatever we can conceive of devoted tenderness, deep affection, intense admiration for goodness, we must conceive of him who, even in the palace of the high priest, and at the foot of the Cross, was the inseparable companion of his Lord; whatever we can conceive of a gentleness and holiness ever increasing in depth and purity, that we must conceive of the heart and mind which produced the Gospel and Epistle of St. John. (*Dean Stanley.*) *As the Son of Thunder:*—It was not as the Beloved Disciple, but as the Son of Thunder—not as the apostle who leaned upon his Master's breast at supper, but as the apostle who called down fire from heaven, who forbade the man to cast out devils, who claimed with his brother the highest places in the kingdom of heaven—that he was known to the readers of the three Gospels. But it is natural that in such a character the more outward and superficial traits should have attracted attention before the complete perfection of that more inward and silent growth which was alone essential to it; and alien in some respects as the bursts of fiery passion may be from the usual terror of St. John's later character, they fully agree with the anathema of the tenth verse of his Second Epistle and with the story of Cerinthus and the bath. It is not surprising that the deep stillness of such a character as

this should, like the Oriental sky, break out from time to time into tempests of impassioned vehemence: still less that the character which was to excel all others in its devoted love of good should give indications—in its earlier stages even in excess—of that intense hatred of evil, without which love of good can hardly be said to exist. (*Ibid.*) *The character of John the Apostle was that of John the man sanctified:*—In calling him to be a follower, the Lord did not suppress his individuality, but used it; as, if one should send a message by a lisping child, the lisp will be heard in the delivery of the message; or as, when Moses' face shone, or Stephen wore as it had been the face of an angel, the men were still themselves. This is the Lord's way with His own throughout. While they are all taken up with Him into heavenly places, there is no dead monotony of character produced; each wears a grace peculiar to himself; each is Christ-like after his own order. So with this man. The original texture of his nature abides. He has lost nothing; rather he is become more simply, truly, characteristically, profoundly, essentially himself—himself, purified and exalted. A traveller, giving an account of an ancient volcano which he visited, tells of a verdurous cup-like hollow on the mountain summit, and that, where the fierce heat had once burned, lay a still, clear pool of water, looking up like an eye to the beautiful heavens above. It is an apt parable of this man. Naturally and originally volcanic, capable of profoundest passion and daring, he is new-made by grace, till in his old age he stands out in calm grandeur of character, and depth, and largeness of soul, with all the gentlenesses and graces of Christ adorning him—a man, as I imagine him to myself, with a face so noble that kings might do him homage, and so sweet that children would run to him for his blessing. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *He is not in the least sentimental:*—Nowhere does he exhibit trace or taint of that false "liberality" which bids truth and lie shake hands and be friends, or judicially binds them over to keep the peace; far less of that "philosophic breadth" which places Jesus Christ, Zoroaster, Sakya-Monni, Mahomet (and why not, by and by, Joseph Smith?), in the same Pantheon. He is full of the grand intolerance of love; incapable of compromise or truce with falsehood, however mighty or loftily throned. If a man come and bring not the doctrine of Christ, whosoever biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds (2 John x. 11). (*Ibid.*) *His unobtrusive courage:*—He never puts himself forward in the sight of others, challenging observation, but yet is ever found by his Master's side in the hour of danger, quietly, and as of course. Thus, on the night of betrayal, after the first alarm and forsaking, he closely follows Jesus from the garden, goes in along with Him to the place of trial and judgment, and never for a moment falls away from Him or flinches. Peter too follows, but afar off, and takes his place with the officers and servants, as if he belonged to their company; and in that "afar off" lay his weakness and danger. John goes in "with" Jesus, and in this lay his safety. Again, at the crucifixion, he held his station near the cross of his Master all day, a witness of His dreadful sufferings; exhibiting that rarest form of courage, which so few even of strong men are capable of—the courage to stand still and look upon the sufferings of a beloved friend, protracted and intensifying from hour to hour, which we can do nothing whatever to relieve. Ah, it takes courage of the loftiest order for that! (*Ibid.*) *His healthiness:*—Here is no invalid or valetudinarian, but a man of heathful, robust physique, capable of sustained energy and patience. There is the same healthfulness mentally: in his writings, with all their depth, we detect nothing hazy, vague, blurred; every chapter is like an engraving in which the nicest lines are distinctly seen. If Paul was characterized by a profound sense of "righteousness," John is as notably characterized (if such an expression may be allowed) by a profound and vehement sense of "truth"—a man to whom "a lie" is intolerable. Naturally and originally bold, intense, capable of the most ardent passion and enthusiasm, with an all-daring imagination, with a capacious understanding, and wonderful receptivity both of brain and heart, he is one of the grandest captives that ever surrendered to Jesus Christ, and he becomes one of the noblest examples of his new-fashioning power, so as to alternately exhibit, beyond the rest, the perfect likeness of the Lamb. (*Ibid.*) 9. HIS WRITINGS AND CHARACTER AS AN AUTHOR:—John stands entirely alone, without any of his fellow-witnesses having exerted on him any appreciable influence, such as, *e.g.*, Paul did on Luke, or Peter on Mark. His theology bears the character less of a doctrinal development than of an animated witness. Not dialectics, but intuition; not the intellect, but the feelings; not the future with its lofty expectations, but the present with its priceless blessings, enters in the didactic writings of St. John ever anew into the foreground.

Only on a single occasion (chap i. 17) is indicated the opposition between Law and Gospel which occupies so important a place in Paul; with John the Gospel stands not only in diametrical opposition to the law, but also immeasurably above it. The cause of this phenomenon is not difficult to discover. John probably never occupied so strictly legal a standpoint as, *e.g.*, James, much less experienced such a sudden transition from darkness to light as Paul. As the sun causes the blossom to unfold, so had the interview with Christ and the continued contemplation of Him (chap. i. 40) awakened his spiritual life with silent but mighty power; and of this inner life his doctrine is at once the expression and the deciphering. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) The Johannine writings form a triology: the Gospel basis, the organic conformation, the final and eternal future of the Church. Christ who was, who is, and who is to come. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) There are three books which we attribute to St. John, besides the two short letters to Gaius and the Elect Lady. Of these, his Gospel is a perfect summary of Christian Theology, his First Epistle of Christian Ethics, his Apocalypse of Christian Politics. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) 10. His unique influence. It is certainly a unique fact that a fisherman, simply relating what he saw and heard, in terms that a child may understand, should have brought the supremest claims of Jesus of Nazareth into view—beyond what even the imperial Paul has done—so as to compel the most profound and philosophic thinkers of every age to meet the problem, and so as to induce men, to whom sin and helplessness are realities and not names, to commit themselves into His hands for both worlds, believing them to be the hands of grace and almightiness. (*J. Culross, D.D.*)

II. St. John's relations with his contemporaries as apostle and author. —1. As apostle with the other apostles. (1) *With St. Peter and St. Paul:*— (*a*) Each has a distinct place in the first formation of the Church. Peter is the founder, Paul the propagator, John the finisher. Peter the apostle of the rising dawn; Paul of the noon in its heat and clearness; John the sunset—first in the stormy sunset of the Apocalypse, then in the calm brightness of the Gospel and Epistles of his old age. (*b*) Each is the centre round which the floating elements of thought and action clustered and crystallized. The whole body of Jewish Christians leaned upon St. Peter, of Gentiles upon St. Paul, of mixed believers upon St. John. (*c*) Each was connected with the sole authentic records of the life of Christ. There can be little doubt that it was St. Peter's disciples who first received the representation which is preserved to us in the Prophet and Lawgiver according to St. Matthew, the human Friend according to St. Mark. We need not hesitate to recognize in the Gospel and Acts of St. Luke St. Paul's view, first of the suffering victim, then of the invisible Guide of the universal Church. We at once acknowledge that we have in the Gospel of St. John the complete image of the Word made flesh. (*d*) Each has borne his part in the unfolding of the Divine economy. Peter the apostle of courageous and confident hope; Paul of faith; John of love. Peter of power and action; Paul of thought and wisdom; John of feeling and of goodness. Peter clings to the recollection of the older world; Paul plunges into the conflict of the present; John, whether as prophet, evangelist, or teacher, fixes his gaze on the invisible and the future. Peter gave to Christianity its first outward historical form; Paul its inward and spiritual freedom; John that Divine end and object in which form and spirit harmonize. (*Dean Stanley.*) (2) *With St. Paul:*—Between St. Paul and St. John how great is the contrast! In St. Paul we are struck mainly by the wealth of sacred thought; in St. John by its simplicity. St. Paul is versatile and discursive; St. John seems to be fixed in the entranced bliss of a perpetual intuition. St. Paul is a dialectician, who teaches as by reasoning; St. John speaks as if the highest life of his soul was the wondering study of one vast Apocalypse. St. Paul begins with anthropology; St. John with theology. St. Paul often appeals to theology that he may enforce truths of morals; St. John finds the highest moral truth in his most abstract theological contemplations. St. Paul usually describes the redemption gift of Christ as Righteousness; St. John more naturally contemplates it as Life. In St. Paul the ethical element predominates; in St. John the mystical. St. John is more especially the spiritual ancestor of such fathers as Gregory Nazianzen; St. Paul of such as Augustine. St. Paul is the typical apostle of Western, as St. John is of Eastern, Christendom; the contemplative side of the Christian life finds its pattern in St. John, the active in St. Paul. Yet, striking as are such differences of spiritual method and temper, they are found in these great apostles side by side with an entire unity of teaching

as to the Person of our Lord. (*Canon Liddon.*) As soon as we pass from the writings of Paul to those of John the difference shows itself in the great words that are used. Paul's words are—sin, grace, righteousness, election, redemption, faith, reconciliation, salvation, the day of Christ; John's words are such as these—life and death, light and darkness, love and hatred, truth and a lie, the Son of God and the Wicked One. Were I to select characteristic and corresponding utterances they would be these from Paul—"Just and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus"; from John—"This is the true God and eternal life." The lines of thought pursued by the two apostles are parallel and harmonious, while yet they lie on different planes. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *St. John and St. Peter*:—As Peter was the first of the apostles in their relation to the world, John was the first in their relation to Christ. The talent of Peter was ideally practical; that of John practically ideal. Peter is the chief of the working, upbuilding spirits of the Church; John the chief of the contemplative. In John, the basis of enthusiasm or devotion to Christ was not an inexhaustible impulse to do, but a deep wondering celebration of the perfection of Christ. The fundamental characteristic of Peter was energetic heart; that of John reposing heartiness. Peter sees the glory of Christ chiefly in the mighty unfolding of the glory of His kingdom; John sees all the glory of the kingdom of Christ comprised in the single glory of His personal exaltation and future appearing. (*P. Schaff, D.D.*) 2. As an evangelist with the synoptists. The fathers of the Christian Church saw in the vision described in Revelation iv. 7, a faithful representation of the four Evangelists. They differ somewhat in their application of the figures; but the majority take the "lion" to represent Matthew, the "calf" or ox to represent Mark, the "man" to represent Luke, and the "eagle" to represent John. But whatever differences prevail in respect of the first three figures, all are agreed that the eagle is a symbol of the fourth Evangelist. "There be a thing too wonderful for me, the way of an eagle in the air." (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) (1) *St. John was acquainted with the Synoptists, and assumes that his readers were*:—(*a*) Many of the things which he supposes to be already known, and which, therefore, he does not repeat, are precisely such as are contained in the other gospels: *e.g.*, the imprisonment of the Baptist (chap. iii. 24), the manner in which Jesus procured a young ass (xii. 14–16), and the stone before the sepulchre, and the presence of other women (xx. 1–2). (*b*) He omits some narratives which are contained in the other gospels, which would have been serviceable to his object: *e.g.*, the explanation of Jesus to the disciples of John (Matt. xi. 28), the miracles at the death of Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 45–51), the supernatural conception, and the ascension, which, however, is alluded to in vi. 62, xx. 17. Amongst other omissions are the death of the Baptist, the election of the apostles, the transfiguration, and the institution of the last supper, the miraculous cure of the ear of Malchus (Luke xxii. 51, *cf.* John xviii. 10), the last exclamation of Jesus (Luke xxiii. 16) and the loud voice in which it was uttered (Mark xv. 37). In cases where the connection would not permit of an entire omission the narrative is briefly sketched (*cf.* chap. xviii. 39–40 and Luke xxiii. 17–23; Mark v. 6–14). (*c*) He contributes materials which complete the others: *e.g.*, the name Malchus (xviii. 10). (*Storr and Flatt.*) (2) *His representation of Christ and His work differs from theirs*:—In one gospel Christ is the fulfiller of the Law, and withal, by a touching contrast, the Man of Sorrows. In another He is the Lord of Nature and the Leader of men. In a third He is active and all-embracing Compassion. Thus the obedience, the force, and the tenderness of His humanity are successively depicted; but room is left for another aspect of His life, differing from these and yet in harmony with them. If we may dare so to speak, the Synoptists approach their great subject from without, St. John unfolds it from within. He sets forth the life of our Lord not in any one of the aspects which belong to it as human, but as being the consistent and adequate expression of the glory of a Divine Person, manifested to men under a visible form. (*Canon Liddon.*) Not only is the theatre upon which we here meet Christ, the form of His discourses, and the impression which is thereby made, different, but even the substance, compared with that of the Synoptists, offers important points of distinction. There the kingdom of heaven is presented, here it is the King Himself; there the human, here the Divine side of the Redeemer; there the blessedness of salvation on the other side the grave is brought into the foreground, here the blessedness on this side. Here the Evangelist begins with the Divine origin of our Lord, there the Synoptists begin with His human birth; there the words and discourses rise to the unveiling of His Divine dignity; in John they proceed from the assumption of this truth as a starting-point. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee,*

D.D.) The Synoptists pourtray Christ in His three several offices—St. Matthew especially in that of king; St. Mark, of God as man; St. Luke, of priest and victim; St. John speaks more particularly of His Divine and heavenly nature, of spiritual things, and of the higher mysteries of Christian rule and doctrine; in which he especially unfolds some of the chief types and ceremonies, which throughout the Old Testament prepare us for the highest and most sacred and mysterious truths, as by parables. (*S. R. Bosanquet.*) The Synoptic narratives are implicit dogmas, St. John's dogmas are concrete facts. (*Canon Westcott.*) (3) *This difference does not affect the perfect harmony of the four*:—For—(*a*) *The Johannine Christ is as truly human as is that of the Synoptists.* The fourth gospel introduces Christ as claiming to have been born (xviii. 37), which the Synoptists never do; it represents Him as having a body that could walk (x. 22), ride (xii. 15), that could be wearied (iv. 6), that could eat and drink (iv. 10, 31), that could be bound (xviii. 12), scourged (xix. 1), that could weep (xi. 35), thirst (xix. 28), be crucified (xix. 18), die (xix. 20), and be buried (xix. 42); of a mind that could know (ii. 24), learn by asking (xi. 34), and express its thoughts (iii. 3); of a soul that could be troubled (xii. 27), and a spirit that could be moved with indignation (xi. 33). It depicts Him as undergoing experiences and performing actions of which only a real man is capable, as, *e.g.*, sitting at a marriage feast (ii. 1–10), shedding tears at a friend's grave (xi. 35), accepting hospitality (xii. 2), and doing the office of a menial (xiii. 5); conversing with a rabbi (iii. 3), with a woman (iv. 7), with the people (vii. 28), with His disciples (xiv. 1), with His captors (xviii. 4), &c.; preaching (vii. 14, vi. 59, ix. 2–6); exposing Himself to the close and constant scrutiny of friends (xi. 1–5) and of enemies (viii. 48–59). In short, if John's Christ was not a *verus homo*, it would be difficult to find one such on earth. Then—(*b*) *The Synoptic Christ is as perfect as is that of John.* If the latter came forth from a pre-existent state so did the former (Matt. i. 18–25; Mark i. 11; Luke i. 32–36). If the latter was "perfectly developed" when He entered upon His public ministry so was the former, as His baptism secured (Matt. iii. 16–17) and the temptation attested (Matt. iv. 11). Was John's Christ saluted by Nathanael as Divine? So was Luke's (v. 8, iv. 34). Had John's Christ the faculty of omniscience? So had the Christ of the Synoptists (Matt. ix. 15, xii. 15–25; Mark ii. 20, xii. 15; Luke v. 35, vi. 3). Neither failed in any miracle He attempted, although in the absence of necessary moral conditions there were instances in which He did not attempt; nor even the miracles of the one greater than those of the other. In Matthew, Mark, and Luke He is under the constraint of the same Divine imperative (Matt. xxvi. 54; Mark viii. 31; Luke ii. 49, iv. 43, xix. 5) as in John (iii. 14, iv. 4, ix. 4, x. 16). That the Synoptic Christ did not know Himself to be the Messiah or the Divine Son until towards the end is absurd; for it was authoritatively proclaimed to Him at the baptism (Matt. iii. 17), and the devils knew it (Matt. iv. 3–6, viii. 29). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) (4) *This difference is perfectly reasonable and intelligible*:—One of Goethe's biographers says of him that there were hidden in him ten different persons; we discover in Luther, Augustine, and Paul such a multiplicity and fulness of intellectual and spiritual life that it sometimes costs us an effort to discover in the very divergent exhibition of this life the same fundamental characteristics in the same person. In the polished and thousand-faced diamond there shines one and the same light in a multiform blending of colours; and should we expect the case to be different in an infinitely higher sphere—the spiritual and the Divine? (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) If a wise man who was merely human like Socrates, could present such a manifoldness in unity that two of his pupils could give such contrasted yet true pictures of his teaching, surely the same is possible in the case of Christ—in the case of Him whose office and work was to be the Redeemer of men of all shades of character and life. (*Bleek.*) The same person may narrate the same thing on different occasions in a different way, and yet in each case with the fundamentals of truth. Compare Acts ix. and xxvi. with each other, and of the same kind chap. x. and xi. where the conversion of Paul and Cornelius is told twice. If a drawing is made of a city first from the east side, then from the west, though in both cases the tallest and most striking towers and edifices are presented, yet in all other respects the two sketches not only can, but must differ widely. And yet both are faithful copies of the original. (*Bengel.*) Each of yourselves may be studied at the same time by the anatomist and by the psychologist. Certainly the aspect of your complex nature which the one study insists upon, is sufficiently remote from the aspect which presents itself to the other. In the eyes of one observer you are purely spirit; you are thought, affection, memory, will, imagination. But to the other observer

your material body is everything. Its veins and muscles, its pores and nerves, its colour, proportions, functions, absorb his whole attention. Yet is there any ground for a petty jealousy between the one study of your nature and the other? May not each illustrate, supplement, and balance the other? These questions admit of an easy reply; each half of the truth is practically no less than speculatively necessary to the other. Nor is it otherwise with the general relation of the first three gospels to the fourth. (*Canon Liddon.*) (5) *This difference has been no difficulty to the Church*:—As far as the religious side of the contrast is concerned, it is remarkable that the conscience of the Church has never been perplexed by it, and that it is exclusively the learned who pronounce it insoluble. This fact proves, in any case, that for the pious and believing heart the Jesus of the Synoptics has never been, and will never be, anything else but that of John. The difference, therefore, does not reach the depths of the religious and moral life. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) Christian piety is fed by our four canonical Gospels, and yet it knows but one Christ. In the people, as well as in a child, there is an instinct which surpasses any acuteness of the best criticism. We can say of the people what Jesus said of the sheep, "a stranger will they not follow." If now the Jesus of John is totally different from that of the three, we must confess that Christendom has saluted a stranger by the name of Master for more than fifteen centuries without the slightest doubt; and has regarded both the stranger and the Master worthy of the same adoration. Such a misconception would not only be without parallel in history, but would even have history against itself. (*Revue Chrétienne.*) (6) *This difference is an argument in favour of the authenticity of both representations*:—Any one who in writing would smuggle in his own wares under the Johannean flag, would certainly have to be very careful never to come into even apparent contradiction to the first three Gospels. He who by crafty pre-meditation would invest himself with the appearance and manner of an apostle, must take the greatest pains to utter an echo of the apostolic witnesses, but never a note that is not in perfect harmony with them. If, therefore, the diversity of doctrinal idea and historical representation between the first three Gospels and the fourth still seems strange, then I may say that it is perfectly inexplicable if we are here dealing with an anonymous author. But all the difficulty will disappear if we accept the fact that this is the work of an apostle who occupies a perfectly independent position beside the other three Evangelists, yet whose testimony he continues, enlarges, and completes. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) (7) *John's style differs from that of the Synoptists*:—We find in St. John's Gospel something more than the artless and childish simplicity of St. Matthew's narrative; more than the rapidity and terseness of St. Mark's narrative; more than the calm and flowing history of St. Luke. With that artlessness, that terseness, and that calmness, there is mingled a higher and more elevated tone—a tone derived from the monuments of the remotest sacred antiquity, as well as from the hidden depths of the most profound theology; a tone reminding us sometimes of the Mosaic account of creation, sometimes of the wise sayings of Solomon, sometimes akin even to the theology of the later Jewish-Alexandrine philosophers. (*Isaac da Costa.*)

III. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.—1. HISTORY OF THE CONTROVERSY. From the disappearance of the Alogi in the later sub-Apostolic age until the end of the seventeenth century, the authenticity of St. John's Gospel was not questioned. The earliest modern objections to it were raised in this country on the assumption of a discrepancy between St. John and the Synoptists. These were combatted by Le Clerc, and for well nigh a century the point was thought to have been decided, when in 1792 Evanson revived it, and was answered by Priestley. The brilliant reputation of Herder next secured attention for his theory that St. John describes not the historical but the ideal Christ, in which several German writers followed him. But these negative criticisms were met in turn by Roman Catholic divines like Hug, and liberal Lutherans such as Eichhorn and Koinel. By their labours the question was again held to have been set at rest. This second settlement was rudely disturbed by the famous "Probabilia" of Bretschneider in 1820. He exaggerated the contrast between the Christ of St. John and of the Synoptists into a positive contradiction. Protestant Germany was then fascinated by Schleiermacher, who not only accepted the fourth Gospel, but found in that Gospel the reason for his somewhat reckless estimate of the other three. The sharp controversy which followed resulted in Bretschneider's retractation, which produced an impression which was not violently interfered with until 1835, when Strauss, in his first life of Jesus, denied that the Gospel was the work of the son of Zebedee.

This was withdrawn in the third edition of 1838, but reaffirmed in the fourth of 1840; and in the popular edition of 1864 he extended a friendly hand to the Tubingen School, which had arisen in the meantime, and which aspired to supplement the negative criticism of Strauss by a positive hypothesis. St. John's Gospel was held to represent a highly developed state of an orthodox gnosis, the growth of which presupposed the lapse of at least a century, and Baur, Schwegler, and Zeller decided that it was not composed till after A.D. 160, which general position is held by the disciples of that school as one of its very fundamental tenets. (*Canon Liddon.*) 2. THE REAL GROUND OF OPPOSITION. The question of the Johannine writing is determined by another graver still: that of the Johannine Christ; and most frequently it is the latter which sways the solution of the former. Nothing can prevent the critic, whose inward feeling, for one reason or another, is repugnant to the Christ of John, from resolving the question of the fourth Gospel in a way conformed to the secret wish of his antipathy; as, on the other hand, the author, whose deepest and holiest aspirations are awakened on meeting with the figure of that same Christ, "full of grace and truth," will soon find in the lights proceeding from such profound sympathy the solution of critical difficulties which have been declared insurmountable. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) 3. THE VAST IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION. If St. John's Gospel is not the historical account of an eyewitness, but only a myth, then there is no historical Christ; and without an historical Christ all the faith of the Christian Church is a delusion; all Christian confession, hypocrisy or deception; the Christian reverence for God an imposition; and the Reformation, finally, a crime or a madness. (*Baron Bunsen.*) The writer of the Gospel certainly professes to have been an eye-witness of the things which he records, and as good as calls himself John. In addition, the same hand that wrote the Gospel unquestionably wrote also the First Epistle (as both external and internal evidence show), in which the distinctest possible assertion is made of the writer's having been a personal witness of the manifestation. If then he was not a witness, I cannot acquit him of the worst kind of "lie," all the more abominable that it is a lie against God, the effect of which is to represent a creature as His equal; and I cannot help quoting against him—shuddering as I do it—the words of that John whom he simulates, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) 4. WHO WAS THE AUTHOR IF NOT ST. JOHN? The "great unknown" who has been suggested would have been too great to have been concealed. He would have stood out a head taller than all the great men of the second century. There is no room in the second century for such a mind. Its literature has an utterly different stamp from the fourth Gospel. The writings of the apostolic fathers stand in dependence upon the apostolic literature. Simply read the letter of Polycarp, who was such an honoured chief in the Church of Asia Minor, and see what a great falling off there is. And the following literature begins, with Justin, the age of theological reflection and of scientific digestion, which presupposes an age of the original production of Christian thoughts, and therefore a book like John's Gospel. Both the Gnosticism of the second century and the contest against it offer us an entirely different picture from the one the fourth Gospel presents. The Gospel points to an earlier stage, a stage of first productivity and of original grandeur. (*C. E. Luthardt, D.D.*) That any writer of the second century should be able to give with perfect accuracy a large number of particulars respecting a former age and a different people is one improbability. Then that he should avoid all indications of his own age is another. The second century was distinguished from the first by metaphysical discussions respecting the nature of Christ, by the unsettled claims of Church officers, and by the peculiar efficacy attributed to the sacraments. Of these controversies there is in this Gospel no sign. Then again, that being a truthful Christian, the author should wish to conceal his distance from the events related, and to represent himself as an eye-witness, even the Apostle John, is another separate improbability. That he should give a view of the person of Christ, surpassing in human tenderness and Divine dignity that of the other Evangelists, and more conducive to Christian comfort and improvement than any other book, this is another improbability. That it should differ from the other Gospels and agree so well is another. But all these combined improbabilities must be accepted, if we take this Gospel to be the composition, honest or dishonest, of any one but the apostle. To all this must be added that the writer of such a work should be always in what is called miraculous concealment; and that within thirty or forty years of its composition it should be received by Christians of distant countries and conflict-

ing parties as of apostolical authority, a work the genuineness of which was above controversy. (*Prof. J. H. Godwin.*) 5. ST. JOHN DID WRITE IT. (1) *Internal evidence.* (*a*) *The author was a Jew*:—We find ourselves so completely transported to the Jewish circle of ideas, and to Jewish life, that we must recognize not only the design of portraying these matters thoroughly, but also the peculiar memory which furnishes the material for such portrayal. (*Weizsäcker.*) Although he nowhere indicates his purpose to write for Jews, he, not less than Matthew, continually cites the Old Testament, and shows that he was acquainted with the Hebrew text, and on the smallest points shows an extensive knowledge of Jewish manners and customs. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) The vocabulary, the structure of the sentences, the symmetry and numerical symbolism of the composition, the expression and the arrangement of the thoughts, are essentially Hebrew. (*b*) *The author was a Jew of Palestine in the time of our Lord*:—He knew the minutest details of the different localities of the Holy land, *e.g.*, the size of the Lake of Tiberias, and the distance of Bethany from Jerusalem. He described the country about Jacob's Well as, according to Renan, only a man could do who had frequently passed it. He is *au fait* as to the relationship between Annas and Caiaphas. He knows exactly how many years they have been rebuilding the temple, and that the Romans had taken away from the Jews the right of capital punishment. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) Writing after the destruction of Jerusalem, he paints the Holy City with its inhabitants and localities in such living colours, that it appears to us sometimes as if the city and temple stood before us. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) It is inconceivable that a Gentile living at a distance from the scene of religious and political controversy which he paints could have realized, as the Evangelist has done, with vivid and unerring accuracy the relations of parties and interests which ceased to exist after the fall of Jerusalem, that he could have marked distinctly the part which the hierarchical class—the unnamed Sadducees—took in the crisis of the Passion; that he could have caught the real points at issue between true and false Judaism, which in their first form had passed away when the Christian Society was firmly established: that he could have portrayed the growth and conflict of opinion as to the national hopes of the Messiah side by side with the progress of the Lord's ministry. All this was foreign to the experience of an Alexandrine or an Asiatic of the second century. (*Bp. Westcott.*) (*c*) *The author was an eye-witness*:—Such he claimed to be, and the frequent and graphic mention of incidents likely to be retained in the memory, but improbable as the result of any other cause, fully confirm the claim. He is more explicit in his chronology than the others. It is through him that we learn of Christ's four visits to Jerusalem. He fixes the day of Christ's baptism, and hour of His calling the two disciples; mentions the grass on which the multitudes sat down; describes the position and gestures of the disciples at the Last Supper; recalls the darkness into which Judas went out; and the lanterns and torches carried by those who arrested Jesus; and relates the changing positions of Peter at the time of his denial, and the means by which he obtained access to the hall. (*G. F. Wright.*) St. John's account may be likened to a freshly plucked cluster of grapes, on which the morning dew still glistens; and I deeply pity him who does not receive this impression, but can think only of the artistic creation of an anonymous compositor who (unheard-of connection!) combines such incomparable talents with such unskilful simplicity. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) (*d*) *This Palestinian contemporary of Jesus was a member of the intimate circle of friends, formed around the person of our Lord.* He knew personally Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Peter, &c., and the kind of relation that Jesus had to each. The naïve replied to Philip, the spiteful remarks of Judas, the cry of devotion mingled with the unbelief of Thomas, are all known to Him. He knew who were the four disciples who by their questions drew forth the instructions of Jesus at that intimate conversation they had with Him on the eve of His death. He recalls the smallest details of the course of the two disciples at the grave of Jesus. All that would have been disgusting charlatanism on the part of a man who had not lived in close intimacy with the apostles, and would consequently only treat the disciples as characters in a romance. This companion of Jesus could only have been an *apostle*. He completes and presents in quite a new light the tradition received in the Church, as we find it recorded in the Synoptics. The narrative is equivalent to a complete renovation of the history of Jesus transmitted, the Synoptics by harmonizing very well with them, but remaining absolutely independent. Only an apostle, who felt perfectly sure of his authority, could stand face to face with the most ancient Gospels already received in the

Churches, and maintain such a position. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) (*e*) *This apostle was John.* His language betrays him. While other Evangelists speak of the precursor as John the Baptist, and very naturally to distinguish him from the apostle, the writer nowhere thinks it necessary to add this surname, although he speaks of Thomas called Didymus, of Judas not Iscariot, and Simon Peter. The only conceivable reason for this is that he himself was John and was known as such, there being no other but the Baptist. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) (*f*) *This John was the disciple whom Jesus loved.* The other disciples are mentioned by their names, Peter, Andrew, Thomas, Nathaniel, &c., while the names of John and his brother James nowhere appear. In chap. xxi. 2, the two sons of Zebedee, who in all the lists of the apostles are at the head, are placed the last. Now the disciple whom Jesus loved, who takes part in this scene (vers. 20, 21) cannot have been James, for he was dead at an early date (Acts xii. 2). It can only have been John, his brother. Lastly, this disciple must have been among the favoured three. But he could not have been Peter, who is distinguished from him, nor James who died first, while he (chap. xxi. 23) survived all the others. Could there be no other than John. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) Why, then, does he not mention his own name? Because his readers were acquainted with it. He certainly never reckoned on severe critics without special gifts for their occupation. The honourable epithet was dearer to his heart than any other; he therefore made use of it with special pleasure when it was necessary to speak of himself; and that man cannot be a very acute psychologist if he regards as immodest boasting the choice of a term that expresses the deepest sense of gratitude for the highest manifestation of favour. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) (2) *The testimony of the author himself:*—In chap. i. 14 he speaks of himself as an ocular witness, not as every Christian is, for the purely moral sense is impossible here. The Evangelist speaks of the Incarnation and earthly life of Jesus, whose history he is about to relate. In such a context it is impossible to use the term "beheld" in a purely spiritual sense. In chap. xix. 35 the Evangelist says, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." Writers have abused the term "he that" to maintain that the author was here distinguishing himself from the witness. But how could he say of any other than himself "he knows that he saith true"? One man does not answer for another's conscience; in the nature of things a man can only answer for himself. The pronoun translated "he that" is frequently employed in an exclusive sense "he and he alone" (comp. chap. i. 18, v. 39, ix. 37); and in no case to point out a different person. It is the witness of the fact who narrates it, it is he alone who has seen it, and all others who know the fact only know it by faith in his testimony. He who hath seen has borne witness of it, that ye may believe. The testimony of the author himself in the capacity of eye-witness is unanswerably confirmed by the first four verses of his first Epistle. It is not possible to express in more forcible terms the fact of personal perception than by means of the different bodily senses—sight, hearing, touch, and he who has seen, heard, touched, bears witness in order that those who have not seen, heard, touched, may believe, and thus possess and rejoice with Him (vers. 3, 4). There is too much holy majesty and tender love in these words to suppose that they were those of an impostor; and if he who wrote them was what he pretended to be, the witness of the life and death of Jesus, it must be admitted that this witness was an apostle, and that this apostle was the disciple whom Jesus loved, as has been attested in chap. xxi. For he alone was at the foot of the cross (chap. xix. 26), and was able to see with his eye the blood and water from the side of Jesus. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) (3) *External testimony.* Up to a certain point we have the same evidence for all the Gospels equally. In the days of the Diocletian persecution (A.D. 303) the Gospel by John was as well known and as universally recognized as those by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In earlier days it was the same. Origen (A.D. 184-253) speaks of "the Four Gospels," which were the only undisputed ones in the whole Church of God throughout the world, and the fourth, which he describes as that which was written by "the disciple whom Jesus loved," was his special delight. In the still earlier days of Irenæus (A.D. 126–190), we find the same universal acceptance of the fourth with the other Gospels. His testimony has special force in support of the Gospel by John. As the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John, he must have known whether the so-called Gospel by John was known to and acknowledged by John's disciple; and it is not conceivable that he could have accepted as the work of John, a book of which Polycarp knew nothing. Moreover the reason he assigns for the existence of only four Gospels, and the explanations he gives of the circumstances in

which John wrote all, imply that the book was not a recent discovery. To the age immediately preceding that in which the good Bishop of Lyons wrote his "Adversus Hæreses" belong the two translations, the Syriac and the old Latin. And the fourth Gospel has its place in them side by side with the other three. The Syriac dates from before the middle of the second century, and the old Latin not much later. And as these translations were made from different MSS. and in parts of the world distant from each other, their original forms must be sought at a distance of time which cannot be reckoned at less than half a century. Justin Martyr belongs to the first half of the second century, having suffered in A.D. 166 or 167. He quotes from certain "Memoirs" as having been written by "apostles and their followers," and so indubitable is the correspondence between Justin's doctrine of the Logos and that of the "Word" in the fourth Gospel, that some critics have resorted to the desperate hypothesis that the former derived it from the latter!—forgetting that Justin appeals to the "Memoirs" as containing the history of the faith which he professed. To the age of Justin and Irenæus belongs a fragment which bears the name of its discoverer, Muratori, a Latin translation from the Greek, which cannot have been written later than A.D. 170. In this work the fourth place is given to the Gospel of St. John, and the author, after giving an account of its composition, proceeds to say, "What wonder is it then that John brings forward every detail with so much emphasis, even in his Epistles saying of himself, 'What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears and our hands have handled, these things have we written unto you?'" For so he professes that he was not only an eye-witness, but also a hearer, and, moreover, a historian of all the wonderful works in order. Almost as important as the testimony of the Fathers is the testimony of unbelievers. The oldest polemic against the faith was written by Celsus (cir. 161–180). In this the whole christological standpoint of the Church is John's, and while Celsus refers most frequently to Matthew, he uses John more than Mark or Luke. John's Gospel then was known at this period by friend and foe, and it will not do therefore to talk of it as originating in that or the immediately preceding time. The testimony of the Gnostic heretics is equally conclusive. The earliest of them is probably Marcion, who came to Rome about A.D. 140. He knew the fourth Gospel as John's, and rejected it on that account. But if it was recognized as such in Gnostic circles, it must have been recognized much earlier in Church circles, which compels us to go back to the times of the freshest recollection of John. But at that date they would not have accepted a book as John's if it had not come from the apostle, and much less if it had been foreign to his way of thinking. (*John Kennedy, D.D.*) *The force of this external testimony*:—The value of this accumulated evidence is not the mere sum of individual testimonies (weighty though that is); but lies in the demonstration thus furnished that in the third quarter of the second century this Gospel was received without question or suspicion together with the three others (and more) by the Churches of Asia, Europe, and Africa. This wide dissemination implies a considerable lapse of years since its publication; so that the combined light of these testimonies shines far back through the first half of the century—that is, within the lifetime of hundreds, if not thousands, who had seen and heard the apostle himself. That within that half-century the Gospel and the Epistle should have been forged, and obtained this worldwide reception as genuine, is a monstrously incredible supposition. (*E. R. Conder, D.D.*) *Conclusion*:—Those who since the first discussion of this question have been really conversant with it, never could have had a moment's doubt. As the attack on St. John has become fiercer and fiercer, the truth has been more and more solidly established, error has been pursued into its last hiding-places, and at this moment the facts before us are such that no man who does not will knowingly to choose error and reject truth can dare to say that the fourth Gospel is not the work of the Apostle John. (*H. Ewald.*)

6. WHEN AND WHERE WAS IT WRITTEN? (1) Its date and place. The unanimous testimony of antiquity is, that the apostle wrote his Gospel in Ephesus. We are led to the same conclusion by internal marks, as for example, that the author has regard to the Hellenistic Jewish theosophy, and for the most part to readers out of Palestine (John ii. 6, 13, iv. 9, v. 1, 2). Another mark of the same kind, is his skill in the use of the Hellenistic Greek. This is so great, when we compare it with the style of the Apocalypse, that if the Evangelist John be the author of the latter, the Gospel, to all appearance, must have been written at a considerably later period. According to Irenæus, the Apocalypse was seen (ἑωράθη) by John toward the end of the reign of Domitian (who died 96). If we suppose that the vision was committed to writing about the time of its appearance, it would fix the date of the Apocalypse

at about A.D. 95; if we now place the composition of the Gospel at about A.D. 100, (and we can hardly put it later), we shall only have an interval of five years between the writings, a space of time which seems too brief to account for the great diversity in their language. If we might, in accordance with the highly plausible internal marks, fix the time of writing the Revelation under Galba (A.D. 68 or 69), the time thus obtained would be all-sufficient. (*A. Tholuck, D.D.*) (2) *The characteristics of the age in which it was written*:—Of the apostles, John alone survived. Nero and the tyrants who succeeded him had been swept away; and no Peter was needed to revive the hope of an infant and persecuted Church. Jerusalem had perished, and in its ruin was broken that Judaic spirit which had struggled against St. Paul. There was nothing within and without the Church to break the profound peace which inaugurated the reign of Trajan. A new generation of Christians had arisen to which the thoughts and feelings of the first were unknown; between the earlier and present state of the Christian society there seemed to be fixed a chasm as of many centuries; what wonder then if in the place of that Divine history now growing dim in the distance, there should have arisen those portentous shadows of Oriental speculation which afterwards deepened into the Gnostic heresy, and what wonder if in the place of that fervent zeal which marked the conduct of the earliest Christians, we find iniquity abounding and the love of many waxing cold, and faith and holiness falling asunder in fatal disunion? (*Dean Stanley.*) (3) *The Gospel in and for its own age*:—The age of St. John, so far from being one of fierce controversy, seems much rather, in the evils attacked and the mode of attacking them, to partake of the general tranquillity of the whole period unbroken till the fierce controversies of the middle of the next century. The chief form, therefore, in which the beloved disciple inculcated Christian truth, was not that of a polemical epistle, but of an historical gospel; was not the assertion of any principle however deep, of any morality however exalted, but the description in all its fulness of the person of Jesus Christ. Previous Evangelists had given to the Church that which the Church had then most needed; the cycle of the warnings, precepts, miracles, external ministrations of the Lord had been preserved in what we now know as the teaching of the first three Gospels. But the life as a whole—the outer life, with the distinct stages of progressive interest—the inner life, with the discourses which represented the glory which He had before the world was—the life as intended to be the source of life for the whole world—this was precisely what we might expect from St. John. It was as though the recollection of his youth, which to the minds of all else were waxing faint, came back on him with all their original vividness; no greater treasure could he bequeath to the world, which seemed as it were to have had a new term added to its existence, than a faithful historical record of those scenes that would else have perished with him; no better antidote could he furnish, alike for the intellectual and moral perversions of his age, than the complete representation of the Word made flesh. But to meet the tendencies of his age no belief in mere facts was sufficient. The prevalent errors had arisen from speculating not on the facts, but on the ideas which the facts represented. The sins of the day had arisen not merely from outward forgetfulness, but from an inward unbelief of the great end for which the facts took place. Still, therefore, keeping his stand on the immovable historical ground of Jesus Christ come in the flesh, he passes over everything merely outward or local; institutions, miracles, actions, are only mentioned in the higher truths which they represent, or else introduced only for the sake of those truths; the earthly things of the previous Gospels are transfigured in the fourth; they are of the body, this of the spirit. The flood of Oriental speculation John met not merely by opposing them, but by acknowledging and reproducing in the light of Christian faith whatever there was of truth in them. (*Ibid.*) 7. ITS VERACITY. The internal difficulties may be summarized as follows: (1) *As to time*:—(*a*) The fourth Gospel implies a long ministry, with festivals, as its landmarks. But the three, at least, allow of a ministry as long as the fourth can require; while reference to the festivals was natural in a narrative, the main scene of which is laid at Jerusalem. (*b*) The fourth Gospel appears to place the Crucifixion on Nisan 14, the three on Nisan 15. This real difficulty has been explained by hypotheses (i) of a passover anticipated by our Lord. This is perhaps most satisfactory. (ii) Of a passover postponed by the chief priests. (iii) Of a difference of computation as to the true day of the Passover, owing to the variation between the solar and lunar reckonings. (iv) Of a possible explanation of St. John's language (chap. xviii. 28, &c.), which would make it consistent with the date of Nisan 15, as that of the Crucifixion. The objection, drawn from the observance of Nisan 14 by those Churches in the second

century which inherited St. John's traditions, assumes that such observance was commemorative of the Last Supper, and not, as is probable, of our Lord's death. (2) *As to the scene of our Lord's teaching*:—"St. John places it in Judæa; the three in Galilee." But no gospel professes to be a complete history, and records of a Galilean and of a Judean ministry, respectively, leave room for each other. (3) *As to the style of Christ's teaching*:—"If Jesus spoke as reported by Matthew, He could not have spoken as reported by John." But the difference of subject, hearers, and circumstances in the two cases, taken in conjunction with the differing mental peculiarities of the reporters, will account for the difference of style. The phrases assumed to be peculiar to St. John are by no means unknown to the synoptists—*e.g.*, the antithesis between Light and Darkness. (4) *As to the matter of Christ's teaching*:—"The discourses in St. John cannot be historical, since they are nothing more than an explanation of the Logos idea put forth by the writer." But this begs the whole question. It might be true if the doctrine of the Logos had been the product of Gnostic speculations. But if Jesus was really the Divine Son, manifesting Himself as such to men, such language as that reported by St. John is no more than we should expect. St. John never represents our Lord as announcing His Divinity in the terms of the Prologue; he would have done so had he really been creating a fictitious Jesus designed to illustrate a particular theosophic speculation. (*Canon Liddon.*) (5) *As to the length of the discourses*:—"John could not possibly have retained these discourses in his memory, in such minuteness and fulness, for so many years." The true answer to this objection is the Lord's promise of the Spirit, to bring all things to remembrance. Subsidiary to this, however, there are various considerations that deserve to be weighed, as, *e.g.*—(*a*) Where writing is little used, the wonderful strength that memory attains. (*b*) There is nothing incredible, or even unlikely, in the supposition of John's having used memoranda; or that the book took its final form only by a very slow process—indeed, by a process of growth. (*c*) John did not, any more than the other evangelists, act as a mere verbal reporter, but reproduced the sense livingly. (*d*) The very length of time that elapsed, filled up as it was in telling of Jesus again and again, in thought and contemplation, and in deepening experience, would render it not more difficult, but more easy, to his full and final testimony. Any one may find analogies within his own knowledge. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) 8. ITS DESIGN. (1) *The polemical theory*:—The idea of a polemical dogmatic design, besides the general one, is held by Irenæus, who says it was John's purpose to confute the errors of the Gnostic Cerinthus. Many of the ancient and modern theologians concur in the view of this ancient father; some of them, however, suppose a more general polemical aim against Gnostic and Docetic errors at large, whilst many think that they discover in the Gospel, besides this, a polemical aspect toward the sect of disciples of John or Zabians (Baptizers); while others think they can detect a polemical purpose against carnal Judaizers; and that the Gospel contains expressions which can be employed in confuting certain heresies no one will deny. But this is insufficient to establish a distinctively controversial aim; for a pure Christianity, constantly and in its own nature, is in conflict with those errors. The characteristics of the Gospel can force us to the idea of a definitely polemic aim only in case the didatic character peculiar to it can be accounted for in no other way. It is, nevertheless, probable that cursorily here and there (chap. xix. 34, 35), especially in the Introduction, he has an eye to erroneous opinions and doubts, which just at that time were current. It is natural to all authors to have an occasional regard of this sort to their relations to their own times. (*Tholuck.*) (2) *The spiritual and supplementary theories*:—He might have intended to present a more spiritual delineation of the doctrine and life of the Saviour. This thought readily occurs to him who has been attracted by the wonderfully sublime simplicity, and the heavenly gentleness, which pervade this whole work, as well as by the many expressions in regard to the higher nature of Christ. The Alexandrine writers, who generally embrace the idea that there is a twofold spiritual point of view existing among Christians, express this thought; and since, in addition, John generally reports those discourses and miracles of Christ which are not mentioned by the other evangelists, many writers, both ancient and modern, have supposed that John had a general purpose of completing the earlier Gospels, especially of supplying what was wanting in their delineation of the Divine in Christ. But the conjecture that the fourth Gospel is more pneumatic than the others certainly belongs to a later period, which reflected from its own point of view on the two classes of records. The Apostle himself would in all pro-

bability have judged in the matter as Herder does: "If you insist on calling this a Gospel of the Spirit, be it so; but the other gospels are not therefore fleshly. They also contain living words of Christ, and build on the same foundation of faith." The object of completing the three synoptical gospels which we have, cannot, then, in this specific sense be admitted. That this cannot have been the grand design, is shown by the unity of form in the Gospel. "This Gospel," says Hase, "is no mere patchwork to fill up vacant spaces;" and not even as a distinct subordinate purpose, kept in view by the Evangelist throughout, can we perceive a design of filling out what had been omitted by the others. It is in conflict with such a view, in fact, that so much has been embraced in the fourth Gospel which is also found in the first three; that not a few of at least apparent contradictions to them occur which might have been harmonized; that, on the other hand, the apparent contradictions between the synoptical gospels themselves are not cleared up; that at chap. xx. 30, some statement of this aim might justly be looked for; and, finally, that to embrace this view strictly would force us to think of a literary assiduity of a comparatively modern stamp. Nevertheless, there is some truth lying at the bottom of this theory. If John in his instructions imparted much which passed beyond the circle of the ordinary oral tradition, and consequently beyond the synoptical gospels which flowed from it, we can hardly think otherwise than that among his friends a longing would be excited to possess a history of the Lord in accordance with his delineation. (*Ibid.*) (3) *The specific practical purpose:*—This was fourfold. (*a*) To show how the pre-existent Word of God "came to His own" (the Jews), unfolding before them His glory as "the only-begotten Son of the Father." (*b*) How that glory was either not discerned by His own, through inward moral and spiritual blindness; or, if perceived (as one can hardly help thinking it was by the ecclesiastical leaders), was deliberately rejected, because "they loved the darkness rather than the light." (*c*) How, notwithstanding, this glory was recognized and received by another "own," the spiritually born, who were inwardly drawn of God to believe on His Name. (*d*) How, by further revelations of His glory in dying for them on the cross and rising again, He gave to these latter the right and power to become the sons of God. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) The unity of the fourth Gospel is a theological unity; the whole narrative is threaded together by the single intention to unfold the relation of the Father to the Son, or Divine Word, as the Divine relation, through a living participation in which all men may be transfigured and set free. (*R. H. Hutton, M.A.*) The design of St. John was to convey just and adequate notions of the real nature, character, and office of that great Teacher who came to instruct and redeem mankind. For this purpose he studiously selected for his narrative those passages of our Saviour's life which most clearly displayed His Divine power and authority, and those of His discourses in which He spoke most plainly of His own nature, and of the efficacy of His death as an atonement for the sins of the world. The object which this evangelist had in view is very clearly stated in chap. xx. 31. It was not to accumulate as many instances as possible of the miraculous power exerted by Jesus, but only those which most distinctly illustrated His peculiar office and nature. (*Bishop Blomfield.*) But assuredly one object the Evangelist had in view was to trace out the progress of belief and unbelief. And in the fifth and sixth chapters we have two forms of unbelief contrasted. The unbelief of Jerusalem—"The Jews sought to kill Him." The unbelief of Galilee—"This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" "Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Types of two forms of unbelief in all ages! One is sad or contemptuous, another fanatical; one sneers, another strikes; one sighs, another grinds its teeth; one would kill Him if it could, another turns upon its heel; one curses Him and loathes the sacred wounds, another would only pierce His loving heart by leaving Him alone. (*Bishop Alexander.*) From its very commencement the Gospel pursues this theme: The eternal conflict between the Divine light and the corruption of men, exhibited in the opposition between the inimical Jewish party and the appearing of the Son of God, and protracted until the light is victorious. As the overture expresses the idea of a musical composition, so the very Prologue embodies this theme, for it speaks of the contest of the world with the Logos before He became flesh; and as the theme of the epistle to the Romans lies in chap. i. 17, so the idea which animates the Gospel of John is expressed in chap. i. 11–13. Two main divisions even of an outward character undoubtedly present themselves. The first, to chap. xii., embraces the public work of Jesus, and closes with a *resumé* of it (chap. v. 44–50). For the second division, the history of the Passion and Resurrection, we are

prepared by the discourse (chap. xii. 23–32), in which the leading thought is: the setting of the sun is necessary, for without it there can be no rising. Chap. xiii. begins the history of the Passion, and at the outstart (chap. v. 3) the disciple points to the final glory. The exclamation of Thomas—the sublimest acknowledgment of the risen Saviour—closes the second part, and by the words to which it leads—"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"—forms the transition to the closing expression: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God." (*A. Tholuck, D.D.*) 9. ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL. I. *Jesus is the Son of God* (chaps. i.–iv.):—1. The Christ (chap. i. 1–18). 2. The introduction of Jesus into the world (chap. i. 19; ii. 11) by the testimony of the Baptist (chap. i. 19–40); of Himself (chap. i. 41; ii. 11). 3. First revelation of Himself as the Son of God (chap. ii. 12; iv. 54). (*a*) In Jerusalem and Judæa (chap. ii. 12; iii. 36). (*b*) In Samaria and Galilee (chap. iv. 1–54). II. *Jesus and the Jews* (chap. v. 12):—1. Jesus the Life. Opening of the conflict (chaps. v., vi.). (*a*) His Divine working as Son of God. Beginning of opposition (chap. v. 1–47). (*b*) Jesus the Life in the flesh. Progress of belief and unbelief (chap. vi. 1–71). 2. Jesus the Light. Height of the conflict (chaps. vii.–x.). (*a*) He meets the unbelief of the Jews at Jerusalem (chap. vii. 1–52). (*b*) Opposition between the Jews and Jesus at its height (chap. viii. 12–59). (*c*) Jesus the Light of the World for salvation and for judgment (chaps. ix., x.) 3. The delivery of Jesus to death is the Life and Judgment of the World (chaps. xi. xii.) (*a*) The raising from the dead (chap. xi. 1–57). (*b*) Prophetic announcement of the future (chap. xii. 1–36). (*c*) Final judgment on Israel (ibid. 37–50). III. *Jesus and His own* (chaps. xiii.–xx.):—1. Jesus' love and the belief of His disciples. (*a*) His love in condescension (chap. xiii. 1–30). (*b*) His love in keeping and completing the disciples in the faith (chap. xiii. 31; xvi. 33). His love in the exaltation of the Son of God (chap. xvii.). 2. Jesus the Lord. The unbelief of Israel now in its completion. The belief of His own (chaps. xviii.–xx.). (*a*) His free surrender to His enemies and to the unbelief of Israel (chap. xviii. 1; xix. 16). (*b*) His self-surrender to death, and Divine testimony in death (chap. xix. 16–42). (*c*) His manifestation of Himself as passed from death into liberty and life, and the completion of the disciples' faith worked thereby (chap. xx. 1–29). *The Appendix* (chap. xxi.):—The glimpse into the future. (*a*) The symbolic draught of fishes (vers. 1–8). (*b*) The symbolic meal (vers. 9–14). (*c*) The calling and its prospect (vers. 15–23). (*d*) Conclusion. (*C. E. Luthardt, D.D.*) 10. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. (1) *In general*:—I love best of all to read in St. John. There is in him something so perfectly wonderful—dusk and night, and the quick lightning throbbing through them! The soft clouds of evening, and behind the mass the big full moon bodily!—something so sad, so high, so full of presage, that one can never weary of it. When I read John, it always seems to me that I see him before me, reclining at the Last Supper on the bosom of his Lord, as if his angel held the light for me, and at certain parts would place his arm around me, and whisper something in my ear. I am far from understanding all I read, yet often John's idea seems to hover before me in the distance; and even when I look into a place that is entirely dark, I have a presension of a great, glorious sense, which I shall some day understand, and hence I catch so eagerly at every new exposition of the Gospel of John. It is true, most of them only ruffle the evening clouds, and never trouble the moon behind them. (*Claudius of Wansbeck.*) 2) *Simplicity and profundity*:—This Gospel speaks a language, to which no parallel whatever is to be found in the whole compass of literature; such childlike simplicity, with such contemplative profundity; such life and such deep rest; such sadness and such serenity; and, above all, such a breath of love—"an eternal life which has already dawned, a life which rests in God, which has overcome the disunion between the world that is and the world to come, the human and the Divine." (*Hase*). If we cast our eyes over the whole body of religious literature, there is certainly none whom we would feel tempted to place by John's side, unless, perhaps, it were Thomas á-Kempis; yet such a comparison would involve as complete a mistake, as to place in parallel the simplicity of Xenophon with that of Plato. In the Apostolic men, cited as scholars of John, in Polycarp, Ignatius, the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, there are, indeed, here and there, tones of assonance with John, but not the touch of John's pencil, while to Paul so many parallels, even besides Luther, present themselves. (*Tholuck.*) (3) *Clearness and depth*:—This little work has been the subject of critical study and exegetical commentaries so numerous that they would form a library. Nevertheless, it does not present any particular obscurities. It is a simple recital, written in a clear

flowing style, its simplicity sometimes borders on *naïveté*, and if its contents are deep, they resemble the ocean in this respect, which is transparent even to the bottom in fine weather. This book has been rightly compared to the light of the moon, whose brilliant splendour meets our gaze through the mysterious calm of the night. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) (4) *Brevity and suggestiveness* :—The vocabulary of St. John is comparatively poor, but the value of his experiences far surpasses that of their verbal exponent. The inscription on Herder's monument at Weimar, "Light, life, love," embodies the fundamental idea of St. John's theology; but who has ever yet perfectly fathomed this in the spirit of the Apostle! (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*). (5) *Spirituality* :—It depends on one's nature more than on his logical powers what he shall find in this Gospel. Very remarkable is it how little children and ripe Christians, the simplest minded and the deepest minded, all like it with so profound a liking. To the mere logician it is one of the most obscure and perplexing writings that can be taken up; to the little child and the child-hearted saint, it is one of the easiest and most delightful. As, in the twilight of a day in September, one may cast a hasty, careless glance across the sky and see only a bright star shining here and there, while if he gazes steadfastly in some one direction for a little time, world after world, at first invisible, will shine forth to him from the blue depths; so, to him who looks long and earnestly into this book, glory after glory will disclose itself, till his whole spiritual sky is one wide field of light, while at the same time a sense of infinite mystery steals over him, and a strangely mingled longing and awe. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) 11. ITS EFFECTS ON THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. I believe the writings of this Apostle have been blotted by more penitents' tears, and have won more hearts for the Redeemer, than all the rest put together. Among the "gracious words" that are set as thick as stars in the firmament of Scripture, there are none that shine with a clearer lustre than those which we find in John. Take the following by way of example: "Behold the Lamb of God!" "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out"; "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life"; "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin"; "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These texts are all the more wonderful when viewed in their connection. If we were asked to name a verse that might be called the very pole-star of faith, what would it be but this? "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How many souls have entered into the peace of believing through means of this one verse God only knows; and again, how often dying lips have whispered it and fading eyes have brightened to hear it spoken. One example may represent a thousand. Jonas Justus, wiping the cold sweat from the forehead of the dying Luther, heard him praying and committing his soul with great confidence into the hands of the Heavenly Father; and then, as if he were grasping hard after the ground of such certain hope, he repeated aloud this passage (in Latin, as he had learned it when a child). (*Ibid.*) 12. ITS VALUE. (1) *As a testimony to the Divinity of Christ* :—There is a proverb that no man's life should be written by his private servant. That proverb expresses the general conviction that as a rule, like some mountain scenery or ruined castle, moral greatness in man is more picturesque when viewed at a distance. The proverb bids you not to scrutinize even a good man too narrowly, lest perchance you should discover flaws in his character which will shake your conviction of his goodness. It is hinted that some obtrusive weakness which escape public observation will be obvious to a man's every day companion, and will be fatal to the higher estimate which, but for such scrutiny, might have been formed respecting him. But in the case of Jesus Christ the moral of this cynical proverb is altogether at fault. Jesus chooses one disciple to be the privileged sharer of a nearer intimacy than any other. John sees more of the Master than any other, more of His glory, more too of His humiliation, and yet John beyond any other of the sacred writers is the persistent herald and teacher of our Lord's Divinity. (*Canon Liddon.*) The fourth Gospel is throughout pervaded by the idea of human testimony to Christ: from the Baptist, from the disciples, from the Jews at Jerusalem, from the witnesses of the raising of Lazarus, from the Pharisees who believed, from the author, and from Pilate. St. John

delights to assist and make permanent the burning cries of confession wrung from the hearts of men. From the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God!" from Nathanael, "Thou art the Son of God"; from the Samaritan woman, "Is not this the Christ?" from Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; from the people, "When Christ cometh will He do more miracles than those which this man hath done?" from the officers, "Never man spake like this man"; from Martha, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God"; from Pilate, "I find no fault in Him"; from Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Wonderful music! drawn from the heart of man by the hand of faith, running up the scales from its faintest and lowest note—"Thou art the King of Israel," to its grandest and richest harmony, "My Lord and my God." But the witness of God is greater, of which this Gospel is full. Hence the mention of the attesting voice from heaven, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Hence the intense conviction that the Scriptures are "they which testify of Him," that "had they believed Moses they would have believed Him." Hence the accumulated reference to type and prophecy in the narrative of the atoning death. In a mere historian there might have seemed to be no more of deep purpose in the particular cruelties inflicted by the soldiers or the mob, than in the shape of the tangled knots of seaweed flung by the spring tide upon the beach. But every incident is to John's eye arranged by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The lots upon the vestment were cast by a Divine hand. The vessel with vinegar, the sponge and hyssop were not there by chance. The perfection and dignity of that Body, which seemed so helpless, were guaranteed by the rubric of the Divine ritual in regard to the Paschal Lamb—"Not a bone of Him shall be broken." The thrust of the soldier's lance is in the dark background of Zechariah's prophecy, and written upon the very Body that shall come in the clouds of heaven. "They shall look on Him whom they pierced." The Evangelist's spirit sails over the deep of Scripture as over an equatorial ocean, but on the far horizon of prophecy he sees its southern Cross. (*Bp. Alexander.*) (2) *As a portrait of Christ:*—The fourth Gospel is a really historical source for a representation of the character of Christ, but in a higher, spiritualized sense of the word. Without this Gospel the unfathomable depth, the inaccessible height, of the character of the Saviour of the world would be wanting to us, and His boundless influence, renewing all humanity, would for ever remain a mystery. (*Schenkel.*) (3) *As a message to modern men:*—When we look around on our own times, full indeed of moral and intellectual interest, but outwardly unruffled—without persecution and without enthusiasm—martyrdom seeming to be almost an impossibility; human and natural agencies alive at work everywhere—this Gospel is not without its use to check desponding thoughts, if we remember that such an age, uncongenial as it might seem to the growth of religious excellence, was the age which witnessed the full development of the character of the holiest of the sons of men. Or again, when we look at the intellectual temptations by which our times are especially assailed, the tendency to lose sight of fact and reality in shadowy systems of philosophy which we have not strength to grasp, the confusion and dissolution of barriers which once fenced round our opinions and our duties, may we not fairly be reminded of some of the speculations of the close of the first century? May we not be allowed to trust that as then, in the first publication, so now, in the revived study of St. John's writings, we may find our best refuge from the distractions of the time, that as of old he was the "true Gnostic," so now he may be to us the true Idealist of the age? (*Dean Stanley.*) (4) *As a gospel for common life:*—If theology is a collection of dry husks, the granaries which contain those husks will be set on fire, and nothing will quench the fire till they be consumed. It is just because I find in St. John the grain which those husks sometimes conceal, for which they are sometimes a substitute; because theology in his

Gospel offers itself to us as a living root, out of which all living powers, thoughts, acts, may develop; because there is nothing in him that is abstract, because that which is deep and eternal proves itself to be deep and eternal by entering into all the relations of time, and manifesting itself in all the common doings of men; it is therefore, I believe, that he makes his appeal, not to the man of technicalities, not to the school doctor, but to the simple wayfarer, and at the same time to the man of science who does not forget that he is a man, and who expects to ascertain principles only by the honest method of experiment. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*)

13. *Testimonies of enemies and friends*:—It has been stigmatized as a myth (Strauss), a theological romance (Baur), a misty picture without reality (Weitzsäcker), a product of dotage and fancy (Gfrörer), poor stuff (J. S. Mill); it has been eulogized as the main gospel only to be comprehended by those who lean on Jesus' bosom (Origen), as more love bewitching and elevating than all the harmonies of music (Chrysostom), as the water of life (Augustine), as the chief gospel, unique, tender and true (Luther), as the boundless flight of the bird of God (Adam of St. Victor), as the key to the right understanding of the rest (Calvin), as the most important portion of the New Testament (Lessing), as the heart of Christ (Ernesti), as written by an angel's hand (Herder), as pervaded with eternal, child-like, Christmas joys (Schliermacher), as the diamond among the gospels (Lange), as wonderful with its fulness of grace, truth, peace, light and life (Meyer), as the good wine kept till the last. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*)

THE BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATOR.

ST. JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

VERS. 1-5. **In the beginning was the Word.**—I. THE APOSTLE ASSERTS THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST. 1. His name: the Word. (1) He is the chief subject of Revelation—the Word of promise—the substance of all shadows, types, and prophecies. (2) The medium of God's communications with the world. To Him the Father communicates Himself in counsel; He, as the Wisdom of God, communicates the Father's counsels to men. 2. His eternity. Not "from," but "in," the beginning. 3. His distinct personality and co-existence with the Father. II. THE APOSTLE CONFIRMS HIS STATEMENT BY REFERRING TO CHRIST'S PRE-INCARNATE MANIFESTATION TO THE WORLD. 1. The worlds and the things in them are not eternal. Reason teaches us that there must have been a first cause. 2. All things were made by the Word (Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2). 3. He Himself was not made; therefore cannot be a creature, however exalted, such as Socinians, Mohammedans, and Arians represent Him. 4. Every form of life is in Him, of whatever rank, from inanimate matter up to rational and spiritual man. 5. All light proceeds from Him. 6. The restoration of the ruined is by Him. Souls in the darkness of death are illumined and revived by Him. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) I. THE RELATION OF THE WORD TO GOD, as possessing the Divine nature and existing with God before creation. II. THE RELATION OF THE WORD TO THE UNIVERSE, as its Creator. III. THE RELATION OF THE WORD TO MEN, as being the source of life and light to them. IV. THE RELATION OF THE WORD TO FALLEN HUMANITY, as shining in the darkness, though the darkness comprehended it not. (*W. Perkins.*) *Practical reflections:*—I. WOULD WE KNOW THE EXCEEDING SINFULNESS OF SIN? Let us read these verses. If no one less than the Eternal God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, could take away the sin of the world, sin must be a far more abominable thing in the sight of God than most men suppose. If Christ is so great, then sin must indeed be sinful! II. WOULD WE KNOW THE STRENGTH OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN'S FOUNDATION FOR HOPE? Let us often read these verses. Let us mark that the Saviour in whom the believer is bid to trust is nothing less than the Eternal God, One able to save to the uttermost all that come to the Father by Him. He that was "with God," and "was God," is also "Emmanuel, God with us." (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Christ and God:*—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i. 1). As the translation of this passage cannot be improved, and the words are plain, no verbal exegesis is required. The subject is Christ and God, and we are here taught—I. THAT CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL REVEALER OF GOD. "In the beginning was the Word"—the Logos. He is not a word but the word. As the Revealer, this Word is distinguished—1. By its faithfulness. Christ is the exact exponent of the Divine intellect and heart. 2. By its fulness. Other words only speak part of God. 3. By its forcefulness. Human words are sometimes powerful, they are not always air; they are sometimes a force. God's words in nature are mighty. II. THAT CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL SELF OF GOD. "And the Word was with God." The expression implies that He had a conscious existence distinct from the Absolute One. He was with Him. He that is with me is not me. 1. Christ was with Him in the sense of agreement. There was a perfect concurrence. 2. Christ was with him in the sense of contact. Never out

of His presence, living in His light, breathing His inspirations. III. THAT CHRIST IS THE ETERNAL SELF OF GOD. "And the Word was God." 1. "He was God" in form. Deep, it would seem, in the constitution of moral soul, is the craving for some form of God. As He appears in the universe, He transcends the limits of human vision. Christ is the form He has assumed; the form in which, in all probability, He appears to His intelligent universe as well as to man. 2. "He was God" in action. Through Him the eternal volitions are carried out and realized. He is the Actualizer of God's eternal ideas. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Word made flesh:*—A fourfold contrast. I. In respect of ESSENCE. Word and flesh. The first suggests pure spirituality, power, eternity; the second materiality, weakness, mortality. II. In respect of EXISTENCE. In the beginning the Word was. In time the Word was made flesh. The eternal becomes an infant of days. He who was in the beginning, and had no beginning, has also an existence numbered by every year that passes away. III. In respect of ASSOCIATION. "With God"; "among us." In perfect holiness and blessedness; acquainted with grief and beset by sin. In the bosom of the Eternal Father, receiving and returning infinite love; and in the arms of a human mother, soon to taste the hatred and cruelty of man. IV. In respect of NATURE. The supreme contrast. He who was God became man. In man are united spirit and matter, angel and brute, seraph and clay. But what extremes meet in Christ! Creator and creature, eternity and time; and these in unbroken union. (*W. Perkins.*) *The Word:*—I. The ETERNITY of the Word. 1. By the phrase "in the beginning" is to be understood eternity. Had St. John said "before" the beginning, he would have presented eternity under the laws of time, a mistake as grave as to describe the Infinite under the conditions of the finite. But mounting up higher than time and space, he leads us to the calm where God dwelleth. 2. Four times he repeats the word "was"; which—(1) Joined with "beginning," makes the idea of eternity dawn upon the mind in all its awful grandeur. (2) Joined to "with God," involves a contrast with verse 3. The sun, moon, and stars in the beginning "were made"; the Word in the beginning "was." His existence and theirs consequently differ radically. (3) Joined to "God" contrasts with verse 14. "In the beginning was the Word"; in the fulness of time "the Word was made flesh." 3. Christ always existed as the Word. It was not in the course of history that He became the Word. In His pre-existence Jesus Christ is God speaking to Himself; in His post-existence God speaking to us. The same word He speaks to Himself and to us; therefore it has the same meaning on the Divine as on the human side. II. The PERSONALITY of the Word. 1. The Word was "with God" in respect of personality. Omnipotence is eternally in God; Jesus Christ is eternally with God—a mode of speech signifying distinct, but not separate, personal subsistence. God spent eternity in self-communion; but He so far transcends us in the power of thinking that His ideas become realities. His one thought becomes a Word consubstantial with Himself. 2. He was with God in respect of complacency. God took unspeakable delight in His Word, for in Him He beheld His own portraiture, without defect, fault, or flaw. God, as Father, infinitely, eternally, loves the Son. This intense love the Son cherishes towards the Father. He was not simply with, but "towards," God. He had His face, so to speak, turned fully towards Him, returning all the wealth of thought and affection poured upon Him. With the perfect thinker the perfect Word reflects back the perfect thought. A further idea still lurks here. The Word was "at home" with God. Christ in His pre-existent state never felt restrained or ill at ease as an inferior with a superior, but as a loving child with an indulgent father (Prov. viii. 22–31); not as a subject in the presence of his monarch, or a creature in the presence of his Creator, but as an equal in the society of his friend. 3. He was with God in respect of counsel or purpose. (1) In respect of creative counsel. All things were gathered together in the pre-existent Christ (Rev. iii. 4; Col. i. 15, 16). (2) In respect of redemptive purpose. In the centre of the earth all the mountains meet. In the centre all terrestrial objects stand together. Similarly Christ is the centre of the plan of our salvation (Eph. i. 3, 4). III. The proper DIVINITY of the Word. 1. "Was God" implies co-equality. Two persons may be in amicable fellowship, whilst in nature and standing the one may be inferior to the other. (1) As Mediator, indeed, in His state of humiliation, Christ was the Father's subordinate and servant; wherefore He says, "My Father is greater than I." (2) But as He is the Second Person in the Trinity, St. John teaches His equality with the Father. The idea of perfect sonship excludes that of subordination. The man of forty is as much a

son as a child of four; the fact of sonship is undiminished, but subordination is gone. But Jesus Christ is from the first a perfect Son, and therefore on a footing of equality with the perfect Father. (3) The Son being thus equal with the Father, God will have no occasion to repeat His Word. The perfect revelation is summed up in one word—Jesus Christ. 2. "Was God" teaches consubstantiality. "The Word was with God"; there it is God with the article denoting the Father's person; here without the article indicating substance, being. The Son can never be the Father; but is of the same essence as the Father—of the same, not of like; *homo-ousia*, not *homoiousia*. 3. Let us therefore hold fast the doctrine once delivered to the saints. Beware of running away with the notion that all the intellects are opposed to orthodoxy. The acute intellects may be, but the profound intellects, which see far and deep, are not. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The Word*:—1. As the mental work in man is the thought of the mind by which the mind holds converse with itself insensibly—that is, without effort and without passion or emotion—and is the perfect image and similitude of the mind from which it proceeds, so does the Son derive a free and unseen origin from the Father, being His express image and similitude. 2. As the mind holds converse with itself by its own thought and cogitation, and sees and knows itself and all things by means of this thought, so does the Father see Himself as in a mirror in the person of His Son. 3. As the intellectual, immaterial word abides in man's mind, so does the Divine Word abide and remain in the bosom of the Father. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) 1. When the Word was—in the beginning. 2. Where the Word was—with God. 3. What the Word was—God. (*Beaux Amis.*) *The resemblance between the Written and the Personal Word*:—I. CHRIST IS DIVINE-HUMAN. 1. He assumed into union with His Godhead a human soul, a human body, and an animal nature. He hungered, thirsted, was fatigued, and had as real a need of meat, drink, and sleep as other men. 2. He grew, not only in stature, but in wisdom. 3. As regarded His human mind, He knew not the time of the consummation of all things. 4. He was as much mixed up with the manifold, humbling, petty details of daily life as any of us. 5. But every now and then there flashed rays of that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. II. THE WRITTEN WORD IS DIVINE-HUMAN. 1. Its Divine element is twofold. (1) Inspiration, which pervades the whole of it. (2) Revelation, which characterizes the most important parts of it—the creation, the whole range of prophecy, the law, the gospel. 2. It is perfectly human—a fact attested by the variety of its style. It is coloured with the human mind, affections, experiences, reasonings. 3. This human element gives the Scriptures that geniality which wakens so many chords in our hearts, and which makes us find them such a sympathetic book. If they spoke only the tongues of angels they might reveal to us mysteries, impress and even scare us, but where would their comfort be? 4. Like the Personal Word, the Written Word, though both human and Divine, is but one book; inasmuch as all its treatises were given by inspiration of one Spirit, who did for them what the living soul does for the animal frame—gave them a regular organization and development which makes the Bible truly and really one body. III. THE PERFECT HUMANITY OF THE WRITTEN WORD INVOLVES ITS BEING COMPASSED WITH INFIRMITY, AS THE WRITTEN WORD WAS. Hence the weaknesses of its human language and thought. 1. In censuring sin it speaks with a fidelity which our false delicacy does not relish, and which no uninspired preacher would dare to imitate. 2. Frequently the writers descend to matters of comparatively local, temporal, and mundane interest. 3. They were unacquainted with scientific truth. 4. In many points they give a handle to the misconstructions of enemies. IV. THERE IS A GROWTH OF HOLY SCRIPTURE EXACTLY CORRESPONDING TO THE GROWTH OF THE PERSONAL WORD. 1. Prophecy is built up stone upon stone on the foundation of the original promise (Gen. iii. 15). This promise is handed over to Abraham in an enlarged and expanded form (Gen. xii. 3). When Abraham's family branches out into twelve tribes, Judah is selected as the tribe in which the promise should run (Gen. xlix. 8, 10). As soon as an earthly kingdom is established, David is indicated as the king on whose throne Messiah should sit (2 Sam. vii. 12–16). 2. The Written Word is ever developing itself from Genesis to Revelation. In Genesis you have the dawn of Divine knowledge and thought; in the New Testament you have its noontide blaze. God, Christ, morality, the Fall, justification, sanctification are not seen as clearly in the Old Testament as in the New, nor in the earlier books of the Old as in the later. Yet from first to last it is the very Word of God, as Jesus is; as much exalted above other books as He is by His Divinity above other men. V. It

EXHIBITS ALL THE SYMPTOMS OF ITS EXALTED CHARACTER AND ORIGIN. It abounds in passages of supernatural sublimity, foresights, revelations of heaven, oracles which seem to vibrate with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. Like the Personal Word, the Written Word rises up in meek majesty to make those who approach it with hostile intent go backward and fall to the ground; upon it deseends the holy dove; over it hangs the bright cloud; it quickens human souls; it says to the stormy sea of the human heart, "Peace, be still"; before it the demons of lust, pride, covetousness, worldliness, quake and flee. As both in His generation and resurrection and ascension Jesus was declared to be Divine, so both at its commencement, when it stoops down to inaugurate the narrative of earth, and at its close ascends to heaven again and exhibits man purged from all stain, so the Written Word is declared to be the Word of God with power. VI. IF CHRIST WERE NOT HUMAN, WE SHOULD NOT HAVE THE CONSOLATION OF HIS SYMPATHY; IF THE SCRIPTURES WERE NOT HUMAN, THEY COULD NOT COME HOME AS THEY DO TO HUMAN HEARTS AND CONSCIENCES. Let us therefore regard them with but one whit the less affectionate veneration. There could be no trial of faith if they presented no difficulties. To what shall we go if we give them up? (*Dean Goulburn.*) *The heavenly analogy of the connection of speech with reason*:—Man's reason was formed in the image of God, and our Lord is called the Word; these are the two Scriptural intimations which guide us into part of the truth respecting the Divine nature. 1. Reason involves a thing distinct from itself, namely, speech, or the power of communicating the processes of reason, so that whosoever has the faculty of reason has in that faculty the faculty of speech or the Word. 2. Though reason wraps up speech in itself, yet we can conceive of reason as energizing latently, and of the faculty of speech as having no exercise. 3. Neither reason nor speech can make any claim to priority of existence; they are twin faculties, born at the same instant. Now listen to what the Catholic Church has gathered from the Scripture respecting the nature of God. I. There is a TRINITY IN UNITY, that is, more than one Person in the Divine nature. Man's spirit, the Bible says, was made in the image of that nature. In man's spirit there are two faculties, reason and speech. The second Person in the Divine nature goes by the name of the Word, that is, He stands to the first in the same relation as that in which utterance stands to understanding. II. St. John intimates that THERE WAS A PERIOD WHEN, although both blessed Persons existed, yet THE SON WAS IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER; when, though the Word was, yet the Word came not forth. That is like reason, with the faculty of speech latent in it, not put forth. III. THE MAJESTY OF THESE PERSONS IS CO-ETERNAL. The administration of this in the human spirit is the twin birth of reason and speech. Speech, then, in the nature of man, represents Christ in the nature of God. What a value and a dignity does this impress on human speech! When you reason and communicate to others the result you adumbrate in the limits of a finite nature, the nature of the Infinite One. Shall any child of man, then, degrade this faculty of speech to vain and profane and unclean communications? (*Ibid.*) *The relation of this revelation with that of Genesis i.* which is an introduction to the story of the first man, as this is an introduction to the story of the second Man, the Lord from heaven. The great words are the same in both cases, though they have evidently deepened in their later use—the beginning, God, the Word ("God said"), all things, light, darkness, life, to be, to become. While the evangelist begins with creation, he goes very far beyond, and consequently uses many words that were not needed in Genesis, but are indispensable to his purpose, such as law, grace, truth, faith, sons of God and sin. As in Genesis, God is taken for granted. There is no attempt to prove that He is, and there is no notice taken of any denial that He is. With a grand daring of disregard, as if there could be no controversy on such a subject, the paragraph proceeds on the assumption that He is, as beyond question, like a postulate or axiom. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Controversy about Christ*:—This verse is an unanswerable argument against three classes of heretics. It confutes—1. The Arians, who regard Christ as a Being inferior to God. 2. The Sabellians, who deny any distinction of Persons in the Trinity, and say that God sometimes manifested Himself as Father, sometimes as Son, and sometimes as the Spirit, and that the Father and the Spirit suffered on the cross. 3. The Socinians and Unitarians, who say that Jesus Christ was not God, but man, a most holy and perfect man, but only a man. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *A notable conversion*:—A memorable hour arrived in the history of a youth belonging to an honourable French family in the second half of the sixteenth century. Though scarcely fifteen years of age, he had been led by blind guides to

unbelief, and the dragon's teeth, sown on an unguarded field, had already begun to produce their destructive harvest. His godly father, deeply concerned for his salvation, placed a New Testament in his room, and offered the silent prayer that he might take it and read it. The son did so. His eye rested accidentally upon a passage which, according to his own words, so affected him that he "suddenly felt the Divinity of the subject, and, together with the majesty, also the power of the words that so infinitely surpassed the flow of all human eloquence. My whole body was convulsed," he continues, "my soul was confounded, and I have been so affected this whole day that I have scarcely been conscious of my own identity." It was not quite twenty-five years after this remarkable event that he was preaching the Gospel of the Reformation at Antwerp, while the light from the blaze of the funeral pile which was consuming his companions in faith shone against the windows of the hall where he preached. And when the pestilence that raged in Leyden in 1602 numbered him among its victims, it was universally acknowledged and lamented that a shining light had set. This young man was the celebrated Professor Francis Junius, and the passage which was the power of God to his salvation was John i. 1. (*J. J. Van Oosterzee, D.D.*) *The nature of Christ perfectly similar and equal to that of the Eternal Father*:—1. This subject yields in importance to none. The views we take of it will influence those we take of all other doctrines, and must terminate in results which affect God's glory. 2. Our state of mind should be one of perfect neutrality. The slightest prepossession is incompatible with the love of truth. 3. The language of the Scriptures must be taken in its obvious signification, just as the Jews took John x. 30, xv. 13. 4. Should this doctrine be clearly taught, no difficulty can affect its certainty or ought to affect our faith. 5. The lines of proof are five. (1) Divine names are given to Christ. (2) Divine attributes are ascribed to Him. (3) Divine works are wrought by Him. (4) Divine relations are sustained by Him. (5) Divine worship is demanded by and paid to Him. The line suggested by our text is the first. I. Christ is called JEHOVAH (John xii. 37; *cf.* Isa. vi. 1–10). II. GOD (Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 8). III. GREAT GOD (Titus ii. 3). IV. TRUE GOD (1 John v. 20). V. MIGHTY GOD (Isa. ix. 6). VI. GOD OF ISRAEL (Exod. xxiv. 9, 10; Psa. lxviii. 17, 18; Eph. iv. 8). In reference to these instances: 1. Has any other received such appellations. 2. Compare these appellations with the religious state of the Jews at the time of Christ. They were strict monotheists, as were Christ and the apostles. If, therefore, it was intended to convey the idea of Christ's Divinity, no better terms could have been used; but if to convey the idea that He was a mere man, they are totally misleading. 3. Compare these appellations with the state of the Pagan world. They were idolaters, and Christ's design and that of His apostles was to deliver them from idolatry. A strange method was employed if Christ were a mere creature. 4. Examine whether events have justified the notion which the prophets gave if Christ be not God. It was predicted that He should utterly abolish idols, and has He not done so? 5. The supposition that the Deity of Christ was taught by the Saviour and His apostles will alone enable us to account for His rejection. Conclusion: 1. Is the Deity of Christ a doctrine of Scripture? Then how is the accuracy of His precepts ratified? How entire the proof of their conformity to the will of God! 2. Is the Saviour possessed of a Divine nature? How absolutely, therefore, is He able to scrutinize our professions of His gospel! 3. The same truth also invites the utmost confidence in His declarations of mercy and offers of pardon. (*J. F. Denham.*) *On books*:—1. What is it which makes men different from all other living beings we know of? Is it not speech—the power of words? The beasts may make one another understand many things, but they have no speech. 2. But where did this power of uttering thoughts come from? The beasts have been on the earth as long as man, and yet they can no more speak than they could when they were created. But Adam could speak at once, and could understand what God said to him. Who gave him that power but Jesus, the Word who was in the beginning with God, and lighteth every man that cometh into the world? 3. By Christ the Word God has spoken to man in all ages. It was He whom Moses and the seventy elders saw, for "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him." He put into David's mouth those glorious Psalms. "The Lord . . . hath put a new song into my mouth." He, as the Word of God, came unto the prophets. When He became incarnate, He spake as never man spake. And since then He has given to all wise and holy poets, philosophers, and preachers the power to speak and write the wonderful truths they have thought out. 4. Ought

not the knowledge of all this (1) make us better and wiser; (2) make us reverence the Bible; (3) reverence all good books? Except a living man, there is nothing more wonderful than a book, a message from a human soul thousands of miles away which can amuse, terrify, comfort, teach us. Why is it that neither angels, nor saints, nor evil spirits appear now to speak to men as they once did? Because we have books by which Christ's messengers and the devil's can communicate with us. If they are good and true, they are the message of Christ, the Teacher of all truth. If they are false and wicked, we ought to fear them as evil spirits loosed among us. This is an age of books. A flood of writings of all sorts is spreading over the world. We ought not to stop that. It is God's ordinance. It is of His grace and mercy that we have a free press. It was dearly bought. The men who died to buy us this liberty knew that it was better to let in a thousand bad books than to shut out one good one, for a grain of God's truth will outweigh a ton of the devil's lies. We cannot silence evil books, but we can take care what we read, and that what we let others read shall be good and wholesome. (*Charles Kingsley, M.A.*)

The Word of Scripture concerning the beginning:—I. THE OLD TESTAMENT WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT LIGHT. II. THE NEW TESTAMENT WORD ON THE OLD TESTAMENT BASIS. (*Lange.*) I. AS THE GREAT DISTINCTION BETWEEN ETERNITY AND TIME. II. AS THE GREAT UNION BETWEEN ETERNITY AND TIME. (*Ibid.*) *What is gained by defending the eternal pre-existence of Jesus Christ:*—Much every way. The Revealer of God being eternal, He is competent to give the world an eternal revelation—a revelation of eternal truth, a revelation of the eternal God. Moses and others might serve as organs of the Old Testament revelation, for the religion they established was temporal, designed to last only "till the time of reformation." In the nature of things a temporal revealer can only found a temporal religion; you must have an everlasting Revealer to make known the everlasting gospel. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The origin of the term "Logos," or Word:*—The claims of Philo to be regarded as the source of St. John's doctrine have been largely advocated. But—I. IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT JOHN WAS ACQUAINTED WITH PHILO OR THE ALEXANDRINE GNOSIS. 1. The relations which existed between Ephesus and Alexandria. 2. The assumption that Apollos carried over the Philonian doctrines. 3. The statement that Cerinthus drew the germs of his doctrine from an Alexandrian source. And 4. The circumstance that Neoplatonism had spread widely amongst the Hellenistic Jews only make it probable that John was acquainted with Philo, but cannot be regarded as establishing it. II. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE TERM LOGOS, THE GOSPEL CONTAINS NOT A TRACE OF PHILONISM, which is remarkable if John began its composition under the influence of that celebrated master. The number of parallels between the philosopher and the evangelist are at the most four, and these are confined exclusively to the prologue. III. THE LOGOS OF PHILO IS ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF JOHN. 1. It is impossible to determine whether the former is a person or an attribute, or a personification, whereas the latter is distinctly personal. 2. The former is not Divine in the sense that the latter is. Philo gives the name of δεύτερος θεὸς to the Logos only metaphorically, whereas John calls Him θεὸς in the strictest didactic sense. 3. The former is a metaphysical conception; the latter an object of religious contemplation. 4. The former has no real connection with human history and salvation such as the latter has. IV. IT WAS UNNECESSARY FOR JOHN TO HAVE RECOURSE TO PHILO FOR THIS PECULIAR EXPRESSION. 1. In the Hebrew Scriptures we have the germs of the doctrine. (1) In Gen. i. creation is attributed to so many separate voices or spoken words of Elohim. What if John purposed to represent the uncreated Logos as the personal Being by whom these creative words were altered? (2) The Maleach Jehovah who appeared as God's messenger, who announced His will (Gen. xv. 1), and who, if distinguished from Him (Gen. xvi. 11), was identified with Him (Gen. xvi. 13, xix. 16, xxxii. 30), would unquestionably prepare the way for such a conception as John's. (3) The creative activity assigned to the Word of Jehovah (Psa. xxxiii. 6-9) would tend to foster the notion. (4) The personification of wisdom (Prov. viii. 22-31) would further serve to develop the idea. 2. In the *Chochmah* writings of the Post-Exilian Period, which carried on and perfected the tendency already begun, John would find another contributory source to the doctrine. In these the transition from an impersonal to a personal Sophia is an accomplished fact (Wisdom of Sirach, i. 1, 4, xxiv. 3, 9; Wisdom of Solomon, vii. 25, 26, 22); and the Chaldee Targumists substitute for Elohim and Jehovah *Memra da Yeya*, a personal being who served as the permanent agent or representative of God, and who was identified with the Shekinah and the Messiah. 3. While Christ never

employed the term, an examination of His utterances concerning His person might easily suggest the propriety of using it. Without alluding to John v. 38, xiv. 24, xvii. 14, the aspect in which Christ's person, character, and work are here contemplated is that of one who has come with the Divine words of truth and life, and the transition must have seemed natural and easy from Christ as the speaker of God's words to Him as God's spoken Word Himself. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ the Word of God*:—What is a word? It is a thought in the depths of the heart made audible to a second person. If Christ be the Word of God, He is God's love sounding in the language of mankind, God's truth reverberating among the centuries as amid the corridors of a grand temple, God's justice revealed to our comprehension. Once this orb was a bright mirror which reflected God's image, but sin darkened it, and it is dim. Once the rolling of its waves, the murmurings of its streams, the noise of its winds, was the word of God; but sin has laid its hand upon all its heart-strings and deadened and disordered its vibrations. Christ is now what the world once was, and more than the world was—God's love, God's truth, audible to men. So that in hearing Christ speak I hear God; in seeing Christ's portrait I see God's; in seeing the picture of Christ delivered in the gospel I see all that is comprehensible of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity and the praises thereof. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) **The Word was with God.**—*The Divine Father and Son*:—Ask the sun if ever it were without its beams. Ask the fountain if ever it were without its streams. So God was never without His Son. (*Arrowsmith.*) *God not solitary*:—God did not spend the everlasting ages in sublime, solitary, masterly inactivity. He had a Word with Him, equal to Himself, the reflex image of His own person. That God from everlasting loved is an idea with which we are all familiar enough; it is the prominent idea in the correlates Father and Son. But in the text Jesus Christ is presented, not as the Son, but as the Word; accordingly the main idea is not God as love, but God as mind. Not only God loved from eternity, but He thought from eternity; He thought as intensely as He loved. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) **The Word was God.**—*The Deity of Christ an impossible invention*:—Imagine yourselves in the position of St. John. Think of any one whom you have loved and revered in past years. He has gone; but you cling to him more earnestly in thought and affection than while he was here. His words, haunts, phrases, handwriting, likeness, are for you precious and sacred. Others may be forgotten, but one such memory cannot fade. But can we conceive it possible that after any lapse of time we should express our reverence and love by saying that our friend was superhuman? Can we imagine ourselves incorporating our recollection with some current theosophic doctrine elevating him to the rank of a Divine hypostasis? And if Jesus was merely human, St. John's statements about Him are among the most preposterous fictions which have imposed on the world. They were advanced with a full knowledge of what they involved. St. John was convinced as profoundly as we are of the truth of the unity of God, and of the interval which separates the highest of creatures from the Creator. And if we are not naturally lured to deify our friends, neither was St. John. If Jesus had been merely human, He would have felt as we feel about a beloved lost friend. In proportion to our belief in our friend's goodness, and to our reverence for his character, is the strength of our conviction that we could not do him a more cruel injury by entwining a blasphemous fable around the simple story of his life. This deification of Jesus by St. John would have been consistent neither with his reverence for God nor his loyalty to his merely human teacher. St. John worshipped the jealous God of Israel; and he has recorded the warning he received against worshipping the angel of the Apocalypse. If Christ had not really been Divine, the real beauty of His human character would have been disfigured by any such exaggeration, and Christianity would assuredly have perished within the limits of the first century. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The Divinity of Christ revealed in the Gospel of John*:—I remember once talking with a lady who said she did not believe Jesus was the Son of God, although she believed He was a good man, and admired very much the teaching He had left. Strangely enough, I found her (with all the beautiful inconsistency of a woman's mind, and that inconsistency is frequently very beautiful and much better than the logical consistency of man's mind) particularly fond of the sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of St. John; such, for instance, as "In My Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you." "Now," I said, "will you go home and read again the Gospel of St. John, and cross out every word that intimates He is Divine, and say you don't believe that and that?" She thought it would be a good idea, and I gave her a

little Testament and told her to mark and cut it as much as she liked. She came back in a week, as she had promised. "Well, how did you get along?" "I didn't get along at all. The truth is, I found I had to cross out the whole of the first chapter, and I began to think, 'If it's like this, what'll become of the beautiful promises and sayings?' so I stopped and cried, 'Lord, I see it is so. I accept Thee as Son of God, my Lord and my God.'" (*Dr. Pentecost.*) *The term Word applicable to Christ*:—A person officiating as a medium of correspondence between the throne and its functionaries or subjects might be styled the word; or the person who should carry the command of a general to those who should see them executed. Such an one might also be styled the word, as standing in a mid-position between the person holding supreme command and those set under authority. No transference of words from a general to a special signification could be more easy and even striking than this. If, then, we assume that the person invested with mediatorial attributes and relations is called in several passages of Scripture "the Word," or "the Word of the Lord," because His official position is analogous to the examples just given or to others which human experience suggests, is there not a manifest propriety in its being used in this instance? and could the whole compass of language supply us with a second term in all respects so suitable as this—the Word? (*G. Steward.*) *Christ the true God*:—Two gentlemen were once disputing on the Divinity of Christ. One of them, who argued against it, said, "If it were true, it certainly would have been expressed in more clear, unequivocal terms." "Well," said the other, "admitting that you believe it, were authorized to teach it, and allowed to use your own language, how would you express the doctrine to make it clear and indubitable?" "I would say," replied the first, "that Jesus Christ is the true God." "You are happy," rejoined the other, "in the choice of your words, for you have happened to hit upon the very words of inspiration. John, speaking of Jesus, says, 'This is the true God and eternal life.'" *Christ is God*:—The commencement of Christian work in Japan happened thus: An American lady, of the name of Prince, interested herself in the country, and four or five missionaries were sent out, but only occupied themselves in the translation of the Scriptures. After some time this lady offered to teach English to a young Japanese, and gave him the Gospel of St. John to translate. Shortly after, it was observed that he became very agitated and restless, walking up and down the room constantly. At last he could contain himself no longer, and burst out with the question, "Who is this Man about whom I am reading—this Jesus? You call Him a Man, but He must be a God." Thus the simple word itself had forced on him the conviction that Jesus Christ was indeed God.

Ver. 2. **The same was in the beginning with God.**—This repetition teaches—I. How little able we are to comprehend this great mystery, which we can but take in by little and little, and must put that together, as children do letters, syllables, and words, till we attain a more full understanding thereof, for our comfort and salvation. II. How much and often it is to be inculcated upon believers to study again and again, as having more in it than will be seen at first view; and when they have found most in it, yet there is infinitely more to be found in that inexhaustible fountain. III. That believers may read all that tender-heartedness, compassion, mercifulness, and sympathy which is in Him, to be not a man's only, and in our kinsman, but in Him who is also the eternal God, whose thoughts and purposes are eternal and immutable, like Himself. IV. That believers may see the wisdom and love of God, who has found a way of reconciliation of lost man by the same in nature and essence, who is the party offended. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *The Word which was in the beginning a testimony*:—I. To the Eternal Personality, as the ground of all things. II. To the Eternal Spirit—Light—as the law of all things. III. To the Eternal Love, as the kernel of all things. IV. To the Eternal Life, as the life of all things. (*Lange.*) *The Word in His exaltation over time*:—He—I. In the beginning founded all things. II. In the middle executed all things; that He may, III., In the end, judge all things. (*Lange.*) *The eternity of Christ an argument for His oneness with the Father*:—Does the radiance of the sun proceed from the substance itself of the sun or from some other source? Any one not deprived of his senses must needs confess that it proceeds from the substance itself. Yet, although the radiance proceeds from the sun itself, we cannot say that it is later in point of time than the subsistence of that body, since the sun has never appeared without its rays. It is for this reason that St. Paul calls Him "Brightness" (Heb. i. 3), setting forth thereby His being from

God and His eternity. (*Chrysostom.*) *The value of Scripture repetitions*:—Repetitions have divers uses in Scripture. In prayer they argue affection. In prophecy they note celerity and certainty. In threatenings they note unavoidableness and suddenness. In precepts they note a necessity of performing them. In truths, like that before us, they serve to show the necessity of believing and knowing them. (*Arrowsmith.*) "*With God*":—These words express the co-existence, but at the same time the distinction of person. They imply relation with, intercourse with. (Comp. the "in the bosom of the Father" of ver. 18, and "Let us make man" of Gen. i. 26.) "Throned face to face with God," "the gaze ever directed towards God," have been given as paraphrases, and the full sense cannot be expressed in fewer words. The "with" represents "motion towards." The Being whose existence is asserted in the "was" is regarded as distinct, but not alone, as ever going forth in communion with God. (Comp. the use of the same word "with" in Matt. xiii. 56; xxvi. 15; Mark vi. 3; ix. 19; 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7; Gal. i. 18; iv. 18.) (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) *Christ and the Creation*:—The old Gnostic Christians held that the world was not created by the Great God, "but by Demiurgus, a spirit descending from the Æons, which were themselves derived from the Deity." John's statement stands in direct antagonism to this. From this we infer—I. THAT CHRIST IS OLDER THAN THE UNIVERSE. The worker must be older than his productions. II. THAT CHRIST IS GREATER THAN THE UNIVERSE. As the architect is greater than his building, the author than his work, the artist than his productions, Christ is greater than the universe. 1. Greater in extent. But Christ's being extends beyond the limits of the universe. 2. Greater in force. 3. Greater in beauty. III. THAT CHRIST IS OWNER OF THE UNIVERSE. Production gives the highest right to possession. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*)

Ver. 3. **All things were made by Him.**—*The Christian doctrine of creation*:—I. THE PURIFICATION OF THE HEATHEN DOCTRINE: obviating the eternity of matter. II. THE DEEPENING OF THE JEWISH DOCTRINE of the Shekinah: clearly pronouncing the personal life of love in God as it enters into the world. III. THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SOUND DOCTRINE of scientific investigation: man the final cause of things; the God Man the final cause of man. IV. THE VERDICT OF THE SPIRIT respecting the derivation of the world from a non-spiritual source: materialism. (*Lange.*) *The Christian features in all things*:—I. The CREATURELY instinct of dependence, as an impulse towards the upholding Word. II. The NATURAL, SELF-UNFOLDING instinct, as the impulse towards freedom (Rom. viii.). III. The COSMICAL, WORLD-FORMING instinct, as an impulse towards unity. IV. The SPIRITUAL instinct, as the impulse to rise in the service of the Spirit. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Creator*:—I. As He is the efficient cause of all. II. As He is the pattern by which all were made. III. As all things are created by the Godhead, and the Word was God. (*Cornelius a Lapide.*) *The universal creatorship of Christ*:—I. ASSOCIATES HIS NAME WITH ALL EXISTENCE, PAST AND PRESENT. 1. It furnishes the key to the dark problems of nature and providence. 2. It gives to science and Christianity a common foundation. (1) Science reveals the eternal power and Godhead of the Word. (2) Christianity the means of mercy to fallen man through the Word. (3) Each a compartment of one great fabric reared to the glory of God. Science the outer court: admire and adore. Christianity the holy place: kneel, pray, praise (Heb. iv. 16). II. AFFORDS TO FAITH THE GREATEST ASSURANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT. "His every word of grace is strong," &c. III. INSPIRES THE HUMBLEST WITH CONFIDENCE. Christ cares for the humblest of His creatures (Psa. civ. 27; Matt. vii. 11). IV. IRRADIATES THE FUTURE WITH A GLORIOUS HOPE (Rev. xxi. 1, 5). (*Van Doren.*) *The relation of Christ to the created universe*:—All things are—I. IN HIM. All archetypal forms and sources of creative life eternally reside in Him. II. BY HIM. He is the one Producer and Sustainer of all created existence. III. FOR HIM. He is the end of created things. Living for Him the explanation and law of every creature. (*Ibid.*) *The creative power of the Word*:—See 1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2. Observe—1. God revealed Himself through His Son before the Incarnation. 2. To be a Creator the Word had to be God. 3. Matter is not eternal: the universe has an intelligent personality back of it, as architect, builder, and sustainer. 4. The stars are a manifestation of Christ, as well as the Bible: we see Him in natural as in revealed religion. 5. The Being who made all things is worthy of being trusted with the absolute work of making and sustaining our characters. (*A. H. Moment.*) *The universe a revelation of Christ*:—The creation

of a single atom would have been a revelation of Him: how much more is this great universe! A man is always greater than his work; no architect, for example, ever put his whole self into the noblest building he designed; even so the Word is greater than the universe which He has called into being. Still, so far as it goes, it reveals Him to us. To the eye of childhood this world into which we are born is beautiful and strange, and marvellous past expression. Not less so to the intelligent and thoughtful manhood. If the romance is gone, as the summer dew from the grass at noon, the real wonder only becomes more overwhelming. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *God in nature:*—To the infidel, Nature's voices are but a Babel din. Trees rustle, and brooks babble, and winds blow; but there is no meaning in their sound. To the Christian, all speak of God; and if it were not for the dimness of the natural eye, he might see His host of angels at their ministry. The tree stretches out its arm, laden with fruit, like the arm of God. The morning sprinkles him with dew, as with holy water; and he is sung to sleep at evening with songs like the lullaby of earthly parents to their children. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Divine designs open to us in creation:*—When I was in the galleries of Oxford, I saw many of the designs of Raphael and Michael Angelo. I looked upon them with reverence, and took up such of them as I was permitted to touch as one would take up a love token. It seemed to me these sketches brought me nearer the great masters than their finished pictures could have done, because therein I saw the minds' processes as they were first born. They were the first salient points of the inspiration. Could I have brought them home with me, how rich I should have been! how envied for their possession! Now, there are open and free to us, every day of our lives, the designs of a greater than Raphael or Michael Angelo. God, of whom the noblest master is but a feeble imitator, is sketching and painting every hour the most wondrous pictures—not hoarded in any gallery, but spread in light and shadow round the whole earth, and glowing for us in the overhanging skies. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The Creator must be Divine:*—To create, to call something out of nothing—be it a dying spark or a blazing sun, a dewdrop cradled in a lily's bosom, or the vast ocean in the hollow of God's hand, mole-hill or mountain, the dancing motes of a sunbeam or the rolling planets of a system, a burning seraph or a feeble glow-worm, one of the ephemera that takes wing in the morning and is dead at night, or one of the angels that sang when our Lord was born; whatever be the thing created, the power to create is God's, the act of creation His; and therefore, since Paul says that Jesus Christ created all things, he cannot mean to depose our Lord from the throne of Divinity, and lower God's only begotten Son to the level of a created being. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Creation the work of God:*—Creation is the work of God: "without Him was not anything made that was made." He only can create. The architect can rear a cathedral, the sculptor can cut forms of symmetry and grace from marble, the painter can depict life on his canvas, the machinist can construct engines that shall serve the nations; but not one of them can create. They work with materials already in existence. They bring existing things into new combinations; this is all. God alone can create. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The greatness of the universe a testimony to the greatness of Christ:*—1. We look around us upon the infinite variety of productions which the earth brings forth—their use, their goodness, their beauty; we sweep the eye of imagination over ocean and continent, hill and plain, lake and stream, corn-land and forest, sahara and paradise; we mark the changes produced by day and night, and the succession of the seasons; we listen to the music of nature—the boom of ocean dashing on the shore, the wind in the forest, the tinkling of the hidden moorland rill; we think of the countless tribes of living and sentient beings that inhabit earth along with us; we think of man with his marvellous endowments; we think of the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places; we listen to all that science can tell us of the subtle agencies that pervade creation and the laws which bind all beings together. 2. Then, standing on earth as on a promontory, we look upwards and outwards. Beneath the nether sky, with its cloud and scenery, and its sunrise and sunset hues of beauty, there are illimitable realms of space, studded with worlds moving harmoniously in close ravelled maze. These heavens were vast and glorious to the eye of the Chaldean gazer thousands of years ago; how have their vastness and glory grown to us since then! The globe which is our dwelling-place is one of the smallest planets wheeling round one of the lesser suns. It is conceivable that only our own little world might have hung solitary in immensity; but the space swept by the telescope teems with solar systems compared with which ours is insignificant. In the Milky Way alone are millions of suns, the nearest of

which requires years to dart its light to us, though light travels two hundred thousand miles during the single vibration of a pendulum. In the presence of that immensity, our globe is but as a grain of sand on the sea-shore. 3. Leaving the realms of space, with the help of geology, let us look back on the realms of time. Since our world became the theatre of life, ages on ages have run their course, for the duration of which we have absolutely no measure. The universe in its vastness, wonder, and divine beauty, and in all the evolutions through which it has passed during countless ages, lay first of all in His mind—if one may say so—as the grand cathedral was in the brain of the architect ere its foundation-stone was laid; it took all that we see, and all that science discloses, and all that mystery still hides, to express His creative idea. How great, then, must the Maker be! How wise, good, glorious! (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Christ's creative knowledge*:—A quaint countryman, telling of his thorough knowledge of the people of his vicinity, said boastfully, "I know all these people as well as if I'd made 'em." That statement of his covered a great deal of ground, whether it were true or were only a suggestion of a truth. No man can understand a complicated piece of mechanism like the man who made it. And there was never so complicated a piece of mechanism on earth as the average man or woman. At the best, every man or woman is a bundle of contradictions; and the closest human friend is puzzled at times over some new phase of those contradictions in his friend. Only He who made that puzzle can know its parts in all their relations and in all their workings. What a comfort in the thought that our Friend of friends knows us as well as if He made us; knows us because He did make us—for "all things were made by Him." (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Christ's presence in His creation*:—He is not a Master who, like a carpenter or builder, when he has prepared a house or ship, leaves the house for its owner to dwell in, or commits the ship to the mariners that they may traverse the sea in it, and he himself goes whither he may. No; God the Father has begun and finished all things by His Word, and preserves it also continually by the same, and remains with His work until He wills that it shall no longer exist (John v. 13). As we were made by Him without our assistance, so also we cannot be preserved of ourselves. Thus here, were all to understand that all things created are preserved, in being otherwise they would not long remain created. (*Luther.*) *The confidence inspired by Christ's creatorship*:—If without Christ nothing was made, then nothing made by Him can do any injury to His kingdom. Fear loves to make exceptions; it allows all else to be innocuous; only that one thing which is directly in view appears to threaten danger. This is met with the assurance that all things, without exception, were made by the Word; therefore every fear is unreasonable to Him who has the Word on His side. If to be made, and to be made by Him, are the same thing, there can be no enemy that is to be feared, either in heaven or in earth. (*Hengstenberg.*) *What was not, and what was made by Christ*:—Many, wrongly understanding "without Him was nothing made," are wont to fancy that "nothing" is something. Sin, indeed, was not made by Him; and it is plain that sin is nothing, and men become nothing when they sin. An idol also was not made by the Word, and an idol is nothing. Therefore these things were not made by the Word; but whatever was made in a natural manner, whatever belongs to the creature, from an angel even unto a worm. What more excellent than an angel among created things? What lower than a worm? But an angel is fit for heaven, the worm for earth. He who created also arranged. If He had placed the worm in heaven, thou mightest have found fault; and if He had willed that angels should spring from decaying flesh, thou mightest have found fault. And yet God almost does this, and He is not to be found fault with. For all men born of the flesh, what are they but worms? And of these worms God makes angels. (*Augustine.*)

Ver. 4. **In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.**—The life which Christ lived was so radiant that it fills our lives with light. It was God-life, without pause or interruption. I. CHRIST THE TRUE LIFE. 1. A life of the highest knowledge. "No man knoweth the Father but the Son." "By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Any life, to be strong and influential, must have a mighty grasp of the highest truths. The highest knowledge is that of the moral nature of God, the spiritual nature of man, and the true nature of the relations between God and man. This knowledge is threefold in its contents, and is the blended result of the perceptions of the intellect, heart, and conscience. Neither alone can reach it; for to obtain even glimpses of it we must be elevated

above the uncertainties of the intellect, the selfishness of the heart, and the bewilderments of conscience. "This is life eternal"; and Christ possessed it in its fulness, because He had this knowledge in absolute fulness and certainty, and came to bear witness to it, and thus to bridge over the gulf which the greatest geniuses had failed to span. 2. A life of perfect love. Knowledge the most perfect is only one element. Love is the grandest form of life, because it includes all the other virtues, which without it are nothing. Consider the infinite difference between the sentiments we cherish towards Shakespeare and Christ. We admire and wonder in the one case; we admire and worship in the other. The one added immensely to our literature and our knowledge; the other created a new religion and discovered a God of greater goodness than the world had ever known, because the key-note of His life was sacrifice and its crown the cross. 3. A life of perfect doing. The greatest life is that in which the grandest ideas, emotions, and actions are perfectly blended. Such was His life. Human nature is ordinarily so poor, that often the men with large emotional natures have a difficulty in keeping themselves pure, and are not great in ideas, and *vice versâ*. Consider the life that must have been in Christ. Not to insist on the wonderful quantity of work that Christ did! Look at its transcendant quality, the nature of His acts and their motive. II. THE LIFE OF CHRIST IS THE LIGHT OF MEN, because it is—1. A glorious revelation. His life, composed of the highest knowledge, &c., was a revelation. It is not speculation that can teach us the highest religious truth, but that truth embodied in a life. We live in an age which denies or questions the truths which for nineteen centuries have constituted the hope of the Church. What is God, man, life, destiny? Some are able to answer these questions off-hand by turning to their systems of theology. But men will continue to ask them, unsatisfied with such ready-made, second-hand answers; and the only answers that will carry any sufficient weight of evidence are those obtained by men who understand the life and death of our Lord. He is the light of the world, the revelation of the Father, and of what man may become. But we cannot perceive the light or enter into the revelation if we stand out of personal relation to Him. 2. A great quickening power, like the sun. We know how one human life will act upon another. If we place ourselves in the light of Christ's life, we shall soon begin to realize a change in our thoughts, hearts, conscience, and will. (*C. Short, M.A.*) *The life and the light:*—Where Christianity is not, there are darkness and death; where Christianity is, there are light and life. Myriads of men testify that some Divine power in Christianity has made them new creatures. These are facts of Christian history, present results of Christian experience. We are not the apologists of a discredited or doubtful cause; we press the arguments on those who oppose. Christianity is a fact that must be accounted for. One branch of the argument is the practical influence of Christ, His fitness and fulness as the life and light of men. I. THERE IS MATERIAL FOR THE CHRISTIAN ARGUMENT IN THE VERY CONCEPTION AND FORM OF SUCH A STATEMENT. 1. It is one of those profound and pregnant statements characteristic of the Christian writings, and especially of St. John. How is it that these simple chroniclers attained to ideas more spiritual, profound, and luminous than those of the greatest philosophers? Whence these conceptions of Christ, so unique, that no other was ever imagined like Him, and yet so congruous and vital that men confess and worship Him? 2. Not only profoundness, but peculiarity of meaning in this conception of Christ and His work. It might have been written yesterday, in the light of Christian history, so exact and adequate is the representation of the peculiar facts and influence of Christ's work. (1) It roots all the religious powers of Christianity in the person of Christ. The way of life not taught by, but life was in Him. Not that His words gave light, but His life. (2) The life and light of all men are in Him. Not merely that He lived, but was the fountain whence every stream of life flows; and all the light that shines about our lives and illumines our souls, bringing the life and knowledge of God. (3) The life was the source of the light. In the world's darkness, He, the living Mediator, stands an incarnate, luminous manifestation of God; so that whoever looks on Him sees wondrous revelations. Just as all things upon the earth's surface are physically enlightened when it turns towards the sun, so are all men spiritually enlightened as they turn towards Him. II. WHAT LIGHT THE LIFE OF CHRIST THROWS ON THE GREAT PROBLEMS OF LIFE AND DESTINY. We speculate on these problems, and call ourselves theologians; we try to resolve them by practical experiments, and call ourselves moralists. But how perplexed the theology; how uncertain the morality! What human thought has thrown any light upon them?

In Christ the only solution of them lies. 1. Has God given us a supernatural revelation of His character and will? It is sufficient to point to Christ. The life is its own light. It is the greatest miracle of history. The impression of perfect goodness is produced by every word and manifested feeling; perfect holiness blends with perfect tenderness into an excellency which has neither defect nor excess. Christ's innocence, contrary to ours, was marked by no ignorance. Virtues almost incongruous blend in Him—greatness and gentleness, holiness and pity, strength and sympathy. He is nobler than the greatest man, tenderer than the gentlest woman. He commands not only the homage of the good, but of the wise. His intellectual character is as great as His moral. The very conception of His kingdom is a miracle—a spiritual, holy, catholic kingdom of God, the consummation of which should be the conversion and service of a whole world. Does not this marvellous life solve the problem of Divine manifestation? Who could have invented it? With it before us, to ask for proofs of the truth of Christianity is as reasonable as to ask at noonday for astronomical proofs of the sun. 2. Men are perplexed with the question of human sin. Wherever they are found they are conscious of wrong-doing. Philosophers and poets of all ages recognize it and lament over it; and the religious problem of every age in the face of it is, "How shall a man be just with God?" What human philosophy has furnished a solution? What can appease my awakened conscience, the memory of a guilty life? Not a mere general assurance of God's mercy. I recognize something beside mercy, even an inflexible righteousness. And just in proportion as I believe in that, my hope is disabled. It is only when Christ is offered as the Mediator between a holy God and sinful men that light is thrown on the problem. When He is recognized as having been offered as a propitiation for human guilt, then God is seen to be just, and the justifier of the ungodly. His salvation respects every requirement of the Divine government, and satisfies every demand of our moral nature. How can this salvation be a personal experience? In Christ is the answer. The same cross which honours the Divine law attracts human hearts, and through Him I receive the atonement. 3. Next comes the problem of human character; its degradation, unholiness, selfishness, and shame. What hope is there for man's moral future? Apart from Christ, none. In Him is the only regenerating power to be found. (1) Through Him we receive the great teaching and gift of the Holy Spirit. With the teaching of holiness, comes a Divine power to enable it. Man wanted moral light, but moral life also. Quickened from death in trespasses and sins, he has the power of spiritual vision given him; he sees the blessed light. But (2) he has in Christ the ideal of holiness, and after what a perfect and noble life he has to strive. This model we may imitate, and be ever approaching that peerless example. (3) Christ in His sympathetic brotherhood encourages us not to despair at failure and gives us grace which strengthens. 4. There is the problem of human sorrow. But suffering is relieved from its anathema, exalted into sacrifice, converted into a gospel, and made the minister of the noblest perfection in the human life of Christ. 5. There is the problem of death. But Christ has brought life and immortality to light. Even death becomes a gospel to immortal men; the transition from this darkness to that light, this sinfulness to that holiness, this sorrow to that blessedness. (*H. Allon, D.D.*) *The life and light of men*:—I. THE SUBLIME DECLARATION. In its ultimate origin all life is mysterious. It must rest on an eternal life. The Divine life the only true life. "In Him life was." In us dependent, continually becoming. The text a contradiction if employed of a mere man. The life in Christ was the life of the Spirit. Reason leads us to the conception of a continually ascending life, vegetable, animal, rational. Revelation adds the spiritual—the life of inspired men, of fellowship with God, of angels of Christ who had the Spirit without measure. His was the life of God—perfect purity, ceaseless activity, infinite love. II. THE PROCLAMATION. The life was the light of men. 1. In paradise. Man walked in it and saw God face to face. 2. Then followed a long period during which the light shone on chosen men, places, institutions. Light in the midst of gross darkness. The heathen world was full of evil. Some light shined here and there. 3. When the fulness of time came the life was the light of men. Power, gladness, graciousness, adaptation, acceptability of the gospel represented in the analogy of light in darkness. Light calls out energies, helps growth, reveals faces, turns bloom to fruit, and fruit to perfection. Life and light intimately blended. 4. What was wanted then is wanted now; light of men as well as of man; in communities, nations, individual heart and conscience. Light in the household—among dark anxieties,

sorrows, desolation. Light in the prospects of mankind—a bright future the outcome of the light of Jesus. Light on the sepulchre—not now a mere sombre monument of fallen pride, but affection's memorial written in the language of hope. The life will reappear, and we shall appear with Him and be like Him, and so be ourselves that life and light of men. (*R. A. Redford, M.A.*) *Christ the life and light of men* :—I. IN HIM WAS LIFE. God is self-existent. Every being but He had a beginning. Every other being, therefore, must have been created. All life which had a commencement must be derived and not inherent. Christ's life was underived and inherent. Therefore He was Divine. II. THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN. John does not declare it to be the life of men; which would be true. Every tribe of animated existence draws its life from God. But man placed above beasts and birds. The difference consists in deriving life from the Word and having the life which was in Him as our enlivening, illuminating principle in us. This light is that which enables man to walk in a wholly different region from the beasts which perish, penetrating the wonders and scanning the boundaries of the universe, while other creatures are limited to a single and insignificant province. This light is the soul: reason, judgment, conscience. If this soul be eclipsed man is morally and spiritually blind. It is a fine testimony to this light when we find it described as the life which was from all eternity in the Word. It gives a majesty to reason and a dignity to conscience when a man realizes that these are part of the life of his Creator. The man who debases them debases no earthborn or perishable thing. The Word endowed human nature with His own life; hanging up in its chambers a lamp, and continually feeding the flame with the flashings of His own eternity. Shall this lamp be substituted now that it has been fractured, its light dimmed, for the Word Himself? Or shall we boast ourselves free from all need of Him just because there glows in us a principle derived from Him? The strangest spectacle is that of a man taking reason and rejecting Christ as his guide, fancying that in directing himself by the shining of his own spirit he shows himself independent of Christ. Man shows his ignorance of creation in putting scorn on redemption. He draws from the Word those very energies by which he would prove himself independent of the Word. The intellectual capacities were Christ's shinings into the uncorrupted, even as our pardon, and renewal, and acceptance into the depraved and ruined. What gave virtue to His sacrifice was that the Self-existent died, and that which gave this worth was emphatically our light. Reason still burns brightly, conscience is not quenched, and immortality is assured because the Word who never had a beginning consented to be born; the Word who never can end consented to die. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ the life and light of men* :—I. He is ESSENTIALLY LIFE—the Living One, as opposed to dying men. II. He is the EXEMPLARY LIFE; for all things exist in the Word, which is the idea of all things living. III. He is the CAUSE AND SOURCE OF NATURAL LIFE to all; the Maker of all things, from whom life has been communicated to all things living; and He is also the sustainer of that life which at the first He imparted; both the giver and the preserver of life to all. IV. He is the CAUSE AND SOURCE OF SUPERNATURAL LIFE; the grace and the glory of all God's faithful children; commencing this life by the communication of His grace, and so bestowing upon men faith, hope, and charity; perfecting this life by the communication of His glory, in which we shall enjoy the beatific vision of God. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *Christ the life and light of individual men* :—I have seen one out of whom had gone all heavenly resemblance, and in whom all rudeness, coarseness, profanity, worldly lusts were incarnate. There was no pressure that inclined him downward, to which he did not yield. Had his soul been of stone, it could not have been less responsive to the Divine solicitations. There was not a function in him which was not petrified on its heavenward side; there was not a capacity in him that did not, so far as righteous action goes, lie dead. Well, mark now; one night, while he was lying on his bed, the Lord, in the shadow of the darkness—not violently, but still as the stillness around and above his bed, more dreadful, perhaps, because of the stillness; perhaps more gentle because of it—drew near to this dead soul; breathed on it once, gently took its hand and said, Soul, arise! And that dead soul felt strange currents run through all its frame; felt the thrill of Divine life charge through its veins, until the frozen current melted, ran, became warm, began to throb, and life came into it—life to stand, to move; and that dead soul arose and stood before the Lord, and then full of rapture bowed down and worshipped. And, ever after—for I knew him well—that man lived a life that took knowledge of all God's mercies, a life as innocent as the bird's is that has no beak nor talons, and cannot wound nor strike, but can only sing; yea, as innocent as the

little stream that has no deep, dark places in it, into which children can fall, unawares, and be drowned, but which runs clear and cool, shallow and safe—content to minister to the roots of flowers that fringe it, and be drunk up of thirsty cattle and labouring men. So he lived his life, I say, and in him I saw what regeneration meant: what the life that Christ said He was, meant. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *Christ the light and life of nature and of grace:*—If I walk the fields of science and nature gives up one secret after another, and if I then turn to the sublimer mysteries of grace, and study the amazing record of the winning back of this earth from the bondage of corruption, they are not different beings to whom the different investigations prove me debtor. Whilst led by reason across the spreadings of space, and enabled by intellect to take the span and the altitude of the architecture of God, I owe all to the Word just as truly as when I feel myself strengthened to cast off evil. As a rational being I owe everything to the Word; as a redeemed being I owe everything to the Word. His the intelligence by which I may count the stars; His the atonement through which I may be furnished for life. His the memory in which I can treasure truth and the righteousness in which I may come before God. His the judgment by which I can weigh conflicting propositions as well as the intercession by which I can be sheltered from wrath. His the imagination by which I can wander through immensity; His the purchasing of the inheritance for outshining all I can conceive. If, then, because of redemption I adore the Word made flesh, shall I not, because endowed with reason, magnify the Word as the Self-existent? If as a redeemed creature I give thanks to the Word that He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the Cross, shall not I as a rational creature pour forth this grateful tribute to the Word: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"? (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ's influence as the light and life most productive to-day:*—Never was there a time when there was so much of Christ in the world as now, because the human race was never so largely in a condition to accept the Divine activity, and to be rendered productive by it. As the sun never had such harvests as now, so there never were such harvests of the Sun of Righteousness. As there is more raised in the State of Illinois in a year now than there was in ten thousand years before the prairies were brought into a state of cultivation, so the products of morality and spirituality are more abundant than they ever were before. In proportion as the minds of men are cleared and rendered susceptible to the activity of the Divine mind, human inspiration is increased individual by individual, family by family, nation by nation. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The difference between life and light:*—I. In the SON OF GOD. II. In THE WORLD. III. In MAN. IV. In the CHRISTIAN LIFE. (*Lange.*) *The life a light of men:*—I. IN MAN: consciousness. II. FOR MAN: the works of God as the signs and words of God. III. RESPECTING MAN: Christ the light of the life. (*Ibid.*) *Christ was the light and life of men* in that He delivered men from ignorance, unbelief, and vice, and from the ruin and misery which are their invariable attendants; and brought them to the knowledge of Divine things, to faith and holiness, and to that temporal and eternal happiness with which these are inseparably connected. This change He effected—I. BY HIS DOCTRINE, which is of Divine efficacy, not only for enlightening, but for purifying and transforming the soul, and imparting consolation and happiness. II. BY HIS INCARNATION, LIFE AND DEATH. For these were the clearest revelation of God, the benevolence of His nature, and His paternal love to men, of the Saviour, and His great and glorious work, of the dignity of man, and the certainty of a state of immortal existence beyond death and the grave. III. BY HIS EXAMPLE. The example—1. Of His holiness, which gave evidence and efficiency to His doctrine. 2. Of His "sufferings, and the glory that should follow," in which He is our pattern (2 Tim. ii. 11; Rom. viii. 17, 29). IV. BY HIS INSTITUTIONS. Shedding down the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, instituting baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Christian ministry, public worship, and other religious exercises, which are the most effectual means for banishing ignorance, and unbelief, impiety, and misery from the earth, and for the diffusion and establishment of knowledge and faith, virtue and genuine happiness among men. Thus extensive is the signification, whilst the primary idea is that of felicity, to which He leads men in many ways. (*C. C. Tittman, D.D.*) *Christ's life the light of men:*—It was not the wisdom of Christ's words, nor the splendour of His works that filled those three years and a half with great event; it was He, the life that was in Him; and with all that was stimulating in His discourses, startling in His works of wonder, and harrowing in His sufferings, the life that was in Him would be quite as likely to issue in effects that would be healing,

when its creeping forth was a quiet and stealthy one, just as it is the light, not the lightning that best fills the earth with radiance; not the hurricane, but the gentle breath out of the south that stirs air and sea and standing corn into most healthful play, and not the deluge but the rain that drops upon the furrows with most of fertility. (*C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*) *Life in Christ*:—To know the scope of the Word, we begin with life in its lowest and simplest forms, as it is seen in the Arctic moss or the ooze brought up from the sea-depths by the *Challenger*. Even in such lower forms the physiologist cannot tell us what life is, nor the microscopist, nor the chemist, nor the wisest philosopher. They can tell us the signs of it, and the laws according to which it is continued or extinguished; but that is about all. From the lowest and simplest we pass upwards, through one order of being after another, till we come to man, in whom life reveals itself so much more marvellously, in sense, intellect, emotion, conscience, will. We mark how different a thing it is in different cases: to the unlettered peasant and the man of profound and various culture; to the playful child and the grey-haired saint, ready to enter the perfect kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In this passage the term "life" is not to be restricted to any single province, wide or narrow, "physical," "moral," "spiritual," or "eternal," but is to be taken in the whole breadth of its significance. Besides the marvel and mystery of life in its nature and infinitely various forms, there is also its immensity of volume—all that is, all that has been, in air, and earth, and sea. As an illustration of the impossibility of dealing with this aspect of the case, a single fact may be selected from the microscopic researches of Ehrenberg: one cubic inch of the hardened clay called *tripoli* he found to contain between forty and fifty thousand millions of the silicious fossil shells of *infusoria*. In presence of such a fact our minds are utterly helpless to conceive the extent of life even in this little globe that we inhabit. All the life of creation, so vast in its sum, so wonderful and glorious, from the life that lasts only a summer evening to that of the archangel who bows before the eternal throne—all that life, the Evangelist tells us, "was in Him." He is the Fount whence it has all proceeded. Being in Him, the outcome was a necessity. If there is life in the vine, it comes out in branch, and leaf, and grape cluster. So with the life that was in the Word: it has come out in the vast and varied life of creation. Because in Him was life, therefore this is a living world, and not a mere material and ponderable ball, or a world of automatons, destitute of understanding and volition. All the life of which we have any knowledge is the out-blossoming and fruiting of the life that was in Him. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Life in Christ*:—There is a project for turning the great desert of North-Western Africa into an inland sea by cutting through the bank which separates its vast depressed surface from the Atlantic; so that large existing populations may be reached, and new towns and fertile country may fringe the then obliterated wilderness of death with smiling contentment and prosperity. It may be but a scientific romance. But it points to the holy privilege and blessed service of the Christian Church. Our Master says: "Speak the words of this life. Cut through the bank of ignorance and prejudice and worldliness and sin, and admit upon the vast spiritual deadness of the world, the rolling tide of a pure and immortal life, that souls and churches and nations may spring up in the freshness of gospel life, and wear the everlasting beauty of Him who has redeemed them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end." (*W. H. Jackson.*) *God's self-revelation through life*:—I. THIS SCRIPTURE OPENS UP TO US GOD'S LIVING WAY OF MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO US. The Bible is the record and interpretation of a way of creation and life, which leads from the promise of the beginning on and on, with a purpose never given up, and toward a goal never lost from sight, and against all human gravitation downward from its high intent until it completes its course in that one sinless life through which God shines—the true light. God has been present as a living power in man's life, as the educating and redemptive power in Israel, as the grace and truth of life in Jesus Christ. II. THIS SCRIPTURE DISCLOSES GOD'S WAY OF ILLUMINING OUR LIVES. Christ entering into human life is its light. He lights up all our history. Other lights of human kindling illumine but portions of our life, and all go out in death. But there is no phase of our nature, no need of our common humanity, no possibility of our love and hope which His life does not purify and irradiate. God with us in our life is alone adequate to human nature. Shall I not trust myself to the life which meets at every point my life? The real gospel thus is God's life through Christ touching our life and making it new. It has Divine right in the midst of the business of the world. It cannot, without disloyalty, be

divorced from common life, sundered from its vital relation to the trade, the politics, and the conduct of men. Jesus Christ brought the kingdom of heaven down to the streets of Capernaum, and what the Church wants is to bring His life through the relations of society around the whole circumference of human life. III. ONLY THROUGH LIVES IN REAL SYMPATHY WITH GOD AND CHRIST ARE WE TO RECEIVE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Not that the mystery of God in Christ is not to be the subject of theological inquiry, but that we are to learn Christian truth, first and best of all in the school where Jesus came to teach it—the school of real life. Our best light always is the kindling of the life into truth. Through life to knowledge is the Christian way. As God has come home to man through the life of Christ, so are we to draw near unto God through the Christian life. If we will live Christ-like lives doubt not that God will reveal His truth and His goodness through them. (*Newman Smyth.*) *The joy of living*:—I. ALL MEN DESIRE TO LIVE. Life, if it be healthy, is joyful. All lives created of God are happy, for He is happy. II. This instinct to live is EVIDENCE OF OUR DIVINE ORIGIN AND QUALITY. However stained and defiled, the image within us is not wholly forgetful of its origin. Within us lingers a sentiment which forbids life to despair of itself. Hence out of the fulness and joyfulness of life springs the conception of immortality. III. We know that all life is of God, that of the bee, the bird, the dog, and other wonderful and fine expressions of life. But finer and more wonderful THE LIFE WHICH HE BREATHES INTO THE SPIRIT OF FALLEN MAN. The new birth is the waking up of dormant faculties, the resurrection of buried powers. Then power comes to the man, spiritual, soul power. The man's life becomes Divine in its harmonies. He begins to grow. IV. This new life WIDENS THE RANGE OF EXISTENCE. V. ALL LIFE HATES DEATH. We sympathize with the falling leaf, weep over the dying friend, in spite of all the natural and spiritual knowledge which recognizes in death the gate of life. But what must God feel as He beholds the death of the soul. VI. THE JOY OF LIVING IS FOUND IN THE PURE AND PROPER GOVERNMENT OF THE LIFE. The life of Christ, therefore, or growth into a life like to the one He lived, is a growth into joy. VII. ALL HUMAN LIVES THAT ARE NOT SELF-DESTRUCTIVE ARE GROWING TOWARDS HAPPINESS. The old aches cannot always last, or the old pains for ever sting us. So there is a hand somewhere that shall take all weakness up, and wipe all tears away. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *God's living light*:—There are three words around which we may group our thoughts of Christ. I. MAN. These words touch and lay bare the distinctive necessity of man's nature. When that nature awakes to the true knowledge of itself it becomes conscious of needing the direction and sustenance of a higher life. We do not attain satisfaction when we seek it on a level with the animal creation, although we belong to it. Nothing is plainer than man's need of God. He must have relation to the inexhaustible and changeless; and if he is to receive a light that can shine on the problems of his own being, that light must be a life. II. REVELATION. The text reveals the distinctive provision of Christianity. God is the creator of this deep necessity, and He has made it not to mock it, but to satisfy it. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." Christ is exhibited not as some gorgeous pageant to be admired, nor as a carefully filled museum to be wondered at; He is a new communication from the Eternal Father. And the design of the Christian faith is not grasped by us, nor its provision enjoyed until we see all its avenues leading up to the disclosure that our Lord came to give life. The unique life has established itself as the light of men, wise to guide and safe to follow. The distinctive need of man is met by the distinctive power of Christ. III. USEFULNESS. These words provide us with a Divine test of the value of all churches and Christian work. As the life is men's light, so "holding forth the Word of Life" is the Christian's duty. To this test we must bring our schools, societies, literature, methods, principles. None of them are good unless they serve His purpose, as lamp-stands from which the life of Christ can shine more widely and brightly upon the hearts of men. (*W. H. Jackson.*) *Life in Christ*:—1. CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE AS HE IS THE CREATOR OF EXISTENCE. 1. This is true in the widest sense. 2. He is Creator, not by delegation, but as Principle. 3. This claim He vindicated in His miracles. II. CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE AS HE IS THE REDEEMER OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. 1. This is the one rational explanation of His death. 2. Redemption is by price. 3. Redemption is also by power. III. MAN'S TRUE LIFE CONSISTS IN HIS UNION WITH CHRIST. 1. There is no true human life apart from God. 2. This true human life we forfeited by sin. 3. But we recover it in Christ. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *The light of life*:—I. THAT THIS LIFE IS ITS OWN EVIDENCE. 1. For life is a

resisting force. (1) Inanimate things are submissive to the forces of nature. Thus a stone is obedient, without resistance, to the law of gravitation. (2) But things of life resist the mechanical forces. Thus even a blade of grass pushes its way upwards through the resisting soil, in the direction opposite to that of gravitation. As we ascend in the scale of life, these resistances become more remarkable. The eagle darts sun-ward, in every stroke of its pinion resisting and triumphing over the force of gravitation. (3) Men who are spiritually dead are like the stone or the feather, under the control of worldly fashion and siuful influences. They are "carried captive by the devil at his will." (4) Men who are spiritually alive resist and vanquish these influences. To do this the more effectually they avail themselves, by prayer, of the promised help of God. So, like the eagles, they mount sun-ward (*cf.* Isa. xl. 31). Thus spiritual life is its own evidence. 2. Life is an appropriating force. (1) A living animal seizes the vegetables around it and appropriates them as food for its nourishment. A dead animal is a prey to the chemistry of nature. (2) Life is au appropriation, even in the vegetable form. The root of the plant performs functions analagous to those of the animal stomach, absorbing from the soil, digesting, and elaborating the juice which nourish its stem and branches. The leaves perform functious analogous to the twigs. (3) The Christian will avail himself of the means of grace, public, domestic, private. He is not in them, like the formalist, a mere observer of what is passing. He is in them as feeder. 3. Life is a propagating force. (1) Let a stone be buried, and after thousands of years it will be found as it was. Witness the Nineveh marbles. Let an acorn be buried; it will germinate and develop into an oak. (2) So the germ of religious life unfolds into the maturity of Christian manhood. It exerts a propagating influence upon the spirits of other men. (3) The waste of life in nature is enormous. So is the waste of spiritual life in the Church. The failure of the propagating energies of spritual life is serious. II. THAT THIS LIFE LIGHTS UP IMMORTALITY. 1. Life touches everything into beauty. (1) During winter the face of nature is dreary. (2) But what beauty is comparable to that of holiness which springs from spiritual life? The beauty of the saint is the reflection of the image of God. It is seen in the integrity that cannot be bribed. It is seen in the magnanimity of sacrifice. It is seen in the tenderness of kindly sympathy. 2. Life illuminates the chambers of the tomb. (1) It prevents not the dissolution of the body. The saintliest die. (2) But while spiritual life prevents not physical dissolution, it modifies death into sleep. The Christian "sleeps in Jesus." The sleeper expects an awakening. (3) The labourer sleeps expecting not only to awake, but to awake refreshed. So does the Christian worker. No more weariness. 3. Life is the germ of immortality. (1) The spiritual life here is the power of an endless life hereafter. The principle is even more than the promise of immortality. (2) Hence "the kingdom of heaven is within you." "The heaven of heavens is love." (3) Christ is eternal life. Having Him, we have eternal life (*cf.* chap. iii. 16; v. 24; xi. 25; xiv. 6; John i. 1, 2; v. 11, 12, 20). (*Ibid.*) *Christ the pre-eminent and illuminating Life*:—I. HIS LIFE WAS PRE-EMINENT. "In Him was life." 1. "In Him was life" without beginning. Life in all other existences had a commencement. 2. "In Him was life" without dependence. 3. "In Him was life" without limitation. All other life has its limits, not so with His. His is without limit—(1) As to kind. In His life were the germs and archetypes of all other life, material and spiritual. (2) As to amount. All other life is circumscribed. (3) As to communicativeness. (4). As to duration. II. HIS LIFE WAS ILLUMINATING. "And the life was the light of men." Christ's life, whatever its variety and fulness, had all a moral character, for He was a moral Being. There are several things taught here concerning His life as light: 1. That His life was "the light of men." 2. That this light was heralded by tbe Baptist. 3. That this light become available by faith. 4. That this light is the true light of "every man." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christians the reflectors of this light*:—There is a little church on a lonely hill-side where they had neither gas nor lamps, and yet on darkest nights they hold Divine service. Each worshipper, coming a great distance from village or moorland home, brings with him a taper and lights it from the one supplied and carried by the minister of the little church. The building is thronged, and the scene is said to be "most brilliant!" Let each one of our lives be but a little taper—lighted from the life of Christ, and carrying His flame—and we shall help to fill this great temple of human need and human sin with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. The life of Christ will be the new sunshine of the world. "Men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him

blessed"; universal man shall receive "God's Living Light." (*Ibid.*) *Christ living*:—A missionary in China stated that on one occasion a number of persons who were hearing him, mostly women, manifested the greatest astonishment when he told them that the God he worshipped and wished them to worship was a living God. Uttering an exclamation peculiar to themselves when much surprised, they said, "The foreigner's God is better than ours—ours has no life." *Christ the universal light*:—The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lonely pine on the mountain top waves its sombre boughs and cries, "Thou art my sun." And the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue, and whispers with its perfumed breath, "Thou art my sun." And the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind, and makes answer, "Thou art my sun." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ a living Saviour*:—A Smyrna native agent came across a Turk from some town in the interior, who showed considerable acquaintance with the Christian Scriptures. He said he had long studied the gospel, and had once nearly got into trouble through it. He was called before the authorities for reading Christian books, but before judgment was passed upon him he begged to be allowed to ask a question. Permission having been granted, he said, "I am travelling; I come to a part where the road branches off in two ways; I look around for some direction and discover two men; one is dead, the other alive. Which of the two am I to ask for advice—the dead or the living?" "Oh, the living, of course!" all cried out. "Well," he added, "why require me to go to Mahomet, who is dead, instead of to Christ, who is alive?" "Go, go about your business!" were the words with which he was dismissed. *Christ's influence in relation to human co-operation*:—You cannot tell how much is done by the pure shining of His light and the emission of this life, and how much by your own receptivity. Nor is it necessary. Christ fructifies and stimulates the original and moral faculties and makes them productive. If I take a plant out of a cellar where it has grown etiolated, and without chlorophyl, and put it where the light will shine upon it, and when it turns green, will you tell me what part of the green is plant and what part sun? I would say that the sun developes this chlorophyl by injecting itself, so to speak, into the leaf. So that the light and the life co-operate with the faith, the love, the receptivity of the individual who receives them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's influence known by its fruits*:—What is the evidence that the sun is active? The fact that every root is sprouting. What is the evidence that the sun has brought summer? The fruits of summer. What is the evidence that the sun has been shedding down upon the earth its light and warmth and ripening power? The flavour of the fruit. Bring me an apple. If it is hard and acid I know that it is the product of a rainy sunless summer. Bring me another, and if it is mellow and full of sugar and aroma, I know that the sugar and aroma do not come out of the ground, but from where there was light and heat. And I can judge of the influence, under which nations have been unfolded by the nature of the fruit they produce. Show me a nation developing coarse animation, and I will show you a nation that has not been true to the light. On the other hand, show me an individual, a family, a community that yields the products of a higher moral nature, and I will pronounce that higher moral nature to be the result of the life and light of men. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 5. **The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.**—*How different men receive the light*:—1. Some merely receive it to evidence their own darkness. 2. Some by outward profession merely. 3. Others receive and impart it as lights which are lighted by the true light. (*W. Denton.*) *Darkness and light*:—I. THE DARKNESS. 1. Of falsehood. 2. Of hatred. 3. Of death. II. THE LIGHT IN CONTEST WITH THE DARKNESS; or, the progress of revelation in the sinful world. 1. The light shining in the darkness (the shaded, coloured light). 2. The light breaking through the darkness. 3. The meridian of gospel day. (*Lange.*) *Christ's pre-incarnate activity*:—I. SHINING IN THE DARKNESS. Darkness points to the Fall. Had the union between man and the Logos continued, His life would have streamed in light around the souls of men, inspiring them with truth and arraying them in purity. But man severed the connection. Turning from the light, he chose a sphere of darkness. Nevertheless, the light continued to penetrate the dark atmosphere of ignorance and sin which thickened round man. II. REJECTED BY THE DARKNESS. Though the light kept on shining through (1) the teachings of nature; (2) the intuitions of conscience; (3) the Mosaic system and the prophets; yet men had not hold of the light, because—1. They did not fully understand it. 2. Because they did not see it. 3. Because they did not deserve it. 4. Because

they hated it. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The manifestations of the light of the Word in darkness*:—I. The light shone in the CONSCIENCES of men. A man without a conscience has never been born: never amidst the dreariness of heathenism—a faculty to distinguish right from wrong, to know that the Supreme Being is pleased with righteousness and angered at wrong-doing, and that sin will be punished. But this light shone in darkness. Conscience persuades resistance of evil passions, but inclination quenches the light. Conscience warns respecting the future, but is silenced by the gratification of the present. Conscience reminds of allegiance owing to a Creator, but the inducements of other masters drown its voice. II. CREATION glows with radiations of its Maker. But its illumination has to enter that darkest of spots, the human heart, where it is opposed by mists of passion, clouds of ignorance, the night of unwillingness to know God. Hence, in spite of the light, men abandoned themselves to every kind of unrighteousness and fell into most degrading superstitions. III. THE PATRIARCHAL RELIGION was derived from immediate revelation. The Eternal Word shone upon man, as soon as he had transgressed, in the promises of deliverance and institutions of worship. But when men multiplied they forgot their ancestral religion while retaining some of its features, disguised and debased, but recognizable. Hence the universal prevalence of sacrifice and the hope of salvation. In every age and district of heathenism the light has thus shone, so that men, in the midst of their idolatries, are witnesses that a revelation has been vouchsafed. This light, too, preserved in the legends of paganism of the Fall, Deluge, &c. Yet the slaves of superstition comprehended not the light. IV. THE TYPES AND FIGURES OF THE LAW sent forth rays converging towards the Sun of Righteousness, which, in the fulness of time, was to cross man's horizon. Yet the understanding of the Jews was so cloudy, and their hearts so gross, that they substituted the type for the antitype. V. What can be declared of those who are privileged with the full shining of THE GOSPEL? The theology of conscience, creation, tradition, type, fade away from the revelation of these last days. The true light now shineth. How? Men are insensible to it. By placing men under a variety of dispensations God would prove that no amount of light will suffice to illuminate fallen creatures unless the Holy Spirit purge the sight. The sun may be in the heavens, but if the light in us be darkness, we shall not be illumined by his beams. The Holy Spirit alone can remove that darkness. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Darkness and blindness*:—If persons who can see are shut up together with others who are blind, in a perfectly dark room, the seeing and the blind are in the same situation; no object is perceived by any, no colours discerned; but if light is introduced into the room, there is then a wonderful difference. To those who are endowed with sight, every object appears in its true form and just colouring; but to the blind all things remain as they were; they are in darkness still; and this because the darkness is in themselves. So it is with the outward revelation of Divine truth: while it is withheld, all are in darkness, but it may shine not only on those who live, and are awake, and can see, but also on the dead, and on the sleeping, and on the blind. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) *Men in darkness*:—There are some vines that never actually come to the surface; they can scarcely be called vines—they are roots, rather, whose home is in the earth. They feed on the loam, and not on the sunshine. Grow as much as they may, they are never anything but a prolongation of fibres. They are earth-eaters; they live in the soil and they die in the soil. They add nothing to the beauty of the landscape; and among the higher orders of life and growth their names are never mentioned. So it is with some men; they are only human roots, that might become men. They live underground. All the fibres of their lives suck in earthiness. Their growth is all lateral. They spread out on all sides. They are never lifted up into moral and spiritual expression. They are of the earth, earthy. They die where they lived, and God alone knows what becomes of them. We only know that the Divine life is not in them, and, therefore, the Divine destiny cannot be. For there is no destiny that does not germinate here. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *The dense darkness of the period when the true light appeared*:—At no time was it so universal or so deep. All the powers and principles of the world had been tried to the uttermost, and found utterly wanting. The religion of heathenism had stretched to that extent that, according to Varro, there were three hundred different gods in Rome alone. The Romans had consummated their idolatry by deifying their emperors and great men, and so had degraded themselves to the basest form of man-worship. The Greeks had speculated in religion till they had brought themselves to a conviction and acknowledgment of their ignorance, as testified in their altar inscribed at

Athens, the very seat of religion (Acts xvii. 22 δεισιδαιμονεστερους) and learning, "to the Unknown God." Their wisdom and philosophy had burnt itself out; and there was no longer any one of their successive schools of doctrine, however formerly dogmatic, which now had an ascendency even among themselves. The Eclectic school had selected something from each of them, and in so doing had condemned them all; and even thus it had not obtained a privilege for itself; for so each person was, of course, at liberty to make his own selection; and so every one in effect condemned every other, and no one gave to any other, or obtained for himself, any respect. The Powers of the world were also in their last stage, both of greatness and corruption. The Babylonian empire was represented by a golden head; the Persian by a breast of silver; the Grecian by thighs of brass: and now the Roman had swallowed up all other nations, and was become universal; but its substance was iron; it was the last of the worldly empires; it was tottering to its fall with its own weight and immensity; it was but feet and toes, base, divided, corrupted, and diseased, and was about to crumble into ruins. The religion of the Jews had also run its course, and had at this time fermented into a new separation. The general mass had corrupted itself. The law of ceremonies had lost its own small portion of life—vegetable life—and had become a mere dead letter only, graven in stone, as obstinate and immovable—a withered and dry tree—yet still raising its barren and leafless branches with proud and pompous pride, and self-conceit, and defiance: but its barrenness had procured it disrespect and distrust, and men refused to shadow under its shadowless top, and even its own vitality was denied and disregarded by the Sadducees. At the same time a spiritual seed had been sown, not resting in the letter; not branching from the now spiritless trunk; but, though small, and lowly, and young, and tender, having yet the real principle of life within it, and meet for the digging, and pruning, and watering of the husbandman. At this time, in the fulness of preparation and unpreparedness, of superstition and infidelity, of ignorance and learning, of power and weakness, of evil and good, of hope and unbelief, Christ came in the flesh; the Sun of light and life was embodied, to convince and dispel the darkness, to lighten the ignorance, to overcome the power, to consume the dry tree, to vivify the green tree, to divide between day and night, between the good and evil, to rule over the one, to condemn and expel the other. (*S. R. Bosanquet.*) *God's candles are and have been ever shining*:—This world has never been given over to the unchallenged reign of darkness: there have always been souls wherein the life has been kindled, and through whom it has shot its rays into the world's gloom—God's candles lighted and placed according to His own will. In this respect the Father of lights has never been left without witness. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The condition of receiving the light*:—It is a fact in physical nature that the sunlight passes through empty space, and neither warms nor lights it. Climb up to the top of the highest mountains at noonday, and the stars come out. The air is thin—it is therefore dark; we see only by as much light as is intercepted. So with your ear. That alone is music which you hear. That is pleasure which you feel. That which your nerve does not report to you does not exist. It is precisely so in morals. There must be something to intercept the light, or that light itself is nothing. It was so with Christ. He was an infinite light. He sat there where there was no soul. They do not know He was God. It is so to-day. He sits among men. He is not God to those who only call Him God. You teach a man nothing if you only teach him to do that. The souls that intercept His rays, to them He is God. There is not one to whom all of God is revealed, because there is no soul that can intercept all there was in Jesus. The light still shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Have whatever soul we may, there is ever more soul to be gained. Even Paul said the one yearning of his soul was to apprehend that for which also he was apprehended. (*Octavius Perinchief.*) *The historical parallel to the truth of the text*:—This fact respecting Christ, that His light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not, hath its parallel in history respecting all truth. All the substances of nature, and all their laws, have been in being, certainly, ever since man has existed. Why did man not see them? Steam has been a fact ever since heat was first applied to water. How was it that man knew it not? The electric current has passed round this earth ever since the earth was made. How is it man but yesterday discovered it? Facts as plain as the daylight have been staring man in the face, sporting with him, and he sat there in his blindness and knew them not. To-day, endless facts, things we sadly need, are across our path; we are stumbling over them, and yet see them not. Coal lay in the earth, how many

years? oil, how many centuries? Men needed them both. Why are they but now found to be serviceable? We say that things come just as man wants them. That is true. God must look in very pity upon us. Our misfortune is, we want not yet the tithe of what He is rich enough to give: "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Men are everywhere hunting fortunes. Where are they hunting them? With the old muck-rake. Why not open the eye? Why not introduce ourselves to some of the wonders that are yearning to make themselves known to us? We think a man is crazy when he begins to see. (*Ibid.*) *The light needed*:—Pythagoras admitted the necessity of Divine interposition to teach man his duty. Zenophanes died at the age of nearly one hundred years, and is said to have thus expressed himself: "Oh, that mine were the deep mind, prudent and looking to both sides! Long, alas! have I strayed on the road of error, beguiled, and am now hoary of years, yet disposed to doubt and distraction of all kinds; for, wherever I turn to consider, I am lost in the One and All." Heraclitus, after all his researches, asserted that "Vain man hath no accurate knowledge which is possessed alone by *the* God, but that man learns from *the* God as the boy does from the man." Socrates saw and confessed his ignorance, and deplored the want of a superior direction. Aristotle's last prayer was, "I entered the world corruptly, I have lived in it anxiously, I quit it in perturbation." Cicero confessed that no excellence could exist without a celestial affiation. Hierocles and Seneca tell us that but by the help of God no man can become either good or prosperous; so that he who would repudiate the necessity of a Divine revelation to lead him by the Holy Spirit into all truth arrogates a power which the greatest reasoners of ancient times disclaimed. *Without Christ—darkness*:—Varro, a Roman writer of the first century, B.C., states that, in his day, he had been at the pains to collect the various opinions on the question, "What is the true object of human life?" in other words, "What is the supreme good?" He had reckoned up as many as three hundred and twenty different answers. How needful is Divine revelation, and how essential to those who are starting in life, that a heavenly guide should teach them the true end and purpose of earthly existence! *The darkness of the natural mind*:—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 at the same time, and happened to meet at the president's levée. They saw each other at a 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 of Jesus Christ, 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!" (*T. de Witt Talmage.*) *Christ is full of light*:—Going into a village at night, with the lights gleaming on each side of the street, in some houses they will be in the basement and nowhere else, and in others in the attic and nowhere else, and in others in some middle chamber; but in no house will every window gleam from top to bottom. So is it with men's faculties. Most of them are in darkness. One shines here, and another there; but there is no man whose soul is luminous throughout. But Christ presented a perfect character. Every room in His soul was filled with light. He is light. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *An alternative rendering*:—"The darkness overcame it not." Sin did not succeed in extinguishing the inner light. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord"—a candle lit by God's own breath. When man fell the candle was sadly bruised, but it did not blow out. The great fundamental truths God planted in man continue to shine despite sin and its grievous consequences. Accordingly the darkness of the Fall was not complete—complete, I mean, in the sense that it could not be blacker; a little light was still continuing to glimmer—candle-light, if you like, but light all the same. Much talk is indulged in concerning original sin, though not quite as much as in former years; but we ought also to speak of original light, a light deeper and more primitive even than our sin. Do I not believe in the total depravity of the race? Yes, in the sense that every power is more or less tangled, that every faculty is more or less corrupt. No, in the sense that the derangement could not be greater, that the putridity could not be more advanced. The confusion and depravity here are great, but in hell they are considerably greater. So far a little light doubtless glimmers in the soul of

every man on his coming into this world; the golden beams of the Sun of Righteousness are to be seen playing in the mental faculties of childhood. "The light shineth in darkness"—the darkness of our fall—"and the darkness overcame it not"; the light still burns. But if the darkness did not overcome the light, on the other hand the light did not overcome the darkness. In the other world, the world prior to the Incarnation, the light and the darkness confronted each other without making much impression one on the other. The darkness did not conquer the light, neither did the light conquer the darkness; and if the light is to win the victory, it must receive an ample increase, and this increase we find in the gospel of Jesus Christ. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*)

Ver. 6. **There was a man sent from God whose name was John.**—*The forerunner*:—I. THE MISSION OF THE BAPTIST. 1. It was immediately connected with the appearance of the Word in the flesh. 2. It was of God. And as His mission so his name. 3. It had as its special end to testify of Christ. 4. Its aim was to bring sinners to believe in Christ. This was not merely God's intention, but his own desire. All true ministers have the same object. 5. It contemplated "all" to whom he addressed himself. II. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHRIST AND JOHN. 1. A current error was corrected. Men thought John the Christ. He confessed himself only the friend of the Bridegroom, the witness-bearer of the Light. 2. This correction vindicated the proper glory of Christ. All honour to the witness, but the glory of the light cannot be given to another. 3. In the marked distinction between the forerunner and Him "who coming after him was preferred before him," overweening thoughts of mere instruments, however valuable, are reproved. 4. John's honour consisted in his proclamation of his Master's glory. Nor was this honour denied him. Ministers are esteemed for their works' sake. 5. The distinction in Christ's case from John and all His ministers is that He is "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The mission of John and of Christ*:—I. THE TRUE NATURE OF A CHRISTIAN MINISTER'S OFFICE. 1. Ministers are not priests or mediators. 2. They are not agents into whose hands men may commit their souls, and carry on their religion by deputy. 3. They are witnesses (Acts i. 8; ii. 40; xx. 21). II. ONE PRINCIPAL POSITION WHICH OUR LORD OCCUPIES TOWARDS MANKIND. As light. 1. He is the centre and source of all spiritual illumination, warmth, life, health, growth, beauty, and fertility. 2. He shines for the common benefit of mankind—for high and low, rich and poor, Jew and Greek. 3. He is free to all. III. THE DESPERATE WICKEDNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL HEART. 1. Christ was in the world invisibly long before He was born (Col. i. 17). Yet He was neither known nor honoured. 2. But Christ came visibly into the world when He was born at Bethlehem and fared no better. His own rejected Him. IV. THE VAST PRIVILEGES OF ALL WHO RECEIVE CHRIST AND BELIEVE ON HIM. 1. The privileges are those of children. 2. These privileges are to be possessed by faith (Gal. iii. 26). 3. Are we sons of God? Have we the marks of Sonship. 4. Do we desire to be sons of God? Then we must receive Him as Saviour. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The ministry of men*:—I. A special way whereby Christ shineth to the world, and helpeth the world to know Him, is the MINISTRY OF MEN; whereby—1. He condescendeth to our weakness, who could not endure more glorious instruments. 2. Trieth our obedience and acknowledgment of His authority in the weak messengers. 3. Maketh manifest that the excellency of the power whereby they do so great things is of Him. II. MINISTERS OF CHRIST MUST NOT RUN UNSENT, but ought to have a calling from God, either extraordinary (in extraordinary times and cases) or ordinary; as being that which will afford them matter of courage in undertaking their work, of comfort under difficulties, and of hope of success; for so John was a man sent from God; to wit, in an extraordinary way, as Christ's forerunner. III. MINISTERS WILL IN A MOST LIVELY WAY PROCLAIM THAT GRACE OF GOD BRINGING SALVATION WHO HAVE THEMSELVES OBTAINED GRACE AND FAVOUR BY IT. And it is a sweet thing when men prove answerable to these names and titles which Scripture giveth them because of their Christian profession; for this forerunner's name was John, a name given by the angel, which signifieth one to whom the Lord had been gracious that he might actively proclaim the same to others, and a name to which John's carriage was answerable. IV. THE CHIEF AND SPECIAL END OF A MINISTRY, is to point out Christ in His excellences and usefulness to lost men, to declare Him in His person, offices, and benefits, how He should be believed in, served or suffered for; John came to bear witness of Christ in His glorious excellency, and as He is the light of dark man, in his comforts and

directions. V. MINISTERS ARE TO PREACH CHRIST WITH PLAINNESS AND FIDELITY in not adding or diminishing with boldness and constancy. VI. THE END AND SCOPE OF A MINISTER'S WITNESSING and preaching, is, and should be, to bring self-condemned sinners to believe in Christ; his preaching of the law and wrath is in order to that, and to bring men to see their need of Christ, and should be joined with the doctrine of the gospel; his preaching of the doctrine of sanctification and holiness should be joined with the doctrine of faith in Christ, from whom virtue floweth for that end. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *The witness of the Light*:—I. HIS APPEARANCE. "There came"—suggesting origination, commencement, dependence, mutability, decay, in opposition to the Word whose creature He was (ver. 3). II. HIS NATURE. "A man." Parted from the Word who was God: although honoured by the near relationship in which he stood to the Word as instrument, minister, herald, and forerunner. III. HIS NAME. "Jehovah is gracious"—a fitting designation of one whose birth was a gift of grace (Luke i. 18), whose manhood was the flower and fruit of grace (Luke i. 80), and whose life work was to be a publisher of grace (Luke i. 76). IV. HIS MISSION. 1. In its character, prophetic. 2. In its authority, Divine. 3. In its work, witness-bearing. 4. In its object, saving. V. HIS RELATION TO THE LIGHT. 1. Negatively. 2. Positively (ver. 8). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The personality of John*:—I image to myself a man of calm, saintly look, with eyes that seemed to pierce the invisible, moving men not by his wild gesticulations, but by the deep solemnity of his spirit, the simple, fearless truth he spoke, and his appeal to the Messianic longings and hopes which then prevailed. Withdrawn from the luxurious world, with its enervating and selfish influences, he had lived to the age of thirty among the mountains west of the Dead Sea, preparing in solitude for the brief but great work of his life. He is, however, no hermit cut off from his fellow-men and taking no interest in their affairs, but a keen observer and discerner; and at the appointed hour he steps suddenly forward, crying to the nation, "Repent," "Behold the Lamb of God!" (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The character of John*:—The Baptist was characterized by—I. STRENGTH. If ever there was a man unlike the little reed that gives itself to be tossed by the wind (Matt. xi. 7) it was John. Your strong man is self-conscious. He has presided over the slow and painful elaboration of his character. He has looked on with satisfaction at the stiffening of his moral fibre into steel, and knows what it is worth. Humility has never been a feature of strong Jewish natures. Yet this strong man says, "He that cometh after me is stronger (ισχυρότερος) than I." II. INDEPENDENCE. Yet like David in God's presence declaring, "I will be base in my own sight," so the Baptist exclaims, "Whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." III. Above all, PURITY. An effective moral teacher must in purity of manhood stand upright. Never could he have brought men to repentance if he had not himself repented. The words "generation of vipers" would have been a mere scream of impotent rage if he had not crushed the serpent in his own heart. Yet, in the presence of Jesus, that pure soul seems black like the waters of a mountain lake in the neighbourhood of the newly fallen snow. The baptism of water he knew; of the baptism of fire, searching and sifting to the marrow, he recognized the need—"I have need to be baptized of Thee." (*Bp. Alexander.*)

Ver. 7. **The same came for a witness.**—A witness is wanted in the period of ignorance and darkness. Such a witness is the moon, which reflects a borrowed portion of light from the sun, and so assures us of him; but when the sun itself arises, himself becomes invisible, and as not existing. His borrowed light also is temporary and changeable. It waxes and wanes, and is sometimes full, and round, and perfect almost as the sun himself; at other times it diminishes and decays, and dies away till it is invisible. So the prophets had the Holy Spirit by time and by measure; and sometimes they were bright and luminous, and shone, as it were, with a celestial and perfect brightness; but then at other times, again, the Spirit in them declined and departed, and left them only the dark lump, waiting till its office should again return, of reflecting some greater or less portion of the sun's own proper rays, and invisible till illuminated. But when the sun itself arose upon the world, this should be the sign of him. The light by which he shone should be his own; and should be in himself, and inherent in him. When the Spirit of God should descend upon him; when the hitherto unembodied light should find this rest, and take this place and station—the embodied Sun of Righteousness, and the light and life, the Divinity itself should be incarnate—then, this Spirit of God, the Godhead itself so united to man, should be the sign of the expected Messiah.

and the witness himself become extinct, in this the last triumphant exercise of his office and witness. (*S. R. Bosanquet.*) *The witness of the light*:—Does the light then need that witness should be borne to it? Is not light its own evidence? Yes, if men have eyes to see; but because they lay in the darkness and slumber of sin, it was necessary to arouse them, and to give testimony to the true light, distinguishing it from all false lights that could only lure to death. In an obvious sense, "the law and the prophets" formed a great system of "witness" to the coming One (Acts x. 43; Rom. iii. 21, 22); but it required completing, and John's ministry was the completion of it—the grand close of the prophetic symphony. The morning star, day's harbinger, bears witness of the sun, by shining in his light; and so also does the mountain top, kindled with the first rays of morning, to the dwellers in the deep valley beneath, or the far-stretching plain. But John's testimony went beyond even this: he not merely preceded the Messiah, closing the prophetic line, but, having first aroused the nation by that cry, "Repent," he actually introduced and named Him to Israel. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The force of testimony*:—Testimony is like an arrow shot from a long-bow; the force of it depends on the strength of the hand that draws it. Argument is like an arrow from a cross-bow, which has equal force though shot by a child. (*Lord Bacon.*)

Ver. 8. **He was not that Light.**—*The personality of the Baptist*:—I. John the Baptist was WELL BORN. The best Jewish blood flowed in his veins. Hereditary forces are the conservative forces of society. Voice, stature, longevity, mental and moral qualities descend from one generation to another. It is not true, however, that inherited tendencies necessarily make character. If this were so there could be no advance or retrogression. A child could be no better, no worse than his parent. Every mind is an original power for good or evil. Still, be thankful, Timothy, that Eunice was your mother; John, that Zacharias and Elizabeth were your parents. II. He was WELL TRAINED. Jewish homes did not let go the training of children. Training tells more than birth in formation of character. Faith, reverence, obedience, courage, humility, are elements of a soldierly training. Let a child see love illustrated at home, and if he cannot be scolded into the Lord's ranks he may be won. III. He was A MAN OF COURAGE (Matt. iii. 1–10). Witness his treatment of the dominant Jewish parties and Herod. This was a real quality, not an affectation. Ask for no trimmers in the pulpit. In the long run the brave man is popular. IV. He was A MAN OF HUMILITY (vers. 29–36). How hard for one preacher to be overshadowed by another, not in some remote town, but round the corner! Let every man do his level best, and, if beaten honourably, rejoice in another's success. V. He was A MAN OF DOUBT. But he took his doubts to Jesus, and had them resolved. Doubter, let Jesus speak for Himself. (*B. J. Hoadley.*) *The danger of mistaking John for Christ*:—To mistake the forerunner for the Messiah, the Baptist for the Christ, the man for the Lord, was not the first characteristic blunder of the Church against her Divine Head. It repeated Eve's mistake of her firstborn for the firstborn of God. If we had not seen the subsequent errors of the Church, we should have been almost tempted to count John's statement unnecessary, perhaps gratuitous, that the Baptist was "not that Light." The only true relation of any ordinance is that of testimony to Christ. At the point where an ordinance ceases to testify of Christ, there it begins to betray Him. Then the betrayal of a Judas is followed by the denial of a Peter. The agency of priestcraft is at the bottom in either case. A false apostle sells, false priests buy, and Christ is crucified between them. The symbol of the thirty pieces of silver is, the nominal Christian barters to the nominal Jew the Divine reality. And so it has been in all ages and with every heresy. You cannot reconcile priestcraft and Christcraft: they are the antagonism of God and mammon. The process is in every case essentially the same, confounding the testifier with the thing testified. Men began first to mingle representative rites with spiritual realities, then inseparably to unite them, and lastly to identify forms with the spiritual facts which they symbolized. Hence arose the transubstantiation of one sacrament, and the transpiritualism of the other. Transubstantiation, which identifies the Lord's body with the bread and wine which He appointed as its symbolic testifiers, and transpiritualism, which identifies the baptism of the Spirit with that of water, are cognate heresies. The ordinance, in either case, displacing the Ordainer, the form neutralizing the fact, and compelling us to protest against sacramentalism on behalf of the sacraments, as well as on the part of the Saviour, that sacramental elements are "not that Light, but sent to bear witness of that Light." (*J. B. Owen, M.A.*) *The secondary*

light :—The brightest light which the hand of man can enkindle is instantly paled when the sun shineth in his strength. Beautiful indeed is that secondary light when shining alone, and not beautiful only, but precious, exceedingly to men who without it would be in darkness; yet, could it speak, it would say, "I am but a spark of another fire; your admiration of my splendour will cease when you see the sun." Such is the speech of the most luminous men. Our light is lunar, not solar, or solar only because Christ is in us; and according to the measure of our capacity He sheds His glory through our life. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *A witness to the Light* :—He is content to claim for his master as for himself the noblest human work, "to bear witness of that Light." No one may add to it; all may, in word and life, bear witness to it. Every discovery in science and advance in truth is a removal of some cloud which hides it from men; every noble character is bearing it about; every conquest of sin is extending it. It has been stored in mines of deepest thought in all ages. The heedless pass over the surface unconscious of it. The world's benefactors are they who bring it forth to men as the light and warmth of the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) *The exact position of John in relation to Christ* :—Just as when we see some object lit up by the sun's beams, we are aware that the sun has risen, though we may not be able actually to see him ourselves; and just as a man, however weak may be his power of sight, at any rate is able to look at a mountain or tree shone upon by the sun, though he may not yet be able to look at the glorious luminary itself; so in like manner did John give light to those who as yet were not able to look at Christ, and through him, while he acknowledged that his light was that cast upon him by the rays of another, the shining and enlightening One Himself was perceived and recognized. (*Augustine.*) *Other witnesses to Christ besides St. John* :—Was the saying less true of Jeremiah preaching beside the temple that was to be desolate, of Ezekiel preaching by the river of Chebar? Was it less true of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost, of St. Paul at Antioch? Was it less true of Bernard, of Francis of Assisi, of Luther, of any man who in later days has awakened men out of the slumber of death? What can be said of each except this, "The same came for a witness"? What would each have said of himself but this, "I am not that Light, but am come to bear witness of that Light"? (*F. D. Maurice.*) *The true glory of John* :—John is something truly great, of vast merit, of exceeding grace, placed on a high eminence. Admire him we must, but how? as a mountain height, which, unless irradiated by the sun, abides in darkness. Therefore raise your thoughts to Him, who illumines this mountain top, elevated for the very purpose of first receiving the light, and so of imparting it to your eyes otherwise pained with so great a glare. John was a light lighted; Christ was a light-giving Light. (*Augustine.*)

Ver. 9. **That was the true Light.**—*The true Light which lighteth every man* :—I. CHRIST IS THE TRUE LIGHT. This is seen when we reflect that—1. He is the source of all the knowledge we have of the Divine Being—His relation to us, His infinite love, and the wonderful plan of salvation He has devised. 2. He is the source of all the knowledge we have of the life beyond. 3. He is the source of all the consolation we experience under the pressure of trial. II. HE LIGHTETH EVERY MAN. 1. The general direction which the beams of the true Light are here directed to take is a marvellous instance of His condescension. The noble chandelier which floods the throne-room of the palace with its dazzling light throws not a single ray into the murky gloom of the squalid courts not far away. That Christ, the true Light, should dart His beams downwards to this abiding-place of sin is part of the wonderfulness of the gospel which we preach. 2. To Him we owe the gift of reason, which is one of the two great foundation stones of natural religion. 3. He has placed within us the gift of conscience—God's eye and voice, a witness against ourselves. 4. The proclamation of the gospel in every land. III. THE TRUE LIGHT IS MADE EVIDENT FROM THE WORKING OF HIS SPIRIT AND GRACE. (*H. W. Price*). *Christ's light* is—I. The light of NATURAL REASON, which He has given us to cultivate and improve, for the benefit of ourselves and others, especially in the great concerns of religion. This light, which even the Gentiles had, was sufficient to have led them to the knowledge of the true God, and, by the visible works of the creation, to understand His "eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 10). II. The light of REVELATION. By this light His will has been made known to us in the Holy Scriptures; the religion of nature commenced revealed; and the lesser light of natural reason was not extinguished by, but absorbed in, revelation. This further light was typified to us by the Shechinah in the tabernacle, and by that bright cloud by

day and pillar of fire by night which conducted the Israelites through the wilderness. III. The light of the GOSPEL: and this is represented by that noblest and brightest of all the heavenly luminaries, the Sun; Christ Himself, who is therefore styled "the Sun of Righteousness," having now arisen on His Church "with healing in His wings." This is the light which constitutes our present day. IV. The last and most perfect light of all will be that of GLORY, which shall never set, nor ever change. But this light none shall ever behold who neglect the use of those lesser lights, who advance not gradually from reason to revelation, from revelation to faith, from faith to glory. (*Wogan.*) *The arrival of the Light*:—I. Its NATURE. "True," not the genuine as opposed to the false, but the substantial, the essential, the original, the permanent, as opposed to the shadowy, phenomenal, derived, transitory. II. Its INFLUENCE. Set forth—1. Intensively, it lighteth. 2. Extensively, as reaching to every man, *i.e.*, to all mankind, in the sense that its light exists for all, and to some degree shines on all, and to all souls who inwardly admit its beams. III. Its CONDITION, described as—1. Coming into the world, *i.e.*, in process of passing from a Divine and Eternal into a human and temporal mode of existence, and—2. Coming into His own, *i.e.*, as unfolding His glory before the theocratic people. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The true Light*:—I. He is UNDECEIVING light, the true light in opposition to all the false lights of the Gentiles. II. He is REAL light, true in opposition to ceremonial types and shadows. III. He is UNDERIVED light, true in opposition to all light that is borrowed, communicated, or participated from another. IV. He is SUPEREMINENT light, true in opposition to all that is ordinary and common. (*Arrowsmith.*) *Christ the Enlightener*:—Jesus Christ enlightening every man—I. FROM WITHIN, *i.e.*, in the intuitive conceptions of the mind. 1. This light is internal, shining in the mental constitution of every man. What was life in the Word pre-incarnate was light or reason in men. 2. This light is innate in every man. "That was the true Light which lighteth every man as he cometh," &c., is a translation of many scholars. God takes care to write His name on the soul of every man; human nature bears the sign-manual of its Maker in its deepest constitution (Rom. i. 19, "in them"). 3. This light is Divine, the same in its nature as that which illuminates God Himself. The light proceeding from the sun is the same as that which resides in the sun. 4. This light is persistent. It continues to shine notwithstanding the Fall and its consequences—"lighteth," present tense. II. FROM WITHOUT, in the revealed doctrines of Christianity. 1. It is a supernatural light: not unnatural, or contranatural, for the most perfect correspondence obtains between the natural and the supernatural. Railway companies often possess running powers on each other's property, and the natural and the supernatural often run their trains on each other's lines. The latter is only an extension of the former. 2. It is a perfect light: true, *i.e.*, the complete as opposed to the imperfect, the full as opposed to the partial. Christ is this; not a ray wanting. You may see God *through* the creation, but you may see Him *in* Jesus Christ. 3. It is a universal light. (1) It enlightens every man that cometh into the world. The perfect is always universal. "Go ye into all the world." The Sun of Christianity is as all-pervasive as the sun of nature. (2) It enlightens every man that goeth out of the world. It can penetrate the blackest recesses of the dark mountains along which you are descending, and dissipate the mist of the swelling flood, and illumine your way right into the unseen. (3) It enlightens the world into which you are going. "The Lamb is the light thereof." (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The Light of the world*:—There has been a threefold revelation of the Word. I. THROUGH NATURE. "In the beginning," before there was ear to hear or mind to understand—the mind of God was speaking with itself. There was a Word. Then—1. The Word is spoken of as bringing the world into being, *i.e.*, God's Word found utterance in creation. A word is an expression or a work. The most expressive of all are not those which the lips speak. The American sculptor gazed upon the sky upon a summer's morning. He went about haunted with the memory of it. It was a necessity for him to express it. Had he been a poet he would have thrown it into words; a painter, on canvas; an architect, into a building; but being a sculptor his thoughts and syllables were expressed in stone. This world is God's sculptured work whereby He speaks out Himself. 2. This creation is a pervading immanence. "He was in the world." Creation is not the work of a Divine watchmaker, who winds it up, leaves it to go by itself, interfering now and then in great emergences called miracles. He is in the world, the life of all that is. The world is the form of which Christ is the Personality. The beauty of the sea-shell and of the field-flower is the loveliness of God. The world is an everlast-

ing anthem hymning God's secrets. II. THROUGH MAN. 1. Universally: "lighteth every man." Just as the sunlight shines on all, more intensely in the tropics, more feebly at the poles, yet shines on all. Your reason and conscience are the God within you. Thus the Fathers spoke of the wisdom of Plato and others as the unconscious Christ within them. Thus, too, in the Old Testament rulers and judges are called "gods" (John x. 35, 36). 2. Specially: "He came to His own." The distinction is between those who received the light common to every man and those who received the special illumination which entitled them to be His own—the Jewish people, the inspired people. Inspiration is God's acting on man's higher spirit—his worship and reverence. There is an inspiration of genius, but the inspiration of the prophet is another thing altogether. The Jews were not great statesmen, artists, scientists; but the thought of God, the sanctity of duty, moral and spiritual truth were in them as in no other nation on earth. III. THROUGH THE INCARNATION. God manifested Himself not through what Jesus taught or spoke, but through what Jesus was and did. 1. Christ was not a transient theophany like the burning bush, the Angel of the Covenant, or the Shechinah glory. 2. But God Himself in man and with man for ever. The application is—(1) That all that can be known of God is through a revelation. The light of revelation is not contrary to, but complementary of, the light of nature. (2) That revelation is progressive. In the world; with the world; made flesh. In the world unconsciously in nature; nearer in man; nearest in Christ; the time is coming when He will be still nearer, "when we shall see Him as He is." (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Christ the Light of all the living*:—I. EVERY MAN COMES INTO THE WORLD WITH A LIGHT IN HIM. Dim in infancy, but ready to be fanned by educational influences; dark in heathenism, but glimmering amongst fogs of superstition. This light reflects—1. On social obligation. Every man has the sense of right and wrong. 2. On religious worship: the sentiment of a God is universal. 3. On future retribution: reference to a future life of reward and punishment instinctive. That all men have their light is clear—(1) From history. Its rays may be seen in the best heathen, in their sacred books, and even amongst the most degraded tribes. (2) From the Word of God (Rom. i.). It is absurd to deny its existence because it burns dimly under the glass of ignorance, and never throws a false hue on duty and destiny, &c. Any light is better than darkness. A manuscript may contain truth, although part may be torn away. II. THE LIGHT IN EVERY MAN IS FROM CHRIST. This fact—1. Exalts Christ as the Creator of souls (ver. 2). He puts this inextinguishable light in them. 2. Reveals the responsibility of heathens. They are not in utter darkness. It is amongst them in those elements of truth by living up to which they may be accepted of God. Thus heathen salvation is not independent of Christ. 3. Furnishes an argument for the congruity of Christianity with human nature. Both the natural and the gospel light come from one source in Christ and harmonize with each other. 4. Supplies a motive to extend the light of the gospel. Although Christ gave men natural light, He saw their need of a higher light, and became flesh and died to give it. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ our revealing Light*:—I once spent a night on Mount Righi, and there was nothing visible for a rod from my window. But when the morning broke, the icy crowns of the Jungfrau and the Schreckhorn began to glitter in the early beams. They had been there all the night, waiting for the unfoldings of the dawn. Even so have all God's laws of the material universe and all His purposes of redeeming mercy through Jesus Christ been in existence from the beginning. They only waited for the dayspring of discovery. And one of the most delightful occupations of a devout mind is to watch the unfoldings of God, and to drink in new truths as He gradually reveals them. (*Theodore L. Cuyler.*) *Jesus our Light*:—A visitor went one cold day last spring to see a poor young girl, kept at home by a lame hip. The room was on the north side of a bleak house. It was not a pleasant prospect without, nor was there much that was pleasant or cheerful within. Poor girl! what a cheerless life she has of it, he thought, as he saw how she was situated; and he immediately said to himself, what a pity it was her room was on the north side of the house. "You never have any sun," he said; "not a ray comes in at these windows. That I call a misfortune. Sunshine is everything; I love the sun." "Oh," she answered, with the sweetest smile, "my sun pours in at every window, and even through the cracks." The visitor looked surprised. "The Sun of Righteousness," she said, softly—"Jesus. He shines in here and makes everything bright to me." Who could doubt her? She looked perfectly happy. Yes! Jesus shining in at the window can make any spot beautiful and any home

happy. *Christ the interpreter of human life*:—I. How far is this true? Is it not rather sin which explains it? Its facts meet us everywhere, and sum up the life of the individual and the nation. We see them and feel their curse. But do they explain all? Are there not stirrings of the awakened conscience, longings of the soul for its lost innocence, better hopes, holier resolves, efforts to lay hold of God? Whence have these come? From the Light. Sin, so far from interpreting life, is its confusion. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But sin has obscured it all; caused its power and promise to be wasted, changed its blessing into a curse, quenched its light in darkness. A saved soul—that is consistent; a lost soul—there is bewilderment in the very thought. We cannot understand our own being till Christ gives us light; then our darkness passes, and the true light shineth. II. It is not only true that salvation in Christ is the end which alone makes human life intelligible—the law of life in Christ is the law according to which we were made. The self-devoted Saviour is "the Light which lighteth every man." Men resolve every motive into selfishness. Men are always seeking, it is said, to please themselves. But this only confuses. There is an impulse of self-denial which cannot thus be explained away. The father labouring for his little ones, the mother watching over her sick child's couch, do this for love's sake, and not to please themselves. The patriot denies himself for his country's good; we are often ashamed of our comforts when we reflect on the wants of others. The impossibility of living a life wholly selfish, the inspirations of pity, the passion for self-devotedness find their explanation in Christ. In Him we see the self-devoted life, the only true and blessed life for man. As Christ was it would be well for us all to be; that is what God would have us all be. All falls into harmony now; this is the true light. III. If we turn from the quenchless impulse of devotedness to the quenchless impulse of worship; if we ask how it was that amidst the degradations of heathenism and the corruption of the Jews, faith itself did not die out; if we ask how it was that though philosophers often seemed on the verge of proclaiming that all religion was only a fiction useful for civil government, men could not rid themselves of reverence; if we ask how it was that in even the worst superstitions of idolatry something may be often seen which strangely suggests to us the gospel revelation; again we are reminded that Christ, "the true Light which lighteth every man," was in the world. He would not let them sink into utter godlessness. He preserved in them some little longing for the true, awoke in them some dissatisfaction with the false. IV. From the Cross comes the light which interprets the deepest and most mysterious facts in human life. The selfishness of pride is crushed as we recognize ourselves saved not by our own righteousness, but by Him that bore our curse. We have murmured that we should bear a doom for Adam's sin: Christ bore the doom for Adam and for us. We have murmured at our birth into a state of sin and suffering. But Christ was born into it for us. Our Christian life is interpreted here. If we are restless amid our pleasures, if we cannot be happy, if we are yearning to be better, it is because the Word is within us pleading with us to receive Him. If we have not been allowed to sink amidst temptations, to rest in a life of ungodliness, and if there be in us purer feelings and holier aspirations, these seek their fulfilment in Christ. (*A. Mackennal, D.D.*) *The natural light in man*:—God prints His own name, He stamps some great universal truths on the mind of every man as he cometh into the world. Men are like so many volumes, continually issuing from the Divine press; and if nothing else be written on them, the name of the Author and Printer is indisputably engraved on the title-page. I do not say that the name is very legible at first, especially since the soul has been soiled by sin, but that it is there is to me a demonstrated truth. Take a sheet of white paper; write on it your own thoughts—your good thoughts or your bad thoughts, just as you please—and underneath your own signature and address. Is that all that is to be read off the paper? Nay; hold it up to the light, and you will behold the name of the manufacturer in watermarks. You may write on it what you like and as you like; but you will never rub off the name of the maker. Your name is on it, but his name is in it. Thus God has written His name in watermarks on the raw material of the soul. You may write on it, the world may write on it, the devil may write on it; but God has written in it—He has deeply stamped His name into the soul in its first make. The idea of God is a lighted lamp hung up in the dome of every man's soul as he cometh into the world, a lighted lamp flashing forth its penetrating and comforting beams in all directions. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Light before Christ came*:—

We must not suppose that all light of faith, of hope, of justice, of purity, of truth, first dawned on the world when Christ came. God has been in the world ever since there was one, and whatever there is that is noble and good proceeded from the inspiration of the Divine mind working upon the human soul, on all nations, in every age, and under the ministrations of the truth as it is in Jesus. He that brought life and immortality to light was neither supine nor slumbering, but was working everywhere before His appearance, and whatever light of truth there has been at any time has come from Him. When, however, He came in bodily form, He came to interpret what only life and conduct can interpret. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ the efficient Light:*—The earthly sunlight only illumines eyes that see, but Christ the true Light enlightens the eyes of the blind; He is at once the Eye and Light of the world. (*Brenz.*) *Light dawning upon man:*—Standing far down in the darkness of an icy valley, I once witnessed a sunrise in the Alps. The first beam struck the summit of Monte Rosa, and looked like a vivid crimson spot amid a deep gloom; and then the rising dawn fired the summits of mountain after mountain, and floated in a river of broadening gold down through snowy slopes, until at last the hills and the valleys and the pine forests seemed to shout aloud, and clap their hands, as they were flooded irresistibly with the rejoicing light. Even so, He who is the Light which enlighteneth every man dawned with an infinitude of blessing upon a dark and guilty world. (*Archdeacon Farrar*). *Christ the true Light:*—That only is "light" which lighteth another; and that, therefore, which should "light" everybody is the True, Original, Primal "Light." Nature teaches it. You cannot conceive of "light" which does not emit. It must propagate itself. The moment that "light" does not shed itself, it is gone out. There is no propagation in darkness. Darkness is naked. A dark room does not darken a light room; but a light room will lighten a dark one. And the more "light," the more it brightens—up to that Perfect "Light" which "lights" everything. The sun "lights" the whole world. Christ is the Sun of God's moral system. When the world was four days old, God gathered all the "light"—which vibrated and was diffused in the atmosphere—into one great centre: or, more accurately, He made for all that "light" one great reflector to "rule the day"; then He made another reflector for the sun—the moon, "to govern the night." When the world was four thousand years old He gathered all moral and spiritual "light"—of the law, of prophecy, of grace, of love, of hope—which was scattered and indistinct before, into one grand depository; or, more accurately, He gave a perfect mirror, to give back all His own lustre and glory, to be the ruler and arbiter of the Gospel Day (Heb. i. 1). And then God made a reflector of that Divine luminary—the Church; the Church, to catch and disseminate its rays in a dark world; the Church, to rule and govern the world's night. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The safety of the Light:*—The night is of the darkest; the moon has hid her face behind the swift-rolling clouds, and not a star ventures to peep out upon what is going on far below on earth. Her anchor weighed and sails broadly spread, a noble ship moves steadily on her way, her captain on the bridge, her trusty steersman at the helm, the watch at their posts. We hear the low, firm word of command, and feel the movement of the vessel responding slowly to her rudder as her course is changed in obedience to the indications of the chart, or in consequence of the observations of the look-out. Now she rounds a rocky headland, and, passing from its shelter, enters a narrow strait, on which, in striking contrast to the gloom behind, a flood of brilliant light is cast from the lighthouse which stands in the centre of that short but dangerous channel, whence it sends forth guiding rays to help mariners who pass through from one great sea to another beyond. The light makes the channel safe; let it be removed, and, striking against the rocky isles which stud the strait, the brave ship, in vain effort to escape, will beat out its life. Do you ask me on what map you will find this channel marked? what are the names of the two seas which it connects? I will tell you. The name of the ocean on the one hand is Eternity; the name of the ocean on the other hand is Eternity; the name of the channel is Life, and its Light is Jesus Christ. Without Him we perish; but with Him, overcoming the perils of the passage, we reach at last the great and wide sea of the Father's infinite love. (*H. W. Price.*) *Christ the Light of the future world:*—Into the impenetrable darkness of the hereafter He alone has entered; only His sacred feet have trodden that awful path of gloom. We read, a little time ago, of some of our English officers exploring a subterranean cavern never yet visited by man—how they groped, and climbed, and crawled for hundreds of yards into the darkness that was but feebly lit up by the glimmer of their tapers. They

pressed onward in spite of every difficulty, till an impassable obstacle prevented their further progress, and the gallant explorers had to return. They might have perished in their perilous enterprise, and left their bones to moulder in their unknown charnel-house till the resurrection morn; or they might have threaded their way through mazy intricacies until, at last, they came again within the welcome sight of daylight, and emerged from their underground wanderings on the other side of the mountain. The Great Explorer passed right through! The Founder of our Faith came out of death into a fuller and more glorious life than He laid down when He yielded up His spirit. It is from Christ—messenger from the land of light and love, victor over death and the grave, that we learn all we know of the home beyond, of the many mansions, of the place prepared, of the thrones, and of the crown. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the Light of every man*:—How can this be true when there are, and always have been, so many who live on still in darkness? First, it was God's intention that "light" should be all-pervasive, and it does not make that intention untrue if, through the negligence of His people—to whom it was committed to carry it out—it has not yet taken place. The orb of day is not less the "light" to the universe, because you choose to eclipse it with your little hand. Neither is Christ less "the true Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," because they, to whom it was given, have not transmitted its beams. But, evil as things are now, it is impossible to calculate what may be the indirect rays of "light" which have reached, from the gospel, through the whole earth. There is a twilight of truth in almost every superstition and every error. Is that dim twinkle a refraction from the cross? (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *God the Light of life*:—When we grasp a truth, and the exquisite pleasure of knowing what is true abides with us like a noble guest; when we conquer a selfish or worldly desire and lie down to rest on the goodness we have won and feel at peace; when in the golden summer-time we pass through the happy woodland and hear the stream and the trees talk to one another, and the beauty that flows into the eyes and ears kindles its instructive fire in our hearts; when we give love or pity or kindness to those that need it, and the quick thrill of heavenly joy, such as the shepherd feels when he finds his lost sheep, swells the heart—what is it that we feel? We feel not only ourselves but God within us. His is the truth, the goodness, His the beauty and the tenderness, and His the joy. He is mingled with us then. His light and life make our light and our life. It is more or less in all men, it is of different kinds in different men, but it shines in all. One may hold it in a soul which is a palace for the crowned Truth to dwell in; another may keep it in a soul which is a ruined cabin where many an outlawed thought and many a felon feeling dwells: but its eternal fire burns in both—in one as brightly as the sun, in the other dimly as in the dying star. (*Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.*)

Vers. 10–11. **He was in the world.**—*The treatment of Christ by men*:—I. By the WORLD. 1. They were in a condition in which they might have known much of Him. He made the world and preserved it and was in it. Yet there was no proper recognition of Him. 2. This ignorance of Christ was the sin of the world, and it is its sin now, a sin for which there is no excuse. In addition to creation and providence we have revelation. II. By HIS OWN. 1. Who are His own. In a sense (1) All mankind by the right of creation; (2) The converted by the right of redemption and adoption; (3) As distinguished from both these, the Visible Church. That its members are His own arises from their possession of advantages peculiarly distinctive—the oracles of God—the ordinances of the kingdom. They are in covenant. Christ is under engagement to grant to them eternal life: they are under engagement to seek that gift and accept it. (*a*) Virtually such was the covenant at Sinai. Christ engaged to bring His own to Canaan, through their obedience to the law by which they were to live. They engaged to go up and possess their inheritance in reliance on Him. The covenant was typical as well as temporal, and typified a spiritual salvation. (*b*) Israel violated this covenant, by the rebellion in the wilderness, and by slowness of heart to understand its moral meanings. (*c*) This covenant has passed away, the substance of its shadows having come, but thousands like Israel are false and perfidious to the new and better covenant: they have the profession without the power of godliness. 2. He came to His own. (1) This was unsolicited by them, the kindness and consideration were all His. (2) He came to them in the wilderness and at various periods of their history, but they rejected Him. 3. He came as the Incarnate Word, and they received Him not. Is this also true of the Visible Church to-day? The un-

converted hearers of the gospel are more guilty than the Jews, and will therefore be visited with a heavier condemnation. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The rejection of the Light*:—I. GENERALLY AND PRIOR TO THE INCARNATION BY THE WORLD. The world knew Him not, which was—1. Inexcusable (Rom. i. 20). 2. Unnatural, since those who lived and moved and had their being in Him should have known Him who made them (Psa. ciii. 22). 3. Heinous. The non-recognition less intellectual than moral, arising not from failure to discern, but from want of inward affinity to the light (John iii. 19; Eph. iv. 18; Job xxiv. 13). 4. Prophetic, since it foreshadowed Christ's reception by Israel with the outlook towards which it is here introduced. II. PARTICULARLY AND DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS INCARNATION BY HIS OWN, *i.e.*, by the Jews, whose rejection of Him, besides sharing the criminality incurred by the world, displayed—1. Monstrous ingratitude. He selected them for no peculiar excellence on their part, and vouchsafed centuries of gracious teaching and discipline to prepare them to recognize and embrace Him. 2. Shamefaced robbery. Christ presented Himself as the Heir claiming His inheritance (Matt. xxi. 38); as a Master (Matt. xxv. 14) only to find His possessions forcibly withheld from Him, and Himself cast forth and killed. 3. Incorrigible wickedness. They could not discern the signs of Messiahship in Him. 4. Dire infatuation, for in rejecting Him they thrust from themselves the kingdom of God, and missed the true vocation of their race. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ rejected by the world*:—His own world rejected Him, as a rebel country might reject a lawful and beneficent king. The very work of His hands, that which was indebted to Him for its very being, refused to recognize Him. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *The world*:—Corrupted mankind are called the *world*, because they love the world more than their Creator. Through love, we make something our dwelling-place; and therefore what we have made by our love to be our dwelling-place, from that we have deserved to be called. (*Augustine.*) **The world knew Him not.**—Let us give the largest scope to these words. If you apply them to the world of matter, I need not say that matter can never interpret spirit. God cannot be known in the charity and richness of His inward nature by anything that matter represents. Nor can men whose whole intercourse with matter either disprove or affirm the invisible and inward truth of Christ. Neither does the race know Him: for they are seeking to live by bread alone. Three-fifths of the world live as the sheep, the ox, and the swine do. The heavens to them contain little unless it be some terror that superstition interprets. They cross the plain of life, with heads down, as herds of cattle cross the prairie browsing as they go. They live for and by the senses. They know not the God who created them, and sustains and blesses them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The non-recognition of Christ*:—When Ulysses returned with fond anticipations to his home at Ithaca, his family did not recognize him. Even the wife of his bosom denied her husband—so changed was he by an absence of twenty years, and the hardships of a protracted war. In this painful condition of affairs he called for a bow which he had left at home. With characteristic sagacity he saw how a bow so stout and tough that none but himself could draw it, might be made to bear witness on his behalf. He seized it. To their surprise and joy, like a green wand lopped from a willow tree, it yields to his arms, it bends till the string touches his ear. His wife, now sure that he is her long lost and lamented husband, throws herself into his fond embraces, and his household confess him to be the true Ulysses. If I may compare small things with great, our Lord gave such proof of His Divinity when He, too, stood a stranger in His own house, despised and rejected of men. He bent the stubborn laws of nature to His will. He proved Himself Creator by His mastery over creation. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Genius unrecognized*:—When Verdi the celebrated musician first made application for admission as a student at the Conservatoire Musicale at Milan, he was rejected by the director, Francesco Basily, on the ground that "he could make nothing of the new comer, who showed no disposition for music!" How this early verdict was reversed is a matter of notorious history. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Recognition*:—Some literary reputations are like fairies, in that they cannot cross running water. Others, again, are like the mystic genii of the "Arabian Nights" which loom highest when seen afar. Poe, *e.g.*, is more appreciated in England than at home; and Cooper is given a higher rank by French than by American critics. (*Matthews.*) *Judgment by contemporaries*:—Contemporary judgment is least of all judicial. The young forestall novelty itself. The old mistrust or look backward with a sense of loss. It is hard for either to apply tests that are above fashion; we adopt, as lightly as formerly we contemned, a fashion that at last we avow we rightly interpret. (*E. C.*

Stedman.) *God present but unknown:*—"I have swept the heavens with my telescope and have found no God." (*Lalande.*) *God unrecognized in His own world:*—Sir Isaac Newton had among his acquaintances a philosopher who was an atheist. It is well known that the illustrious man, who takes the first rank as a mathematician, natural philosopher, and astronomer, was at the same time a Christian. He had in his study a celestial globe, on which was an excellent representation of the constellations and the stars which compose them. His atheist friend, having come to visit him one day, was struck with the beauty of this globe. He approached it, examined it, and, admiring the work, he turned to Newton and said to him, "Who made it?" "No one!" replied the celebrated philosopher. The atheist understood, and was silent. (*Christian Age.*) *Christ is often near but unknown:*—Every faculty of the soul, if it would but open its door, might see Christ standing over against it, and silently asking by His smile, "Shall I come in unto thee?" But men open the door and look down, not up, and thus see Him not. So it is that men sigh on, not knowing what the soul wants, but only that it needs something. Our yearnings are home-sicknesses for heaven; our sighings are for God, just as children that cry themselves asleep away from home, and sob in their slumber, know not that they sob for their parents. The soul's inarticulate moanings are the affections yearning for the Infinite, and having no one to tell them what it is that ails them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) **He came to His own.**—*Christ's coming and rejection:*—I. IN WHAT SENSE HE CAME TO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT. He came as the long-expected Messiah (Hag. ii. 7; John iv. 26), answering all the characters given Him as such in the Old Testament. 1. He came as Immanuel (Isa. vii. 14, ix. 6, xxxv. 4, xl. 9, 10). His testimony to this effect was confirmed by exercising the authority of God—(1) by forgiving sins (Matt. ix. 2); (2) by healing the sick (Matt. viii. 3); (3) by raising the dead (Mark v. 41; John xi. 43); (4) by calming the storm (Mark iv. 39). But so far were His own from receiving Him that they accounted Him a "sinner" (John ix. 24), a "deceiver" (Matt. xxvii. 63), "mad" and possessed of the "devil" (John x. 20). 2. He came as the Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. xviii. 15), whom He resembled in many things. But they rejected Him because His doctrine contradicted their prejudices, censured their vices, and laid a restraint on their dominant lusts. 3. He came as High Priest and Mediator between God and man, typified by Aaron; but they, depending on being Abraham's seed, on circumcision, the priesthood, and expiations of their law, received Him not. 4. He came as Redeemer and Saviour (Isa. lix. 20, xlii. 6, 7), but not seeing their want of redemption (chap. viii. 33), and having no desire for spiritual blessings, they received Him not. 5. He came as King (Psa. ii. 6; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Zech. ix. 9), to rescue them from their enemies, and govern them with good laws. But as His kingdom was not of this world they rejected Him (chap. xix. 14, 15, xviii. 40, Luke xix. 14). II. IN WHAT SENSE IT IS NECESSARY THAT WE SHOULD RECEIVE HIM. We receive His name, and therefore receive Him by profession; the Scriptures, as declaring His will; His ordinances: but do we receive Him in all the offices and characters He sustains? 1. Acknowledging Him as a Divine Teacher, do we learn and practise His precepts? 2. Acknowledging that He is Mediator, do we rely on His atonement and intercession? 3. Confessing Him to be all-sufficient Redeemer, do we glorify Him in our body and spirit, which are His? 4. Do we in reality as well as in profession receive Him as our King? It is implied in these questions that we receive—(1) His doctrine as the rule of our faith, experience, and practice; (2) His merits as the ground of our confidence; (3) His Spirit, without which we are none of His; (4) His example as our pattern; (5) His exaltation as the ultimate object of our desire. III. THE GREAT PRIVILEGE THEY ATTAIN WHO RECEIVE HIM. 1. They are unspeakably near to Him as made sons of God by regeneration (John v. 1). 2. They are dear to Him above all others. They are favoured with access to Him, taken under His protection, and assured of a great reward. (*J. Benson.*) *Christ's coming to His own:*—The Jewish nation was "His own," by choice (Deut. vii. 6); by purchase (Exod. xix. 4, 5); by covenant (Deut. xxvi. 18); and by kindred (Heb. ii. 16). (*F. H. Dunwell, B.A.*) *Christ rejected by His own people:*—He came unto His own *things*, and His own *people* received Him not. He was as a householder coming to his own house and being kept out by his own servants. What is the earth but one great apartment in the house of God! Its furniture (its hills and valleys, and rivers, fruits and flowers, and harvest fields) is Jesus Christ's, for, apart from Him, was not anything made that was made: yet when He came to His own house His ownership was denied by the servants who had been put into temporary possession by His own power and grace. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The*

Advent:—The coming of Christ had—I. AN OBJECT. 1. Men had lost sight of God. Some had lost it. Others had never had it. All were destitute of it except a small class of Hebrew believers. Three kinds of sin had blinded, corrupted, usurped the human soul. (1) Self-admiration, which makes a rebel of the intellect; (2) Self-will of the conscience; (3) Self-indulgence of the passions. Curiosity was all that was left as the highest aim in science; war, in enterprise; and a sensuous enthusiasm for the beautiful in art. Alexandria, Rome, and Athens represented these three ambitions. 2. In losing God, man had lost himself. Faith in God and the dignity of man went down together. With Divine worship fell human rights and liberties. Seneca stood for the world's idea of learning; Cæsar, for its idea of politics; Corinth, for its idea of pleasure. 3. The object of the Advent, therefore, was to restore to man his God and Father, and himself. II. A METHOD. Not by creating a religious capacity, but by quickening men with trust and love. 1. Not first by a book: that would have reached not one in ten thousand, nor him in his heart. 2. Not chiefly by oral instructions, which have to be certified to the understanding before they can inspire faith. 3. Not by a mere creature-image of Deity, for that would have been only adding another to the old Pantheon of idolatries. 4. This infinite goodness, this One Spirit of God, must come in a life. Christ must be the Son of the Father; must touch humanity and enter into it; must wear its flesh; must lift its load; must partake its experience; must be tempted with it; must be seen, nay, felt, suffering for it. This will complete the manifestation. This will be, not an education, not an inspiration, not a human self-elevation, which neither history nor logic hints at; but a coming of Heaven to earth; a theophany, or manifesting of God. This is perfect compassion, and effectual relief. This gets the sundered souls together. Even stolid and blinded eyes will behold their Lord. This will move, and melt, and convince of sin, and arouse to holiness. III. A MOTIVE. There could be but one (John iii. 16). (*Bp. Huntington.*) *The Advent of Christ.* I. THE GREAT ADVENT; OR, THE ARRIVAL OF THE HEIR. 1. The illustrious personage described. (1) The Word of God; implying personality, intelligence, eternity, divinity. (2) The Creator of the universe. (3) The life and light of men; the source of whatever mental, moral, or spiritual truth ever entered into the soul of man. (4) The heir of Israel and humanity. He came into His own possessions. (*a*) Into the world which by reason of His creatorship was His. (*b*) Unto Israel, the special creation of His grace, and His peculiar treasure. 2. The manner of His coming pictured. He came (1) Voluntarily. The Baptist was *sent;* Christ *came.* (2) Opportunely. In the fulness of the times; the time pre-appointed by God; the time pre-eminently adapted for a new religion. The false faiths had been tried and found wanting. The Mosaic economy had served its purpose. The Roman power had provided a means of universal communication, and Greece a universal language. (3) Graciously. To communicate the life and the light without which neither Israel nor humanity could be saved. It would not have been surprising had He come to condemn rather than to save. (4) Unostentatiously. We might have anticipated an advent in great power and glory: instead of that it was in the form of a servant. II. THE MOURNFUL REJECTION; OR, THE REPUDIATION OF THE HEIR. Israel's conduct representative of the world's. This rejection was—1. Symbolized at His birth. "No room for Him in the inn." Manger for His cradle. 2. Experienced throughout His life. "Despised and rejected of men." Calumniated as a wine-bibber, a blasphemer, an impostor, a confederate of Beelzebub, and persecuted and scorned. 3. Confirmed by His death. "Away with Him"! "Crucify Him"! Learn (1) The amazing condescension of Christ. (2) The supreme claim of Christ. (3) The wickedness and danger of the unbelief which rejects Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Jesus of Nazareth the true promised Messiah*:—No Scripture has so directly and immoveably stood in the way of opposers of Christ's divinity, from Socinius backwards, than this chapter. In the text we have—I. CHRIST'S COMING INTO THE WORLD. 1. The person who came. The Second Person in the Trinity, whose infinity makes the act of His coming miraculous. But Christ, who delighted to mingle mercy with miracle, took a finite nature, so that what was impossible to a Divine nature was done by a Divine Person, and being made man could do all that a man could do except sin. The endeavour to account for this mystery has been the source of all heresy, both of hypothesis and denial. 2. The state and condition from which Christ came. From the bosom of the Father, a state of eternal glory, joy, and Divine communion. How great the humiliation from this to that of a crucified malefactor! And yet it was perfectly voluntary. 3. To whom He came. Everything was "His own" by creation, possession,

and absolute dominion; but the Jews were His by (1) The fraternal right of consanguinity; and (2) Churchship, as selected by Him. That it was Palestine and not Rome He came to was of His sovereign mercy. 4. The time at which He came. When they were at their worst. (1) Nationally. Only a remnant left, and that under a foreign yoke; when to be a Jew was a mark of infamy. (2) Ecclesiastically. When most corrupt, hypocritical, sceptical. In this we may see (*a*) the invariable strength of Christ's love; (*b*) the immoveable veracity of God's promise. II. CHRIST'S ENTERTAINMENT BEING COME. May we not expect for Him a magnificent reception, a welcome as extraordinary as His kindness, especially when we consider His purpose? But His own received Him not. This is not strange. The Jews only followed the common practice of men, whose emulation usually preys on those superior to them. 1. The grounds of His rejection. (1) Christ came not as a temporal prince, which frustrated their carnal hopes. They therefore derided "the carpenter's son." (2) They supposed that He set Himself against the law of Moses by His spiritual interpretations, human exceptions, and exposures of rabbinical glosses. 2. The unreasonableness of these grounds. (1) He came to be not a temporal prince, but (*a*) a blessing to all nations, which is inconsistent with the idea of a warrior Messiah. This is the burden of prophecy—(*b*) of a low, despised estate (Psa. xxii.; Isa. liii.) (2) He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. The ceremonial law was fulfilled and passed away, therefore, of itself. 3. The reasons which should have induced them to receive Him. (1) All the marks of the Messiah appeared in Him. (2) His whole behaviour was a continued act of mercy and charity. Conclusion: The Jews are not the only persons concerned in this guilt, but also all vicious Christians. (*R. South, D.D.*) *The ingratitude of man*:—I. THE PEOPLE AMONGST WHOM OUR LORD DWELT WERE GUILTY OF INGRATITUDE TOWARDS HIM. 1. It was an act of distinguished favour that He should be born among them; yet they rejected Him, which was a high-handed act of national ingratitude. 2. Special cases occurred involving still greater ingratitude. (1) Among them were many whom our Lord healed. Strange ingratitude that a man should owe his eyes to Him and yet refuse to see in Him the Saviour; should owe to Christ his tongue and be silent in the great Physician's praise. (2) He fed thousands of hungry persons: yet they followed Him, not for Himself, but for what they could get out of Him. (3) When He acted as a teacher they tried to murder Him. 3. The further our Lord went on in life the more ungratefully was He treated. He forgot Himself and gave Himself away that He might seek and save the lost; and yet men strove to take away His life which was more valuable to them than to Him. 4. At last that evil generation had its way with Him and crucified Him. 5. When He rose and tarried for forty days to minister blessing, they first doubted and then invented an idle tale to account for it. 6. In this ingratitude those who were nearest to Him had a share. One denied Him, and all forsook Him and fled. II. WE ALSO HAVE BEEN UNGRATEFUL TO OUR LORD. 1. Those who are most indebted to Christ's love and grace—believers. (1) Every sin is ingratitude since Christ suffered for it and came to destroy it. (2) The setting up of any rival on His throne in the heart, when Christ is dethroned in favour of wife, child, friend, ambition, pleasure, wealth, is base ingratitude. (3) The same is true when we lose large measures of grace; when the Holy Spirit admits us into peculiar nearness to God and we act inconsistently. (4) And so the little service we render and our lukewarm love. Christ's love is like the ancient furnace which was heated seven times hotter; ours like the solitary spark which wonders within itself that it is yet alive. (5) The rare consecration of our substance is another case in point. Our gifts to His poor, His Church, missions, are an insult to Him. (6) How base is our ingratitude when we neglect His commands and have to be driven to obedience. 2. There are those whose ingratitude is even greater. (1) Those who refuse to trust Him, in spite of gospel announcements, loving invitations, the evident manifestation of Christ. (2) Those who oppose Him, jest at His gospel, and treat His people with indignity. What evil has He ever done you? When has He given you an ill word or look? It is to His silence that you owe your life. There is no chivalry in such conduct as this. 3. Those from whom, above all others, such conduct ought not to have proceeded. (1) Children of pious and sainted parents. (2) The restored from sickness. III. WHAT THEN? What comes out of all this? 1. Let us appreciate our Saviour's sufferings. 2. Admire our Saviour's love. 3. Apply the cleansing blood which can take away the scarlet sin of ingratitude. 4. Learn how to forgive. Christ loved men none the less for their ingratitude. 5. Judge how we ought to live in the light of this subject:

devote ourselves entirely to Him. In conclusion, what will become of the finally ungrateful? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *His own*:—There are two ways of belonging to another: unwilling and inevitable, or willing and hearty. You may belong to a nation by birth, and dislike it; to a family, from dependence or self-interest, and care for no welfare in it; to a university, and be out of harmony and out of temper with its administration. But so you cannot belong to the brotherhood that is of the body of Christ. You must be in sympathy both with the brotherhood and its head. The legal ownership you cannot help; it brings no animation and no comfort. By your creation you are the Lord's; His to be disposed of, to live or die, to be judged. The business of your new heart, "receiving Christ," is to change this reluctant belonging for the closer and grateful loyalty of affection; the legal bond for the gracious one of faith. (*Bp. Huntington, D.D.*) *The coming and rejection of the light*:—The light came into men's hearts as into its proper native dwelling-place. The Word from whom that light issued asserted His right over all the feelings, instincts, impulses, and determinations of these hearts, as over His own rightful domestics and subjects. But the light was repelled; the rightful Ruler was treated as an intruder by these domestics and subjects. There was anarchy and rebellion where there should have been subordination and harmony. A usurper had reduced those into slavery who would not have the service which is freedom. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Christ rejected*:—His own were those who believed with Him in the Scriptures; the teachers of Israel, those who had been trained for His reception. The peasants of Galilee knew Him and received Him when He fed them; for the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib. He was rejected by those who were the most rigorously orthodox; by the men who believed that their whole life should expend itself in maintaining the temple and its worship. The last days of Christ, the illustrious days of His controversy, were spent with the best, the highest, the most moral of all the people then upon the globe; and they knew Him not. The poor knew Him, and followed Him; the blind knew Him, and cried out to Him; the dead knew Him, and came to life; but the armour-bearers of the then regnant faith—the priests, the teachers—looked upon Him with blank faces, and treated Him as a pretender, a traitor, and slew Him. Is the Christian spirit any more acceptable to-day? Is the policy of Christian nations saturated with blood, and bearing every insignia of the cross imbued with that spirit? Are all pompous churches, with all forms of superstition connected with their worship, and full of symbols of Him who came not to destroy but to save—are they truly Christian? Listen to the *Te Deum* when men knee deep in blood come back with victory on their banners. See the government of most Christian nations; how degraded have been the empires over which they have ruled. See how the Christian nations of Europe lie over against each other, like hungry lions waiting only for an opportunity to spring! What Christian nation, looking at its past history and present policy, can be said to have received Christ? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ still rejected*:—As John writes, there was an advent and a rejection: a bodily advent, a bodily crucifixion: the image and outer form of the Word that was from the beginning, the ever-living Emmanuel, the Christ that comes to-day. If He is rejected to-day, it is by the pride and fashion and self-indulgence of to-day. It is our compromising consciences, it is our well-dressed sensuality, it is our commercial cunning, it is our literary conceit, it is our making merchandise of men and of men's virtue, our covering up cruelty, and calling it patriotism; dishonesty, and calling it regular trade; hollowness and mutual flattery, and calling it good society; prayerless self-idolatry, and calling it a rational religion—it is these things that prepare and build His cross, and crucify Him afresh. (*Bp. Huntington, D.D.*)

VERS. 12–14. **As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.**—*St. John's first view of Christ the key to his Gospel*:—I. These verses DESCRIBE THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF ST. JOHN. In this point of view the order of time is different from the order of the statements. The several steps are these—1. The apprehension of the glory of Jesus. 2. The receiving Him and believing on His name. 3. The effect of the power to become sons of God. This agrees with the actual experience of the evangelist. 1. He sees Jesus as pointed out by the Baptist. But where was the glory? (1) That of "the Lamb of God." (2) The revelation of grace and truth in him. God's infinite love, holiness, justice: His own self-sacrifice. 2. He goes home with Jesus and gave himself up to His gracious influences, believed on

His name. 3. What followed we know. He became a son of God. II. THIS EXPERIENCE DETERMINED THE STRUCTURE, SUBSTANCE, AND SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL. 1. It serves to account for the subordinate place which miracles and Christ's external life generally hold in it. John's grand purpose, as marked by his own experience, was to illustrate the self-commending glory of Christ as the Word and only-begotten of the Father, that those who had never seen Him with the eye of sense might come to the blessedness of those who had not seen and yet had believed. 2. It serves to account for the prominent place which the inner life of Christ and the manifestation of His Sonship-glory occupies here. The two grand pivots on which the Gospel turns are Christ the LIGHT, and Christ the LIFE. Christ the Light, revealing the Father and all that concerns the Father; Christ the Life, communicating by the Spirit a new life to men so as to make them God's sons. Its twofold purpose is to set forth Christ as the Incarnate Word and Only Begotten, full of grace and truth; and also the reception of Christ, the believing on His name as the commencement of the new life of sonship. Thus it is that so much prominence is given to Christ's relation to the Father on the one hand, and to the fellowship of Christ with His people on the other. 3. From these considerations we see the groundlessness of the objections against the Johannian authorship of the Gospel. Given John's conversion, as here shadowed forth, and his warm, fervid nature, his life of Jesus could not well have been any other than it is. III. THE MORE GENERAL RELATIONS OF THE SUBJECT, as setting forth the essential glory of Christ and the glory communicated to all who, by receiving Him, become sons of God. 1. What is the connection between the two? That there is a connection is seen in the difference between John and his companions and the mass of the Jews. The one perceived His glory, the other saw it not. To the one He appeared a miserable pretender, to the other the Eternal Son. Moreover they recognized in Him the Saviour that taketh away the sins of the world. They received Him, and then the standing and spirit of sonship became theirs. 2. How is it that this view of Christ's glory is followed by such effects? (1) By such means we see our emptiness, guilt, and misery. (2) But He invites us to Him, tells us of His fulness, pardon, grace, asks us to receive Him and let Him put forth His power. (3) Must we not welcome Him? The blessed change is wrought in the very act of seeking it. (*W. G. Blaikie, D.D.*) *Receiving Christ and becoming sons*:—I. CHRIST WHO HAS COME INTO THE WORLD SEEKS ADMISSION TO THE HUMAN HEART as a lawful and everlasting tenant. The Christ in the book, in the creed, in the church, effects but little for us. Christ in the heart becomes all our salvation and desire. II. THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST IN THE HEART IS FOLLOWED BY SONSHIP. 1. There is a natural sonship pertaining to all men; for we are all His offspring. 2. There is a special, redemptive, restored sonship bestowed on those who receive Christ. 3. All that pertains to this sonship is supernatural. Adam was not a son by blood, nor by the will of the flesh, but by the will of God; and a restored son is as marvellous a creation as Adam. III. THIS SONSHIP INVOLVES A NEW BIRTH AND ELEVATION TO THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE POSITION. There is nothing higher than being admitted to sonship with God. What we want is not some new spiritual dignity, but the recognition of this exalted condition. IV. TRUE FAITH IS HERE DESCRIBED AND EVIDENCED. 1. Faith in receiving. Christ comes into the believer. Christ *without* does not save, but Christ *within*. 2. Faith is evidenced by the opening of the eyes to see the glory of Christ, and the affiliation to God which follows. V. GOD HERE RECEIVES ALL THE PRAISE. 1. The power and the will are of God. Ascribe to Him the wisdom and the glory. 2. The Christ whom we receive is God's "unspeakable gift." 3. Faith and its attendant privileges are by power bestowed by God. (*S. Martin.*) *The connection between receiving Christ and becoming sons*:—I. These two things are connected IN RESPECT OF GOD: it is the will of God that all should believe in Christ, and He has appointed the mediation of Christ as the channel through which all should receive salvation, and all that is necessary for its attainment. II. These things are connected IN RESPECT OF CHRIST: for, in consequence of what He has done, all may become the sons of God, and may be enriched with all the blessings of His grace. III. They are connected IN RESPECT OF MEN: all who would obtain salvation must receive Jesus Christ as the only Saviour. (*C. C. Tittman, D.D.*) *That act by which we do effectually apply Christ to our own souls*:—I. THE NATURE OF THIS RECEIVING OF CHRIST. 1. No man can do this in the darkness of natural ignorance. If we know not His nature and offices we do not take, we mistake Christ. The receiving act of faith, then, is guided by knowledge. 2. This receiving of Christ

implies the assent of the understanding to the truths of Christ in the gospel—His Person, offices, incarnation, satisfaction—which assent, although it is not saving faith, is its groundwork. This is more than conjecture or opinion, it is belief. 3. This also implies hearty approbation, liking, and estimation; yea, the very acquiescence of our souls in Christ as the most excellent remedy for wants, sins, and dangers (1 Peter ii. 7). There are two things in Christ which must gain the approbation of the soul. (1) That it can find nothing unsuitable to it in Christ as it does find in the best creatures—no weakness, pride, inconstancy, or passion. He is the altogether lovely. (2) That it can find nothing wanting in Christ necessary or desirable. In Him is the fulness of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. 4. It consists in the consent and choice of the will; and this is the opening of the heart and stretching forth of the soul to receive Him (see Christ's complaint, chap. v. 40, and Ephes. i. 19). 5. The respect that this act of acceptance has unto the terms upon which Christ is tendered to us in the Gospel. Faith answers the gospel offer, as the impress on the wax does the engraving on the seal (1 Cor. xv. 11). There is no receiving Christ but on His own terms. (1) He is offered sincerely and really, and is received with a faith unfeigned (1 Tim. i. 5). (2) He is offered entirely, and is received in all His offices as Christ Jesus the Lord (Acts xvi. 13). (3) He is offered exclusively, and the soul singly relies on Him (Acts iv. 2; 1 Cor. iii. 11), and not partly on His righteousness and our own. (4) He is offered freely as the gift, not the sale of God (John iv. 10; Isa. lv. i.; Rev. xxii. 17). So the believer comes to Him with an empty hand. (5) He is offered orderly. First His Person, then His privileges (Rom. viii. 32), so the believer does not marry His portion first. II. THIS IS THE JUSTIFYING AND SAVING ACT OF FAITH. 1. The faith which gives the soul right and title to spiritual adoption, with all the privileges and benefits thereof, is true saving faith. 2. That only is saving faith which is in all true believers, in none but true believers, and in all true believers at all times. III. THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS ACT OF FAITH (2 Peter i. 7; James ii. 5; John vi. 29). 1. Considered qualitatively it has the same excellency that all other precious graces have. It is the fruit of the Spirit. It is singled out to receive Christ. As it is Christ's glory to be the door of salvation, so it is faith's glory to be the golden key that opens that door. (1) It is the bond of our union with Christ (Eph. iii. 17). (2) It is the instrument of our justification (Rom. v. 1). (3) It is the spring of our spiritual peace and joy (Rom. v. 1; 1 Peter i. 8, 9). (4) It is the means of our spiritual livelihood and subsistence. Take away faith and all the others die (Gal. ii. 20). (5) It is the great scope and drift of the Gospel to get men to believe. The urgent commands aim at this (1 John iii. 23; Mark i. 14, 15; John xii. 36). Hither, also, look the great promises and encouragements (John vi. 35–37; Mark xvi. 16). The opposite sin of unbelief is everywhere threatened (John xvi. 8, 9; iii. 18, 35). IV. APPLICATION: 1. For information: If there be life in receiving Christ, there must be death in rejecting Him. 2. If faith be accepting Christ, then there are fewer believers among professors than were thought to be, and more believers than dare conclude themselves such. 3. Those who have the least degree of saving faith, have cause for ever to admire the bounty of the grace of God to them therein (Eph. i. 3). 4. For examination: (1) The antecedents of faith—illumination (Acts xxvi. 18); conviction (Mark i. 15); self-despair (Acts ii. 37); vehement and earnest cries to God for faith. (2) The concomitants of faith—seriousness (Acts xvi. 29); humiliation (Ezek. xvi. 63; Luke viii. 38); a weary condition (Matt. xi. 28); a longing condition. (3) The consequents of faith—evangelical meltings (Zech. xii. 10); love to Christ, His ways, and His people (Gal. v. 6); heart purity (Acts xv. 9); obedience (Rom. xvi. 26). 5. For exhortation: (1) What is in Christ whom you are to receive? (2) What is the offer of Christ by the gospel? (3) What is in the rejecting of that offer? (*J. Flavel.*) *Reception of Christ our introduction into sonship*:—I. THE HONOUR. To become sons of God not merely by adoption, but by generation (Rom. viii. 16; 1 John iii. 1). On our side is sonship, on God's Fatherhood. Sonship is—1. Higher; 2. Nearer; 3. More blessed; 4. More glorious than—creaturehood. There is sonship in the angels, in unfallen man; but this is beyond these. As—(1) Introducing us into a more intimate intercourse; (2) Making us partakers of the Divine nature. II. THE GIVER OF IT. Christ Himself; elsewhere it is the Father. All gifts are in Christ's hands—living water and bread of life, Himself, sonship. This right or power of sonship He purchased for us; for those who had no right, or power, or title. III. THE WAY OF ATTAINMENT. 1. Receiving Him—doing the reverse of what Israel had done; accepting and owning Him for all that God announced Him

to be. 2. Believing on His name, *i.e.*, Himself. IV. THE PERSONAL CHANGE THROUGH WHICH THIS IS REACHED. "Born:" 1. Not of natural descent. 2. Not by natural generation. 3. Not by human adoption. 4. But of God (James i. 18). (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *The grace of Christ to those who received Him:*—The grace appears in—I. HIS PREVAILING WITH MEN TO EMBRACE THE OFFER MADE TO THEM, and in what is implied in that. 1. Christ offers Himself, and we welcome and receive Him. The first acting of true faith is to accept Himself; not merely the special benefit He brings. 2. We exercise implicit confidence in Him. We have a right knowledge of Him; rejoice in His character; accept and hide Him in our hearts. 3. In the form in which Jesus is proclaimed in the Gospel, His saved ones receive and believe in Him. "So we preach; so ye believed." There is a correspondence between the Gospel and faith of the same kind as that between the seal and the wax. (1) Christ is offered sincerely, and He must be accepted with a faith unfeigned. (2) He is offered exclusively, and must be accepted as the sole basis of our hope. (3) He is offered as a gift; we must not attempt to merit Him. 4. The actual committing of our all to Christ when we receive Him. What is the saving act of faith? (1) Not assent, although that must be a part of it. (2) Not assurance, although that will follow it. (3) But acceptance of Him and confidence in Him. II. THE SPECIAL PRIVILEGE WHICH HE BESTOWS ON THOSE WHO RECEIVE HIM. 1. The saved are by nature the children of wrath; but in His person God is reconciled towards them. 2. Having reconciled them, He makes them sons—co-heirs with Himself. 3. Of Him also is the comfort and dignities of sonship. III. THE CHANGE WROUGHT IN THEM WHO RECEIVE HIM, to which their accepting Him is ascribed. 1. A new form of existence—a new birth; all things have become new. 2. This change is (1) not by natural inheritance; (2) nor by the operation of the natural will; (3) nor the fruit of superior endowment or acquisition; (4) but of God, by the office and operation of the Spirit. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Man's part in the advent:*—I. THE RECEPTION. A true reception of Christ for every man alike is of three parts. 1. Belief that He is what He says He is. For any messenger the first condition of acceptance is that He be found to be what He claims to be—much more the Saviour of mankind. 2. Sympathy. A plenipotentiary, an agent, a purely mental operator does not need this. But the moment you include a moral purpose, spiritual influence, there must be common feeling and assimilation. Interests must be felt to be identical. Loyalty must bind the subject to his king. Enthusiasm must mount at the leader's name. If Christ's purpose was to fill human hearts with love, we cannot be His without loving Him. 3. Service: not compulsory, but that which love disdains to call service. In the hungry, sick, ignorant, &c., the Lord makes a new advent to your heart every week; and Christ will not be received till everybody within our reach is made, somehow, better by our faith in Him. II. THE BLESSING. Servants and creatures we were before, and, in a sense—but not the full and glorious sense—children of God. Now sons of God, a royal line, conquerors, sufferers rejoicing in the midst of temptation. Born now, their immortal seed remained in them. III. THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST'S NAME WILL SEEK TO RECEIVE HIM. 1. By giving up the dearest preference that hurts the simplicity and humility of their faith. 2. In the New Testament, Christian instruction, prayer, doing God's will; and counting faith, not doubt, the glory, and power, and joy of man. 3. In the communion of His body and blood. (*Bishop Huntington.*) *A new year's guest:*—The text in connection with Matt. xxv. 35. Suggested by the motto on a new year's card. I. A STRANGER TAKEN IN. House-room is a larger gift than refreshment at the door. We must not be satisfied with benefactions to His representatives. Notice three strange things. 1. That He was in the world and the Maker of it, and yet a stranger. (1) When born in the Bethlehem of His father David, there was no room for Him in the inn. (2) Soon there was no room in the village itself, whence He had to flee into Egypt, a stranger in a strange land. (3) On His return, there was no room among the mass of the people. Jew and Gentile proved how truly He was a stranger. All this a sadly singular thing; and yet we need not wonder, for how should a wicked and selfish world know Jesus or receive Him. 2. That we should be able to receive the Lord Jesus as a stranger. He has gone to glory, but we can yet receive Him. (1) By owning Him when and where believers are few and despised. (2) By showing brotherly kindness to a poor saint. (3) By holding fast His faithful Word when its doctrines are in ill-repute. (4) By taking up our cross where Christ's precepts are disregarded, His day forgotten, and His worship neglected. (5) By receiving the gift of spiritual life. Profession is abundant, but the secret life is rare. 3. That Christ will deign to

dwell in our hearts. This is a miracle of grace, yet the manner is simple enough. (1) A humble, repenting faith opens the door, and Jesus enters. (2) Love shuts to the door with the hand of penitence, and holy watchfulness keeps out intruders. (3) Meditation, prayer, praise, and obedience, keep the house in order. (4) And then follows the consecration of our whole life as His people. II. THE STRANGER MAKING STRANGERS INTO SONS. The moment Christ enters the heart, we are no more strangers and foreigners, but of the household of God. 1. He adopts us and puts us among the children. 2. The designation of sons brings with it a birth, with the actual condition of sons. 3. Living, loving, lasting union seals our sonship. 4. This union creates in us a likeness to God. A small window will let in the great sun; much more will Jesus let in the life, light, and love of God into our souls, making us like God. III. HAVING RECEIVED JESUS AS A STRANGER, WE FEEL A TENDERNESS HENCEFORTH TOWARDS ALL STRANGERS; for we see in their condition some resemblance to our own. When Christ is in us, we search out opportunities of bringing prodigals, strangers, and outcasts to the great Father's house. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Receivers and sons*:—I. BELIEVING IS A RECEIVING OF CHRIST. 1. Under what notion should we receive Christ? As our Mediator. (Isa. lxi. 3–4). (1) Our Prophet, receiving His doctrine as delivered by Himself (Heb. i. 2; ii. 2, 3); by His prophets and apostles (Heb. i. 1; Matt. x. 40); by His ministers (2 Cor. v. 19, 20; Heb. iv. 11, 12). (2) Our Priest (Heb. vii. 23–26); and so we must believe —(*a*) His satisfaction for our sins (2 Cor. v. 21; Heb. ix. 28; 1 John ii. 2), to the justice and law of God (Gall. iii. 13); (*b*) His intercession for our souls (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24). (3) Our King (Psa. cx. 1, 9): so we must—(*a*) acknowledge His sovereignty (Matt. xxviii. 18); (*b*) obey His laws (Luke vi, 46; John xiv. 15); (*c*) submit to His penalties (Col. iii. 24, 25). 2. How should we receive Him? (1) Penitently (Acts ii. 36). (2) Willingly (Psa. cx. 3). (3) Affectionately (Luke xiv. 26). (4) Constantly (Rev. ii. 26). (5) Only (Acts. iv. 12). II. BELIEVERS ARE THE SONS OF GOD. 1. In what sense? Not by generation, but regeneration (John iii. 31). (1) Man lost the favour of God (Rom. v. 19). (2) The Son undertakes his redemption—(*a*) by becoming man; (*b*) by dying, whereby He purchases all believers to Himself, to be members of His body (1 Cor. vi. 20; Titus ii. 14); (*c*) and so from Himself the dead conveys His own spirit unto them (Titus iii. 5, 6). (3) The Spirit regenerates and makes them new creatures (2 Cor. v. 17). (4) Being new creatures, they are received into the favour of God (Rom. viii. 15), and made His sons (Rom. viii. 14). 2. With what privileges? (1) Privative. They are freed from the slavery of sin (Rom. vi. 14); from slavish fears (Rom. viii. 15); from the curse of the law (Gal. iii. 13). (2) Positive. (*a*) They have access to God (Gal. iv. 6). (*b*) They are interested in God's providence (Rom. viii. 28; 2 Cor. vi. 18). (*c*) They rejoice in God (Phil. iv. 4). (*d*) God rejoices over them (Zeph. iii. 17). (*e*) Their glorious inheritance is assured (Col. i. 12, 13). (*f*) This inheritance is witnessed to them here (Rom. viii. 16, 17), and sealed (Eph. iv. 30), whereof they now have the pledge (Eph. i. 13, 14). 3. How known? (1) By prayer (Gal. iv. 6). (2) Obedience (1 Pet. i. 14, 15). (3) Purity (2 John iii. 9). (4) Conformity to the Divine image (Rom. viii. 29). (5) Faith (Sol. iii. 26). USES. 1. See the honour of believers. 2. Live like the sons of God. (1) By despising the world. (2) By patiently enduring all chastisements (Heb. xii. 6–9. (3) By longing to come to your inheritance in heaven (Psa. xlii. 1, 2). (*Bishop Beveridge.*) *Faith and its attendant privileges*:—I. FAITH MAKES THE GRANDEST OF DISTINCTIONS AMONG MEN. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not"—that is one company; "but as many as received Him"—that is another. 1. There are many distinctions among men—rich and poor, governors and governed, teachers and taught. But these will pass away. The grand distinction, which will out-last all time, is that of faith or the want of faith. 2. This distinguishing faith is—(1) A receptive faith; one which accepts Christ by confiding, trusting, and depending on Him. (2) Faith in His name, as—(*a*) The Word: receiving His messages from the Father. (*b*) The Life: receiving His vitality in spirit. (*c*) The Light: seeing all things in the light of Christ. 3. This distinction is one which obliterates all others. If a chimney-sweep receives Christ, he is a child of God; so is an emperor—but not the one more than the other. II. FAITH OBTAINS THE GRANDEST OF ALL ENDOWMENTS. "Sons of God." 1. There is a distinction here between son and servant. The believer ceases to be a slave, and becomes a child; and yet he becomes a servant. Christ was first His Father's Son, and then His servant; so we, being sons, have the joy of serving our Father. 2. We are also sons by likeness—miniatures, and sometimes caricatures, yet resemblances. 3. We are sons, in having the privilege

of free access to our Father. III. FAITH IS THE EVIDENCE OF THE GRANDEST EXPERIENCE. Every believer is a regenerate man. It is of no use to attempt to mend the old nature. A man brought his gun to be repaired. The gunsmith told him it wanted a new stock, lock, and barrel. That looked like making a new one. You must begin *de novo*. Baptism cannot regenerate; nor blood, the natural way of birth; nor man's carnal will, nor his best will; but God, who, as the Creator, new-creates the soul. IV. FAITH RAISES THE BELIEVER TO THE NOBLEST CONCEIVABLE CONDITION. He is fitted to be a child of God. 1. Notice the inconceivable honour. All others pale before it. 2. The safety. 3. The happiness. 4. The duties. There is an old French proverb which says, "nobility obliges." There is an obligation on nobles. If you are a son of God, you must act like one. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith is receiving*:—It is the empty cup placed under the flowing stream; the penniless hand held out for the heavenly alms. (*Ibid.*) *Sonship more than adoption*:—The sonship is not effected in virtue of a mere act of adoption on the part of God. A child may be taken out of the family to which he originally belonged, and be planted in another; he may get a new name; he may be trained to forget that he had other birth; he may be made heir to great estates; he may be as dearly loved and as tenderly cared for as if he were own child to those who have adopted him: but the fact remains that he is really the child of another, and nature may prove too strong for the new bonds, and he may pine for his native home, and at length go back to it. The "sons of God," however, are sons by birth, for such is the significance of the word here used, having not only a new name and position, but also a new life. It is not simply that they are called sons; they are sons, partakers of the Divine nature, with a filial relationship, and a filial resemblance to the eternal God. The sonship is already established in fact and in principle, though it awaits its full manifestation hereafter (1 John iii. 1, 2). (*J. Calvoss, D.D.*) *Comfort for the dying*:—When Philip Melanchthon was dying, he said aloud and distinctly to his surrounding friends, "I have those words of John concerning the Son of God, my Lord Jesus Christ, before me continually: 'The world received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.'" (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *Receiving the light*:—Suppose you were in a dark room in the morning, the shutters closed and fastened, and only as much light coming through the chinks as made you aware it was day outside. And suppose you could say to a companion with you, "Let us open the windows, and let in the light." What would you think if he replied, "No, no; you must first put the darkness out, or the light will not enter"? You would laugh at his absurdity. Just so we cannot put sin out of our hearts to prepare for Christ's entering; we must open and take Him in, and sin will flee; fling the window open at once, and let Christ shine in. (*J. Edmond, D.D.*) *The honour of adoption*:—I have heard of some fine gentleman in London, dressed in all his best, walking out in the park. He had a poor old father who lived in the country, and who came up dressed in his rustic raiment to see his son. As the son was not at home when the father reached the house, he went into the park to find him. Now the fine gentleman did not absolutely disown his father, but he went out of the park at a pretty sharp trot, for fear anybody should say, "Who is that country fellow you were talking with?" He did not like to own his father, because he was a labourer. We could not thus wonder if the glorious Lord refused to own us. There is such a come-down from the loftiness of His holiness to the depth of our faultiness. But yet He has such love, such a manner of love, that He bestows upon us this honour, that we should be openly called the sons of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The treasure unreceived*:—A nobleman once gave a celebrated actress a Bible, telling her at the same time that there was a treasure in it. She, thinking he meant religion, laid the Bible aside. She died, and all she had was sold. The person who bought the Bible, on turning over its leaves, found a £500 note in it. Poor creature! had she read the book, she might not only have found the note, but the "pearl of great price." (*Sunday School Chronicle.*) *Christ must be received*:—There is dew in one flower and not in another, because one opens its cup and takes it in, while the other closes itself, and the drops run off. God rains His goodness and mercy as wide-spread as the dew, and if we lack them, it is because we will not open our hearts to receive them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Believing is receiving Christ*:—He comes to your door. He wants to get in. He knocks. He waits. Is not that wonderful? I was lately visiting that part of the country where our beloved Queen stays when she comes to Scotland. She visits among the poor. I saw some of the cottages to which she is in the habit

of going. In the house of one of her servants I saw her own likeness, and the likenesses of several of her family—all gifts from themselves. You say, What kindness! what condescension! And so it is. But what would you think if I told you—what I am glad I cannot tell you, for it would not be true—that when they saw the Queen coming, they locked their doors and pretended to be out, and kept her standing knocking at the door, refusing to let her in, though she came to speak kindly to them and to do them good? You would say, Surely the people must not be in their right mind. And yet that is just what King Jesus does—Queen Victoria's King. He comes to your door to bless you, to save you. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Most people keep Him out, and will not have anything to do with Him. They say, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." Opening the door to Him, saying, "Come in, Lord Jesus, come in"—taking Him to our heart, and only fearing lest He should ever go away again—is believing. The believing heart is the heart that has let in Jesus, and in which he dwells (Eph. iii. 17). (*J. H. Wilson.*) *Privileges of adoption:*—By adoption, God gives us—1. A new name (Numb. vi. 27; Rev. iii. 12). 2. A new nature (2 Pet. i. 4). Whom God adopts He anoints; whom He makes sons, He makes saints. 3. A new inheritance (Rom. viii. 17). When the Danish missionaries in India were translating a catechism, with some of the converted natives by their side, and when they came to a part where it was said of Christians that they were the sons of God, one of the natives, startled at so bold a saying, as he thought it, said, "It is too much; let us rather translate it, 'They shall be permitted to kiss His feet.'" *Adoption and justification:*—Justification is the act of God as a Judge, adoption as a Father. By the former we are discharged from condemnation, and accepted as righteous; by the latter, we are made the children of God and joint-heirs with Christ. By the one, we are taken into God's favour; by the other, into His family. Adoption may be looked upon as an appendage to justification, for it is by our being justified that we come to a right to all the honours and privileges of adoption. (*Dr. Guyse.*) **Which were born.**—*Three great negations:*—The children of God are born—I. NOT OF BLOOD. Grace does not run on the lines of nature. Many beautiful and graceful things do come by gentle and noble blood, but not this. It needs a very narrow field of observation to convince us that NO parent, however pious, can command the conversion of his children. Else why should there be in this world that bitterest spectacle of a pious parent's heart being broken by a wicked child! II. NOT OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH. The expression relates to any desire which, ruling in a man's mind, might be supposed to lead him to some act whereby he should become a child of God, and the idea is utterly repelled. Every one who is a subject of the grace of God is so first passively, that afterwards he may be so actively. He is first acted upon by a will and power without him, and then he acts out that will and manifests that power. III. NOT OF THE WILL OF MAN. Observe the steps. Not of parents, not of self, nor of any creature whatsoever. One man, indeed, may will the conversion of another; and if he clothe that will with prayer, if he offer that will with faith, and if he does all in his power to forward that will, God may give him that man's soul. But God never promises He will do this. A soul passes into the family of God and becomes an heir in the register of sons when he receives Christ, and only then. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The three negations illustrated:*—When it pleased God to bring Abraham and his family into covenant with Him, that family consisted of three classes of persons; first of all, there were his own children; secondly, there were those who were born of his men-servants and maid-servants; thirdly, there were those slaves, whom he purchased and adopted. All these three classes were admitted into covenant with God, by reason of their relation to Abraham. "Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, and circumcised them" (Gen. xvii. 23). Of these classes, Ishmael was born of blood, as being his own flesh and blood, as we say; those born of the flesh were the other children born in his house, not his own; and those born of the will of man were those who, having no right to his protection, being yet bought of his free will, acquired a right by purchase and adoption. To these three classes were the benefits of the first covenant confined. . . . The truth, which St. John here announces, is that to all who received the message of the Lord Jesus, all who believed on His Name and submitted to His ordinances, to all those He gave the same power, even to become sons of God (Gen. iii. 16, 17; Rom. v. 13). (*G. Cornish.*) *The being born of blood and of God considered:*—I. In their ANTAGONISM. II. In their essential DISTINCTION.

III. In their congenial CONNECTION. IV. In the MEDIATOR OF THEIR UNION. (*Lange.*) *The new, celestial, divine birth constitutes the true nobility of grace as contrasted with:*—I. The aristocracy of BIRTH. II. The aristocracy of MONEY. III. The aristocracy of MERIT. IV. The aristocracy of FAME. (*P. Schaff, D.D.*) *Not of blood:*—The blood through which the chyle is distributed to the different parts of the body is the seat of life, hence the connection between child and parents is called blood relationship; and in classic usage also we have the expression "to spring from the blood"—that is, from the seed of any one (Acts xvii. 26). (*Tholuck.*) *Not of the will of man:*—According to the teaching of some men, how is it? "I am a minister of God—I am a man—as a man I may will to take a child and baptize it, and I may will to baptize it by a certain hour of the clock; and just as I am going to baptize it, I may will to put it off till to-morrow; and when to-morrow comes, I may will that I will not baptize that child at all—for if baptized, the child may die. And so, according to the caprice of my will, the child is baptized at this hour, or at that, to-day, or to-morrow, or it is not baptized at all; and therefore, following the caprice of my will, and just according to my will, the child is inevitably a child of God at this time of the clock, or at that time of the clock—to-day, or to-morrow, or the next day, or never at all." What, I ask, is this but to be "born of the will of man"? (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The simultaneity of faith and regeneration:*—We must be careful that we do not interpet the words "which were born" as if the new birth was a change which takes place in a man after he has believed in Christ, and is the next step after faith. Saving faith and regeneration are inseparable. The moment that a man really believes in Christ, however feebly, he is born of God. The weakness of his faith may make him unconscious of the change, just as a new-born infant knows little or nothing about itself. Bnt where there is faith there is always new birth, and where there is no faith there is no regeneration. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *The spirituality of religion:*—This verse is most emphatically in the style of John. Never can he lose sight of the perfect spirituality of Jesus Christ's work. John shows the very religiousness of religion. Christianity is to him more than a history, more than an argument, more than a theology—it is a spiritual revelation to the spiritual nature of man. On the part of man it is to be not an attitude, but a life—the very mystery of his spirit, too subtle for analysis, too strong for repression, too divine to be tolerant of corruption. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The higher generation:*—The result of receiving Him remains to be explained. How could they become "sons of God"? The word which has been used (ver. 12) excludes the idea of adoption, and asserts the natural relation of child to father. The nation claimed this through its descent from Abraham. But they are Abraham's children who are of Abraham's faith. There is a higher generation, which is spiritual, while they thought only of the lower, which is physical. The condition is the submissive receptivity of the human spirit. The origin of life is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*)

Ver. 14. **The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.**—*The God-Man satisfying the desire of humanity:*—I. THE DESIRE. The desire of a Saviour had attained its maturity in the period of universal decline which preceded the Advent. This desire was a prophecy of its own satisfaction because inspired, nourished and developed by the God to whom the heart addresses itself. A child is born called Jesus whose name announces all that He came to do. What do men say about Him? 1. That He is a fabulous symbol of that union of man with God realized in the development of reason. But if this be the case why has man desired one outside of his own reason? What meaning is there in the history of religions. 2. That He was a great social reformer. But His gospel is profoundly spiritual and traces all external reform to inward moral renovation. But is man's heart satisfied with the idea of a social reformer? Had Christ swept away every social abuse and satisfied every national need, the human heart would still have yearned for a Saviour. 3. That He was a philosopher, the Socrates of Jerusalem. But man does not need such. The ancient world had more than it required. It had the greatest and purest of sages, but found no rest in their schools. Man desires something higher, shall his Christ then be—4. A prophet? Prophets will not avail, for the greatest have most ardently desired a Saviour and were but men. 5. An angel? No, or Mary would have seen Him in Gabriel. Angels could celebrate His birth but not take His place. Turning now to the desire we shall see that man's cry has been for a God-Man. Two well-defined sentiments enter with it.

1. The hope of finding God. For this alone has man passed from one religion to another. (1) This God not the inert and isolated God of philosophy, lost in the solitudes of heaven: but (2) a living, present God. 2. The sorrow of condemnation. Man longs to appease a justly offended God. He therefore offers sacrifice, the produce of his fields, the first-born of his flocks, nay, his child, his brother. But it avails nothing. A sacrifice must be found that is both pure and human. For many ages man has sighed for an incarnation in order to redeeming sacrifice. This is what has been promised. Ancient prophecy recognized in the Messiah's person the man and the God, the Victim and the King. II. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE DESIRE. "The Word was made flesh." 1. What is this but that before He existed in God as a personal being. Had the Word been a Divine virtue or influence, it would had in it nothing special or distinctive, and therefore could have been no Saviour. Nor could it have communicated the knowledge of the true God. "God is love." A God who did not love would be a God dead. But how should God be from all eternity, a God of love, if He had no object for His love? Where, then, will you find this object if not in that Word which is God, and yet is distinct from Him. The Son gives us the Father. 2. He shows us the living nature of God's revelations. A perfect revelation of the living and eternal God is living and eternal as Himself: the express image of the Father. Each utterance has life like the Word Himself. God has spoken (1) In Eternity, and His Word is His only Son, (2) In Time, and Creation was the echo of the Word. (3) In Revelation, and each of the syllables of the Word was a fact of mystery. (4) In redemption and now the Word is made flesh. While giving full weight to His Divinity, let us not attenuate His humanity. The one is as necessary to our salvation as the other. By being Man and yet one with the Father, He was able to consummate on the cross His redeeming sacrifice, drawing the heart of man to God and the heart of God to man. III. THE PROOFS OF THIS DOCTRINE. 1. The history of Jesus shows us Divinity and humanity united in His person. His personal humiliation from the manger to the cross side by side with the glory of His morals and perfect character. 2. Jesus was conscious of and professed His union. He speaks of Himself as the Son of Man and the Son of God; and insisted on His oneness with the Father. 3. The apostolic Church confirmed this doctrine, proclaiming His Divinity and worshipping Him. IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DOCTRINE. Christianity stands or falls with it. 1. For whose sake do the impugners of the doctrine deny it? (1) For the sake of God? But the Deist gives us instead of the living, consummate God an abstract and distant Divinity. We don't know where to find Him, and He has never dried a single tear nor gladdened a heart. Thus God is libelled and His cause compromised. (2) For the sake of man? But man has desired this God-Man: He only has blessed the race. 2. If what the impugners say is true, Christianity is an imposture and Christ a deceiver. And yet He is admitted to be the noblest of Beings. Let these considerations be weighed. V. CHRISTIANS ARE ENTRUSTED WITH THIS DOCTRINE. Let it not slumber in creeds, but be preserved in a living faith and communion. (*E. de Pressense, D.D.*) *Bethlehem and its good news*:—1. There was nothing great about Bethlehem (Micah v. 2). It was but a shepherd village or small town, yet here the great purpose of God became a fact. It is in facts that God's purposes come to us that we may take hold of them as realities. The city is poor, but its lowliness makes it more suitable as the birthplace of Him who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. And all about it seems to suit Him. It is "the house of bread," fit dwelling for Him who is the Bread of God: Ephratah "the fruitful," as if pointing to the fruitful One. 2. It is not named in the text; but you cannot read the latter without being transported to it. 3. At Bethlehem our world's history began, for His birth has influenced all history, sacred and secular, before and behind. As regards our text, let us see—I. WHAT IT IS. Christ, Immanuel, Jesus, are our Lord's names in time; but "Word" and "Son" are expressive of His eternal standing. The inaccessable Godhead becomes approachable, the incomprehensible, comprehensible. All the nations of the earth God hath made of one blood, and of that one blood the Word was made partaker. Thus Bethlehem becomes a link between heaven and earth. God and man must meet here and look each other in the face. II. WHAT IT TEACHES. God's thoughts of peace. The message is a decided but not a finished one. You must associate Bethlehem with Calvary. 1. Would you learn the way to God? Go to Bethlehem: the Infant in the manger is the way. 2. Would you learn the vanity of earth? Go to yon manger where the Lord of Glory lies. 3. Would you have a safeguard against worldliness and

sin and error? Keep the child's companionship. 4. Would you learn to be humble? Go to Bethlehem; there the Highest is lowest. 5. Would you learn self-denial? See the Word made flesh. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Why God became Man*:—This Gospel contains no record of the Nativity like the others. They record the fact, this the underlying principle of the fact. Unless you take John's point of view, you cannot understand Luke's story. I. THE FACT ITSELF. Three things: 1. The Word: personal, eternal, Divine, the active energy of the Divine Nature. (1) The Author of creation. (2) The Source of all life and light. (3) The medium of all revelation. 2. With the audacity which is the true work of Divine revelation, the text draws together the two discordant ideas "Word" and "flesh"; not this tremulous, feeble, mortal body with its needs, weaknesses, pains, desires, corruption, not the whole humanity, body, soul, spirit, the entire sweep and range of what a man is. 3. How He "became" it; which involves the willing transformation, by the energy of the Person Himself. Became—not assumed. It was not a transcient manifestation such as the Buddhist incarnation or Hindoo avatar; not God coming down in the likeness of men for a moment or two; but so becoming us, He ceased to be the Word. So the living heart of Christianity is supernatural. That round which it turns is the biggest of all miracles, and if you take that all the rest is natural. II. THE VARIOUS PURPOSES WHICH THIS MIGHTIEST OF ALL MIRACLES SERVES IN THE WORLD. Here is a five-fold star, with five rays. 1. To show God. As the Shekinah glory abode in the Tabernacle, so God tabernacled in Christ's flesh. Christ shows God as He was never seen before, full of grace and truth. The mightiest and brightest light that makes God known, is that of gentleness, tenderness, self-oblivion, patience. If you want to know God, and not to guess Him, not to shrink from Him, and not merely to see the fringe of brightness about the Infinite heart, you must turn away from everything else to Christ. 2. To show what man ought to be. How perfect Christ's example is we may gather from the admission of enemies, from our own hearts and consciences. Instead of being handed over to a mere law "Do this and live," it means "Do as I do, because I love you and you love Me." 3. That He might die. You cannot understand Christmas without Good Friday, the meaning of the cradle unless we see the shadow of the Cross. Christ came to bear our sins that we might be born again unto newness of life. 4. That He might have sympathy with us. He has trodden all the road before us, and is near us to help us on. 5. That manhood might be glorified. He has stooped down that thereby He might befit us to be like Him. Where He is, He will lead us. What He is, He will make us. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The incarnation*:—I. THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD PLAINLY ASSERTED. 1. THE PERSON ASSUMING. The Word, *i.e.*, the second Person in the most glorious Godhead, called the Word, either because He is the Scope and principal Matter, both of prophetical and promissory Word; or because He expounds and reveals the mind and will of God to men (ver. 18). 2. THE NATURE ASSUMED flesh, *i.e.*, the entire human nature, consisting of a true human soul and body (Rom. iii. 20; Gen. vi. 12). The word flesh is rather used here than man, on purpose to enhance the admirable condescension and abasement of Christ; there being more of vileness, weakness, and opposition to Spirit in this word than in that, as is pertinently noted by some. Hence the whole nature is denominated by that part, and called flesh. 3. THE ASSUMPTION ITSELF. Not *fuit*, He was (as Socinus would render it, designing thereby to overthrow the existence of Christ's glorified body now in heaven) but *factus est*, it was made, *i.e.*, He took or assumed the true human nature into the unity of His Divine Person, with all its integral parts and essential properties, and so was made or became a true and real Man by that assumption. The Apostle, speaking of the same act (Heb. ii. 16), uses another word, fitly rendered "He took on Him," or He assumed: which assuming, though inchoative, it was the work of the whole Trinity, God the Father, in the Son, by the Spirit, forming or creatiug that nature; as if three sisters should make a garment betwixt them, which only one of them wears; yet terminative, it was the act of the Son only; it was He only that was made flesh. And when it is said, He was made flesh, misconceive not, as if there was a mutation of the Godhead into flesh; for this was performed, not by changing what He was, but by assuming what He was not. As when the Scripture, in a like expression, saith, He was made sin (2 Cor. v. 21), and made a curse (Gal. iii. 13), the meaning is not that He was turned into sin, or into a curse; no more may we think here the Godhead was turned into flesh, and lost its own Being and nature, because it is said He was made flesh. II. THIS ASSERTION STRONGLY CONFIRMED. He dwelt among us, and we saw His glory. This was

no phantasm, but a most real and dubitable thing. For He pitched His tent or tabernacled with us. And we are eye-witnesses of it (1 John i. 1, 2, 3). (*J. Flavel*). *The Incarnation*:—I. CHRIST'S HUMILIATION. He took the whole nature of man. 1. That He might suffer. 2. That He might obey the law of God in the nature that had broken the Law. 3. That He might die. He could not have died without a body. He could not suffer death while in His Father's bosom. 4. That He might sympathise with men (Heb. ii. 17). II. CHRIST'S CONDESCENSION. "He tabernacled," as in a tent. He lived on earth for a time, just as a man might live. The word is used particularly—1. As a reference to the tabernacle of old. This was a meeting place between God and His people. Such was Christ. Through Him a just God can meet the sinner. 2. It intimates His condition. A tent is an inferior dwelling to a house or a palace. Christ went about from place to place, and had not where to lay His head. He was dependent upon others for His rest and food. 3. It sanctifies affliction. No one need be ashamed of his poverty, since Christ was poor. III. CHRIST'S GLORY. Amid all His humiliation, His glory burst forth and manifested itself—"We beheld," &c. Clad as our Saviour was in the garments of a man, it was impossible entirely to veil His higher nature. Neither was it advisable. It was necessary that the world should know that He was God. His Divine glory was constantly manifesting itself—when the star led the wise men—when He taught the doctors in the Temple—when He healed the sick and raised the dead. But the chief glory was only visible to spiritual eyes. 1. Divine wisdom. The world considered His wisdom to be folly. It was not His outward manifestation, not His miracles or acts, but the plan of salvation, and the scheme He accomplished when He said, "It is finished." 2. Divine love. There is more glory in the love of God than in all the universe of material creation. This can only be discerned by the eye of faith. When a sinner is brought to find peace, he realises the glory of Christ. We have seen. Have you seen? IV. CHRIST'S FULNESS. "Full of grace and truth." Hence His glory need not deter us from coming to Him. 1. Full of grace, *i.e.*, He is easy to approach, merciful, loving, gracious, in aspect and nature. 2. Full of truth. Himself the truth. Hence we have a firm foundation for our faith. All Christ does is true. His pardon is a true pardon. His promises are true, &c. (*Preacher's Analyist*). *The necessity of the Incarnation*:—I. THAT MAN MAY POSSESS A FULL AND FAITHFUL REVELATION OF GOD'S CHARACTER. Jesus became a medium through whom the dazzling attributes of Deity were modified, and a focus in whom the infinite perfections of Diety were centred. II. THAT THERE MAY BE A PERFECT EXAMPLE. Precept will often fail, when example will succeed. Christ was made like His brethren that they might be stimulated to be like God. III. THAT AN ATONEMENT MAY BE MADE FOR SIN, AND MAN RECONCILED TO GOD. IV. THAT MAN MAY HAVE A SYMPATHETIC AND POWERFUL MEDIATOR at the right hand of God. Conclusion: Jesus is a perfect Saviour—perfect in His power to save, being able to save to the uttermost; perfect in His willingness to save, declaring that whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out; perfect in His sympathy, knowing our frame, remembering that we are dust, and declaring that He will carry the lambs in His arm, and deal with peculiar kindness with those in special trials; perfect in His wisdom, knowing His sheep and knowing the way that they take; perfect in His faithfulness, being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and promising never to leave nor forsake His own disciples. He is a perfect Saviour because in Him dwelt and dwells the fulness of the Godhead. (*J. H. Hitchens, D.D.*) *The purpose of the Incarnation*:—I. THE DIGNIFIED CHARACTER WHO WAS MADE FLESH. 1. The Word partakes of the same nature and perfections as the Father and Spirit. (1) Eternity (Micah v. 2). (2) Omniscience (John xxi. 17). (3) Omnipresence (Matt. xxviii. 20). (4) Immutability (Heb. xiii. 8). 2. This dignified Person was made flesh. (1) He had a true body, not merely the appearance of one. (2) He had a reasonable soul. (3) All the Persons of the Trinity were concerned in His Incarnation. The Father prepared His body; the Spirit formed it; the Son assumed it. 3. He dwelt among us—(1) Performing the most astonishing miracles; (2) Preaching the most interesting truths; (3) Living the most holy life. II. SOME REASONS WHY THE SAVIOUR BECAME INCARNATE 1. That ancient prophecy might be fulfilled (Gen. iii. 15; Deut. xviii, 15; Isa. ix. 6; &c.). 2. That the glorious perfections of Deity might be displayed—the glory of God's infinite wisdom, almighty power, unspotted purity, inflexible justice, boundless compassion, inviolable truth. Hence angels and men combine in singing "Glory to God in the highest." 3. That captive sinners might be redeemed. (1) By nature man is a spiritual slave. (2) Christ

become incarnate to redeem him from—(*a*) Sin. "Sin shall have no more dominion, &c." (*b*) Satan. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet." (*c*) The world. "This is the victory, &c." (*d*) Wrath. "Who hath delivered us from the wrath to come." (3) Jesus redeems us by His blood (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). (4) In the day of conversion, the believer experiences His redemption. (5) Christ redeems us to His image, His grace, His heaven (Psa. lxxxvi. 11). 4. That the righteous law of heaven might be honoured. 5. That the empire of Satan might be ruined. 6. That the gates of paradise might be opened. We learn the amazing condescension of the Saviour. Consider—(1) From whence He came; (2) To whom; (3) The circumstances in which; (4) Why. (*T. Lewis.*) *The double Incarnation; or, the soul's Christmas* (text in conjunction with Eph. iii. 17):—There are two births of Christ—one unto the world, the other into the soul. Men think more of the former than of the latter and celebrate it every year; but the latter is equally momentous. The soul has its births; the rising into conscious existence of every latent sentiment, filial, connubial, parental, Christian. I. The ANALOGY between those two Incarnations. 1. Both result from Divine interposition. 2. Both create great epochs; the temporal advent was the crisis of history. The B.C. meets in it, the A.D. starts from it. And from the Spiritual advent all after life takes its date and derives its impulse. 3. Both awaken antagonism, the former Herod's hostility, &c., the latter that of the depraved nature. 4. Both are manifestations of God. II. THE DISSIMILARITY. 1. The one may become a curse to man, the other must be a blessing. Nothing so terrible to a lost soul as the former. It aggravates the world's guilt and augments its responsibility. The latter brings sunshine to the soul and ever advancing blessedness. 2. The one occurred without man's choice, the other requires his seeking. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The great birthday*:—Christmas day is the greatest birthday of the year. I. It is THE BIRTHDAY OF CHRIST. The greatest man, teacher, benefactor, but immeasurably more than this. Men have misconceived and misstated the Incarnation; that two persons were united in Christ instead of two natures in His single person; that the infinite Being was confined within the finate nature which He assumed; that God ceased to be really Himself; that human nature was annihilated by its union with Deity. It was inevitable that the possibility of the Incarnation should be questioned; but what is man but a sample, at an immeasurably lower level of a union of two totally different substances, one material, the other immaterial, under the control of a single human personality? As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. And He who could bring together matter and spirit in man might surely raise both matter and spirit to union with His own Divinity under the control of His eternal Person. But what moved God to unite Himself with a creative form? Is not such an innovation on the association, if not on the conditions of His Eternal Being? Yes, but so was Creation, and Creation involved possibilities which led to much else beyond. It involved the possibility of the fall. And then as God must have created out of love, so out of love He must bring a remedy to the ruined creature. Of other remedies nothing has been told us, but we know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. II. THE BIRTHDAY OF HUMAN GREATNESS. Man has alternately depreciated and exaggerated His importance. Just now the deprivatory account is the popular one. It is no longer possible; we are reminded to think of this earth as the centre for whose benefit all else exists. It is only a small satellite of the sun while the sun is but one of thousands of stars which are moving round some undiscovered centre. The insignificance of man's dwelling-place involves its own insignificance. And this impression is deepened by the vicissitudes to which men are exposed, and the cheapness of human life. But apart from Christianity nature also opens out another side to the matter. When we look at any one man, however feeble and worthless, we become conscious of his having some title to a profound and anxious interest. Here is a man who, before he became a criminal, threaded his way unnoticed through the crowd; but put upon his trial for his life he becomes a centre of universal interest. Why, if he is only an animal, should the question of his life be followed more anxiously than that of an ox or a sheep? Men are thus moved because a destiny is being weighed in the balance and at such moments the depreciatory theory of man's nature and origin gives way. The poor prisoner in the dock represents the ineffaceable, indestructible greatness of man. Still men's judgment about himself rises and falls with the varying circumstances of his life and modes of his mind. Left to himself he has no solid ground of confidence in any estimate he may form. To discover the greatness of his need and capacities,

he requires some standard utterly independent of himself. Such he finds in the Incarnation which, uniting, his nature to that of the Being who made Him, restores to man his self-respect, and makes him feel his moral poverty without God and his utter dependence upon Him. Think of our Lord's life from this point of view, of putting such high and exceptional honour on our nature. The moral beauty of which mankind is capable appeared in Jesus as it never appeared before or since. But we can only surrender ourselves to its power when we admit that it is the life of the Word made flesh. A man might have uttered the Beatitudes, but as mere man, being modest and truthful, could have said, "I and my Father are one." All, however, fall into place if He is the God-Man. Embrace this truth and it is not hard to understand how His death on Calvary availed for the world's redemption. Nor does it matter that His life was lived on a small planet. Since the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, the vastest stars and suns have no more claim, on account of their size, to His regard. When He became man to elevate and redeem the human family He chose the scene where the Divine work would be best achieved. III. THE BIRTHDAY OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD. At the manger of Bethlehem we may dare to look forward to that union of human love, of human hearts, of which the noblest of our race have ever dreamed, a brotherhood sometimes recommended as abstract argument, sometimes dictated by revolutionary terrorism, but which, to be genuine, must be a perfectly free movement of human hearts and wills drawn towards each other by supreme attraction. That attraction we find in the Divine child of Bethlehem, born that He might regenerate the world, and all the courtesies and kindnesses of Christmas between families, households, rich and poor, old and young, are rightly done in His honour who came to unite us to each other in union with Himself. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The relation of the Incarnation to modern problems*:—I. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD. The soundest, shortest argument for the Being of God is Christ. God is in nature; but nature is dumb. "No speech, no language, their voice is not heard." But in the Word God has spoken. The Incarnation teaches Theism by teaching us more than Theism. God is something more than the constructor of this curious clock. What comfort do we get from the conception of an infinite brain? Add the Incarnation to Theism and we have peace, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." But does not my own nature teach me that God is good? Yes, but Christ corroborates the testimony of our moral nature. The avatars of India and the Apotheoses of Greece are only efforts of the mind to anticipate this great doctrine of Christianity. The sense of guilt and longing for reconciliation may have produced these myths. But that does not prove that the subjective state was a superstition. The ability to appeal to the historic facts concerning the life of our Lord is the strongest confirmation of the truth of our religious instincts. We can proceed by way of philosophy and prove our need of a Saviour, and by way of history prove the fact of a Saviour who reveals the nature and fatherhood of God. II. TO THE IRRELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF THE AGE. That is marked by a tone of serious, disheartened scepticism. Yet the Positivist tries to keep his religion after he has denied his God. What he teaches as a substitute for the Gospel is taught by the Gospel itself, is the only form in which it is worthy of a moment's consideration. If he would worship an ideal humanity, he must take Christ. If he would see an example of "altruism" he must take Christ's atonement. But infidelity must go back to Christ or forward to despair. When a man has discarded the eternal hope in Christ it is not strange that he should ask "Is life worth living?" Christ or Pessimism, the gospel of hope or the gospel of despair, salvation or suicide are the sharp antitheses presented by modern thought. III. TO APOLOGETICS. Applying to Scripture the argument of design, we conclude that it was constructed on a plan which must have existed in a single mind before it was executed in the progressive publication of the separate books. The Incarnation gives to the Bible its unity. The Old Testament is a congruous body of doctrine culminating in Christ; the New Testament is a coherent body of doctrine culminating around the Person of Christ. The doctrine is woven in the very texture of the sacred books. How did this happen? The advanced thinkers will not ask us to believe that organisms grow by chance. The intelligence that built the world, made the Bible. IV. TO THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE. The paradox of the Bible is the severity with which God looks on sin, and the tenderness with which He regards the sinner. Is there any way in which this dual relationship can be brought into conspicuous pre-eminence? Yes; the Incarnation is God's testimony to His love for man and to His respect for law. He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The atonement is

therefore based upon the Incarnation. Advanced thought a short time since founded the hope of the universal forgiveness on the fatherhood of God. Now it preaches that man is under law to an extent which makes it idle to speak of forgiveness. Sin and suffering are inseparable, they say, and thus those who preached a gospel of love without law, now preach a gospel of law without love. Liberalism does not know how to reconcile these ideas, and by rejecting the Incarnation has rejected the only method of reconciliation. V. To RELIGIOUS COMMUNION. A man may be a Christian who does not accept all the doctrines of the creeds. It is equally clear that a man who denies all cannot be invited to the Lord's table. Where then shall we draw the line? Here. The acceptance of this doctrine draws towards Christ; its rejection separates from Him by an impassable gulf? The man who worships the Lord Jesus as God, and gives Him the homage of his heart is a Christian, although he may not accept the Athanasian statement. The same principle determines our relations with Romanism. It is not necessary to abate any of our antipathy to her errors, but a church must not be refused a place in Christendom which holds the Incarnation and related doctrines. VI. To THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION. Any religion which is to take permanent hold upon the world must offer a theory of the universe and tell me whence I am and whither I am going; must prescribe a code and teach morality; must stir the emotions and take hold of the heart; Christianity unites these three ideas in the Incarnation. VII. To PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE. The incarnate life of Christ stands in close relation to the development of Christian character. That development is gradual, and is concurrent with the study of Christ. And to study Him is to know that He is Divine. If we study the great principles which constitute His doctrine we hear the voice of one who spake as never man spake. So comprehensively, so minutely, so influentially. If we study His example there is that which proclaims His Divine perfections, and yet His human, helpful, imitable brotherhood. VIII. To CHRISTIAN WORK IN RELATION TO THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD. The book of Acts is the second volume of the life of Christ, the first being an account of all Jesus "began." The Incarnation, then, was but the beginning of a great career which is still in progress. It is Christ who is still doing the evangelization of the world. This is the only true basis of missionary confidence, and the continuously fulfilling prophecy of the final victory. IX. To MAN'S PLACE IS THE SCALE OF BEING: correcting the depreciation of man by science and the exaggerated dignity conferred upon him by Pantheism. He is neither an insignificant atom nor God. The Incarnation shows his reconciliation, not identity with God, and his glorious and elect creatureship. X. To THE PURPOSES OF GOD. We know not what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Him. And He is the same to day, yesterday, and for ever. The perpetuity of Christ's human nature is the guarantee of an immortalized personality. And our individual interest in Jesus will not prevent us sharing the enthusiasm we may rightly feel concerning the destiny of His Church. The marriage of God and man eighteen hundred years ago is but the prophecy of a day when the bells of heaven shall ring in the nuptials of a ransomed Church with her royal spouse. (*Prof. Patton.*) *An argument for the Incarnation:*—Millions throughout the world hail the annual return of Christmas not because of its festivities, but because it commemorates the birth of Jesus. Class Jesus, as some do, with Plato and Shakespeare, and He would receive no more honour than they. This exuberance of feeling is due to the belief that He is divine. Whence does this belief spring? From the Scriptures. But all people do not accept the Bible; we have therefore to move along other lines of argument. And Christians may find their faith strengthened by finding the conclusions reached by the Bible arrived at by other roads. I. AN INCARNATION OF GOD IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE. No doubt it involves a miracle. The process by which the two natures were united in one person is wholly mysterious. But so is that by which spirit and matter, mind and body combine in man. But if the one is not impossible, why the other? We are not now dealing with the limited powers of men but with the omnipotence of God; and what the Almighty chooses in His wisdom to do, even if it be to assume a human form, He can do. II. AN INCARNATION OF GOD IS NOT IMPROBABLE. 1. It has always been expected and desired, and the expectation has been expressed in every possible way—in fable, philosophy, religion. 2. This instinct is natural. Man cannot be satisfied with the manifestations of God in nature. They leave the soul with vague, restless desires after a more perfect acquaintance. At best they give a God for philosophers, for the intellect, not one who has influence over life moulding

and fashioning the heart. 3. These two facts point to an incarnation. For who created the desire? God Himself. And shall He who creates the capacity leave it unsatisfied? III. THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF CHRIST CAN ONLY BE EXPLAINED ON THE GROUND THAT HE, THE WORD MADE FLESH, IS THE SATISFACTION FOR THIS DESIRE. You cannot understand the account of His life unless you recognize His Godhead and manhood. 1. He is the only perfect Man who has ever trod this earth. This is the confession of friends and foes of His own day and ours. How is this to be accounted for? Not by surrounding influences. There was nothing in His age, home, or contemporaries calculated to produce a perfect man. 2. All His actions and words are in harmony with the idea that He was the Word made flesh. His wonderful birth is succeeded by a wonderful life. (*W. Braden.*) *The relations of the Incarnation*:—I. The Incarnation in relation to MAN. 1. It shows the dignity of the human body. The material part of our nature has been maligned in every age; but ever since the incarnation it has been respected more and more. "Matter is essentially evil," said the Greek philosopher. "Whoso layeth his hand on a human body toucheth heaven," said Novalis and Carlyle. The incarnation took place between these utterances. 2. It shows the dignity of the human soul in the human body—of human nature in its totality. 3. Linking man to God it removed the antithesis between them. Something more was requisite to remove the antagonism, even the atonement. Prior to the Incarnation a wide gap divided the Creator from His creation, but the Incarnation filled it up, and did away with the antithesis. There is now not a single break in the chain of existence. From the tiniest atom to Absolute Being there is one continuous ascent. II. The Incarnation in relation to GOD. It is a revelation of God. 1. It reveals the plurality of persons in the Divine essence. This truth is the exclusive property of the Church of the New Testament because the Incarnation is its exclusive property. The Holy Trinity existed previously, and dim prefigurations of the doctrine are noticeable in the Old Testament. But the doctrine would never have been fully apprehended but for the historic reality. 2. The Incarnation reveals the Fatherhood of God. "The glory as of the only Begotten." Deny the Incarnation and you deny the deepest Divine Fatherhood. It reveals the intrinsic Fatherhood. It shows us a Son, not by creation in time, but by generation in eternity, and consequently shows us a Father, not in virtue of His creative, but of His generative energies. By the side of this all other fatherhoods are types and figures. 3. The Incarnation reveals the redeeming character of God. Deny the Incarnation, and you have no positive proof of the Divine love; believe it, and you can never desire a higher proof. He gave His only begotten son; what more could He do? (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The significance of the Incarnation*:—There was an end sought; by what means should it be reached? There was a tremendous necessity; how should it be met? There was an infinitely gracious wonder to be wrought; in what wondrous way should it be accomplished? This was the problem. Conjectures as to its solution only serve to show that the way taken was the only way. 1. Almighty compulsion would have crushed human freedom, put human virtue aside, turned grace into magic. 2. Moral influence or persuasion would have left man's past disobedience uncancelled, the sanctities of law despised, authority abolished by Him in whom it was established. At best there would have been an invertebrate manhood, a molluscous morality. 3. Voices of audible command or promise spoken perpetually from heaven to earth would have formed a revelation as grotesque as ineffectual. 4. Written communications must have been subject to manifold hindrances and limitations as an agency of salvation, as was shown when they were actually employed. 5. A redemption by sacrifice must depend on the value of the victim sacrificed; human sacrifices would contravene all the teachings of the Divine economy touching the sanctity of human life, and of the insufficiency of the sacrifice of brutes, apart from their typical sense, the religious history of the world affords abundant evidence. We look, then, as we are bidden to look, for the reuniting power between God and man, to the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. I. This appears in THE TWOFOLD FORM OF A FACT AND A PERSON, both being far more conclusive than any course of abstract reasoning in theodicy, or any theological demonstration. The fact and the person both take their place in the public scenery of events, in inspired Scriptures, in general history, in a line of great transactions inexplicable without them; and they have become imbedded in the experience and enshrined in the reverent and loving faith of millions of men through fifty generations. What is this fact? The life of God appears on the earth not only harmonized, but perfectly blended with the life of man. Humanity

begins again with a possibility and offer of a restoration which is salvation to all who will receive it. As the life of God is in Christ, we share in it by being united to Christ. He took our human nature. The Divine nature or life was not naturally ours—it was lost. We become "partakers" of it. Each individual believer in this covenant of grace, lives eternally. Abiding in the vine, the branch lives, grows, bears fruit. Here is the certainty of immortality. II. THE RELATION OF THE INCARNATION, THEN, TO THE BODY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE is not difficult to be determined. 1. It is the comprehensive truth of revelation. We may take any article of the Christian creed, except those which affirm or imply the unity of God and the natural depravity of men, and attempt to separate it from this supreme and central fact, and we fail. 2. As the doctrine is comprehensive, so it is distinctive. In the ancient ethnic religions, in the Gnostic theosophies and emanations of the East, as in modern Deism, Pantheism, and Positivism, there is nothing that can be mistaken for it. III. THE DOCTRINE OR THE FACT HOLDS A LIKE CENTRAL AND INCLUSIVE POSITION IN HOLY SCRIPTURE. There is a unity in the sacred writings, and that unity is the person of the Incarnate Word. The development of the kingdom of God among mankind follows naturally a historical method; and so Genesis comes first, with much afterwards, in the preparatory dispensations, before the birth of the Saviour. But the real "beginning," or genesis, is given in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John. From that radiant dayspring the light is reflected back to Eden, and shines forward to the Apocalypse. By this reading, innumerable difficulties, which have given superfluous trouble, disappear. The parts take their due proportions. IV. LOOKING ONWARD, WITH THIS WARRANT, FROM OUR LORD'S ASCENSION, WE SEE THE INTERIOR PRINCIPLE OF HIS KINGDOM as it is set up among the nations and expands along the ages. Christ not only watches His family from above, He dwells and works within it. His family is His body, and His body is His bride, and His bride is His Church; and He lives in the members. What began in the past eternity proceeds in the eternity to come, and to "the Word" there is but one eternity. We see our calling. What an inheritance! What privilege! What responsibilities! (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Why was the Incarnation delayed:*—Inasmuch as God is unchangeable, and the love exhibited in Bethlehem was in Him from days of old, I make bold to affirm that He embraced the first opportunity to work out the redemption of the race. What would be the use of sending earlier when the world was not prepared to receive Him? Jesus Christ is the joint product of heaven and earth; He is God and Man; hence the necessity for both to be ready. God was ready, the Son was ready. The earth was not ready. He had to wait till humanity should be ready. The mind of man had to be prepared. Were it a mere question of love or power, He could have been sent earlier; but as it was also a question of wisdom, He must not be sent at a period likely to defeat the end in view. God could not travel faster than the conditions of humanity admitted. He must suit His pace to the tottering steps of man. It took God longer time, perhaps greater pains, to beget Christ in the human mind than to beget Him in the Virgin's womb. Four thousand years were needed to accomplish the former; but the instant it was brought to pass, "God sent forth His Son into the world, made of a woman, made under the law." (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The difference between the Christian and the heathen incarnations:*—The Greek popular incarnations were, in the main, personifications of natural phenomena. When the court of Olympus was constituted, the conviction—universal among the Indo-European peoples—that the gods could not be strangers to men, made it natural to believe that they came down to earth from time to time. Aristotle's and Plato's triads again were simply psychological. These philosophers resolved the unity of the human personality into a triad of principles. The Hindu Trimurtti is a classification for religious purposes of the great natural processes of creation, preservation, and destruction; and the thought of incarnation is easily linked to the idea of Vishnu, as the Preserver uses the agency of heroes or great men to deliver the race from evils by which it would otherwise be overwhelmed. The Scripture Trinity, on the other hand, is a special revelation concerning the constitution of the Divine nature. The Incarnation is based upon the ultimate fact that God is love. If we regard Christianity as a philosophy, the doctrine of the Incarnation is its essence. If we regard Christianity, practically, as salvation for fallen man, the Incarnation is the secret of its exhaustless Divine power. (*Principal Grant.*) *Voluntary sympathy:*—One of the secrets of Victor Hugo's power over the French people was their memory of the following: When the disasters

of the Franco-German war were falling thickly, and the iron band was closing round Paris, word came that Victor Hugo was coming to the city. He came at the very moment that the investment was complete, with the last train, the last breath of free air. On the way he had seen the Bavarians, seen villages burned with petroleum, and he came to imprison himself in Paris. A memorable ovation was given him by the people, and they never forgot his voluntary sharing of their sufferings. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Christ clothed in human flesh*:—The pure Godhead is terrible to behold; we could not see it and live; but clothing Himself with our flesh, makes the Divine nature more amiable and delightful to us. Now we need not be afraid to look upon God, seeing Him through Christ's human nature. It was a custom of old among the shepherds, they were wont to clothe themselves with sheep-skins, to be more pleasing to the sheep; so Christ clothed Himself with our flesh, that the Divine nature may be more pleasing to us. The human nature is a glass, through which we may see the love and wisdom and glory of God clearly represented to us. Through the lantern of Christ's humanity, we may behold the light of the Deity shining. *God incarnate*:—"Christ did not gain one perfection more by becoming man, nor could He lose anything of what He possessed as God. The almightiness of God now moved in a human arm; the infinite love of God now beat in a human heart; the unbounded compassion of God to sinners now glistened in a human eye; God was love before; but Christ was now love, covered over with flesh." (*R. M'Cheyne.*) *The grand purpose of the Incarnation*:—Christ came down to the tabernacle of our nature which had broken down and become a ruin, and to raise it up and repair it, making it fit for the habitation of God by His own indwelling. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *The ideal fitness of the Incarnation*:—The Incarnation is not true, say the Unitarians. Then it is a great pity; certainly it deserves to be true. Deny it, and the universe loses its unity and integrity; it is despoiled of much of its grandeur and poetry. According to the orthodox view a continuous path stretches from the smallest particle of matter at the very bottom of creation right up and away to the sublimest heights of the Absolute and Unconditioned—all things gathered together in one in Christ. What a grand unity! The two hemispheres of being, the Infinite and finite, wedded in one glorious orb, which is now the "Light of the World!" In this sublime unity, effected in the Incarnation, is contained the fundamental truth of Pantheism without the grave and multiform errors thereof. Here the advocates of Pantheism will find all they want, the two factors, Infinite and finite, reduced into one. Instead of a God evolving the creation out of Himself, here is a God involving Himself in the creation. Instead of the doctrine of evolution, the one developing into the many, here is the doctrine of involution, the many gathered together in the one. The Unitarian doctrine, because ever confronted with a duality of being, belittles the creation, despoils it of its grandeur and divineness; and its meagreness and poverty are a testimony against its truth. What advantage, then, hath the orthodox faith? or what profit is there of the Incarnation? Much every way. It dignifies the human body, demonstrates the potentiality of human nature, and reduces the duality of being, finite and Infinite, into an adorable unity in the indivisible person of the blessed Saviour. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The beneficent inspirations of the Incarnation*:—It is often thrown in the face of believers in the Incarnation that we paint human nature in colours too black, that we recklessly and unduly disparage this creature of God. But surely they who fling this taunt in our face know not whereof they speak. True, we do cherish very humble views of it; but humble views are not low views. How can we, who believe the Godhead has found room enough in it to dwell in all His inexhaustible fulness, think low of it? The Incarnation shows us its grand potentialities, and throws upon it a thousandfold stronger light than Unitarianism possibly can. Believers in the Incarnation, therefore, burn with a quenchless desire to go and rescue poor, down-trodden, despised human nature in lands afar off. Only faith in the Incarnation can create missionaries. You demand a proof: I appeal to the story of missionary enterprise. Where is the roll of the missionaries of Unitarianism? "By their fruit ye shall know them"—systems as well as men, faiths as well as trees. (*Ibid.*) *Lessons of the Incarnation*:—The Incarnation of God in human form involves or foreshadows all the great truths of redemption. It teaches or implies—I. THAT THE CONDITION OF MAN IS A FEARFUL AND EVEN DESPERATE ONE. If sin were a trivial affair God would not have so humbled Himself. II. THAT GOD IN HIS LOVE HAS SENT DELIVERANCE. Nature does not disclose this manifestation of love. Christ incarnate shows that God has a place in His heart for the

guiltiest of men. III. THAT THE GOD-MAN WAS WILLING TO SUFFER FOR OUR SALVATION. God's beneficence has in it heart-sorrow and willingness to endure grief for love's sake. God gave His Son, but that Son was one in heart and mind with Himself. The hand that Jesus reaches down to rescue man is the hand of the Almighty. The stormy ages will be calmed only because a Divine voice has said "Peace be still." The theology taught by the Incarnation is the world's hope. (*J. H. Barrows, D.D.*) *The Hypostatic Union*:—I. ITS NATURE. There are three illustrious unions in Scripture. 1. That of three Persons in one God: essentially. 2. That of two distinct natures and persons by one spirit: mystically. 3. This of two distinct natures in one Person: hypostatically. For the more distinct management of this latter I shall speak of it—1. Negatively. When Christ assumed our nature it was—(1) Not united consubstantially as the Three Persons in the Godhead are united. They have but one and the same nature and will; but in Christ there are two natures and wills. (2) Nor physically as soul and body are united. Death dissolves that, but this is indissoluble. (3) Nor mystically, as Christ is united to believers; for they are not one person with Him. 2. Positively. The human nature was united to the Divine. (1) Miraculously (Luke i. 34, 35); which was necessary to exempt the assumed human nature from Adam's sin (Luke i. 15). For God can have no fellowship with sin, and had Christ been a sinner He could not have satisfied for the sins of others (Heb. vii. 26). (2) Integrally. Christ took a complete and perfect soul and body that He might heal the whole nature of that sin which had infected every member and faculty. (3) With all its sinless infirmities (Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15). (4) So that each nature retains its own essential properties distinct, and the two understandings, wills, powers, &c., the human and the Divine are not confounded as Eutyches held. (5) Inseparably. Although Christ's soul and body were divided at death, yet neither of them from the Divine nature. II. ITS EFFECTS. 1. By virtue of this union the properties of each nature are attributed to and agree in the whole Person; so that the Lord of glory was crucified (1 Cor. ii. 8), the blood of God redeemed the Church (Act xx. 28), and Christ is both in heaven and on earth (John iii. 13). Yet the properties of our nature are not imparted to the other, nor is it proper to say that the Divine nature suffered, or that the human was omniscient. But the properties of both natures are so ascribed to the one Person that it is proper to affirm any of them of Him in the concrete, though not abstractedly. 2. The singular advancement of Christ's human nature, it being hereby replenished with an unparalleled measure of Divine graces (Psa. xlv. 8), and so He becomes the object of worship (Acts vii. 59). 3. The concourse and co-operation of each nature to His mediatory works, for in them He acts according to both natures. The human doing what is human, suffering, dying, &c.; the Divine stamping all with infinite value (2 Cor. v. 19; Heb. ix. 14, 15). III. ITS GROUNDS AND REASONS. 1. The Divine did not assume the human necessarily but voluntarily; not out of indigence, but bounty; not because it was to be perfected by it, but to perfect it. 2. And so consequently to qualify and prepare Him for a full discharge of His Mediatorship. (1) As prophet; for as God He knows the mind and will of God (John i. 18; iii. 13); as man He is fitted to impart it to us (Deut. xviii. 15–18 cf. Acts iii. 22). (2) As priest; had He not been man He could have shed no blood; and if not God it had been no value, for us (Heb. ii. 17; Acts xx. 28). (3) As king, had He not been man He had been heterogeneous, and so no fit head for us, and if not God He could not rule or defend His body the Church. IV. ITS USES. 1. Let Christians inform themselves of this momentous trust, and hold it fast against subtle adversaries. 2. Adore the love of the Father and the Son who devised this method for your recovery (Phil. ii. 7; John iii. 16; Heb. ii. 16). 3. Infinite wisdom has here left an everlasting mark. 4. Infer the incomparable sweetness of Christianity that shows such a foundation for the sinner's hope. 5. Union with our natures is utterly vain without union with our persons. 6. If Jesus Christ has assumed our nature, then He is touched with and has pity for our infirmities (Heb. ii. 17, 18). 7. See to what a height God intends to build up the happiness of man in that He has laid the foundation so deep in the Incarnation of His Son. 8. How wonderful a comfort is it that He who dwells in our flesh is God. (*J. Flavel.*) *The Word made flesh*:—I. THE NAME BY WHICH OUR LORD IS DESCRIBED. 1. He was known by this name in the Jewish Church long before His advent. 2. He is so called because He comes forth from God like a word, a revealing medium from us. II. THE WONDERFUL ORDER OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE TOWARDS US. This is the mighty Being by whom the world and man was made. After man had

fallen He might have refused to repair the injury. But the new creation was to proceed from the same hand as the first. 1. The unsearchable love which showed itself at the beginning brought Him down again from His Father's bosom. 2. With wonderful condescension He came not as before in power and majesty, but in weakness and shame, in the likeness of the fallen creature whom it was His purpose to restore. III. THE INCARNATION as a mark of love and tenderness HAS SOMETHING STRIKING ABOUT IT and affecting to the heart. To have taken the nature of angels—to have appeared on earth in the pomp of majesty had been a humiliation. IV. BUT IT WAS IN THE FORM OF MAN THAT GOD'S COMMAND HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY DISHONOURED, AND THEREFORE CHRIST ASSUMED IT. 1. It might be inconsistent with the good of the denizens of the unseen world if their disobedience had been left unpunished. And yet, on the other hand, there was the love of God to His creatures. How reconcile justice and mercy? Thus the perfect obedience of the Second Adam atoned for the offence of the first and of His descendants. 2. But how merit this? For all creatures owe this obedience, even unfallen angels. In the Son of God alone could the necessary merit be found. 3. Wherefore when mediator there was none God answered for us: "a body hast Thou prepared Me," &c. 4. But men required something more, something to show them how to live and to make themselves ready for their pure inheritance. Therefore to furnish an example the Word was made flesh. V. JEHOVAH IS AWFUL IN HIS INEFFABLE PURITY, BUT THAT WE MIGHT HAVE COURAGE TO APPROACH HIM the Word was made flesh. VI. WE WANT SYMPATHY IN OUR WEAKNESS, INFIRMITIES, AND SORROWS; therefore that we may know that He can and does feel for us THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH. VII. THIS ASSUMPTION OF OUR BODY BY CHRIST IS A PLEDGE OF ITS RESURRECTION, and such being the case, how we ought to reverence it! VIII. IN THAT BODY CHRIST WILL RETURN. 1. Then the Christian will be like Him, for he will see Him as He is. 2. Then those who have rejected Him will meet their doom. (*J. Garbett, M.A.*) *The Word made flesh*:—I am thinking of a word. Do you know what it is? No, not until I have told you. But as soon as I say "John," then you know the word I was thinking of. You know it now because the word was made sound, and you caught it. Were I to write it you would know it, because the word would be made ink, and you see it. Something like that is what our text means. We could not tell what God's thoughts about us were until He showed us them in a way we could understand. And He let us know them by sending Jesus Christ into the world. He took a body like ours in order that we might know God's thoughts about us; and the more we know Jesus the more we know of God's mind. He is the Word; God's thought made flesh. But then we might see and hear a word and yet not understand it. Did you ever see a Hebrew book? The letters are little, thick, squarish things, with dots all over them, as if the pen had been sputtering when it was writing! Now you could see these words, but you could not understand them by yourself. How then do we come to know Hebrew? We get some person who knows Hebrew, but who also knows English, and he teaches us. He knows the Hebrew word, and he tells us in English what it means, and so we come to learn. It is the same with the Word made flesh—with Jesus. We may see Him, may read about Him, but before we can know Him we must get help from some one who knows Jesus Christ and also knows us. Who is that Teacher? He is the Holy Spirit. Till He teaches us we cannot know God's thoughts about us; we might see the words in the Bible, might see the Word made flesh, but yet not be able to understand their true meaning, any more than we could understand a foreign book till some one had taught us the language. (*T. R. Howat.*) *The Nativity*:—I. THE WORD. 1. There are some who say this name was given because so many excellent words of prophecy and promise, and all of Him, are spoken in this Book—the Word *objective*. 2. Because he disclosed all God's counsel—the Word *effective*. 3. Because He cometh as the Word to teach us—the Word *preceptive*. 4. These are all true, but short. He is the only-begotten of the Father. As the Son is to the Father, so is the Word to the mind. They proceed both. The Son refers to a living nature, the Word to an intellectual nature. There is in Him not only the nature, but the wisdom of the Father. The Word showeth the manner, the Son the truth of His proceeding. (1) With us the Son is begot by propagation; the Word therefore was requisite to show that His proceeding was not after a carnal manner. (2) But lest we should think that God's Word is no more to Him than ours is to us, we are told that He is "only-begotten," and so of the substance of His Father. II. FLESH and IN US is used—1. To express His union with human flesh fully. It is part for the whole. If He abhor not the flesh; of the spirit there will

be no question. 2. From the flesh came the beginning of transgression: so of all others least likely to be taken. The Word not refusing it, the rest have good hope. 3. Not man, a person; but flesh, our nature. 4. Flesh in Hebrew is the same for good tidings, suggesting that some incarnation should be good news for the world. Why the Word, flesh? (1) Surely, most kindly. The offended party was the Author of the reconciliation. (2) Most fit "all things were made by Him." He that built repaired. (3) Most in the way of justice, that He might make full amends for the flesh's fault. III. The Word WAS MADE flesh. 1. Made, as against. (1) Manicheus holding that he had no true body. (2) Made, not converted into flesh, as Cerenthus, nor the flesh converted into the Word as Valentinus. (3) Not made as friends are made, who continue two several persons still, and while the flesh suffered the Word stood by and looked on as Nestorius. (4) Not made by compounding, and so a third thing produced of both, as Eutyches. 2. But by taking the seed of Abraham. His generation eternal as the Word of God is as the inditing of the Word within the heart. His generation in time, the Word made flesh, is as the uttering it forth with the voice. The inward motion of the mind taketh into it a natural body of air, and so becometh vocal; it is not changed into it, the Word remaineth still as it was, yet they two become one voice. IV. Being past these points of belief, LET US PAUSE TO STIR UP OUR LOVE TO HIM WHO THUS BECAME FLESH FOR US. 1. If we were so much beholden for the Word spoken, how much more for the performance; if for the Word that came to flesh, how, then, for the Word become flesh. 2. The Word, "by whom all things were made," came to be made Himself. It is more for Him to be made than to make many worlds. 3. If made, then made the most complete thing of all that ever He had made. But what is man that He should be made him, or the Son of man that He should take His nature upon Him? 4. If man, yet the man hath part—the soul. 5. What flesh? (1) The flesh of an infant—not able to speak a word. (2) How born? In a palace, cradle of ivory, robes of estate! No! A stable His palace; a manger His cradle; poor clouts His array. (3) What flesh afterward? In cold and heat, hungry and thirsty, faint and weary. (4) Is His end any better? What flesh then? Rent and torn; crowned with thorns; crucified. To be made the Head of angels a humiliation, much more lower than the angels, much more "despised and rejected of men." And why? Because He loved us. V. And DWELT. 1. A word of continuance. Not only made, but made stay. 2. Dwelt in a tent. Not a house to stand for ever, but a tent to be taken down again. He came but of an errand, to sojourn till He had done it, and being done He laid His tabernacle aside. 3. Soldiers dwell in tents. An enemy we had strong and mighty. He came as our champion; set up His pavilion among us; took the military oath with shedding of blood at His circumcision and passion. His engagement with the enemy cost Him His life, but saved ours. VI. WE BEHELD. 1. He dwelt not invisibly or obscurely. The angels saw Him, and the wise men and the apostles, &c., &c. 2. We, not one but many. 3. We beheld: not at a blush, but at full sight, and at leisure and for long. The word is that from whence a theatre is derived; as men with good heed behold things there. So did we intentively all the acts and scenes of His life. VII. HIS GLORY FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH. Two streams. Grace refers to the Son, truth to the Word; grace is to adopt us, truth to beget us anew. Fitly do these follow after glory. Glory terrifies. Grace invites; and His glory is such that it is full of grace; His mercy as great as His Majesty. Grace, too, as opposed to the rigour, threats, and curses of the law; and truth as set against the shadows and ceremonies of the law. Take grace from truth and it is a mere illusion; sever truth from grace and it is unpleasant. VIII. Now for THE BENEFIT. 1. Being made flesh He will be a benefactor to it. "No man hateth his own flesh." He seeth us daily in himself. And if God the Father love the Word He must love, too, our flesh which he has taken from us. 2. Being made flesh, all flesh may come to him to present their request. 3. Being made flesh, He will not suffer this of ours, the same with His, to perish, but repair it again and raise it out of the dust. (*Bp. Andrews.*) *The Person and work of Christ*:—I. THE PERSON HERE SPOKEN OF. The Word. 1. The origin of the expression. (1) Some have traced it to the Jewish Targums, where the angel of the Lord of the Old Testament is designated the Word of God. (2) Others to Philo, who spoke much of a semi-divine person called the Word of God. (3) Others to the phrase, "the Word of the Lord came upon him," in the prophets, understanding by that not an influence or a communication, but a person. But it is difficult to decide. 2. What is said about the Word. (1) That He was God. (2) And yet distinct from God. (3) The

Creator of the universe. 3. The appropriateness of the term. He is especially the revealer of God. Deity in the abstract is unrevealed; only through the Word has He made Himself known. Not that Divine manifestations began at the Advent. (1) The external world reveals God's power and Godhead through its Maker, the Word. (2) Hence for all that men have learned from the universe they have been indebted to the Word. (3) His are the intimations of God derived through conscience and intuition. (4) All the truth that man has ever learned has been through Him who is the True Light that enlighteneth every man. II. THE AFFIRMATION HERE MADE CONCERNING THE WORD "became flesh." The other evangelists give us the facts, St. John the soul beneath the facts. Admit the assertion of John, and all that the others say becomes perfectly natural. Deny the truth of what John affirms, and everything that they tell becomes incomprehensible. What is meant is not that He ceased to be the Word, but that in addition to what He had been He took human nature upon Him. This union of Deity and humanity conditioned both. 1. It made it necessary that the humanity should be pure; hence the peculiar manner of Christ's birth, wherein the entail of sin was broken, and His body made a holy thing. 2. It required that His Godhead should be manifested under certain limitations. The Incarnation was to man a revelation of God; to angels an inveiling of God. III. THE PROOF WHICH IS FURNISHED OF THIS TRUTH. "We beheld." This verse is the text of the whole gospel, and each succeeding chapter presents us with some new manifestation. In the first, Christ is introduced to us by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God; in the second, He is the Temple of God; in the third, He is the glorious anti-type of the brazen serpent; in the fourth, He says, in answer to the woman's question, "I Am;" in the fifth, He is the Judge of all; in the sixth, He says: "I am the Bread of Life;" in the seventh, He is the Water of Life; in the eighth and ninth, He says twice: "I am the Light of the World;" in the tenth, He says: "I am the good shepherd;" in the eleventh, He says: "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" in the twelfth, He is the King of Zion riding in triumph to His capital; in the thirteenth, He is the perfect Exemplar; in the fourteenth, He says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" in the fifteenth, He says: "I am the True Vine;" in the sixteenth, He is the Precursor of the Comforter; in the seventeenth, He is the great Intercessor; in the eighteenth, He is, by His own solem asseveration to Pilate, the King of a spiritual domain, whose fundamental principle is truth; in the nineteenth, He is the Willing Victim; and in the twentieth, He is again the Resurrection and the Life. IV. THE RESULTS that flow from the reality of the Incarnation. 1. The reality of Christ's Deity gave sacrificial efficacy to His death on our behalf. 2. The reality of Christ's manhood assures us of perfect sympathy at His hands. 3. The union of the two makes the resources of Deity available for us. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*)

Christ, the word :—1. It will be quite unnecessary for us on the present occasion to entangle ourselves in any philosophical discussion of the name employed by St. John—"The Word." He who became flesh is the Word, the Revealer of God, at once Power and Wisdom, Light and Life. Creation is part of His handiwork, as the Revealer of God. In order to reveal the Father, the Word must live a man's life amongst men. This, then, is St. John's contention. By sight, and by touch, and by voice, says he, I became acquainted with a certain human life; a life, which had a peculiar charm, a special glory about it; and that glory I can only describe as the glory of a well-beloved and only son from a father. Utterance, action, suffering, all were one continuous and incessant testimony to an unseen Father in heaven. 2. Thus, then, it appears, on St. John's showing, that that which became human was truly Divine; and that which became subject to the conditions and limitations of space and time was truly Eternal. Let us endeavour to draw out one or two of the thoughts that are involved in these two statements. (1) The Divine became human. That is to say, the Divine laid hold of the human in such a way as to make the human, so far as it could be made, a true image and reflection of itself. All, then, that our faith in the Incarnation warrants us in asserting is, that in Jesus Christ we have "authentic tidings of invisible things," that in Him the Divine and human are so united and blent, that we can draw certain and reliable conclusions as to the nature of God, so far as that nature can and need be known by us. And oh! think what this means! Think what the difference is between saying, "Jesus is only a man seeking God, adding one more to the many guesses as to the nature of God:" and saying, "In Jesus we see God seeking man, and seeking him out of pure love in order to save him": "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." When we "have told its isles of light, and fancied all beyond,"

there must yet be heights and depths in that High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity which no fancy, however soaring, can penetrate. In this sense, and under such limitations as these, did the Divine become human, or the Word become flesh. If I make the Incarnation the measure not only of that in God which it is necessary for our eternal life to know, but also the measure of God Himself, I am exposing your faith and my own in the truth of the Incarnation to a very perilous strain. For my own sake, and for yours, I dare not do this. (2) As we may say, in this guarded manner, that in the Incarnation the Divine became human; so we may say also, somewhat paradoxically, that in the Incarnation the Eternal became temporal, clothed itself in forms of time and space, in order to reveal that which was before the foundation of the world, which is from everlasting to everlasting. We all know, I should suppose, how easy it is to drift into a notion about the work of Christ, which amounts really to this: that He came not to do the will of God, but to alter it. The Divine did not become human, the Word was not made flesh, if the will of the Son on earth was not at all times and in all things at one with the will of the Father in heaven; and if we may not accept the words, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," as a full and adequate statement of the mission of Jesus Christ. The work of Christ is, in fact, the invisible becoming visible, the Eternal becoming temporal, the Infinite, finite. The Incarnation is, in short, the sacrament of the eternal grace of God; an outward and visible sign, an effectual sign, of a grace, of which time is no measure. 3. "Rejoice in the Lord alway." We can see now what the real ground of all such rejoicing is, and how solid it is. The Incarnation unlocks for us the secret of the Divine, Eternal Will, the Will which is at the root of all things, and which rules all things, and shows us that its first and last word is love. (*D. J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ, the life and the light*:—"The Word became flesh": such is St. John's statement. In order to understand the statement thoroughly, we must ask: First, what does St. John mean by "The Word?" And, secondly, what does he mean when he says, that "The Word was made," or "became," "flesh?" In the previous verses of the chapter St. John has been speaking of the Word, though only in the fourteenth verse does he begin to speak of the Word Incarnate. But St. John has much more to say than this. He refers all creation to the instrumentality of One whom he calls the "Word;" whom, afterwards, he calls the "Light"; and presently as Incarnate, the "Son." Moving on, step by step, St. John at this point introduces another thought. All creation is expressive; but one part of Creation is more expressive than another. Creation is not a dead level, but an ascending series. First the inorganic and inanimate world; then the living being; then the self-conscious life of man. "Things" first; then, "life"; then, "light"; that is, persons, existence, self-conscious, rational and moral. "All things were made by Him." "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." All is by the Word, expressive: but into the life which is the light of men—that is to say, which in men becomes self-conscious, intelligent, capable of reflecting the Maker's image, He, the Word, can put more meaning, more expression, than he could into the inorganic creation; and so can render it more significant, more declaratory of the Divine thoughts, mind, and will. From the creative Word St. John passes to the indwelling Light, that "true Light, which (as he says) lighteth every man." He who is the creative Word is also the indwelling Light. He who is the fount of all being, is also the light of man's being, the illumination of reason and conscience, the son of his soul. So it has been since the Incarnation. And so it was before the Incarnation. Whatever the physical basis of life may be, the metaphysical basis of life is ever one and the same, even the Divine eternal Word. The Word, who was in the beginning, and was in the beginning with God, did not make man, as man makes a thing—a piece of furniture, or a house, or what not—turning it out of hand, and so leaving it to shift for itself. In the moment of creation He became to man the mysterious basis of that strong mysterious thing which we call life; the indwelling light, through whose guidance and illumination man might know God, and become like God. So wondrous, so subtle, so passing thought, are the ties which bind man to Him who made him! In this way, all those long ages before the Incarnation, He was in the world—a world made by Him, yet a world which knew Him not. II. And now we can safely address ourselves to the second part of our subject, and inquire what St. John means, when he says that "The Word became flesh." That the Word—being what He has been from the first, and still is, to man, the metaphysical basis of life, the indwelling light—should Himself become a man, and dwell for some thirty-three years amongst men, full of grace and truth, need not surprise us; ought to be no

stumbling-block to us; has nothing incredible or unnatural about it. Certainly it would be in the highest degree unnatural and incredible and monstrous, that the Word should become man, if that Word were not, by original constitution, so intimately related to man, But once see the spiritual constitution of man in this living and life-giving Word of God, as John and Paul saw it, and the Incarnation becomes not only unnatural, but, in the highest sense of the word, natural; not merely not incredible, but eminently credible, because so entirely in accordance with man's needs, and with God's original constitution of human nature. The Light that was only inward; and, being only inward, was dimmed and almost quenched by man's darkness; must needs become outward also, in order that it may shine in all its native purity and strength, and shining thus may reveal God to man, and man to himself. And how could it thus become outward, save in a human life; that sweet and lovely and altogether exquisite human life which the Gospel pages mirror to us? There, in those pages, the inward voice of conscience becomes an outward voice also; the latter attested by the former, the former cleared and deepened and intensified by the latter. The voice of Jesus, be sure, has its echo within every one of us. On this same Rock of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, Life, and Light, we can securely build all the other truths of our most holy faith; the Fatherliness of God, the brotherhood of men, and all else that most concerns us to know and believe for our souls' health. Wherever, in human nature, there is a trace or vestige of light, there we have a manifestation of the presence of the indwelling Word, the same Eternal Word, who dwells in our souls as Light. (*Ibid*). **And dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.** Three sorts of men are described in the Bible as living in tents: shepherds, sojourners, and soldiers. The phrase here used has reference to the calling of all these three, and that it points to Christ's life on earth being that of a shepherd, a traveller, and a soldier. (*Arrowsmith.*) *Christ the tabernacle of God*:—The Jews in the wilderness had a tabernacle or tent, wherein they worshipped God, and there the glory of God was seen. Over the mercy seat hovered the Shechinah. A glorious light, the symbol of the Divine presence, shone ever in the sanctuary. In like manner Christ, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory," the true Shechinah, tabernacled among us. His flesh, that is, His body of human nature, was as a tabernacle, in which resided that Divine nature of which the glory in the Jewish tabernacle was the symbol. Thus the Tabernacle of God was with men, and He dwelt among us. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *God dwelling with men*:—Here is an answer to Solomon's wondering exclamation: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" Here is fulfilment, higher than had yet been known, of the ancient word, "I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you," and anticipation of what shall yet be when "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them—their God." (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *Christ's glory in the flesh*:—I. HIS OUTWARD GLORY. When a Jew heard this he must have denied it, inasmuch, as there was little in Christ which answered to his conception of Messianic glory. Yet lowly as was our Lord's life in general, there were occasional gleams of it. 1. At the Incarnation. 2. At His Baptism. 3. At His Transfiguration. 4. When the Greeks had an interview with Him. 5. At His Resurrection. 6. At His Ascension. II. But HIS INTERNAL GLORY far surpassed this. Love, compassion, justice, truth. Add to these an existence which has neither beginning nor ending, and a power which nothing can resist, and this is God. And such as is the Father, such was the Son. 1. This glory is that to which man, in his fallen condition, is most blind. Offer man a Saviour crowned with visible power, or who shall secure wealth or pleasure, who would not acknowledge Him? Christ did indeed offer these. They who should come to Him should conquer sin and reign in heaven; should have spiritual riches and celestial pleasures—but who would purchase these at the price demanded? 2. Pray to God that He may open your eyes to see the glory of Christ and your glorious privilege. (*J. Garbett, M.A.*) *The glory of Christ*:—What was it? I. NOT A NIMBUS or halo as seen in pictures, or it would never have been denied. But that of—II. HIS CHARACTER and life, and therefore open moral and spiritual eyes were needed to see it. III. His PERFECT WISDOM, which spake as never man spake. IV. His ALMIGHTY POWER, able to minister to every need and relieve every suffering. V. His WONDROUS LOVE, which prompted Him to go about doing good. VI. A glory, therefore, which could only have come down from THE FATHER, and which led the disciples afterwards from the earthly Master to the heavenly Father. (*A. J. Joscelyne, M.A.*) *The True*

Tabernacle and its glory:—I. LET US BEHOLD THIS TABERNACLING OF GOD WITH US. Two Divine things are more clearly seen in Christ than aught else. 1. Consider them together. (1) Grace and truth are spoken of in the concrete; not full of the news of grace and truth. Others were that. There is grace in other men; but they have it as water flowing through a pipe: He as water in its fountain. There is truth in others; but in Him dwell the depth, the essence of the fact. And both evermore abide in Him. (2) Grace and truth are blended. "And" is no common conjunction. The two rivers unite in one fulness. The grace is truthful grace; not in fiction, fancy, to be hoped for or dreamed of; but grace, every atom of which is fact, redemption which does redeem, pardon which does blot out sin, renewal which actually regenerates. The truth is gracious truth, steeped in love, saturated with mercy. (3) Grace and truth balanced. He is full of grace, but He has not neglected the sterner quality. There are many who are loving but not faithful; many sternly honest, but not kind. In Christ there is no defect either way. He does not hide the truth, however terrible; but He utters it with infinite compassion. He does not save unjustly, nor proclaim truth unlovingly. (4) These qualities in Him are at the full. In Him the immeasurable grace of God is treasured up; and all truth about God and Divine things hath been declared by Him. 2. Take each by itself. (1) Full of grace. In Exod. xxxiv. the glory of God lay in His grace. So in Christ. This is seen in His Incarnation; in His being made perfect through sufferings, so that He might be a sympathetic High Priest; in His life, words, and actions; in His death, as our substitute and representative; and in His union with His people. (2) Full of truth; not merely in what He said and promised, but in Himself. He is the fulfilment of all the promises; the substance of all the types. (3) Full of grace and truth as dealing truthfully in matters of grace concerning our salvation; encouraging many gracious hopes which are all truthfully realized; working both in His people. II. LET US AVAIL OURSELVES OF THIS TABERNACLING. 1. Let us pitch our tents around this central tabernacle, as the Israelites did round theirs. 2. Let us resort to it to obtain grace to help in time of need. 3. Let us abide in joyful, peaceful confidence in Him who is grace and truth to us. 4. Let us tell everybody about it. 5. What manner of people ought we to be among whom Jehovah dwells. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The glory of Christ beheld!*—The greatest glory of the Jewish Church was that God tabernacled in its midst. The greatest glory of the Tabernacle was the most holy place. The glory of the holy place was the Shekinah. Jesus Christ was God's Tabernacle, and the surpassing excellence of this Tabernacle is fulness of grace and truth. I. A FAVOURED PEOPLE. Who are the *we*? 1. An elect company. 2. A called company. Special in the case of the apostles. General in the case of all believers. 3. An illuminated company. Christ's glory not manifest to the rest of mankind. II. THEIR EXALTED PRIVILEGE. "Beheld His glory": not heard or read of. Many were the privileges of the disciples, but this excelled them all. How can we behold? 1. By faith. 2. Experience. 3. Communion. III. A MOST BLESSED VISION. 1. Of Christ's complex person as God and man. 2. Of the motive for which He undertook His redeeming work. 3. Of His self-sacrifice. 4. Of His endurance and perseverance. 5. Of His triumph. IV. THE TESTIMONY WHICH WE WHO HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY ARE SURE TO BEAR. That He is—1. The only-begotten of the Father. 2. Full of grace. 3. Full of truth. (*Ibid.*) *Beholding Christ's glory:*—The noblest objects never disclose their best meaning at first sight. Sir Joshua Reynolds says that when he visited Italy to make the acquaintance of the celebrated masterpieces, he was much cast down. The renowned masters maintained towards him a quiet and dignified silence; they refused to confide to him their thoughts. He gazed steadfastly and could not behold their glory. Persevering, however, the pictures gradually began to raise their veils, and permit him to have an occasional peep at their rare beauty: they softly whispered to him a few of their secrets; and as he continued unwavering in his devotion, they at last flung away their reserve, showed themselves with an open face, and revealed to him the wealth of beautiful ideas that was lodged in them. As with pictures, so with characters. The diviner the life, the closer the inspection requisite to understand it. If we begin in the remote past, with Samson and Hercules, we shall not experience any very formidable difficulties in grasping the principle which fashioned their characters. The story of their lives is comparatively simple, having strength for a foundation. But as we wend our way down to later times, we come across more complex characters; new factors come into operation; and the process of analysis is harder of a successful accomplishment. But of all characters, ancient or modern, none demand so much

intent gazing as that of Jesus Christ. Potences perfectly novel in the history of the world exert their subtle influence; the human and the Divine, the grace and the truth, are so closely associated, that not at once do we grasp the radical idea, and perceive its subdued, tempered beauty. The depth and manifoldness of Christ's character form the reason for the well-nigh two hundred lives and harmonies which have been launched upon the world. A difficult character to understand fully, for its beauty only grows upon us by degrees. Every age discovers a new trait; every fresh generation perceives a fresh excellence; and thus from age to age He increases in loveliness in the estimation of men. He continues to reveal to the loving earnest gaze His glory, "the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *Beholding the glory of Christ*:—Though the Israelites were not able to look on the face of Moses, we saw the glory of the only-begotten. No one indeed could see His glory who was not healed by His humiliation; for there had flown into man's eyes, as it were, dust from the earth; the eye itself had become diseased, and earth was sent to heal it again; the flesh had blinded man, the flesh restores him; the soul, by consenting to carnal affection, had become carnal; hence the eye of the mind had been blinded: then the Physician made for us ointment; He came in such wise, as that by the flesh He destroyed the corruption of the flesh. Thus "the Word was made flesh," that we might be able to say, "we saw His glory." (*Augustine.*) **Full of grace and truth.**—*The fulness of Christ*:—It was fulness in presence of the world's immeasurable need; fulness that stood in contrast with the emptiness of men. The scribe and the Pharisee, the philosopher and the guide into the paths of pleasure, the bringer forth of things new and the bringer forth of things old, whatever their pretensions, alike failed to satisfy the cravings of human hearts, so manifold and deep, and left them sighing, "Who will show us any good?" Even the sacred ordinances of the Old Covenant, out of which it was designed that with joy men should draw water as from the wells of salvation, had been turned very largely into mere outward ceremonies, and the sacred services into mere "bodily exercise"—reminding one of the process of dropping buckets into empty wells, and drawing nothing up. The Word is made flesh, and sojourns among men; and they find in Him the very fulness of the Godhead bodily. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The character of Jesus*:—In the life of Jesus we see—I. INEFFABLE GRACE combined with RESOLUTE FIRMNESS. 1. His character is such as to forbid undue familiarity. Avowed infidels, as well as Christians, feel almost reverent in its hallowed presence. 2. But He was as remarkable for His firmness. Strength is necessary to greatness. Christ possessed tenacity of purpose in an extraordinary degree. His spirit did not faint because of the magnitude of the task He undertook. He successfully stood the test of adversity and of prosperity. II. The FEMININE AND MASCULINE VIRTUES in sweetest harmony. He was made of a woman, which explains partly those fine feminine traits discoverable in His character. Every great man, especially every poetic genius, is strongly marked by womanly softness and delicacy in countenance, feelings, life. Christ had them pre-eminently. III. FEELINGS AND KNOWLEDGE, heart and intellect, in perfect accord. No one can read the gospels without being deeply impressed by the exquisite sensibility of Christ. There is more heart in the gospels than in all other books put together. The heart was systematically crushed under ancient forms of civilization. Sensibility was deemed a sign of weakness. Hence men were carefully trained to repress, and, if possible, eradicate all feeling. Witness stoicism. How different with Christ! In Him we witness a dignity, a loftiness, a nobility which never show to better advantage than when compared with the highest ideals of Greek culture. But at the same time He evinces a depth of emotion and delicacy of feeling quite foreign to them. The Greek impresses us with his cleverness: Christ with His greatness and goodness. The Greek sought mind in all things; taught by Christ, the Christian seeks a heart. IV. THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VIRTUES in beautiful proportion. The hardest of tasks is to suffer in a right spirit. Christ taught it and practised it. No one was ever more energetic in opposition to wickedness; but what strikes us more forcibly is His unprecedented meekness under wrong; and thus He originated a new type of goodness. V. THE REAL KISSING THE IDEAL. He realized in daily life the highest ideal humanity has ever been able to conceive, the divinest poetry and the sternest reality. Man's ideas were always far in advance of his noblest achievements; in Christ both go hand in hand. VI. THE HUMAN GENTLY MELTING INTO THE DIVINE.—He moves before our vision in the form of a man; we look inquiringly and affectionately, and then we penetrate the outward guise and behold the inner splendour. He was a man, no doubt; but no man ever looked

more like God. The character of Christ can be transferred in its integrity to the Lord of Hosts without degrading the loftiest ideal of Him. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The influence of Christ's grace and truth upon art:*—In classical times the prevailing form of art was sculpture. The hard stone was fetched from the rock, and carefully chiselled and elaborately polished to represent the "human form divine." Their sculpture exhibited a simplicity, a severity, a chaste grandeur which far outstrips all efforts of modern ages. Indeed, a vast change has imperceptibly stolen over the minds of men, which is seen in the fact that whereas sculpture was the prevailing form of art among the Greeks, painting is the prevailing form among Christians. We have not been able to cope with the ancients in marble, but it is generally admitted, I believe, that we have greatly surpassed them on canvas. But why has painting superseded sculpture? Because painting is more feminine, and therefore more capable of expressing the softer, gentler virtues. It is the female face of art. One may say with tolerable accuracy that fine art is the creation of Christianity. Art there unmistakably was in the world before—splendid, severe, pure, strong; but we can hardly pronounce it fine. Christianity has softened men, it has softened manners, it has softened art. The heathen ideal was truth; the Christian ideal is grace and truth. (*Ibid.*) *Jesus Christ the fountain of Grace:*—The glory of the Mediator consisted, not in His wisdom, by which He knew what was in man—nor in His power, to which a material universe rendered homage—but in His grace, in the kindness of His heart, in the complete and perfect benevolence of His character. In this respect He was the "brightness of His Father's glory." His heart was an overflowing fountain of love, a plenary spring of goodness, which perpetually sent forth streams of grace, to bless a barren and desert world. He is exhibited to us in this character, as the Head of the gospel dispensation, as the Founder of a new order of things, as the Author and Finisher of our faith. I. To ILLUSTRATE THE GRACIOUS CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST. "He was full of grace." 1. The gracious character of the Saviour appears from the great design of His dispensation. His benevolent mind contemplated a world lost and ruined by sin; a whole race of creatures who were in rebellion against God, and exposed to the penalties of a just and righteous law. His own happiness was unaffected by the apostacy of creatures. He was in the bosom of His father. He was with God, and was God. There was nothing in His immaculate purity, nothing in His essential rectitude, or in His inviolable adherence to justice, that dictated a dispensation of mercy. The world might have perished, its inhabitants might have been lost, and His glory would have been without a stain, His felicity unimpaired. It was only the plenitude of His grace, only the promptings of infinite kindness, that induced Him to undertake our salvation. Believers are destined to a heavenly inheritance, to live with Christ, to enter into His joys, to share in His dominion, to be for ever with the Lord. He effects a great deliverance, and bestows an infinite wisdom. He is "full of grace." 2. From the means adopted to secure the design of His mission. The intensity of kindness may always be measured by the sacrifices to which it leads. What think you would be the testimony of the widow of Nain to the gracious character of our Lord? But these miracles of mercy were but the appropriate appendages to His mission; they were not its objects; they were but blessings which He scattered in His way to suffering and to death. In order that suffering on behalf of others should indicate kindness it must be voluntary. It testifies to benevolence of disposition, only in as much as it is a free-will offering. So strong was His kindness, so intense His love, so determined His compassion, that He submitted to the agonizing, the ignominious death of the cross, to accomplish the salvation of sinners. "This was compassion like a God." 3. From the characters of those whose salvation He sought. They were all sinners, but many of them were the worst of sinners. But the grace of His heart was not expended by its earthly efforts; after He ascended to glory, He manifested in an equal degree the forbearing kindness of His heart, the distinguishing sovereignty of His grace. Who would have thought that the kindness and grace of our Lord would have rested upon such a man as Saul? 4. From those supplies of grace which are afforded to the believer, from his conversion to his reception into a world of glory. The work of grace would not have been complete had it terminated with the renewal of our hearts. The life of the Saviour imparts must be sustained by the same energy. 5. From the benignant character of His religion. II. LET US ATTEMPT AN IMPROVEMENT OF OUR SUBJECT. 1. The gracious character of the Saviour is an encouragement to sinners to come to Him. 2. The gracious character of the Saviour will aggravate the punishment of

the finally impenitent. 3. The gracious character of the Saviour is a reason why His people should continually apply to Him. 4. Finally, it is the duty of Christians to imitate the example of Christ. It should ever be their aim to be "full of grace," to cherish a kind and generous disposition to others. It is not for the Christian, who has had so much done for him, and who constantly needs more, to be a selfish man. (*S. Summers, M.A.*)

Vers. 15–18. **John bare witness of Him.**—*The pre-eminence of Christ*:—I. CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY TO JOHN THE BAPTIST. 1. John refers to and repeats previous testimonies, applying them to Him whom the congregation had just seen depart. The testimony was pointed, warm, confident, bold. 2. The substance and form of the testimony were that, though Jesus was after John as to His birth and ministry, He was before him as to the dignity of His person, His mediatorial office, and above all His Deity. II. CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY TO ALL BELIEVERS. 1. All the fulness demanded for their wants, the entire supply for their need, is treasured up in Him. (1) This might be asserted of the Word. (2) But it is here asserted of Him as made flesh. 2. What has the believer that he has not received from Christ? By nature he is empty. 3. How exalting to Christ the truth that all are and always have been, and always will be, dependent on Him. 4. We derive from Christ, not through merit, grace after grace, and grace corresponding in nature to that poured on Christ. III. CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY TO MOSES. 1. Moses held a high place—the Law was given by him. 2. Nevertheless, no comparison could be made of Moses with Christ. He fulfilled his ministry and passed away, but Christ abides as the eternal administrator of grace and truth. (1) The Law gives knowledge of sin and leaves us: grace and truth come with salvation from sin. (2) The Law was the shadow of good things to come: the grace and truth of Christ were those good things. IV. CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY TO ALL CREATED INTELLIGENCES. 1. God is invisible and incomprehensible to all except His Son Jesus Christ. 2. Many are sons of God, Christ alone is the only-begotten of the Father. 3. Christ has declared the Father as no creature has done, revealing His nature, perfections, counsels, by His teaching, example, and secret influence on the minds of His people. 4. The eternal life of the best of His creatures consist in the knowledge of Him. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ pre-eminent*:—I. IT IS CHRIST ALONE WHO SUPPLIES THE SPIRITUAL WANTS OF ALL BELIEVERS (ver. 16). 1. The Spirit of Life is His special gift to the Church, and conveys from Him, as from a great root, sap and vigour to all the believing branches. 2. He is rich in mercy, wisdom, righteousness, holiness. 3. Out of His fulness believers in every age have been supplied. 4. Every saint in glory will acknowledge that he is Christ's debtor for all he is. II. THE VAST SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST TO MOSES AND THE GOSPEL TO THE LAW (ver. 17). 1. Moses was employed as a servant to convey the moral and ceremonial law which could not justify. 2. Christ as a Son came with the keys of God's treasury of grace and truth (Heb. iii. 6). (1) Grace bringing salvation through faith. (2) Truth fulfilling in His own Person the types of the Old Testament. III. IT IS CHRIST ALONE WHO HAS REVEALED THE FATHER TO MAN (ver. 18). 1. No man could see God and live. 2. Yet all that man is capable of knowing of God the Father is revealed to us by God the Son. In His words, deeds, life, and death we see the wisdom, love, and holiness of God. IV. HOW GREAT THE HONOUR OF THE BAPTIST AND CHRISTIAN MINISTERS in heralding such a Being. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Face to face with Jesus Christ*:—How far ahead John was of the apostles in his conception and reception of the Saviour. Throughout the Baptist was not only a seer of the light but was drenched by the light. I. JOHN'S EXPERIENCE AND TESTIMONY. Ver. 15 is information that the Apostle evidently thought very valuable. Having affirmed the Incarnation he recalls the testimony of the Baptist to that Incarnation. In this testimony lay the power and grace of the Forerunner. His was no outside knowledge or second-hand information, but experience, direct and personal. So now the man of permanent power is the man who speaks, or teaches, or works out of personal and spiritual experience. Learning, culture, travel, profoundest and most masterly thinking are well in their several places, because sanctifiable; but sanctity based on experience of the witness of the Spirit in us and to us individually is the grand thing. II. JOHN'S FULL-VOICED, ARTICULATE UTTERANCE OF THAT EXPERIENCE. Combine the two, "beareth" and "crieth," and you have the perfection of Christ-like witness. Sometimes in law-courts witnesses have again and again to be instructed to speak "out" or "up." There is self-evident reserve, hesitancy, a wish to say as little as possible. But John had no reserves, concealments, trickeries, and so "cried" out.

Fitting it should have been so. Your private letter or personal explanation may be quiet and unobtrusive; but if your stand is in the public market, and the proclamation is a royal one, security must be taken that all around hear and know. If our heart be in our utterance the voice will answer to the heart. The testimony must not be chirped or whined, or spoken in falsetto. An unnatural twang will spoil the best speaking, albeit roaring, violence, physical sensationalism must not be confounded with "crying." III. THE WELL-BASED AND SELF-ABNEGATING CHARACTER OF JOHN'S TESTIMONY. It was the experience of no mere mood or frame, but the granitic conviction and enunciation that he was only the runner before another. 1. His aim was to keep men from leaning on himself. 2. He disclaimed any intention of founding a sect or organizing a Church. He called himself a "Voice," not a foundation. 3. His great purpose was to lead men to Christ. From this he never swerved. John's conduct in drawing attention away from self to Christ should be imitated by every worker for Christ. Explanation, system-making, to say nothing of self-proclamation, is often sheer waste of that strength which can only be profitably utilized in sending men straight to Christ. IV. JOHN'S UNEXAGGERATED, almost charily worded, RECOGNITION OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY. There was no gospel for him as there is none for us if Christ were not human. He was "a Man," but a Man who was co-eternal with the Father. But the Baptist's economy of words in proclaiming that fact is noticeable. "He was before me." Simple, ordinary-looking, superficially unremarkable, but they hold in them an absolute statement of the pre-existence and Divinity of the Man Christ Jesus. V. THE SIMPLICITY AND DIRECTNESS OF JOHN'S WITNESS TO THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST. "This is HE." To-day the message of the servant of Christ in relation to every problem of life and destiny must be, "this is He." There lies the spell, the mission, the divinest success. Not His gospel even, but Himself. Not about Him, but to Him. Not the Bible or the Church, but Himself. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) *The effectiveness of the Baptist's ministry*:—"He who follows me preceded me." Here, then, is an apparent contradiction, intended to excite attention and stimulate mental activity. The enigmatical form must have also contributed to impress this important declaration on the memory of the hearers. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Public attention drawn to Christ*:—The coming forth of the Incarnate Word among men was not in secrecy and silence, as a king might go forth *incognito* among his subjects; but public attention was directed to Him. This was done most efficiently by John. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *John's self-effacement*:—Not only is the moon changeable, waving and waning, and its shape and light declining as it grows older, and itself approaches nearer and nearer to the sun; but so soon as the sun arises, though the moon should be yet in its full size and roundness, its light immediately fades from view, and itself becomes as if it no longer existed, for the superior glory of that incomprehensible luminary. And so both John the Baptist and the Jewish form of worship faded and shrunk, and became as non-existent, after they had performed their parts and offices as witnesses and schoolmasters to the great and glorious appearing of the Son of God Himself, the Sun of righteousness, the Word made flesh, the Godhead incarnate, the light and life of men and all creation, embodied in shape, and planted in place, and made visible: though too bright and dazzling to be comprehended, except by those who had opened and exercised their eyes to see His witnesses in the hours of darkness, when others were immersed in sleep, and so were not forced to shut them close in the daytime, in the blindness of unbelief. (*S. A. Bosanquet.*)

Ver. 16. **Of His fulness have all we received.**—*The fulness of Christ*:—The word "fulness" is given to vessels that are brimful of liquor, and so is metaphorically applied to Christ, who is brimful of grace. I. Take grace for LOVE, so there is a fulness of love in Christ. 1. Of pardoning love (Luke xxiii. 24). When on earth He did not pardon once, but again and again, and that without upbraiding. 2. Of compassionating love (Matt. v. 3-4). When poor souls could not come to Him He went to them. 3. Of special love to His disciples (Matt. xii. 47-50). II. Take grace for HOLINESS, and there is a fulness of holiness in Him. Holy things, the law, priests, temple, were only types of Him. If there were not a fulness of holiness in Him—1. How is it possible that God and man could be brought so near who were so far apart? 2. How should He be anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Eph. i. 23). The saint's fulness is only particular, His is universal (Col. i. 19). Their's ebbs and flows and is often empty. III. Take grace for GIFTS, and there is a fulness of excellency in Christ. 1. Kingly (Heb. i. 3, 8). 2. Pro-

phetical (ver. 17). 3. Priestly (chap. xvi. 7, 10). 4. In general (Hagg. ii. 7; Col. i. 11). IV. WHAT IS OUR DUTY FLOWING FROM HENCE? If there be such a fulness then—1. Let all men come to Him. All have wants. 2. Let us trust to Him. 3. Let us draw forth from Him. (1) By a serious, frequent consideration of His fulness (2 Cor. iii. 18). (2) By resting upon it in time of temptation. (3) By giving forth of it, as the conduit receives more water by letting out. 4. Let us labour to be like Him, full of grace. 5. Let us take heed how we do anything that may rob Christ of the glory of His fulness. (*W. Bridge, M.A.*) *The communication of Christ's fulness*:—There is a dealing out of His fulness. I. BY THE UNION THERE IS BETWEEN CHRIST AND A BELIEVER. Union is the cause of communion or communication. Bread is united to a man by his eating of it. II. BY THE OVERFLOW OF HIS INFINITE GRACE HE IS ABLE—1. To succour and supply those who are tempted (Heb. ii. 18). 2. Whatever grace Christ hath received He hath received not for Himself but for others (Eph. iv. 8; John xvii. 19; Isa. lxi. 1, 2). 3. There is an infinite willingness in Him to communicate this grace (Heb. iii. 2; Psa. xvi. 2; Job. iv. 24). 4. As He is willing nothing can hinder Him (Isa. xliii. 13; Titus ii. 14). III. WHY THEN ARE BELIEVERS SO EMPTY OF GRACE? 1. The fulness of grace in a believer is many times hid from the world and from Himself. 2. Sometimes the avenues of grace in a believer are choked or broken. 3. This grace is communicated in proportion. What is your want? go to Christ and get that supplied. IV. APPLICATION: 1. See the transcendent excellency of the saints. 2. What an encouragement there is here to come to Christ and partake of His fulness. 3. Acting upon this believers are firm against all temptations, discouragements, afflictions. 4. Then believers should labour to strengthen their assurance of union with Christ. (*Ibid.*) *The reception of Christ's fulness*:—Whatever grace the saints have they have it all in the way of receiving. 1. The grace and mercy of justification and remission of sins (Rom. v. 11). 2. Of adoption (Gal. iv. 5). 3. Of sanctification (Gal. iii. 2). 4. Of the gifts of the Spirit (Acts x. 46, 47). 5. In general all is by way of receiving (Col. ii. 6; 1 Cor. iv. 7). This will appear—I. FROM MAN'S NATURAL INABILITY—1. To overcome sin, be it never so small (1 Cor. xv. 57). 2. To rise again after falling. Peter must have a look from Christ before he could repent. 3. To stand and continue. 4. To prepare himself unto what is good (Eph. ii. 1, 5; John vi. 44). II. FROM THE SUPERNATURALITY OF GRACE (Eph. ii. 10). III. FROM THE SHORTNESS OF THE MEANS OF GRACE. The means as it is in itself, without God's appointment, is utterly inefficient. IV. FROM THE WORK AND NATURE OF FAITH. There is no grace that the Scripture puts more upon than faith—in the Old Testament all victories, in the New all cures. Yea, the same works that are given to Christ are given to faith: sanctification, justification, salvation. Why? Because faith is a receiving grace (ver. 12). So believing is nothing but receiving the grace of God. V. FROM THE POSTURE AND TRUE BEHAVIOUR OF PRAYER. Prayer is the soul's begging. A beggar holds forth his hand noting his willingness to receive (Job xi. 13). In conclusion—1. You say that this cuts off all endeavour. Not so (see Phil. ii. 12). 2. Why is all this? (1) That all boasting and self-confidence may be taken away (Rom. iv.; 1 Cor. iv. 7). (2) That Christ may be fully honoured. (3) That the children of God may live by faith. 3. This doctrine is full of spiritual use. (1) Behold what infinite care God hath of believers. If a mother would not let her child eat bread but of her own cutting, or drink water but of her own drawing, what carefulness of her child that would argue. (2) What comfortable lives believers live—even their troubles are from God who makes them minister to their good and helps them in them. (*Ibid.*) *The abundance of grace the saints receive from Christ*:—I. AN ABUNDANCE OF GRACE. "Grace for grace" like "skin for skin" (Job ii. 4). All his skins. This suits (1) the word "and" or "even;" (2) the attribute of Christ, "fulness;" (3) the scope of the place where Christ is set above Moses. (4) Other Scriptures (Rom. v. 15, 17, &c.) 1. Abundance of grace discovered. (1) It will appear if you consider the several advances grace hath made from the beginning till now (Gen. iii. 15), the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. xii. 3), the Mosaic, the prophecies, Christ, the preaching of the gospel. (2) The manifestations of grace under the Old Testament were under a veil; that veil is now removed (2 Cor. iii. 18). (3) There were many doctrines of grace communicated to the Jews, yet they were so tempered by the law that the very gospel seemed law unto them. Now the law is so tempered by the gospel as to seem gospel. (4) Grace was manifested under the old dispensation by drops and at intervals (Heb. i. 1), under the New Wholesale. 2. Abundance of grace exhibited and communicated. Is it not a great matter—1. For an ungodly man to be justified.

For a man to be a child of God. 3. To have the image of Christ drawn on a filthy soul. 4. For a man to be in heaven before he comes there (chap. xvii. 3). 3. But we do not see this abundance, objectors say. But—(1) Though little in quantity it may be great in quality. (2) Though it be small as a possession it is great as an earnest (Col. i. 12). II. APPLICATION: 1. Why should any of God's people vilify and degrade the *gift* of God whereby they are enriched? 2. Behold what great sinners inconsistent professors are! 3. What a mighty encouragement there is here to come to Jesus Christ and be filled! (*Ibid.*) *Whatsoever grace the saints have they have it from Jesus Christ*:—Grace is sometimes taken for—1. The favour of God; 2. God's assistance; 3. Holiness; 4. Gifts; 5. An office in the Church. But whichever it is it comes from Christ. This will appear if you consider—I. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF NATURE (1 Cor. iii. 5; ver. 13). II. THE ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST (Rev. i. 17; Rom. viii. 29; chap. xiv. 6). 1. There are three great doors which must ordinarily be opened before converting grace can get into the soul of man. (1) A powerful ministry (1 Cor. xvi. 9); (2) The door of the heart (Acts xvi. 14); (3) The door of the ear (Job xxxiii. 16). 2. Christ has the opening of these doors (Rev. i. 18; iii. 7). 3. The names which Christ bears witness to, His all-sufficiency, Sun of Righteousness, Morning Star, Raiment, Bread of Life, Door, Good Shepherd, &c., are given to Christ to show that He is all they signify to the soul. And they are not barely given to Him; He is "Good" Shepherd, Bread "of Life," &c. Therefore, as the apostle says, "He is all in all." (*Ibid.*) *The answerableness of grace in every Christian to the grace of Christ*:—We have received grace in abundance from Christ, but whatever grace there is in Him there is somewhat in the saints answerable thereunto, as the impression answers to the stamp. 1. Take grace as the favour of God: Both Christ and believers are God's beloved (Matt. iii. 17; 2 Sam. xii. 25). 2. For privilege: Both are called Sons of God (Heb. xii. 6); Heirs (Heb. i. 2; Rom. viii. 17); Elect and precious (1 Pet. ii. 6; 1 Pet. i. 2); Light (John viii. 12; Eph. v. 8). 3. For assistance (Psa. xxii; 1 Cor. xii. 9). 4. For sanctification (chap. xvii. 19). The reason of this—I. THE UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE (Job xiv. 20). II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST AS THE SECOND ADAM A COMMON PERSON BETWEEN GOD AND US (Rom. v. 15; John v. 26). III. THE LOVE BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE CHRISTIAN. Love loves to make a thing loved like itself. IV. THE SAME SPIRIT IS IN A CHRISTIAN THAT IS IN CHRIST (chap. xv. 26). (*Ibid.*) *The fulness of Christ*:—This fulness is shown—I. IN THE DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURE CONCERNING CHRIST. 1. His perfect humanity. 2. His supreme divinity. II. IN THE POETRY AND METAPHORS WHICH DESCRIBE HIM. "Ancient of Days," "Alpha and Omega," "Lion of Judah," "Sure Foundation-Stone," "Sun," "Desire of all Nations." III. THE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS MOST APPRECIATED WERE TRUTH AND GRACE, AND THESE WERE MANIFESTED IN FULNESS. 1. Truth represents—(1) Intelligence. In Christ there is a fountain of knowledge inexhaustible. The keen Sadducee, the exact Pharisee, the learned scribe, the eager Mary, all wonder at the gracious words which proceed out of His mouth. The words of Jesus are a study for one's life, and those who have studied them most are as far as ever from exhausting their meaning. (2) Reality. This was complete in Christ. He was the shadow of no substance, the image only of the invisible God. 2. The grace of Christ was love in fulness. IV. THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL HIS DISCIPLES CONFIRMS THE OBSERVATION OF HIS FIRST FOLLOWERS. They could say, "We beheld"; we "Whom having not seen we love." What is this grace but grace superseding grace, grace supplanting grace—as the blossom supplants the bud, and as the fruit supplants the blossom—as the noon supersedes the morning, and as summer supplants spring—grace superseding and surpassing grace. What have you received? Is Christ to you a cistern which you have emptied? A vine stripped of fruit? Bread eaten and gone? Or is Jesus Christ living bread? A fountain of living water? A tree of life bearing all manner of fruit? In plain language, does grace supersede and supplant grace? Are you rising higher and yet higher through the uplifting of the hand of this Saviour? Is sanctification supplanting conversion, and is glorying in tribulation being built upon patience in sorrow? If so, beware of pride, and of vanity, and of vain-glorying, and of boasting. God forbid that we should glory save in the fulness of this Jesus Christ. At the same time quiet your fears and call forth your hopes. All that you have received is from fulness. Come again. Come every hour—for everything. Friends may depart, but friendship in fulness abides in Jesus. Helpers may become helpless, but might exists in fulness in Jesus. Riches may leave you, but in Christ there are riches unsearchable. Health may sink, but strength undecaying is in

Jesus. (*S. Martin.*) *Fulness of grace*:—I have heard our Lord likened to a man carrying a water-pot, and as he carried it upon his shoulder, the water fell dropping, dropping, dropping, so that every one could track the water-bearer. So should all His people be, carrying such a fulness of grace that every one should know where they have been by that which they have left behind. He who hath lain in the beds of spices will perfume the air through which he walks. One who, like Asher, has dipped his foot in oil, will leave his footprints behind him. When the living and incorruptible seed remains within, the Divine instincts of the new nature will guide you to the wisest methods of activity. You will do the right thing under the inward impulse rather than the written law, and your personal salvation will be your prime qualification for seeking out others of your Master's flock. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *All fulness in Christ*:—God cannot give you anything more than He gave you 1,800 years ago. It was all in Christ. Take a very vulgar illustration, which is altogether inadequate for a great many purposes, but which may serve. Suppose some man tells you that there was a thousand pounds paid into your credit into a London bank, and that you were to get the use of it, as you drew cheques against it. The money is there, is not it; the gift is given, and yet for all that you may be half dead, a pauper. In the very last of the Arctic expeditions, last year or the year before, they found an ammunition chest that Commander Parry had left there fifty years ago, safe under a pile of stones, the provisions inside being perfectly sweet and good and eatable. There it had lain all those years, and men had died of starvation within arm's length of it. It was there all the same. And so, if I may venture to vulgarise the great theme that I am trying to speak about, God has given us His Son, and in Him all that pertains to life and all that pertains to godliness. My brothers, take the things that are freely given to men of God. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *How grace is received*:—Here on the one hand is the boundless ocean of the Divine strength, unfathomable in its depth, full after all draughts, tideless and calm, in all its movements never troubled, in all its repose never stagnating; and on the other side is the empty avidity of our poor, weak natures. Faith opens these to the impulse of that great sea, and "according to our faith," in the exact measure of our receptivity, does it enter our hearts. (*Ibid.*) *The fulness of Christ*:—I have found it an interesting thing to stand on the edge of a noble rolling river, and to think, that although it has been flowing on for six thousand years, watering the fields, and slaking the thirst of a hundred generations, it shows no signs of waste or want; and when I have watched the rise of the sun, as he shot above the crest of the mountain, or in a sky draped with golden curtains sprang up from his ocean bed, I have wondered to think that he has melted the snows of so many winters, and renewed the verdure of so many springs, and painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the golden harvests of so many autumns, and yet shines as brilliant as ever, his eye not dim, nor his natural strength abated, nor his floods of light less full for centuries of boundless profusion. Yet what are these but images of the fulness that is in Christ? (*J. Bates.*) *Grace to receive grace*:—The Duchess of Gordon and a companion were visiting at a cottage in Scotland when a pedlar came in, threw down his pack, and asked for a drink of water. The woman of the house handed the water to him, and said, "Do you know anything of the water of life?" "By the grace of God I do." He drank the water, and then said, "Let us pray." And this was his prayer: "Oh, Lord, give us grace to feel our need of grace. Oh, Lord, give us grace to receive grace. Oh, Lord, give us grace to ask for grace. Oh, Lord, give us grace to use grace when grace is given." He then took up his pack and went away, having preached a powerful sermon in those few words. *The fulness of Christ*:—On a tradesman's table I noticed a book labelled "Want Book." What a practical suggestion for a man of prayer! He should put down all his needs on the tablets of his heart, and then present his want book to his God. If we knew all our need, what a large want book we should require! How comforting to know that Jesus has a supply book, which exactly meets our want book! Promises, providences, and Divine visitations, combine to meet the necessities of all the faithful. *The riches of Christ's grace*:—There is a story of Rowland Hill, which I have no doubt is true, because it is so characteristic of the man's eccentricity and generosity. Some one or other had given him a hundred pounds to send to an extremely poor minister, but, thinking it was too much to send him all at once, he sent him five pounds in a letter with simply these words inside the envelope, "More to follow." In a few days' time, the good man had another letter by the post, and letters by the post were rarities in those days; when he opened it there was five pounds again, with just these words, "And more

to follow." A day or two after there came another, and still the same words, "And more to follow." And so it continued twenty times, the good man being more and more astounded at these letters coming thus by post with always the sentence, "And more to follow." Now, every blessing that comes from God is sent in just such an envelope, with the selfsame message, "And more to follow." "I forgive you your sins, but there's more to follow." "I justify you in the righteousness of Christ, but there's more to follow." "I adopt you into my family, but there's more to follow." "I educate you for heaven, but there's more to follow." "I have helped you even to old age, but there's still more to follow." "I will bring you to the brink of Jordan, and bid you sit down and sing on its black banks, on the banks of the black stream, but there's more to follow. In the midst of that river, as you are passing into the world of spirits, My mercy shall still continue with you, and when you land in the world to come there shall still be more to follow." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Grace obstructed:*—When our spiritual supplies fail, the channel is sometimes at fault, and not the stream; the hindrance to their coming lies with us and not with our heavenly Father. The supply of fuel to our city in midwinter sometimes fails, not because the coal-fields are exhausted, but because the weather has frozen our rivers, detained our colliers in the Channel, and blocked up our railways. The supply of water or of gas to our houses is sometimes insufficient, not because the reservoirs are low, but because the pipes which connect our dwellings with the main service are choked up or broken. News fail to reach us, not because our correspondent has neglected to write, but because the means of transmission have been imperfect. (*Samuel Martin.*) *Grace preferred to earthly honour:*—Having rendered some service to Lord North, the Prime Minister, during the American war, he received a polite communication from that nobleman, desiring to know if he stood in need of anything which it was in his power to bestow. Mr. Fletcher modestly replied:—"He was sensible of the Minister's kindness, but he only wanted one thing, which he could not grant him, and that was more grace." It is a high attainment to prefer the grace of God to earthly honours and emoluments. None but God, the author of grace, can incline the heart to this. (*J. Cope.*) *A precious plentitude:*—I. THE FULNESS. 1. The fulness belongs to Christ personally. In His complex nature He possesses fulness. (1) In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The fulness of omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, justice, mercy. The attributes of God make up a perfect total. The unity, with all its uniqueness is His. The fractional parts are ours. (2) There was also a fulness of Christ in respect to His manhood. Nothing was lacking in Him to constitute human perfection—sinlessness, sympathy, the virtues of both sexes, human nature in its completeness. 2. In Christ is an acquired fulness. His perfect obedience secured an everlasting wellspring of merit; and now risen from the dead there is a fulness of prevalence in His intercession, of cleansing power, and of peace, when the Spirit applies the blood to the guilty conscience. 3. A fulness of dignity, prerogative, and qualification. He is a perfect prophet, priest, and king. Join all the qualities involved in name or fame and you shall find that He comprises them all in liberal, lavish fulness. 4. A fulness of every kind of perfection. All that is virtuous, amiable, noble or illustrious. 5. A fulness of the Spirit. The Lord gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him. 6. An abiding fulness. All the saints of every age have drawn their supplies from Him, but He is just as full as ever. He is never less, He can never be more than full. II. THE FILLING. 1. Surely, then, the saints were empty before. All alike are empty of merit and satisfaction. 2. The filling is universal. All the saints partake of it. 3. There must be a personal reception in every case. Grace cannot be derived or transmitted from one individual to another. 4. It is gratuitous "Grace for grace"; not purchased or earned but received. All the doing to receive it is an undoing: the soul empties itself to be filled. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. We are shown that we ARE ALL UTTERLY DESTITUTE AND EMPTY of spiritual blessings. The abundance in Jesus Christ is intended—1. To supply our deficiency. 2. To relieve our poverty. 3. To satisfy our hunger and thirst. II. We are warned THAT AS SOON AS WE HAVE DEPARTED FROM CHRIST IT IS VAIN TO SEEK FOR HAPPINESS, because God hath determined that whatever is God's shall reside in Him alone. Accordingly we shall find angels and men to be dry, heaven to be empty, the earth to be unproductive, and, in short, all things to be of no value, if we wish to be partakers of the gifts of God in any other way than through Christ. III. We are assured that WE HAVE NO REASON TO FEAR THE WANT OF ANYTHING, provided that we draw from the fulness of Christ, which is in every respect so complete as to be in-

exhaustable, (*J. Calvin.*) *Christ's fulness*:—There is a fulness of atoning efficacy in His blood, for "the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin"; of justifying righteousness in His life, for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"; of Divine prevalence in His plea, for "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him; seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them"; of victory in His death, for through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; of efficacy in His resurrection from the dead, for by it "We are begotten again to a lively hope"; of triumph in His ascension, for "when He ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men"; of blessings unspeakable, unknown; grace to pardon, regenerate, sanctify, preserve, and perfect. There is a fulness at all times; a fulness by day and by night; of comfort in affliction, of guidance in prosperity, of every Divine attribute, of wisdom, of power, of love; a fulness which it were impossible to survey, much less to explore. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The fulness of Christ received*:—I. AN APPEAL TO OUR GRATITUDE. Glory be unto Christ for His fulness, for of it have all the saints received—Old Testament saints and New, martyrs, reformers, saints on earth, saints in glory, &c., &c. And they all received all that they had. II. A DISCRIMINATION OF CHARACTER. Thus may we know the people of God, for of His fulness all have received. 1. There are some who receive their religion from their fathers and mothers; but religion is not to be inherited; it is a personal matter. 2. There are those who have got their religion from good works. They do not belong to John's company. 3. Others get their religion partly from self and partly from Christ; but to John's company Christ is all in all. The true Christian gets all from Christ. Even Paul was the chief of sinners, less than the least of all saints, and confessed that he was nothing. III. A SENTENCE OF ADMONITION TO BELIEVERS. Should they not be—1. Most humble. Pride, and indebtedness to Christ for all, is a contradiction. 2. Most grateful. When our friends love us we love them in return. So Christ deserves that we should spend the spirit for Him. IV. A WORD OF SWEET ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE SINNER. You need a new heart, repentance, a sense of sinfulness, pardon. He can give you all, no matter how guilty you are. (*Ibid.*) *Christ's inexhaustible fulness*:—I. THERE IS IN CHRIST A FULNESS, the greatest abundance of blessings of every description. It is such a fulness as is in God, for John tells us that Christ is—1. the Creator and Preserver of all things. 2. The Author of human redemption. 3. The fountain of life and light. 4. The Author and Dispenser of salvation. II. CHRISTIANS HAVE RECEIVED OF THIS FULNESS—1. Many blessings, such as spiritual illumination, faith, pardon, acceptance, the aids of the Spirit, sanctification, hope, and the happiness begun in this world, and perfected in the world to come. 2. These many blessings in great abundance, "and in everything have been enriched by Him." III. "ALL HAVE RECEIVED." 1. All men if they were willing; and what is there to hinder all men from receiving them? Even now, and at all times, may not all receive them? All may receive to the utmost extent of their desires. 2. All men, of every class and condition; for different men, according to the variety of their situation and circumstances, stand in need of different blessings; and all may have those blessings which their necessities require. 3. All men, in every age, and in every part of the world. 4. There is a "fulness" of blessings in Christ sufficient for the present and eternal salvation of the whole human race. 5. In Christ there is—(1) An open fountain, to which all have access, from which all may draw, the righteous and the wicked, the joyful and the sorrowful, the living and the dying. (2) A copious fountain, from which all may draw in abundance. (3) An inexhaustible fountain which never can be drained, however great be the number of those who draw from it. 4. A perpetual fountain, flowing to all eternity, from which all who are willing may continually draw. (*C. C. Tittman, D.D.*) *The fulness of Christ the treasury of the saints* (*cf.* Col. i. 19):—I. THERE IS A GLORIOUS FULNESS IN JESUS. Why, then, are we so weak, unfurnished, and unhappy? There is that in Jesus which—1. Can enable us to rise to the highest degree of grace. (1) If sin is to be overcome the conquering power dwells in Him in its fulness. (2) If virtue is to be attained, sanctifying energy resides in Him to perfection. (3) Without Him we can do nothing, but we can do all things through Him. There are many barely Christians who have scarcely enough grace to float them into heaven, their keel grating all the way; and yet their privilege is to reach the deep waters, and have so much grace that they may sail like a gallant bark on the broad ocean, with a glorious cargo and all colours flying, so that there may be administered an abundant entrance. 2. Sufficient for the conquest of the world. (1) All the

might for the conquest of heathenism. (2) All the strength for victory over vice and infidelity at home. (3) Every weapon required for the fight. Fulness for teaching, convincing, converting, sanctifying. II. THE FULNESS IS IN JESUS NOW. 1. The glory of the past depresses many Christians. Scarcely any Church realizes that it can do what its forefathers did. A people are in an evil case when all their heroism is historical. But the fulness upon which Paul, Luther, Whitefield drew is unexhausted. 2. The mass of professors have their eyes on the future. Yet, if the texts are true, all that is to be done can be done now. Want of faith in Christ's fulness makes them dote on the Millennium. 3. Our Churches believe that there is fulness in Christ, and that sometimes they ought to enjoy it. But it is not the Lord's purpose that a fulness should reside in Jesus during revivals. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and that being the case, the highest state of revival should be the normal condition of the Church. III. THE POSITION OF THIS FULNESS IS RICHLY ENCOURAGING TO US IN THE MATTER OF OBTAINING IT. In Christ: 1. Where we can receive it now. 2. In Him who loves to give it. 3. With Him who is Himself ours. If God had put it in an angel we should not feel greatly drawn to Him; but He has placed it where we love to have it, where we feel at home, where we are glad to go often, where we would abide. IV. FROM THIS FULNESS MANY OF US HAVE RECEIVED. 1. This should encourage us to further exercises of faith, 2. What restrains us from receiving. (1) I cannot be a Christian of the highest type. Why not? If you have received life you can receive it more abundantly. (2) I cannot hope to be as useful as some. Why not? According to your faith it shall be done unto you. What you have received is a pledge of what you may receive. V. THE RECEIPTS WE HAVE ALREADY HAD ARE NOT TRIFLES. "He that spared not His own Son," &c. He has given to all such grace as they have capacity to receive. So on to perfection. 1. Believe in great things. 2. Expect great things. 3. Attempt great things. 4. Don't talk about this but set about it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. The ONE GLORIOUS PERSON concerning whom this verse is written. 1. The Word or speech and revelation of God. "Wouldst thou have me see thee," said Socrates "then speak." Wouldst thou see God? Listen to Christ. 2. Lest Christ should be regarded as a mere utterance, John is careful to show that He is a Divine Person. 3. Christ was also man. 4. Lest others should come into comparison with Him they are all barred out. Angels, John, Moses. II. The two PRECIOUS DOCTRINES. 1. That all grace is treasured up in Christ Jesus. His is an immeasurable fulness of grace and truth. (1) Of grace—pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying. Of this He is always full. (2) Of truth. 2. All the saints have received all of grace out of the fulness of Christ. (1) All of them. (2) Very abundantly. III. THREE EXPERIENCES. 1. Our own emptiness. 2. A personal reception of Christ Jesus. 3. The discovery that all we receive comes to us by grace. IV. FOUR DUTIES. If we have received Christ then—1. Let us praise Him. 2. Let us repair to Him again. 3. Try and obtain more. 4. Encourage others to receive Him. (*Ibid.*) **Grace for grace.**—I. THE EXPOSITION. 1. Some take the phrase to have reference to the Law and the Gospel; but St. John is speaking of what takes place after Christ comes and the Law is abandoned. 2. Others to faith in Old Testament saints and light in New Testament saints. That does not hold, because both had faith and light. 3. Others, grace in the believer resembling grace in the Saviour; but that would only give us the moral qualities of Christ, and leave us destitute of those evangelical blessings which He came especially to bestow. 4. The real sense is that of exchange; "for"—instead of *a* new grace coming in the place of the old, and, when that is done with, another fresh from the fulness, and so on until grace becomes glory. II. THE ILLUSTRATION: 1. Grace in the believer dies, wastes away, as all living things do, and the faster they live, the faster they die. Granite rocks might last for ever, their life and motion are so slow; but the most exquisite flowers stand in their prime rich-blossomed state only for a short time. "You must come to-day," we say, "or you will not see the best of it." So with that most living thing called grace. Indestructible in its fountain and principle, it yet comes and goes, flowing in, flowing out, blossoming, fading. In the human soul, if there were not replenishment, grace *for* grace, it would soon be empty and dead. 2. This does not mean simply a steady continuance of the same class of gracious ministration. You stand by a river and watch the flow, the drops of water coming and going to the ocean. But then other drops succeed them, and others them, so evenly and incessantly that we hardly realize that the waters are passing away. So with the supply of grace. Suppose the colour of the river should change with the day, now black from muddy hills, now yellow as the Tiber,

now blue as the Rhone, now crystal as the Tweed, it would be a singular phenomenon; but grace *for* grace means a change like that. There is an element of sameness in all graces, just as water is water, but in many respects one kind of grace is not like another. 3. There is no invariable order, but in general—(1) The grace of forgiveness is the first bestowed. This may come after much anxiety, or quite gently; but, come as it will, peace is a special grace. (2) But the believer does not rest long in his peace. Next comes a totally different kind of grace—active strength and the spirit of boldness. Not that he is deprived of his peace, but that becomes secondary. This is very necessary, as uniform tranquility would be injurious. To root the tree firmly rough winds are necessary. (3) The grace of patience for the grace of active strength. Working time comes to an end, or work goes on, patience comes to prevent discouragement. (4) The grace of victory for the grace of preservation in battle. As thy day so shall thy strength be. Not dying grace till death. III. THE APPLICATION: 1. Do not try to live in or by the past. Live in it by a grateful memory that will help you; but not so as to get a present living nourishment out of states, and frames, and feelings that are dead and gone. You would not get on in June seeking the withered leaves of last autumn. Let them sink into the soil. Trust nature to get all the good that is in them, and send that good up again. 2. We ought to be afraid of stagnation, but never of new experiences or enterprises. 3. Christ offers grace for—not grace, you have none, brother sinner; you would never take it—but for sin and its condemnation. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Grace for grace*:—I. GRACE BY DEGREES; grace upon grace; a little grace to begin with, but more grace afterwards. "He giveth more grace," grace following in grace, and further in superabounding grace, when grace turns into glory. II. GRACE TO PREPARE FOR FURTHER GRACE—the grace of a broken heart—to make room for repentance; the grace of hatred of sin to make way for the grace of holy and careful walking; the grace of careful walking to make room for the grace of close communion with Christ; the grace of close communion with the Lord Jesus Christ to make room for the grace of full conformity to His image; perhaps the grace of conformity to His image to make room for the higher grace of brighter views of Himself, and still closer incomings into the very heart of the Lord Jesus. It is grace that helps us on in grace. When a begger asks you for a penny, and you give him one, he does not ask you for a sixpence; or if you give him a shilling, he would not consider that an argument why you should give him a sovereign. But you may deal thus with God. The grace you have expands your heart, and gives you capacity for receiving yet more grace. You send your child to school to learn A B C, the grace of learning his alphabet. But it is preparatory to the spelling book, a preparation for further acquisition of knowledge. III. GRACE ANSWERABLE TO GRACE. Let God give me grace to be a preacher, and He will give me grace to discharge the office. If you have the grace of resignation you may need the grace of patience. Or grace received by us answerable to the grace that is in Christ. A young heir to a large estate, though not of full age, generally gets an allowance suitable to the position he is to occupy. If he has £100,000 a year in prospect, he would hardly be limited to a penny a week. When I see one child of God always mourning, another always doubting, and yet another always scheming, I see they are living below their privileges. They do not seem to have grace in possession answerable to the grace they have in reversion. We always inculcate the propriety, on the part of all our people, of living within their incomes; but the child of God cannot live beyond his income in a spiritual sense. IV. GRACE IN ABUNDANCE. Like the waves of the sea, where one comes there is another close behind it. V. GRACE FROM HIM TO PRODUCE GRACE IN US. The grace of gratitude should be produced in us by the grace of generosity from God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ's fulness*:—As the sea is not diminished by the treasures of rain which it yields, and which are dispensed to the earth to fertilise and refresh it, or as the sun is not wasted, that he has imparted light to all past generations of men; so Christ has not been affected in His fulness, though from Him has proceeded all the good that has ever been bestowed on every creature. That in the beginning He laid the foundations of the earth, and that He then spread forth the heavens like a curtain, has not diminished His strength. That He brought into being all the families of life, in their innumerable and varied forms, has not exhausted His resources. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ's fulness and our reception of it*:—We all receive of His fulness grace for grace, as all the stars in heaven are said to light their candles at the sun's flame. For though His Body be withdrawn from us, yet by the lively and virtual contact of His Spirit He is always kindling, cheering,

quickening, warming, enlivening, hearts : nay, this Divine life, begun and kindled in any heart, wheresoever it be, is something of God in the flesh, and in a sober and qualified sense, Divinity Incarnate, and all particular Christians, that are possessed of it, so many mystical Christs. (*R. Cudworth.*) If any one is to obtain grace, His fulness must do it : our crumbs and morsels, our tiny drops and bits, they verily will not do it. All, whether Jews or Gentiles, if indeed they would obtain grace and be really found before God, are required (and indeed they can do no other) to fill their little flasks from this well—a well which flows and overflows for ever and ever ; they must drink their fill from this fountain-head of living water, springing up into eternal life. In short, His fulness is without measure or end ; therefore draw manfully and without fear, and drink with pleasure and joy! For here is overflowingly enough, even into eternal Life ; in this you will have enough to praise and thank God for to all eternity. (*Luther.*) *The plenteousness of grace :*—The philosophic Hamerton tells us the story of a woman who worked in a cotton factory in one of the great manufacturing towns in Lancashire, and who, in an excursion, went for the first time to the coast. When she caught the earliest glimpse of the Irish Sea, the expanse lying out before her eyes, looking like the limitlessness of the ocean in its rush and roll of billows, she exclaimed, as she drew one boundless breath of freshness and glory : "At last, here comes something there is enough of!" (*Dr. C. Robinson.*)

Ver. 17. **The Law was given by Moses.**—*Points of contrast between Judaism and Christianity :*—I. IN THE PERSONS REPRESENTING JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. 1. Moses was the servant, Christ the master. 2. Moses was a subject, dependent, Christ was King of kings. 3. Moses was only a man, but Christ was the God-man. 4. Moses was the agent smiting the rock, Christ was the rock smitten. 5. Moses was but the channel of communication between God and His people; Christ is the source of all our mercy. 6. Moses was only the student; in Christ dwelt all the fulness of wisdom. 7. Moses was delegated; Christ spoke in His own name and on His own authority. II. IN THE CREDENTIALS OF THE WORK OF MOSES AND THOSE OF THE WORK OF CHRIST. 1. The ten plagues were wrought for punishment. The thirty-two miracles of Christ were performed in mercy.* 2. The miracles of Moses were a national calamity; those of Christ a national blessing. 3. The miracles of Moses were destructive; those of Christ remedial. 4. Those of Moses were wrought on matter; many of those of Christ on mind or spirit. 5. Those of Moses were wrought by power derived from God; those of Christ by Himself. III. IN THE FESTIVALS OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. 1. The former refer to temporal deliverances and to carnal things; the latter commemorate spiritual deliverances, and refer to the heavenly and the Divine. The Passover, *e.g.*, sets forth the emancipation from Egypt; the Lord's Supper of redemption from sin. 2. The Jewish Sabbath, the last day of the week, commemorated the creation of the world; the Christian Sabbath, the first of the week, is the sign of the new creation. 3. The Jewish Pentecost commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai; our Pentecost, the baptism of the Spirit. IV. ABOUT JUDAISM WE HAVE THE OUTWARD; ABOUT GRACE AND TRUTH WE HAVE THE INWARD. 1. The virtue in the Jewish sacrifices was outwardly derived; the virtue in the Atonement is the inward. 2. Their laws were given amidst the external thundering and lightning of Sinai; ours amid the calmness and quietness peculiar to Christ. 3. The Jews were separated from the world more by outward signs; we are separated by the circumcision of the heart. V. THE LIFE OF OBEDIENCE GOD REQUIRED FROM THE JEWS WAS EMBODIED IN A CODE OF LAWS; THAT OF THE CHRISTIAN IS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. (*S. Jones.*) *The Law by Moses :*—God's education of the world, class by class—the Law one of the most important lessons ever taught it. Advisable to review these old lessons. I. THE LAW. Wider and narrower meanings of the word. 1. Political, representing the theocratic idea. 2. The ceremonial, representing the sacrificial. 3. Moral, representing the inculcation of holiness. A remarkable foreshadowing of the Holy Trinity. II. BY WHOM GIVEN. Moses. Fulness of accounts concerning him. Scenes and dates of his life easily traceable. 1. His outer life. (1) Education. (2) Energy. (3). Patriotism. 2. His inner life. (1) Meekness, disinterestedness (Exod. xxxii. 20-32). (2) Prayerfulness. III. TO WHOM GIVEN. 1. Not to the world, but to a peculiar people ; this contrary to human practice, and a proof of heavenly origin. 2. To a people specially prepared from the time of Abraham in all the circumstances of their national life and location. 3. To a people who nevertheless failed to keep it in its

entirety for a single generation. Hence we see that, while God has always a law, and that law has always been in its great characteristics the same, man has always failed to keep it. (*W. L.*) *Grace and truth by Jesus Christ*:—I. GRACE. 1. The Divine message. 2. The heavenly gift. 3. The supernatural help. II. TRUTH. This grace, embodied in the life, working outwards from the heart—III. CAME BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. They could come by no other. 2. From Him they were inseparable. The twofold nature of the Divine Man. IV. FOR WHOM. Not like the law for a people, but for the world (Matt. xi. 28; John iii. 16; 1 Tim. ii. 4; Tit. ii. 11). (*Ibid.*) *Moses and Christ*:—I. A COMPARISON. 1. Both men. 2. Both messengers from God. 3. Both bearers of a revelation. II. A CONTRAST. 1. Moses only man; Christ the Son of God. 2. Moses raised up by God; Christ sent forth from God. 3. Moses the bearer of a revelation outside of himself; Christ the bringer of a revelation in Himself. 4. Moses a lawgiver; Christ a declarer of grace and truth. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The three dispensations in history and in the soul* (*cf.* Gal. iii. 6):—I. The dispensation of NATURAL RELIGIOUS FEELING. 1. The race was in childhood. It acted from impulse. It obeyed no written code of moral regulations. The man chosen as the representative of this period was Abraham. The record of it is the book of Genesis. That writing is the first grand chapter in the biography of man; and its very literary structure—so dramatic in contents, so careless of the rules of art, so like a child's story in its sublime simplicity—answers to the spontaneous period it pictures. "The patriarchal age" we call it. Throughout the whole of this era, reaching from Adam to Joseph, there were beautiful virtues, flowering into the light by the spontaneous energy of nature, but poisoned in many spots by the slime of sensuality. The human stock threw out its forms of life with a certain negligence, as the prodigal force of nature does her forests—as a boy swings his limbs in the open air. Character needed a staunch vertebral column to secure its uprightness. 2. Corresponding to this impulsive religious age of the race, is the natural state of the individual. It is the condition we are born into, and the multitudes never pass beyond it, because they are never renewed or made Christian. Morally, they are children all their lives. Bad dispositions mix with good. Conduct is not brought to the bar of a governmental examination, and judged by an unbending principle. Nature, true enough, is always interesting; and spontaneous products may be beautiful. But man, with his free agency, beset before and behind by evil, is not like a lily growing under God's sun and dew, with no sin to deform its grace or stain its colouring. He has to contend, struggle, resist. He is tried, enticed, besieged. Natural religion might possibly answer in the woods or in some solitary cell. But let the young man travel to the city, and the young woman lend her ears to the flatteries of that silver-tongued sorceress, society; and all this natural piety is like a silken thread held over a blazing furnace. 3. And as the first dispensation ended in a slavery in Egypt, or broods darkly over Pagan nations still, so the lawless motions of every self-guided will end in a servitude to some Pharaoh in the members that cries aloud for emancipation—a settled alienation from the household of the good. II. Next comes the LEGAL OR JUDICIAL stage. 1. The world's religious experience is concentrated in Judæa, human progress running on through Hebrew channels. Others have wandered off into hopeless idolatries. Now God calls Moses and appoints him the head of the second epoch. A period of law begins. Instinct must be curbed, for it has done mischief enough. Impulse must be controlled by principle, for it has proved itself insufficient. There must be positive commands, ceremonies, and ordinances, coercive restraints, and penalties. 2. So with all of us; there comes a time when we feel that we cannot act by inclination, but must follow law. The principle of duty is that law. Babyhood is passed, and its instincts suffice us no longer. To do as we like would still be pleasant, but it is dangerous and false. We become stewards, and must give account of our stewardship. Life has put its harness upon us, and we must work in it. The beneficence as well as the rectitude of this is apparent. By obeying a law, we acquire superiority to it. Voluntarily submitting to certain rules for a time, our virtue is strengthened and finally becomes independent of them, so that it can go alone. The inebriate binds himself by a pledge, and thus regains his freedom. Let us not despise law, for every day practical proofs are scattered before us that it is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. III. But there is a THIRD DISPENSATION, and at the head of it one greater than Moses. These outgrew the period of literal commandment. It became a dead profession, a school of foolish questions, a shelter of hypocrisies. The enlarging soul of the race asks a freer, more sincere, more vital nurture, and it comes. If the simple religious instincts of Abraham had been

accepted for righteousness; if the law had been given by Moses, grace and truth enter in by Jesus Christ—grace for the heart, truth for the understanding. 1. Christ does not abrogate law, but by His own life and sacrifice first satisfies its conditions. "Think not that I came to destroy, but to fulfil." The Cross does not unbind the cords of accountability, but tightens and strengthens them. Divine laws never looked so sacred as when they took sanctity from the redemption of the Crucified. We must still be under discipline; but the Lawgiver is lost in the Redeemer. The drudgery of obedience is beautified into the privilege of reconciliation. Love has cast out fear. The soul is released from the bondage. 2. Neither of these three stages, whether of the general or the personal progress, denies or cuts off its predecessor. Nature prepares the way for law, making the heart restless by an unsatisfying experiment without it. The Law disciplined wayward, uncultured man, making him ready for Christ. Judaism and Moses looked forward to the Messiah. So, in the heart of childhood, there are expectations of the responsible second stage of manhood; it is too thoughtless yet to look beyond, to the age of mature Christian holiness. But see, again, when that second age of stern command and strict obedience comes, it grows sober and reflective. It feels heavily that it is not sufficient to itself. It must look forward for the consolations of the Cross. 3. Each stage requires fidelity in the preceding. You must have been true to the better impulses of youth, that you may be, to the best advantage, a servant of the law of maturity. You must be faithfully obedient to duty before you are fit to be a subject of grace. Do not imagine you can glide over into the favour of heaven, without first keeping the commandment. Abraham, Moses, Christ; impulse, discipline, faith; nature, law, gospel; instinct, obedience, grace; Mamre, Sinai, Calvary; this is that Divine order—not bound by rigid rules of chronological succession, but having the free play and various intershadings of a moral growth—to which we are to conform our lives. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Use of the law*:—"You never saw a woman sewing without a needle! She would come but poor speed, if she only sewed wi' the thread. So, I think, when we're dealing wi' sinners, we maun aye put in the needle o' the law first; for the fact is, they're sleepin' sound, and they need to be awakened up wi' something sharp. But when we've got the needle o' the law fairly in, we may draw as lang a thread as you like o' gospel consolation after it." (*F. Lockhart.*) *The law shows us our need of Christ*:—One of the persecutors, in Queen Mary's days, pursuing a poor Protestant, and searching the house for him, charged an old woman to show him the heretic. She points to a great chest of linen, on the top whereof lay a fair looking-glass. He opens the chest, and asks where the heretic was. She suddenly replied, "Do you not see one?" meaning that he was the heretic, and that he might easily see himself in the glass. And thus God's law is the glass that shows us all our spots. Let us hold it right to our intellectual eye; not behind us, as the wicked do, they cast God's word behind them; not beside us, like the rich worldling that called to Christ—not to turn the back of the glass towards us, which is the very trick of all hypocrites; nor, lastly, to look upon ourselves in this glass when we are muffled, masked, or cased, for under those veils we cannot discern our own complexions. But let us see the clear glass before our face, and our open face to the glass, and then we shall soon perceive that the sight of our filthiness is the first step towards cleanliness. (*J. Spencer.*) **Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.**—I. How THEY CAME. 1. Let us begin with truth. Truth came by Jesus Christ. (1) The truth of performance in distinction from engagement. You read of the promise made unto the fathers. It was first announced in Paradise, and was renewed from time to time. That promise has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. (2) The truth of reality in distinction from prefiguration. The Law was a shadow of good things to come. We are in possession of the truth, of which the paschal lamb, the manna, the rock, the altar, the mercy-seat, &c., were the shadows. (3) The truth of certainty in distinction to error and falsehood. What is heathenism? An assemblage of false gods, temples, sacrifices, hopes, fears: "turned the truth of God into a lie." What is Mohammedanism? A vast improvement on heathenism. Mohammed was a man of great talent; but that his communications from God, that his puerile and depraved notions were Divinely inspired, is a lie. What is Popery? Take her traditions, rites of saints, miracles, infallibility—what are these but lying wonders? What is justification by works? What is antinomianism, but a lie? But the gospel is the truth, and we can point to its incontestible evidences. (4) The truth of importance in distinction from all other truth. Things may be equally true, and yet not equally valuable. There is physical, historical, and moral

truth; but I lay my hand on the Bible and say, "This is life eternal." (5) This is truth the most honourable to God, suited to man, most influential, most beneficent; and we do not wonder at Paul saying, "I count all things but loss," for the excellency of it. 2. Grace came by Jesus Christ. (1) Because He revealed it (ver. 18). "Never man spoke as this man." "Grace was poured into His lips," therefore "the common people heard Him gladly." (2) Because He is the effect of it. "God so loved," &c. (3) Because He is the medium of it. Everything worthy of the name flows from His mediation—"promises which are yea and amen through Him"; redemption, which is through His blood. (4) Because He is the exemplifier of it. Look at His Old Testament emblems, and those in the New: a lamb is the image of His Person, a dove of His Spirit. Righteousness and joy and peace is the character of His kingdom. II. WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THEM NOW THEY ARE COME? We must have something to do with them, or they will have something to do with us. Having come in contact with the gospel you cannot shake it off. It will either be a savour of life or a savour of death. 1. We are to receive them. Not grace without truth or truth without grace. The gospel is truth, and therefore to be received with the firmness of conviction and assent; grace, therefore to be received with cordiality, gratitude, and joy. 2. To exemplify them. Under the agency of the Spirit we are softened from our natural hardness to receive Divine impression, and fashioned into the very character of the gospel so that we realize it, embody it, and render it visible, so that we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour by showing what it is. Whatever the gospel is we are required to copy it—if light, we are to be illuminated; if salt, we are to be seasoned; if love, we are to be lovely; if holiness, we are to be holy. There are some who are all truth who are not all that grace requires. The perfection of the Christian arises from the harmony and proportion of these excellencies. In your zeal for orthodoxy you must not renounce charity and candour. 3. To extend and diffuse them. Though grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, there are millions who have never heard of the Saviour. But are they to remain ignorant always? (*W. Jay.*) *The purpose of the law*:—The law threatened, not helped; commanded, not healed; showed, not took away, our feebleness. But it made ready for the Physician, who was to come with grace and truth. (*Augustine.*) *Law and grace*:—The Law was given, but grace came, because the one was sent by a servant, the other was brought by the Son. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Grace and truth one with Christ*:—The words "was given" imply the external and positive institution of the Law; "came" denotes grace and truth appearing historically in the very person of Him who is their essential source (ver. 4), and becoming realized in His life and communicated through Him. Moses may disappear, the Law remains nevertheless; it is only given by him. But take Jesus Christ away, and grace and truth are gone; for these gifts have come by Him, and are closely united to His Person. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Claim and gift*:—There was first, in the Law, God's claim of right, which man could not meet, and now, in Jesus Christ, God's gift of salvation. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) The one could only give the command, but the other supplies motives and strength to keep it. The one could only show in figure, what the other exhibits in fact, the means whereby we may obtain pardon where the command has unhappily been broken. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Grace and truth*:—Grace in opposition to the curse of the moral law; truth in opposition to the figures of the ceremonial law. (*Bp. Reynolds.*) Grace comprehends all the perfections of the will; truth all the virtues of the understanding. (*Dr. Preston.*) *Truth*:—It is plain that the antithesis cannot be between the false and the true, but only between the imperfect and the perfect, the shadowy and the substantial. So, too, the eternal word is declared to be τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν (chap. i. 9), not denying thereby that the Baptist was also "a burning and a shining light" (chap. v. 35), or that the faithful are "lights in the world" (Phil. ii. 15; Matt. v. 14); but only claiming for a greater than all to be "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Christ declares Himself ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἀληθινὸς (chap. vi. 32), not that the bread which Moses gave was not also "bread of heaven" (Ps. cv. 40), but it was such only in a secondary inferior degree; it was not food in the highest sense, inasmuch as it did not nourish up into eternal life those that ate it (chap. vi. 49). He is ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινὴ (chap. xv. 1), not thereby denying that Israel also was God's vine, which we know it was (Ps. lxxx. 8; Jer. ii. 21), but affirming that none except Himself realized this name, and all which this name implied, to the full (Hos. x. 1; Deut. xxxii. 32). The fact that in John's writings the word ἀληθινός is used two and twenty times as against five times in all the rest of the New Testa-

ment, is one which we can scarcely dismiss as accidental. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Jesus Christ* :—It is at this point that the Apostle for the first time announces the great name so long expected. In proportion as the history of the mercies of the Word towards humanity unfolds before his view, the spectacle inspires him with terms even more concrete and more human. The Logos of ver. 1 appeared as Light in ver. 5; as Son, ver. 14; and in ver. 17 He is at length called Jesus Christ. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Law and grace* :—These great words have stood here in John's Gospel for eighteen hundred years, but I am afraid there are millions of Christian people who have not discovered their glorious meaning. They are still under law, and are still surrounded by the unreal shadows of darkness. About the grace and the truth which have come through Jesus Christ, they know almost nothing. I will begin with what is most obvious. We find ourselves living in a world in which the forces of nature are constant, in which what we describe as natural laws are uniform and invariable. There is an iron rigidity in the constitution of things. We have to discover that constitution. We cannot change it. We have to take account of it in the conduct of life. What we call Nature seems to show no mercy to those who disregard her method. She will give us harvests, but we must pay her price, and her full price. We can have health and strength, but only upon her conditions. Now this relentlessness of nature forms men to think of God sometimes as relentless; for nature, they say, is the revelation of God. We are under law—this is the inference—under law throughout every province of life, and we can never escape the natural consequences of our sins. We must exhaust the penalty in this world or other worlds, we must pay the debt to the uttermost farthing. Christ meets us in nature and contradicts that inference. Nature is only the partial and incomplete revelation of God. Christ reveals the actual truth. You believe that there is no release from the natural consequences of ignorance, of folly, of recklessness, of vice, and that in the full and unqualified sense of the words "What a man soweth that shall he also reap." But the whole story of Christ's life contradicts that belief. If natural laws were supreme, men born blind would remain blind to the end of their days. Christ gave them sight. That is not merely part of the evidence of the gospel. It is a very substantial part of the gospel itself, and a part of the gospel exceptionally necessary in our times. If natural laws were supreme, deaf would remain deaf, the dumb would remain dumb. Christ gave them hearing, speech. The laws of nature are not supreme. In Christ, the gracious power of the Eternal revealed, not to one age only but to all ages, that nature is not supreme, but that God is supreme. Nature may be relentless; God is not. And it was in the natural order itself that Christ by His miracles gave us this great discovery. The universe is a great school for the discipline of the intellect and the virtue of mankind, and it could not be an effective discipline if the natural order were not constant. But to infer that the methods of God are bound by the methods of nature is a false inference. Let me take another illustration of how Christ contradicts what may be called our natural belief in law. We are conscious of fault, perhaps of something that ought to be described by a darker name. It lies upon our conscience, and we cannot escape from it. We say, "No, it is impossible that I should ever escape. The guilt is mine, and if I live for a thousand years it will be mine still." Grace came by Jesus Christ. You think that by an eternal law you must suffer for your sins. The Christian gospel declares that Christ suffered for them. His relations to us—you will discover this, I hope, some day if you have not discovered it yet—are of a kind which made it possible for Him, as it was possible for no one else. But does He deliver from the external and natural consequences of wrong-doing? Not obviously. Perhaps not frequently. If He delivered men from these obviously and frequently, the moral discipline which we are to derive from the constancy of the order of nature would be imperilled. Sometimes, indeed—and far more often than we even suppose—I am inclined to believe that Christ does really deliver us even from the natural consequences of wrong-doing. But even when these remain their whole character is changed. As sins they are forgiven. Then they become simply the natural consequences of what we have done, not the penal consequences. We do not see behind them a God that is punishing us for having done wrong, but a God who has pardoned us, and who is standing by us to discipline us by certain hard conditions of life to a higher perfection. Consequences which were penal as long as we were unforgiven, become simply natural and disciplinary as soon as sin has been remitted. Do you say that if the consequences remain it makes no difference whether they are penal or whether they are natural and disciplinary? You

would hardly say that if you knew the difference from experience. But even apart from experience you may get some glimpse of the truth. Here is a man who, as the result of his recklessness and his gross vices, is suffering disease for which there is no cure. He is miserably weak, sometimes he is in great pain. His condition is the natural result of his evil life, and since he brought it on himself by his vices, he feels that it is the penal result of his evil life. Here is another man, suffering from weakness equally prostrating, from pain equally severe, but his weakness and pain came upon him from no fault of his own. They are the result of exposure to damp air acting on some original defect of the constitution, or the result of overwork for the sake of his wife and children, or of accident, or they came upon him on the battlefield when fighting for his country. They are natural consequences of certain past events in the man's history; they are not the penal results of the man's vices. Would not the first man give a great deal to exchange the weakness and the suffering which are penal for the weakness and the suffering which are merely natural? That is what Christ reveals. Law came by Moses, grace came by Jesus Christ. Let me take another illustration. Law, moral law, law as we know it—and I am using the word in its popular sense—begins by imposing duty. The law of consequence begins by imposing duty. The law given to the Jewish people so far forth as it was law begins by imposing duty, and it makes the fulfilment of duty the condition of peace with God and of larger power to do well and of eternal blessedness. All this is of the very essence of what we call law. Grace came by Jesus Christ. He begins in altogether a different way. He does not say "Live righteously, and God will be at peace with you," but "God is at peace with you, therefore live righteously." He finds us in our sin. Whenever He really finds us we are conscious of our sin, and so we are ready in our strong belief in that form of law which is familiar to us to say, "God can be no friend of mine as yet; I must amend my ways, I must break off my evil habits, I must master my evil passions, I must become pure, devout, earnest about religion, and then God will be at peace with me." That is law. What Christ says is, "God is already at peace with you, is already your Friend. He will not wait till you have amended your ways before He dismisses the remembrance of your sin. He dismisses it at once, and will help you to mend your ways, will help you to break off evil habits, will help you to master evil passions, will help you to become pure, devout, and earnest about religion." That is grace. People do not see the glory of it, do not see what it means. They think that Christ only came to make some things plainer to the world than they were before. It never occurred to them that it would not have been worth while for the eternal Word of God to become flesh in order to do that. Truth—there is an infinite suggestiveness in the way John puts the contrast between what Moses did and what Christ has done. He does not merely say, "The law was given by Moses, grace came by Jesus Christ." What he says is, "The law was given by Moses, grace came—grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Judaism was evidently wanting in grace; it was wanting in reality too. All its institutions were elementary, visible, material illustrations of the spiritual realities, the very truth of things, which are ours in Christ. Not only grace and truth, reality came by Jesus Christ. And wherever the grace is obscured, the truth, the very reality and substance of the Christian revelation loses its place, and the mere shadows of heavenly things remain. It was so among the Judaising opponents of Paul. You remember how they insisted on the necessity of circumcision if men were to be saved. But, said Paul, circumcision is nothing. It is a shadow, it produces no real change in a man. We Christians have the true thing, of which circumcision is but the shadow, the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of man but of God. I entreat you to dismiss shadows, all shadows. Recognize the truth, the reality that has come by Jesus Christ, and in the truth you will find grace. There is a real sacrifice for sin, the eternal Son of God. There is a real Priest. While we deal with the shadows of sin, the shadows of sacrifices and the shadows of priests may avail for us; but when the sin comes home to us in its reality, be sure of this, that only the sacrifice that is real and the Priest that is real will give us courage and peace. And the glory of what Christ has achieved, and the revelation of grace which has come by Christ, is this, that while Christ has cancelled the old and infirm form of law, Christ creates a righteousness transcending all that law had demanded. Grace comes, grants us to begin with more than man had ever hoped for by perfect obedience, and grace tells man that, by an obedience he would never have been capable of before, he is to retain this great wealth and constantly to augment it. And so in a higher region grace and law blend. The law

is not made void—it is established; the righteousness that law demands grace renders possible; and so man is glorified for ever in the eternal glory of God. (*R. W. Dale, M.A.*)

Ver. 18. **No man hath seen God.**—*The limitations of human vision:*—Some men have seen much, for all have not the same power of vision. Some have seen much more than others with—I. THE NATURAL EYE. They have travelled far and near; seen wonders upon the deep and on the mountains, and the marvels of creation living and lifeless—but no man hath seen God. II. THE INTELLECTUAL EYE. 1. The eye of science. They can invade worlds of truth which are veiled and shut to souls of lesser power; ascend into the heavens and see the harmony which rules all the movements of those gleaming worlds, descend into the deeps of the earth and of the ages which have measured out its history, and read the records which are there inscribed. They can see something of the unity which pervades the whole universe; that all sciences are but chapters in one great illuminated book, or are but notes in one sublime and never-ceasing song—but they have not seen God. 2. Some men have the poet's eye which can glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, and detect behind what is natural and changeful the truths which are typified, and which abide for ever—but even they have not seen God. III. THE MORAL EYE. Patriarchs, prophets, apostles beheld wonderful visions. Some of them were favoured with glimpses and manifestations and tokens of His presence, and so impressive and overpowering were these that they felt as if they had seen God, but even they were no exception to the rule that "no man hath seen God at any time." (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *The invisible and revealed God:*—I. THE INVISIBLE GOD. 1. We are invisible to each another; nay, to ourselves. There is a veil between our spirit and another that, while our words and looks may serve to indicate what is passing within, they cannot unveil the indwelling soul. And so utterly can the soul tyrannize over the house in which it dwells, that it can compel it to illuminate its windows with festive joy when all is woe within, or compel it to darken them when all within is mirth and revelry. And if we cannot see man, much less can we see God. 2. There is no law that God has impressed on nature that we can see. Form and colour we can see, and that things move, but not the pervading life nor the gravitation which holds them together in their orbits. 3. The material universe is but a faint indication of God's greatness, nor does it seem possible for even omnipotence to embody itself in matter. We might imagine the sun robbed of its beams, and heaven, earth, and sea combining to surrender whatever of beauty or grandeur they contain, still the result would be miserably insufficient to portray the glory of the invisible God. 4. The mind is baffled in its attempt to grasp the fundamental mystery. The loftiest conception we have is that of infinity. And yet this is a mere negation, and must be affirmed of each separate attribute as well as the totality of God's being. 5. Without the guidance of revelation no one has ever reached any fair conception of the unity, spirituality, and moral character of God. Though day unto day has been uttering speech, and night unto night showing knowledge, the mass of the rude and unlearned have everywhere, divided the empire of the universe among gods many and lords many. And as to the philosophers, such of them as have been able to emancipate themselves from gross polytheism, have either guessed at the truth that there is one God, and have contented themselves with a cold deduction of reason, or they have merged God and nature in one, thus destroying His personality in Pantheism. The world never by wisdom knew God. And were we to close the Book of Revelation in a few generations we should relapse into a heathenism as absolute as that of Greece and Rome. 6. And as for the supposed teachings of natural religion, they are but flashes from the revealed Word. We are astonished that any eye can miss the Divine monogram written large in the heavens, small in the flower. But we do not search nature for the invisible, we take the idea with us. II. THE DECLARED GOD. Christ has revealed the Father in three ways which meet and satisfy these corresponding necessities in man. 1. The incarnation, *e.g.*, of the spiritual in the bodily meets that necessity which feels how impossible it is to grasp the purely spiritual. We do not feel happy at the thought of what is both infinite and invisible. Who has not felt at times the all but intolerable oppression that comes upon the spirit when one has stood in the shadow of Alpine mountains! We are bewildered by the unmanageable vastness of the conception of an all-prevailing God. We long for something that we can more effectually compass. We wish to pray; are heavy

laden and sad; but infinitude is too grand for us in such hours, and we long for a friend who can take our hand and say, "Fear not I am with thee." But God, the great and glorious mystery, has been manifest in the flesh. As He had to reveal Himself to man, He found no better medium than man, the form with which we were most familiar, and of which we should be least afraid. 2. By His character and life Christ declares to us the moral character of God. There is much in God which humanity, even in its highest and purest type, is inadequate to represent. The medium is tarnished and dimmed so that the heavenly light cannot shine through it, or only brokenly. Once only has humanity formed a medium through which, in its unmingled brightness and beauty, the moral character of God might pour its beams. To learn the moral character of God we must learn it in Christ; its holiness, its tenderness, its mercy for the sinful. 3. Christ has declared to us the Fatherly character of God. God we are told is love. This He is in Himself, and this He has been pre-eminently to us. We need more than words, and then, when we receive but words from those who might give us more real help, we learn bitterly that all friends are not true. Now there is no better test of love than the test of endurance and suffering, but Divine love has made for us the highest sacrifice, "for God so loved the world," &c. (*Ibid.*) *Invisible things*:—There are even material agents in existence around us so subtle as to elude the cognisance of the senses. There are powers in nature whose ever-present influence we perceive, yet which themselves are never directly discerned. The varied forms and colours of material objects around us the eye can detect, but not the latent electricity that pervades them. The masses and motions of the planetary bodies are appreciable by the sight; but the keenest organs of sense cannot see gravitation, cannot detect that mysterious power, as it flies through space, binding orb to orb. And if thus on the confines, so to speak, of the material and spiritual worlds, there are agents impalpable to sense, much more, when we pass those limits, do we enter into a region where bodily organs fail us, and a vision and faculty far more divine is needed. Who has seen thought? What eye has ever rested on that mysterious essence which we designate mind, soul, spirit? If it be that spiritual intelligences surround us, if millions of spiritual beings walk the earth both when we wake and sleep, yet, as they pass hither and thither on their heavenly ministries, does the faintest sign of the presence of these glorious beings ever flash on the dull sense of man? Nay, are we not dwellers in a world of embodied spirits, holding continual intercourse with them, witnessing constantly the proofs of their existence and the effects of their activity: yet has one human spirit ever become visible to another? No! it is but the forms of spirit that are visible to sense. We see in the busy world around us the mere houses of souls. In this sense, then, God is now and ever must be invisible. If even a finite spirit cannot be seen by the bodily eye, how much less the infinite spirit? (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *The invisibility of God*:—We are much in the condition of children for whom their father has built a magnificent house, and stored it with all needful provisions, and ornamented it with the most exquisite decorations, a house which the more it is examined the more it reveals forethought and arrangement, startling its inmates constantly with unexpected anticipation for their comfort and happiness. But their father, for some reason or other, is concealed from their view. "Now every house is builded by some man, but He that built all things is God." We dwell in His house. Its roof declares His handiwork. Its chambers are garnished with a wondrous glory. Its table is supplied day by day with food convenient for us. The house is renewed year by year. But the Hand which accomplishes it all is unseen. We sometimes long to get behind the intercepting veil. We would fain see the Great Worker at His work, see the arm of power, gaze on the fountain of light, rise above and through all phenomena, leave the fleeting behind us, and stand in the presence of the changeless. But no man hath seen God at any time, and what is more, "no man can see God and live." (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *God invisible to sense*:—Could we entertain for a moment the supposition of God condescending to contrive some resplendent form, some radiant shape of superhuman majesty and loveliness, by which to convey to man a conception of His spiritual glory, we might conceive the universe to be searched in vain for the materials of such a production. We might give the rein to fancy, and imagine the sun robbed of its glory and the stars of their splendours, and heaven, earth, sea, skies, all the myriad worlds in space, combining to surrender whatever of beauty or grandeur they contain; still would the result be miserably insufficient to portray the unapproachable glory of the invisible Being of God. "These are but parts of His ways; how little a portion is heard of Him!

but the thunder of His power who can understand?" (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *The incomprehensibility of God*:—In the Greek legend she who desired to see the deity in his splendour is instantly reduced to ashes. In the Hindoo mythology when Brahma, the supreme, shoots down a pillar of light between the two contending deities, Siva and Vishnu, one deity wings his way upwards for a thousand years with the speed of lightning, but cannot reach its summit; the other wings his way downwards with the speed of lightning for a thousand years yet cannot find its base. Christian theology has felt this no less clearly that God in His own Being is incomprehensible. There is a picture of the vision of St. Augustine, who, when he was writing a treatise on the Trinity, saw a child trying to empty the ocean with a shell into a little hole in the sand. "What art thou doing?" asked the saint. "I am trying to empty the sea with this shell into this hole," answered the child. "But that is impossible," said Augustine." "Not more impossible, O Augustine, than for thee in thy treatise to explain the mystery of the Trinity." (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) As regards God, our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him, and our safest eloquence concerning Him is silence, when we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity or reach. (*Hooker.*) **The only-begotten Son.**—*The only-begotten Son*:—This "only-begotten Son" is the same Person who, in the previous portion of the chapter, is designated the Word, and of whom it is said in language of which it is impossible for us to mistake the reference, "He was made flesh and dwelt among us," and so dwelling among men there was beheld in Him "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The Person, then, who is thus named is none other than He who was more familiarly known as the Lord Jesus Christ. I. Briefly, then, let me try to unfold to you THE IMPORT OF THIS GREAT NAME—the Son, the only-begotten Son of God. There is a previous inquiry to which I may, in a very few words, refer. What is the reference of the text—it being ascertained that it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ? Does it refer to Him as Divine, or simply as Mediator between God and man? It is evident to my own mind that the Scriptures give the name Son to the second Person of the Godhead, as a Person of the Godhead, and that it belongs to Him as Divine, and that, apart altogether from His becoming incarnate and doing work for the salvation of sinners, He is the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. Further, there is nothing in the name itself that makes it inapplicable to the Divine Person. It is quite true that, as applied to man, it does include those ideas of derivation of beings, which are totally inconsistent with the notion of eternal existence; but when we find figures of any sort applied to God, we must strain them no further than is consistent with a notion of His Divinity. Yet farther: if this name be not descriptive of a Divine relation, then the name "Father" also is not descriptive of a Divine relation. And if you take it away, then have we no manifestation of the first Person of the Godhead by any personally distinctive name whatever. As, therefore, you say the "Father" is a name belonging to the first Person of the Godhead as Divine, so is the "Son." We must take notice, in an introductory way, of the expression "only." This name, whatever be its import, belongs to Christ as it belongs to no one else. There is but one Son of God in the sense of my text. You do not need to go far back into the previous context to find that there are others who in a certain sense are the sons of God. II. We now proceed to notice SOME OF THE THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THIS INCOMMUNICABLE TITLE. 1. I think that instead of suggesting to us, when wisely interpreted, something inconsistent with Divinity, this title in its sole and incommunicable pre-eminence suggests the very idea of Divinity. Indeed that is the very first thought I find in it—sameness of nature with the Father. The Son of man is not angelic; the Son of man is man. And so when you speak of Him in the full and true and proper sense, the Son of God is God. Nay, so far may you carry this principle that you cannot describe a creature as the son or child of God without his being, as far as a creature may be, partaker of the Divine nature. It was because there was something of it in him that Adam was called the son of God. But in the full sense, in which it belongs to no other, it is true only of Jesus Christ that He is God. 2. Then there is second thought. There is resemblance in character. The Son of God resembles the Father, and the resemblance in this Divine nature is so perfect as to come to identity. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." 3. Then, thirdly, these words Father and Son suggest intimacy of fellowship. "The Father showeth the Son all things that He Himself doeth!" 4. But perhaps the most prominent of all ideas connected with the title is intensity of mutual Divine affec-

tion. The Father loveth the Son. 5. There is another idea which is brought out also in Scripture, namely, community of interests. All that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son. 6. But I should be omitting one thought of great importance if I did not say that the title "Son," as applied to the second Person in the Trinity, does, after all, indicate a certain distinction. The Father is not personally the Son, nor the Son the Father. And now for one or two particular inferences from what I have been unfolding in this somewhat dry and formal manner. And first—if these things be so—oh, what love is that of the Father towards sinful men? The second inference is this—I wish I could bring it out as it presents itself, in its attractive phase, to my own mind. If the Saviour be God's beloved Son—His only Son—the object of infinite, unfathomable, everlasting delight—what an argument the sinner has when he goes to God for pardon, love, and all spiritual blessings! What a plea does God put in the sinner's mouth, when He says to the sinner, "Ask of Me for My Son's sake." But there is another side to this argument. If the Saviour be God's only Son, what becomes of those that will not know Him—of those who dishonour and reject Him? (*J. Edmund, D.D.*) **He hath declared Him.**—*Christ the revelation of the invisible God*:—The obvious import of these words is, not that Jesus Christ has told or taught us verbally who and what God is, but that in His own person and life He is the silent inarticulate manifestation of God to the world. A child may declare or describe to you the appearance and character of his father; a pupil may tell you of his teacher; an author may give an account of himself in his book; but there may be in each of these cases an involuntary and indirect description, much more clear and emphatic than the direct one. For in his writings, the author, especially if he be an earnest writer, unconsciously portrays himself, so that we may know as much of the heart and soul of a favourite author by familiarity with his books as if we had lived for years in personal intercourse with him. So the pupil has caught the revered master's manner; or the child bears, not only in his person, but in his temper, habits, sentiments, prevailing tone of thought and feeling, a strong family-likeness to the parent; and though there may be much in the father which, from inferiority of talents or attainments, the character of the child may be inadequate to represent, yet, according to his measure, he may convey to us a better idea of what the father is than by any express and formal description of him we could attain. Now, so it is in the case before us. Jesus manifests the Father by His person, by His life and character, and especially by His sufferings and death. (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *The unseen God made visible in Christ*:—In looking at the sun through a telescope, if we use unstained glass the eye will be burned to the socket, and we shall see nothing; but if we employ a coloured medium, we can examine it with safety. So no man can see God and live. But if we contemplate Him through Christ, that is, if we come to Him through the medium of humanity, we behold Him without being destroyed, nay, the sight of Him thus imparts salvation to us; for we behold His glory as that of the only-begotten, and lo! it is full of grace and truth. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Christ's relation to the Great Father*:—I. He is the NEAREST RELATION to the Great Father. The phrase "only-begotten" which occurs only here and John i. 14; iii. 16, 18; 1 John iv. 9, implies an essential relation perfectly unique as appears.—1. From the interpretation which the Jews put upon it (chap. v. 18). 2. From the extraordinary manifestation of Divine love which the sacred writers saw in His mission. 3. From several events of His history—(1) His miraculous conception; (2) His persistent self-assertion; (3) His wondrous miracles; (4) His atoning death; (5) His resurrection and ascension. II. He is TENDEREST IN AFFECTION to the Great Father. 1. In His preincarnate life (Prov. viii. 30). 2. In prophecy (Isa. xlii. 1). 3. At His baptism. 4. At His transfiguration (2 Pet. i. 17, 18). 5. In the Epistles (Col. i. 13). From this we learn—(1) That God loves; He is not mere infinite Intellectuality; He is infinite Sensibility too; (2) Christ is the highest object of His love. That love is not the love of pity, of gratitude, but of infinite complacency. III. He is the MOST ACCURATE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF the Great Father. 1. He alone is intellectually qualified to know God. The highest created being only knows God in some of His aspects; Christ knows Him in all, in His being. 2. He alone is morally qualified to know God. He alone is—(1) Sufficiently pure: only the pure in heart can see God; (2) Sufficiently powerful: Moses, Isaiah, John could not stand a slight manifestation. IV. He is THE MOST COMPLETE REVELATION of the Great Father (Matt. xi. 27). He is the LOGOS, the only word which can express the Divine heart. He has revealed.—1. God's Being: a Spirit, &c. 2. His relation: a Father. If Christ is the correct revelation of God—(1) All other revelations must be tested by

His. (2) Much that is prevalent in religious society must be repudiated as un-Christ-like. (3) Christ alone must be held as the Master of souls. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *A Blessed Evangel*:—Concerning—I. THE CHARACTER OF GOD, Who is—1. Not an abstraction, but a Person. 2. Not a Supreme Intelligence merely, but an infinite Heart. 3. Not a Divinity enthroned in the serene altitudes of His measureless perfections, but a Father interested in the affairs and providing help for the necessities of His children, yea, coming near them in the person of His Son. II. THE DESTINY OF MAN. 1. By establishing the inherent dignity of human nature, since it was capable of union with Divine. 2. By revealing its lofty possibilities when so allied. 3. And so discovering that man must have a future not bounded by time. The first prediction of this was man's creation (Lev. i. 27), the second the Incarnator (Heb. ii. 14). III. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL which is announced to be grace and truth, without which the nature of God could not be revealed nor the destiny of man attained. Lessons: 1. Do we believe in the Incarnation? Our answer discloses the inner quality of our souls (1 John iv. 2, 3). 2. Have we accepted the gospel it brings? This also is heart searching, character revealing, destiny fixing inquiry (John iii. 33, 36; 1 John v. 10). 3. Can we confirm from personal experience these truths? If so our faith will be invincible against modern doubt. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Revealer of God*:—Jesus Christ declared—I. THE UNITY OF GOD. By this we do not understand that this truth was absolutely unknown before His advent, but that it received new importance and fresh vitality in the religion He established. 1. There is but one God—a very vital truth. Whence came it? From nature? Let us ask the pupils of nature, the numerous nations of antiquity. How many gods are there? "There are gods many," not that nature taught polytheism, but her pupils learnt it in her school. The mildest departure from the monotheistic faith was that of Persia and the adjoining countries. Their populations looked around, and beheld, as we behold, the presence of light and darkness, of good and evil. These two powers were in perpetual antagonism. How did they account for them? By the adoption of a creed in which there were two gods, Ormuzd and Ahriman, a god of good and a god of evil. 2. Turn from nature to philosophy. Philosophy and idolatry were attached twins. The capital of the one was the centre of the other (Acts. xvii. 16). There were a few there who dared to ridicule the graven images; but what had they to offer instead? Nothing. The alternative lay between polytheism and atheism. One here and there gave utterance to lofty truths about God. But to their thinking the existence of inferior deities was not inconsistent with that of the Lord of all. Socrates on his deathbed ordered a fowl to be sacrificed on his behalf to the god Æsculapius. Besides, the idea of one God, supreme among the many, was counteracted in its influence by the absurd notion that in proportion to His greatness was He removed from the ordinary affairs of mankind. 3. This truth, absent from every other, is prominent in the literature of the Hebrews. The Jewish creed teaches it, but its Author is God. 4. This Old Testament truth Christ appropriated, and made it the cardinal doctrine of the new religion. He amplified it and gave it a vitality it never had before. Its novelty on Christ's lips consist in its representation that God is near man and interested in his concerns. Judaism showed men a great God, but he was distant. Paganism showed them a near god, but he was small. In Christianity, however, we see the great God of the Jews without being far, and the near god of the Greek without being small. II. THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD. Not that this was totally unknown to the ancient leaders of thought, but that it received from Christ a new impulse, power, and application. 1. That God is a Spirit is a thought than which there is none more familiar to the modern mind. Whence came it? From nature? Decidedly not. Matter does not give the idea of spirit; it cannot give an idea which is not in it. 2. Whence then came it? We are conscious of mind, a substance essentially different from matter; but the most influential modern school denies that mind is different from matter, being only the natural result of the happy organisation of matter. And this was practically the doctrine of ancient stoicism, whose God was refined matter. 3. Let us turn to the Hebrew Scriptures, where we find very Spiritual views of God; but the ideas in the Jewish mind were low and carnal. Hence the proneness of the nation to idolatry, which is materialism of the grossest kind. 4. At this crisis Jesus Christ makes His appearance on the arena of history, and proclaims, with an emphasis and a fulness of meaning before unknown, "God is a Spirit," &c. This declaration overwhelms us with its simplicity, purity, and grandeur. III. THE GOODNESS OF GOD. 1. The prominent idea of the god of nature is power. But the idea of bare power would create dismay

rather than trust. God is mighty, but I have offended Him. Will He forgive? Nature cannot say? 2. The main excellence of the god of philosophy is wisdom; but such a god can make no appeal to the heart of humanity. 3. Christ declares that "God is love:" His love and His essence are so interwoven that the cessation of the one would be the destruction of the other. Being always in His bosom, the Lord Jesus knows perfectly the contents of God's heart; and in His life, death, and ministry that heart is unfolded to the world. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *God unfolding Himself to man* (Children's Sermon):—The ancients tell a story of one who tried to storm the heavens, but was defeated, and had to bear the heavens as a punishment on his shoulders. He was called Atlas, from which we get the name for a collection of maps. Our religion rests upon the one great doctrine of God. How are we to know Him? We can't see Him. But seeing the Queen would not make her known to us; but—1. If the Queen were to send us a picture painted by herself we should know her knowledge, skill, and love of beauty. 2. If she were to send a kind letter we should know her better. 3. If she sent a daughter exactly like herself we should know her best. In these three ways God has revealed Himself to us. 1. The world is a great picture painted by God. Visit a factory and you see order everywhere, which shows that the man who built and arranged such a place had an orderly mind. So there is order; and wisdom, power, beauty and goodness as well, which tells us something of God. 2. The Bible is God's letter which tells us of God's heart, which nature does not; and what He thinks of us and would have us be and do. 3. Jesus Christ is God's Son, and if we want to know exactly what God is like we must study Jesus. If we want to know how He treats sinners and little children, we must find out how Jesus treated them. (*Joseph Dawson.*) *Christ the declarer of the Father*:—I. CHRIST'S PERSONAL MINISTRY. 1. Its contents—(1) God's nature, perfections, authority, and government; (2) The eternal councils of His will for the salvation of lost sinners; (3) The wonders of His love in sending His only-begotten Son into the world. 2. Its manner—(1) Unique and authoritative; (2) Gentle and tender; (3) Complete; (4) Zealous; (5) Courageous; (6) Unanswerable; (7) Commanding. 3. Its credentials—(1) The fulfilment of types and prophecies; (2) His life; (3) The purity of His doctrine; (4) His miracles. II. HIS PROPHETIC OFFICE more extensively considered—1. Before the Incarnation. 2. During His earthly life. 3. After His ascension—(1) By the ministry of inspired man; (2) By the ministry of uninspired men, pastors, teachers, officers of the Church; calling them, inclining their hearts to the work, giving them opportunities for engaging in it; (3) By internal illumination, removing the veil from men's heart, and quickening their apprehensions by His Spirit. III. THE USE. 1. To show the excellence and necessity of Christ's teachings. 2. To warn against the danger of refusing to hear the Divine Teacher. 3. To encourage us to attend to His teachings. (*Dr. Guyse.*) *Christ the perfect revelation of God*:—Perfections that are set before us in mere epithets have no significance but that which we give them by thinking them out. But perfections lived, embodied physically, and acted before the senses, under social conditions, have quite another grade of meaning. How much, then, does it signify when God comes out from nature, out of all abstraction and abstractive epithets, to be acted personally in just those glorious and Divine passivities that we have least discerned in Him and scarcely dare impute to Him. By what other method can He meet us, then, so entirely new and superior to all past revelations, as to come into our world history in the human form; that organ most eloquent in its passivity, because it is at once most expressive and closest to our feeling? (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *God only to be seen in Christ Jesus*:—A man cannot behold the sun in the eclipse, it so dazzleth his eyes. What doth he then? He sets down a basin of water, and seeth the image of the sun shadowed in the water. So, seeing we cannot behold the infinite God, nor comprehend Him, we must, then, cast the eyes of our faith upon His image, Christ Jesus. When we look into a clear glass, it casteth no shadow to us; but put steel upon the back, then it casteth a reflex, and showeth the face in the glass. So, when we cannot see God Himself, we must put the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ as it were a back to His Godhead, and then we shall have a comfortable reflex of His glory. (*J. Spencer.*) *God revealed in Christ*:—We use many words to declare our minds, thereby showing the incoherency of our thoughts and the faultiness of the vehicle in which we convey them. The more powerful the mind, the fewer and clearer the words it uses to disclose itself; and the higher and more inspirational the mood, the more condensed and significant the language. Every extraordinary genius reveals itself, not by the multiplicity of its sentences, but

by one or two words struck off the anvil at the moment of white heat. Every illustrious man is characterised by one or two sentences. "Know thyself!" therein you see the whole mind and philosophy of Socrates. God revealed Himself once in Christ the Word. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) Christianity says with simplicity, "No man hath seen God, except God." That is a saying of profound meaning. (*Napoleon Buonaparte.*)

Vers. 19–28. **The record of John.**—I. AN INSTRUCTIVE EXAMPLE OF TRUE HUMILITY. 1. John was an eminent saint of God (Matt. xi. 11; John v. 35), yet we see him lowly and self-abased. (1) He refuses the honour which the Jews were ready to pay him; (2) He declines all flattering titles; (3) He asserts that he is only a voice and a baptizer with water; (4) He exalts Christ alone. 2. The greatest saints in every age have been men of the Baptist's spirit. (1) They have differed widely in gifts; (2) They have been all alike in humility; seeking not their own honour, thinking little of themselves, giving Christ the pre-eminence. This is the secret of the honour Christ has put upon them (Luke xiv. 11). 3. Let us cultivate this spirit; (1) This is the initial saving grace; (2) We have no religion without it; (3) All saints may have it; (4) It will appear most beautiful in death and at the Judgment. II. A MOURNFUL EXAMPLE OF THE BLINDNESS OF UNCONVERTED MEN. 1. The Jews professed to be waiting for the Messiah, and yet at the moment of the manifestation of Christ they were utterly dark (ver. 26). And, worse than this, the vast majority would never know Him. 2. John's words apply to thousands now. Christ stands among those who know Him not. Money and pleasure they know. They are asleep with salvation within reach. Application: 1. Do we know the extent of our religious privileges? 2. Do we know that Christ rejected will be soon Christ withdrawn. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The confession of John:*—I. AS IT RESPECTED HIMSELF. 1. He confessed I am not the Christ. This is a hard saying for human nature. Though death is working in every part, it will be its own saviour if it can. Man may be willing to take the reform of John wherewith to gild his own pretensions, but he is offended with the idea that he needs salvation at the hands of another. But there is no hope for him until he confesses it. 2. He confessed that he was not Elias nor any of the prophets. He came, indeed, in the spirit and power of Elias (Matt. xi. 14), and was "more than a prophet": but not in their sense. Ah! the deceitfulness of the human heart! To have such popular preachers, to be united to such a mighty Church—this pleases the natural man. But John's example teaches us to renounce all prophets, save only as they set Christ forth. 3. He confessed he was not worthy to perform the most menial offices for Christ. The greatest of men sink into nothing before the glory of Christ. And if such was John's unworthiness, considering who he was, what is ours, considering who we are? II. AS IT RESPECTS THE CHRIST. 1. He bore witness to Christ's pre-existence, and therefore to His divinity. 2. To His coming after him, and therefore to His humanity. 3. To His real presence, and any one searching for Him can find Him now in His Word and sacraments; and He is present now as then, as the Messiah, with all His Messianic blessings. 4. To his atonement (ver. 29). III. AS IT RESPECTS OUR RECEPTION OF CHRIST. 1. We are to give heed to the testimony of Christ's heralds. (1) Those who speak to us in the Scriptures; (2) Those who minister in sacred things; 2. We must set ourselves to work in Christ's way; (1) By repentance (ver. 23); (2) By faith (ver. 29). (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The Forerunner's confession:*—I. BY WHOM MADE. John: on the testimony of the Evangelist (ver. 19) and his own (ver. 23). 1. The Evangelist's estimate of John was high (ver. 6, 7). The dignity of his person, the nobility of his character, the elevation of his calling (comp. Prov. xxxii. 2). 2. His estimate of himself was low (ver. 23); an obscure desert preacher, an echo sounding through moral wastes, an insignificant forerunner, a water baptizer who could not touch the impure heart. This language revealed the essential humility of his nature (chap. iii. 20; *cf.* Phil. ii. 3), the felt loneliness of his position (chap. iii. 26; *cf.* Kings xix. 10), his feebleness (chap. iii. 27; *cf.* 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10), the fruitlessness of his mission (ver. 25). II. WHEN DELIVERED. On the occasion of the Embassy and after the Baptism. It was—1. Timely: given at the moment required (1 Peter iii. 15). 2. Prompt: without hesitation or reluctance, knowing that he had nothing to conceal or to be ashamed of (2 Tim. i. 8.) 3. Consistent: the same to the legates and to the populace (Matt. v. 37; Cor. i. 8.) 4. Final (Heb. x. 2; John iii. 6). III. TO WHOM ADDRESSED. The deputation from Jerusalem (ver. 19). 1. Composed of Priests and Levites, who would keep each other in countenance, and perhaps overawe

the desert prophet by their combined importance. 2. Prompted by growing excitement in the Temple authorities at John's popularity. Perhaps hastened by report of Christ's baptism. Those who enter on evil courses are easily alarmed (Job xviii. 7–11.) Rulers governing by force or fraud are afraid of democratic commotions. 3. Instructed to ask who the Baptist was. Public men must expect to be criticised and questioned out of jealousy, fear, and even hate. IV. OF WHAT COMPOSED. Of his testimony concerning himself. 1. Negatively: (1) Not the Christ concerning whom he volunteers no information (Pro. xxix. 11; Eccles. iii. 7); (2) Not Elias, *i.e.*, in the sense they meant; although he was Elias in the sense of Malachi (ver. 5), and Christ (Matt. xi. 14); (3) Not the prophet: neither Moses nor Jeremiah (Job x. 21; Zech. i. 5.) 2. Positively: (1) A voice in the wilderness; (2) A herald of Jehovah. (3) A baptizer; (4) A servant of Christ. Learn: 1. The best qualifications for a witness of Christ—humility and courage. 2. The secret of success in life—to know who oneself is not as well as who oneself is. 3. The inferiority of all Christ's servants to himself. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Forerunner and his Lord*:—I. A GREAT QUESTION. 1. there was something in the man that called it forth. Speaking generally, every man is an enigma. Many men, however, go through life without being challenged. Men of the regulation type, whose individuality never strikes you—such men have an easy time of it and give others no trouble. There are others whose strong and striking individuality is an intolerable nuisance to a slumbering, self-complacent society—heroes, reformers, martyrs. Such was John. No one could mistake him for any one else. Hence he was put on his defence and cross-examined. 2. There was something in the times that called forth this question. The world was throbbing with expectation. Heathen religion and philosophy ended in a query. The lost deity of Athens was a note of interrogation. The Jews had grown weary of the stereotyped platitudes of the Rabbis. Men could not help contrasting these days with those of the prophet. And now John came with words of living fire, and thousands exclaimed, "this is the Prophet." The phylactured class looked profound and shook their heads. Others responded, "No amount of head shaking will account for this miracle of a man. While you shake your head he is shaking multitudes." It was natural that the spirit of inquiry awakened by him should be first exercised upon him. II. A GREAT ANSWER. It is not difficult to give our estimate of other men, but very difficult for a man of delicate feeling to estimate himself, and most difficult to a man of John's popularity. If there be any littleness in him it will show itself now. John had summed up other people; what about his estimate of himself! An exaggerated estimate had been formed of him. Will he have genius and modesty enough to correct it? Yes. 1. He answers negatively, and brushes away all exaggerations. 2. He answers in the affirmative (1) concerning himself. Isaiah had only noticed the voice and message. John would not do otherwise (2) concerning Him for whom he had been mistaken. Every true preacher finds his way from every question to Christ. (*a*) He is near; (*b*) He stands. Not one who hurries through like a passing stranger; (*c*) He is unrecognized; (*d*) He is the Lamb of God. (*David Davies.*) *The mission of John the Baptist*:—It was no affair of his to determine his own latitude and longitude in the chart of the world's history. That was for his cotemporaries to do, not for him. That was their responsibility, not his. It was for him not to be thinking about himself and what he might possibly be, but to do his work, to fulfil his mission, to bear his testimony. 1. You cannot have forgotten how our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, being tempted in the wilderness, took up, in opposition to the tempter, not any special or exceptional ground such as He might claim as Messiah and Son of God, but common human ground, such as any poor tempted, suffering mortal may stand on and be safe. The language of the evangelist reveals his profound sense of the difficulty of the situation and of the nobleness of the Baptist's demeanour in it: "He confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ." It was so easy to equivocate, to give an ambiguous answer; so hard to return a decisive, resolute, unhesitating "no." The false prophet would have returned a very different answer. The true prophet must take up common human ground, and so be help and strength to his sinful, suffering, tempted fellow-men. "Is the way of the Lord straight, or not? Is every obstacle removed out of his path, every offence out of His kingdom? If not, then it is my duty, and yours, to help to make it straight. This is all that I profess or claim to do. Necessity is laid upon me, and do it I must." 2. But again—there is a shadow of loneliness and isolation in the reply, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." And so it must always be when the circumstances are at all

similar. John the Baptist was far in advance of his cotemporaries; was at a far higher spiritual level than they. There was only One who could thoroughly understand, appreciate, and sympathize with him—his Master and ours, Jesus Christ. If your work is the fruit of real conviction, if it is inspired by true ideas, the work will live, the ideas will triumph, will spread and propagate themselves and mould other minds—on a small scale it may be, and in a very humble way—until it shall be a surprise even to yourself to witness it. John's work lives even to this day. His thoughts still mould us. 3. And, once more, there is a feeling of hope and joy in the reply, as well as a shadow of loneliness and isolation. John the Baptist could not forget, any more than we can, that the words which he selected to describe his work are imbedded in a passage of which this is the opening strain: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God." True prophet and earnest worker for God that he was, he could not but find joy in his work, for the work's own sake, as well as sorrow. For it is the very nature of such work to bring both joy and sorrow. It is so still. Whatever be the work which is given us to do, whatever be the path of duty for us, if we will but throw ourselves heartily into the one, and tread the other firmly and diligently, hope and interest and joy are sure to spring up around us. In some way or other the work is sure to bring a multitude of wholesome human interests along with it. (*D. J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The mission from Jerusalem:*—The work of John and its results would seem to have come up formally before the Sanhedrim, and this mission was born of their professional dealing with the matter. They had suffered him to go on for some time without taking any public notice of him, Gamaliel-like thinking. If this be of man, it will come to nought; if of God, it will prove itself. And so the resolution probably was: Wait and take the winning side. I suppose they looked upon the Forerunner as one who was going up like a rocket and would come down as a stick. They do not send a deputation till they must. They did not like this interloper, but comforted themselves with the thought that the worst would soon blow over, and that the enthusiasm, too fierce to last, would soon cool down. At length, when they found that it was not to be pooh-poohed, they said, "We must see to the bottom of this." But it would not have been dignified to come to examine into matters themselves, so they sent a deputation to obtain an account of who John was and what he was about. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) *The Sanhedrim*, though of considerable antiquity, was not of Mosaic origin, nor was it called by that name until the days of Antipater and Herod. In the time of Christ it was composed of seventy-one members, chosen from—1. The chief priests and their families, the officiating high priest being president; 2. The elders, including both priests and laymen, and 3. The scribes, professional jurists, or experts in law. The court resembled that of Jehoshaphat's time (2 Chron. xix. 8–11), and possessed the power of judging a tribe, a false prophet, and a chief priest. It was not so much a theological court, to whose jurisdiction belonged all offences against the theocratical principles of the State, as the supreme native tribunal of Judæa, to which all matters were referred that could not be dealt with in inferior courts, or that were not reserved by the Procurator. In the exercise of its judicial capacity, therefore (Deut. xviii. 12), these emissaries were sent to inquire into John's credentials as a prophet. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Baptist's temptation*:—This may be regarded as a temptation of John corresponding to the simultaneous temptation of Christ. John refused the titles in which the hierarchical party expressed their false views, even as Christ refused to satisfy their expectations by the assumption of external power. (*Canon Westcott.*) Is it a little thing to have a deputation waiting upon you from the capital, in whose heart there is evidently a very special expectation, and to hear them say, "Who art thou?" in a tone which seems to imply "We shall not be surprised if thou dost reveal thyself as the very light we have been expecting." This temptation often seizes a man, and, extending himself beyond his proper function and calling by flattering persuasions, the result is self-mortification and ignominy; and he who might have done something really good goes out of the world having mis-spent his little day. When a man says, "I claim infallibility," and, whether at Rome or in London, he commits the most grievous sins, though he wear the holiest of names. Look at John, see how the great men crowd round him. It never occurred to him that he was some great one. Hence the subtlety of these tempting flatteries. But he baffled them, and kept them at arm's length. He would have no compliments, and declined the illustrious titles that were offered him one by one. But this was not enough. John did not stop at the half truth. A man may resist a temptation to lie, and yet conceal the whole of the truth he has been commissioned to tell. If John was not the Christ, but knew

who the Christ was, it was not enough for him to decline the Messiahship. He must declare the Christ. This he did with a promptness, clearness, and fulness that puts many a so-called evangelical ministry to the blush. Hence John came out unscathed, and was rewarded by one of the greatest eulogies ever pronounced by Christ on man. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) **Levites.**—It was by no accident that these were mentioned. John was of the national priesthood, and thus descended from the Levites. It is just possible therefore that relatives or family friends being turned for the nonce into deputies, he might be more easily persuaded to fall in harmony with that foregone conclusion to which they would guide him. Thus a disturbing element of personal relationship would enter into the temptation to assert himself, and to surcease his lowly subordination of himself to that "other" Christ who could by no possibility be accepted by these temporal Messiah-expecting Jews. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) **Who art thou?**—The botanist, in his rambles along the lanes and among the hedgerows, passes by hundreds of flowers without pausing to look at them. A momentary glance is enough. He has seen so many of the same kind before. But now and then he sees a flower which invites his curiosity. He takes his pocket lens, and, with many a keen, scrutinizing, gaze he asks, "What art thou? What sayest thou of thyself." This was the principle in which these religious scientists came to John. He did not belong to their schools, and had not been classified in their catalogue of men and professions. In what niche could he be placed? Such a man is an awkward one for classification. He is a class in himself. He cannot be bracketed with others. (*David Davies.*) **I am not the Christ.**—A gentleman heard two distinguished ministers one Sunday. Recording his experience, he said: "In the morning I could not see the Master for the man; in the evening I could not see the man for the Master." (*Ibid.*) *Ministers must send men to Christ*:—A member of Ebenezer Erskine's congregation recorded that having gone once to that godly man to express his admiration and gratitude for a particular sermon, Mr. Erskine accepted gratefully the latter but dismissed the former peremptorily, and asked with kindling eye, "Did the sermon lead you to Christ? If never before did you then and there give yourself to Jesus Christ?" The preacher's fidelity was painful at the moment, and was resented; but after reflection led the visitor to acknowledge that, but for the preacher's turning away the conversation from praise of the sermon to Jesus Christ, he would have been little or nothing the better for it. As it was he was sent to Christ. The pointed question set him thinking and praying, and he never rested until he had given himself to the Lord Jesus. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*)

Ver. 20. **He confessed and denied not.**—*John and Jesus*:—I. THE DIGNITY OF TRUTH. 1. It seems easy for John to have confessed and denied not. But here is a people ripe for Christ. They had been expecting Him for four hundred years. Moreover, no sooner did John appear than there was a tendency in the whole nation to recognize him as the Christ. They ask expecting an affirmative. For in John they recognize a born leader, a man which met the traditional conception of what the Messiah was to be. The ball was at his feet; the sceptre within his grasp; the hermit of the desert may to-morrow be a king. One word decides the future, but the hardest temptation—that to power—is resisted. 2. It was not easy for John to resist; is it easy for us? How many are content to appear just as and what they are? There are very few who are not ready to appear more learned, clever, innocent, and better off than we really are, if our fellows will only give us credit for it. How much need there is for absolute truth telling in social life! When a man hates another he generally says what he means; but to speak truth at all times, in the ordinary dealings of life, even though admiring deputations leave us and in spite of neglect and pain, this is difficult. 3. This reality was the secret of John's power. (1) He was trained for it in the desert. He had been face to face with God and had learned to pray, think, act for himself without "consulting any but his conscience and his God." He had accustomed himself, too, to self-denial and to do without enervating luxuries and dissipating companionships. The desert enters too little into the curriculum of our education. (2) The evidence of John's reality was his popularity. This position may seem doubtful, because we often find that a man's popularity is in inverse proportion to his sincerity. Yet men love reality. John's preaching was direct, personal, frank, hard hitting; and yet the crowd was always there: the homely citizen, the publican, the warrior, the Pharisee, all swept into the vortex of this man's influence, and the reason was John's reality. At heart the world hates humbug; and it is this religious manliness that we want to-day. The

Church has grown afraid of plain speaking, and her apologetic "hope I don't intrude" the world listens to with disguised contempt and dismisses with easy scorn. II. THE GRANDEUR OF SELF REPRESSION. 1. This a rare gift in the great scramble of life, where every man sets his heart upon a common prize. Here is a great, powerful, popular man swaying a nation, and yet at the very crisis of victory obliterates himself in favour of another. 2. Thus early in history we are taught that Christ must be all in all. They called John "the Baptist"; but John dismissed the title. He said, "No, there is another baptism in comparison with which mine is nothing." We are not Wesleyans, Baptists, Churchmen—these are ephemeral distinctions which men set up. When the Master comes, all such distinctions die. We are Christians only. And when we begin to decrease into nothingness, when our poor getting on, our thirst for power, is swept out of us and there is left nothing but the desire that Christ shall shine—then there is increase for the Church. 3. Christ and John—how near they stand together; yet how far apart! Christ like John could be stern. It was to John's murderer that Christ uttered the one purely contemptuous expression that ever passed His lips. John like Christ could be gentle. The most beautiful thing ever said of Christ was said by this stern ascetic. But John was not Jesus; and he confessed it. (*W. J. Dawson.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **What sayest thou of thyself?**—I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MADE THE MAN. John was the transition point between the old and the new. The old religion was breaking up as was evident in the multiplication of sects, like the multiplication of the sects before the Reformation showed that it was near. Four divisions of society: 1. The Pharisees. The formalists of their day they endeavoured to keep religion alive by retaining the past. It is an evidence of something gone when antiquarians collect and prize relics. Pharisaism is the religion of habit. 2. The Sadducees: Rationalists, cold of heart and clear in intellect. Sadduceeism is a reaction against Phariseeism in every age. Rationalism is a dry, critical, negative spirit which protests against all that cannot be proved. The religion of the intellect merely. 3. The Essenes: They could bear neither formalism nor scepticism. Mystics who went out into the wilderness to find God in contemplation. Their creed "God must be felt," their religion one of feeling. 4. The Herodians: A political party who turned aside from religious questions to those which concerned man's social and political existence. II. THE MAN JOHN. 1. It was impossible for John to join the Pharisees. How, with his impatience of all that was unreal and his iron earnestness, could he belong to those whose life was droned away in litanies and genuflexions? 2. Nor can we conceive him resting in mere Sadducaic negations; satisfied with their cold intellectualisms and protests against superstition? 3. Nor could that iron man dream life away with the Essenes. 4. As for the Herodians—surely for one whose life was so real, a patriot's life offered what was wanted. But John yearned not for civil liberty, but a kingdom of God. He loved humanity more than men, and could find no career in mere politics. It is only in the consideration of such circumstances that John's peculiar life becomes intelligible. III. HIS MISSION. 1. The preparation. Thirty years' preparation for one year's work. (1) Consider the testimony of such a life to the existence of another world; (2) In the wilderness he measured the worth of society, with its conventionalities and parties. No one sees how the battle goes while he is in it; no one ever understood the world except by getting out of it; (3) The Spirit of God passed into life and action in Him, and made Him intensely real. Only real men can deal with real questions, and the real questions of to-day are not the frivolous ones discussed in religious journals, but what is God and where. What is human life? Whither are we tending? 2. The mode in which John prepared the way for Christ. (1) He calls himself a voice: an articulate expression. Four centuries had passed and no one could speak the word "Repent," if the kingdom of God is to come. Regenerated society comes not from regenerated institutions; but regenerated hearts produce both. But none till John had found the tongue to express this. He spoke out what the world wanted. Distinguish between eloquence and fluency. Fluency John had not: short, sharp, decisive words were his. No ornament or trick of oratory there. Let us not covet fluency but eloquence, the gift of speaking the right thing, at the right time, in the right way. 2. He was a voice crying "Prepare," &c. He was a leveller. (1) The mountain of caste stood in the King's way. John said, "I tell you God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," and the mountain fell. (2) The mountain of religious sectarianism, "O generation of Vipers," levelled

that. (3) The mountain which gave impunity to wrong doing. John's rebuke of Herod brought that down. Notice the wondrous way in which all fell together at that mighty voice. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The answer of the Baptist*:—He had come—I. TO ANNOUNCE THAT GOD WAS ABOUT TO COME AS HE NEVER CAME BEFORE. 1. This was Isaiah's belief, and when John accentuated it he knew that the Divine visitation was near. Had the prophet suspected the delay he would have wondered, and knowing it, doubtless John wondered. Do we? Let us then remember that God always takes His time. If He wants to make a weed, that does not take Him long: if He wants to make an oak, that is more tedious business; if He wants to save a world it takes Him longer still. 2. The Baptist did not imply that God was absent, but that He was about to be manifested. Hitherto it had been winter; the Sun of righteousness had been comparatively hidden. Now He was to arise with healing in His wings. 3. Christ came for—(1) The world's enlightenment; (2) The subjugation of men; (3) The saving of the world. II. TO BID MEN GET READY FOR HIM. "Make straight the way." That was man's work. If God had compelled men to prepare that would have ensured the frustration of His purposes. God's will is that men should do His will willingly. Three great barriers. 1. Thoughtlessness: It was troublesome to think about Christ sufficiently to see the validity of His claims; so now. 2. Pride: The Jews could not bring themselves to confess their need of a Saviour. 3. Worldliness. (*H. W. Burgoyne, M.A.*) *The voice crying in the wilderness*:—I. WHERE THE VOICE CRIED. In the wilderness. 1. Locally: (1) Generally, the wilderness of Judæa (Matt. iii. 1); (2) Particularly, Bethany beyond Jordan. 2. Metaphorically: in the moral desert of Judæa Israel was a wilderness, and Zion a desolation. The Hope of Israel survived only in the breasts of a few (Luke i. 25). The deepest corruption and the basest hypocrisy reigned among the priesthood (Matt. xxiii. 13, 39). The people were sunk in social and moral degradation (Matt. iii. 8; Luke vii. 7–14). The intellectual classes were ostentatiously sceptical (Matt. xxii. 23; Acts xxiii. 8). II. THE PROPHETIC VOICE IS SUITABLE FOR AND DEMANDED BY THE SPIRITUAL WASTES OF SOCIETY. There the prophet should cry aloud and spare not (Isa. lviii. 1). III. THE QUALITY OF THE VOICE. 1. Lonely. 2. Authoritative. 3. Directive. 4. Arrestive. (*T. Whitelaw, M.A.*) *Only a voice*:—Christ was a surprise to the world. God prepared the world for this by the ministry of the Baptist. The world has now become accustomed to the story of redemption. But the proclamation of the coming of the King in His glory is still a surprise. It runs counter to all human plans of development, is contradictory to the pride and self-confidence of men, and stands in the same relation to our ministry as did the coming of Christ as a Redeemer to that of the Baptist. That we may rightly fulfil this most responsible office, let us look at the outline of his work. These parallel and coincident offices are—I. AN ORDINANCE, NOT AN OUTGROWTH. Its origin is traced to mystery. It is not in harmony with the other voices of the world, but introduces a discord with other utterance, as students of history criticise the record. Heaven, not earth, is its source. It came by Divine ordinance, not through human development. The law of its appointment was such in John the Baptist, and is to be such in our living. 1. The motive of its fulfilment is of God. 2. The reward of fidelity is equally of Divine ordinance—does not come by natural outgrowth. The herald's work will have little accumulation of visible results. The reward is beyond. Soon shall we forget the ingratitude of earth. II. IT IS THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF ANOTHER'S INDIVIDUALITY. As if he had said, "I am the mouthpiece of one proclaiming." 1. The breath of God is the power by which our work is accomplished. Said Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." 2. The words are of God, though ours be the voice. And may I add to this thought, the very tone of such a voice is of God. III. Finally, ALL THIS IS COMBINED IN TESTIMONY. There was the simplicity of sincerity in this man. Christian workers, make it true in your own experience that ye are for Christ without qualification; and let man be helped by the testimony that springs from this deep sincerity. 1. Self-forgetful living is the first element in such testimony. 2. In such testimony there must be detaching influence. John the Baptist did not attach disciples to himself. He pointed to the Lamb of God, and his disciples left him and followed Jesus. 3. There must be plainest teaching. John the Baptist preached a single sermon, twice the same day; but while he had that sermon he needed no new one. "Behold the Lamb of God," &c. It was blessed to his hearers because it was emphasized by sincerity and consecration. Peter and Andrew knew his meaning, and comprehended that there was more in his utterance than even the words had phrased. Let us enter into this harmony of service, so that our

speech shall be sustained by our silence; our conscious influence be in harmony with that which is unconscious and undesigned among our fellow-men. Conclusion: I speak to—1. Christians that they may bear their testimony to the manifested and coming King. 2. Those who are not Christians. The voice of Christ speaks to you to-day. What answer will you give? (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *Self out of sight in the preacher*:—Rev. Dr. Andrew A. Bonar in "Christian Growth," an address to Christians at Glasgow, said: "Some years ago, a zealous and devoted elder, now gone to glory, was pushing his way one evening to be in time for a workers'meeting. Taking his place in the meeting, he noticed how the conversation was going on, and rose to give a word. He said, 'In coming along I saw a crowd at a shop door in Argyle Street. I pressed in among the crowd to see what was attracting the attention. There was a large picture in the hands of the auctioneer; and he, with great skill, was holding it up to view; and, standing behind his picture so as to be completely hid, was inviting the attention of the company to every remarkable point in the painting. All the while I never got a glimpse of the man himself. That is the way to preach Christ. Self out of sight—Christ held forth.'" *An uncouth messenger, but a glorious message*:—A lady, who was in Richmond at the time of the siege, tells of the delight with which she received a note torn from a soldier's pocket-book, and grimed all over with gunpowder; but which assured of the safety of the town. The medium was nothing; the message was everything. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *A minister's work*:—My barque is but a little fishing boat, whose business it is to fish for the souls of men; my gifts fit me only to be such a coasting vessel as may carry corn from port to port to feed those who hunger for satisfying bread. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Baptist and the Bible*:—I. JOHN HAD LEARNED TO READ HIS BIBLE. It is a good thing to be able to quote from Scripture. To buy a Bible and treasure it as an ornament is good as far as it goes; but the book must be read so as to be remembered if it is to be of service. It is just possible that had we been in the Baptist's place we should have had some difficulty in making our memory of Scripture serve us. The Bible is crowded out by the multiplication of books, the very best of which is not to be named beside it. II. JOHN BELIEVED IN PROPHECY. The question arose, doubtless, as to whether the New Teacher was orthodox. His testimony, however otherwise disagreeable, showed that he was loyal to the traditions of his religion and country. It is a great trouble to some people to believe in the Jewish prophets. III. John believing in prophecy REGARDED HIMSELF AS THE FULFILMENT OF IT. It is not every man who, being asked who and what he is, can turn to the Scripture and find the answer there. The remembrance that God was working according to a great plan, and that he was part of that plan, must have given him a noble self-consciousness. In this the Baptist was not wholly singular. Although our names may not be in the Bible, we are as much a part of God's plan as John was. Believe, then, that as truly as God sent the Baptist He sent you. (*H. W. Burgoyne, B.A.*) *John in the wilderness*:—Losing the solaces of an earthly home, he found in God an everlasting portion. Like a single trunk of an Alpine tree rising solitary from between the interstices of some lonely rock and throwing its branches over the cataract. You look for soil, there is scarcely any to be seen; and yet that gnarled root has fastened its tenacious grasp on the bare stone, and tossed its green branches in the air, as if it needed nothing but the breath of heaven for its support. So this soul flourished where less hardy spirits would have starved, and breathed freely the atmosphere of heaven while yet upon earth. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Make the paths straight*:—This is what the sun says. He comes to us every morning, and stays with us all day long, but if it were not for the preparation and reception in the way of opening shutters and raising blinds, we should lose very much of his blessing. All the world over, before a blessing can be enjoyed there must be a fitness to receive it. If you take a blind man into a picture-gallery, what good do you do? The beauty of the pictures is there, but the man is unaffected by it; its way into the man's soul has not been made straight. You may play all manner of beautiful music, but if your audience is deaf, you play only for yourself; the way of the music is not made straight except into your heart. And the result will be just the same if the blindness and deafness are not natural but assumed. If the man in the picture-gallery is only covering his eyes with his hands, he is as good as blind; and if the people in the concert-room are only putting their fingers into their ears, they are as good as deaf. So it was, alas! so it is, with the people and Jesus. (*H. W. Burgoyne.*)

Vers. 24–27. **They which were sent were of the Pharisees.**—*The question of the Pharisees*:—1. It is an evidence of a sick and corrupt Church when corrupt men are entrusted with most grave and weighty employments in it; for so was it with the Church of the Jews when "they which were sent were of the Pharisees." 2. Corrupt men are more ready to jangle and lie at wait for advantages than to embrace the truth of God delivered by His servants; for these Pharisees take no notice of what He had said from Isaiah, nor seek to be further cleared in it, but think they have an advantage of him, that he should presume to baptize. "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ?" &c. 3. It was an uncontroverted truth, both among friends and foes, in the Jewish Church, that at the coming of the Messiah there should be some changes in the way of religion and an institution of new ordinances; for the Pharisees have nothing to say against his baptism if he were Christ, or Elias, or the prophet: their only objection is, "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not?" And John's answer, "I baptize, but there standeth One among you," &c., importeth that he being Christ's forerunner, who was now come into the world, it was lawful for him to administer this sacrament. 4. Ministers ought to arrogate no more unto themselves than to be ministers and dispensers of the external means of word and sacraments, leaving the glory and efficacy thereof unto Christ entirely; and people ought so to be affected in coming to these ordinances. Therefore saith John, "I baptize with water," not denying that Christ also baptized with water, nor yet denying that baptism administered by him was accompanied with grace and the Spirit of God; but he only compareth his person and office with Christ's, and showeth that whatever grace came by the sacrament administered by him, yet he was not the giver of it, but Christ only, who had appointed him to dispense the outward seal. 5. Christ may be among a people, and yet they who reckon themselves very high in the Church neither see Him nor know Him; for saith John, "there standeth One whom ye know not." 6. It is the duty of ministers, and will be the care of such as are faithful and zealous, to exalt and commend Christ at all occasions, that men may fall in love with Him. Therefore doth John again repeat his doctrine, "He it is," &c. 7. The more high employment and the eminent gifts men have, and the more ready men are to esteem of them, the more will they abase themselves, if they be truly gracious, and be affected with the excellency of Christ; for it is John, the greatest among them that are born of women, and so much esteemed among the Jews, and the forerunner of Christ, who thus abaseth himself. "He is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." 8. Albeit Christ, of free grace, do honour men with eminent employments under Him, and particularly ministers of the gospel. Yet such as know Christ and themselves well will not only see that they are unworthy of the high employments they have, but even to do the basest service to Him; for John saith not, I am unworthy to be His forerunner, though employed in that service, but "whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose," which was a mean and base office. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *The Pharisees* represented the Judaism of the Post-Exilian era. Originally purists as well as legalists, they strove to carry out in practice the ideal of legal life set up by the scribes. Hence they were denominated Perushim, Pharisees or Separatists. First mentioned by Josephus under Jonathan and Hyrcanus, high priests about B.C. 145–150. In the time of Christ they had so far degenerated from their primitive piety as to make the essence of religion consist in ceremonial observance—an apostacy which drew down upon them the exposures, rebukes, and denunciations of Jesus. They were ultra-conservatives in Israel, the champions of orthodox literalism, and who accordingly watched everywhere with inquisitorial severity to see that the theocratic order was preserved intact, not merely as to ritual, but also with respect to the competence of office and doctrine (chap. ix. 13; vii. 47, 48; xii. 42). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 26. **I baptize with water.**—*The baptism of John*:—If the rite, which the Forerunner of our Lord administered, is not to be considered as a Christian institute, to what dispensation are we to assign it, since it is manifestly no part of the economy of Moses? The reply is that it was the symbol of a peculiar dispensation, which was neither entirely legal nor Evangelical, but occupied an intermediate station, possessing something of the character and attributes of both; a kind of twilight, equally removed from the obscurity of the first, and the splendour of the last and perfect economy of religion. The light which he emitted, though it greatly surpassed every preceding illumination, was of short duration, being soon eclipsed and extinguished by that ineffable effulgence, before which nothing can retain its

splendour. (*Robert Hall*). **One among you.**—*Christ among us* :—1. As to His human nature, as one of yourselves, as He took upon Him the form of man and became the servant of men, and is among you as once He sat in the midst of the doctors in the Temple. 2. As to the Divine nature He is amongst you, for He filleth all in all, and is very nigh to every one. 3. He is among you as the Light which lighteth every man, and as the Word of Wisdom in the heart of all His people. 4. Among you as the Mediator between man and God, and seeking to draw all men to God. 5. Not as the Baptist in the desert, but in the midst of the cities of men. 6. Among you all, for the benefit of all, as the true tree of life in the midst of the garden of this world for the life and for the healing of all. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *The unknown presence* :—We can imagine the Master visiting various spheres in the modern world with the same result. I. BUSINESS. II. PLEASURE. III. THE CHURCH. IV. AFFLICTION. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Christ near yet unperceived* :—I. THE WORLD'S CREATOR A STRANGER IN HIS OWN DOMINIONS. 1. In part arising from the intentional obscurity that veiled His appearance among man. For purposes of their own earthly sovereigns often travel in disguise; but the world has never witnessed so strange an incognito as this. The King of Glory laid aside His robes of light, and in the simple garb of a suffering man, "hid" Himself from the wise and prudent that He might reveal Himself to the lowly and the meek. From His own disciples at times He purposely veiled His identity (John xx. 14; xxi. 4; Luke xxiv. 16, 31). 2. Too largely owing to the blinding effect of sin. The other and gentler John affirms the same mysterious but humbling fact, and enumerates the accumulating evidence of its truth. For ages the true Light shined in promise, prophecy, holy law and inward conscience, yet the darkness discovered it not (ver. 5). In the fulness of time the Creator came to visit this province of His empire, and was unrecognized upon His own estate (ver. 10). More humbling still, when He came to His own possessions His own people received Him not (ver. 11). Even those to whom He made Himself known were but imperfectly acquainted with Him. II. THE IGNORANCE OF MAN CONCERNING THAT WHICH THEY MOST NEED TO KNOW. Ignorance baneful, knowledge beneficial; yet vast numbers are strangers to the source, centre and sum of all wisdom. 1. With some the knowledge of Christ is only indirect; the evidence of vague rumours or the acceptance of testimony; a secondhand knowledge. 2. Personal knowledge exists in varying degrees. Some are only on terms of distant acquaintance; others have occasional communications; others have intimate friendship; with the most loyal and loving Christ sustains confidential relations. 3. To be ignorant of Him is the worst privation man can suffer (2 Cor iv. 3, 4). 4. When He is known He is admired, loved, trusted and obeyed (chap. iv. 10). III. THE SAVIOUR'S KINDNESS AND COMPASSION IN REVEALING HIMSELF TO THEM THAT SEEK HIM. 1. He has no wish to be unrecognized. He stands, waits, knocks (Rev. iii. 20). 2. He awaits our entreaty to remove His disguise (Jer. xiv. 5). 3. Once admitted to His friendship we shall grow in intimacy with Him. 4. In His own home hereafter He will show us more and more of His hidden glory. (*R. Lewis.*) *Christ unrecognized* :—I. A STARTLING WONDER. Christ unknown. 1. Not from want of evidence then or previously. (1) The world manifested its Maker; (2) Conscience reflected His light; (3) Prophecy and type shadowed His person and ministry. Abraham saw His day. Moses spoke of Him. To Him gave all the prophets witness. (4) John proclaimed Him. 2. Not from want of evidence now. In addition to all the above, (1) The Holy Spirit testifies of Him. (2) The Christian consciousness of eighteen centuries fulfils the promise of His perpetual presence. (3) His ambassadors declare Him. (4) His sacraments embody Him. How strange that He should be amongst the children of His people, the hearers of His gospel, and yet not be known! II. A STERN NECESSITY. In the knowledge of Him, and in that alone standeth our eternal life. That knowledge is the beginning, the middle and the end of Christianity. 1. The beginning. Christ's first invitation echoed by His first convert was "Come and see." Isaiah saw His glory, and was cleansed for service. When Paul saw Christ he became a new man. 2. The continuance. The development of Christian life depends on growing knowledge of Him (2 Pet. iii. 18; Philip iii. 10; Heb. xii. 2; *cf.* iii. 1). 3. Its consummation is in heaven, where we shall see His face, and be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. III. A BLESSED OPPORTUNITY. "There standeth." 1. How? (1) Stationary—not shifting, coming and going. (2) Patient—not wearied by procrastination, but waiting to be gracious. (3) Accessible. "Lo, I am with you alway." "Now is the accepted time." 2. What as? (1) A sympathizer. (2) A Saviour. (3) A personal friend. IV. A FEARFUL ALTERNATIVE. 1. To know Christ

is to be known of Him. Christ knows His sheep. He recognizes us when our friends have ceased to do so; when it is difficult to do so; in poverty and obloquy; at the last day. 2. Not to know Christ is to be disowned by Him. "I never knew you." (*J. W. Burn.*) **He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me.**—*The magnanimity of the Baptist*:—The world recognizes jealousy as the chief weakness of popular leaders and preachers. Such men are spiritual athletes, who cannot bear a rival. The greatest of popular preachers, the darling of Antioch and Constantinople, admits that he who can overcome this is almost like the disembodied spirits, whose lives, pure as the crystal stream, can never be darkened by any shadow of envy or vainglory. But the leader of a great party in a nation; the founder of a sect, which has vitality enough to live on for years; who was regarded by some as probably the Messiah—that he should have bowed down in prostrate humiliation before a younger successor, this is original indeed. (*Bp. Alexander.*) *The best servant the most humble*:—As the lark that soars the highest, builds her nest the lowest; the nightingale that sings the sweetest, sings in the shade when all things rest; the branches that are most laden with ripe fruit, bend lowest; the valleys are fruitful in their lowliness; and the ship most laden sinks deepest in the water, so the holiest Christians are the humblest. (*J. Mason.*) *Humility not contemptible*:—Humility did not make John the Baptist contemptible; but when he refused the name of a prophet, Christ said that he was more than a prophet. Humility did not make Moses contemptible; but as he was the mildest man upon earth, so he was the greatest upon earth. Humility did not make David contemptible; but when he humbled himself, he said unto Michal, "I will be more humble yet, and lowly in mine own sight, yet thou and thy maids shall honour me." As Christ ceased not to be a king because He was like a servant, nor to be a lion because He was a lamb, nor to be a judge because He was judged; so man doth not lose his honour by humility; but he shall be honoured for his humility, as the son was honoured when he was humbled (Luke xv. 18–25). Thus humility hath found that which pride sought; like little David, which was least accounted of, and yet got the victory, yea, when no man durst encounter with the giant (1 Sam. xvii. 28). (*Henry Smith.*)

Ver. 29. **Behold the Lamb of God!**—*The work of Christ, and of His disciples*:—I. THE SAVIOUR'S WORK IN THE SALVATION OF MEN. 1. He taketh away the sin of the world. The father says, "Save the family"; the citizen, "Save the town"; the patriot, "Save the country"; Christ, "Save the world"—and not merely says, but accomplishes. 2. His qualification for the work; the "Lamb of God," innocent, pure, spotless; the "Son of Man"; the "Son of God." The head of humanity and the heart of God were in the great sacrifice. 3. His constant watching. Christ asks men to follow what they seek. Not one follower is unnoticed. 4. His ready welcome. The noble gathering up of the Gospel is in the golden word "Come." It is not the mere sentimental emotion roused by a Sunday service that He seeks, but the coming and believing in Him. 5. His intimate knowledge of the character of any that may come. Christ reveals to men their ideals. Peter. Nathaniel. II. THE DISCIPLES' WORK IN THE SALVATION OF MEN. 1. Manifestation of humility in the presence of Christ. "I am not worthy." 2. Manifest perseverance. Men scarcely listen; but John repeats his direction. The humble man is not changeful, not persistent. 3. Exquisite naturalness. Andrew thought of his brother: a rather obscure man brings Peter to Christ. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The Baptist's message*:—I. THE TRUE MESSENGER. 1. One who sees Jesus for himself (ver. 33). The true herald of Jesus is like John. (1) He is on the look-out for his Lord's appearing. (2) He rejoices to preach Jesus, as One whom he has seen and known, and still hopes to see. (3) He preaches Him as come, and as coming. 2. He calls upon men to see Jesus. (1) Plainly and confidently. (2) Continually and solely (ver 35). (3) Earnestly and emphatically. 3. He leads his own followers to Jesus (ver. 37). (1) He had enough force to induce men to be his followers. (2) Enough humility to induce his followers to leave him for Jesus. (3) Enough grace to make him rejoice that it was so (2 Cor. iv. 5). 4. He loses himself in Jesus. (1) He sees the necessity of this (chap. iii. 43). (2) The propriety of this (chap. iii. 29). II. THE TRUE MESSAGE. John's word was brief, but emphatic. He declared Jesus to be—1. Sent and ordained "of God." 2. The one real, Divinely-appointed sacrifice for sin—"the Lamb of God." 3. The only remover of human guilt—"which taketh away the sin of the world." 4. Set forth as the object of faith—"Behold the Lamb." He exhorted his hearers to look at him with

that look which saves. The end of all ministries and ordinances is to bring men to look to Jesus. Both John, who ran before, and we, who run after, must point in the same direction. III. THE TRUE RECEPTION OF THAT MESSAGE. The conduct of John's disciples shows that our true wisdom concerning gospel testimony is—1. To believe it, and so to acknowledge Jesus as our sin-removing sacrifice. 2. To follow Jesus (ver. 37). 3. To follow Jesus, even if we be alone. These were the vanguard of the vast hosts who have since followed Jesus. They knew not what suffering it might involve, but went first and foremost. 4. To abide with Jesus (ver 39). 5. To go forth and tell others of Jesus (vers. 40, 41). Conclusion: Here is—1. A lesson for those who preach. John's sermon was short, but full of Jesus, and effectual for soul-winning. Imitate him. 2. An example for those who have believed. 3. A gospel for those who hitherto have not known the Saviour. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The great message:*—John's prior life was Divinely ordered for this evangelical apprehension of Jesus. Born of the lineage of Levi, he renounced all priestly heritage and claim, and even attendance at the Temple; and thus was lifted above the class interests and sordid motives which might have swayed him toward the worldly and temporal expectations of the Messiah, and disentangled himself from the meshes of rabbinical tradition. By his seclusion, the direct reading of the Old Testament, and his communion with God, his perception would be farther cleared to discern the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ and the innermost case and necessity of that kingdom—redemption by sacrifice. Notice—I. The TENDERNESS of the message. 1. A Lamb—symbol of sweetness, innocence, harmlessness, patience; an idea peculiarly grateful to hearts pierced with sin and worn weak by the anguish of self-accusation. 2. An idea the opposite of the "wolf" element in man—oppression, injustice, self-seeking, revenge. 3. The first death was a murder. Lamb-like virtues have never been admired. II. The PREPARATION of the message. The all but universal hope of the Jews was of a warring, conquering King. How fitting that the disappointment should be broken by the proclamation of a Lamb! By His very peacefulness and harmlessness many would be prepared to surrender their misconceptions. III. The SIGNIFICANCE of the message. 1. The Divine appointment of the Lamb. 2. His atoning character, as foreshadowed by the prophets. 3. The redemption through His blood. IV. The DEFINITENESS of the message. The "sin" of the world taken away from every one who will accept Him for a Saviour. V. The PECULIARITY of the message. What an antithesis to other kings, whose path has been reddened with blood, and who have come and gone without the slightest benefit to the race. Christ comes to deliver and bless. VI. The BREADTH of the message. "The world," not Jews merely. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) I. THE PECULIAR NAME WHICH THE BAPTIST GIVES TO CHRIST. The Lamb of God. Let us serve Him faithfully as our Master. Let us obey Him loyally as our King. Let us study His teaching as our Prophet. Let us walk diligently after Him as our Example. Let us look anxiously for Him as our coming Redeemer of body as well as soul. But above all, let us prize Him as our Sacrifice, and rest our whole weight on His death as an atonement for sin. Let His blood be more precious in our eyes every year we live. II. THE PECULIAR WORK WHICH THE BAPTIST DESCRIBES JESUS AS DOING. 1. Christ is a Saviour; not a conqueror, a philosopher, a moralist. 2. A complete Saviour; not merely makes vague proclamations of pardon and mercy, but takes away sin. 3. An almighty and universal Saviour. He died not for Jews only, or a few persons, but all mankind. (1) His work on the cross was more than enough to make satisfaction for the sins of all. (2) His blood was precious enough to wash away all guilt. (3) But the efficiency of Christ's atonement is for those only who believe. 4. A perpetual and unwearied Saviour "taketh." He is daily doing this. III. THE PECULIAR OFFICE WHICH THE BAPTIST ATTRIBUTES TO CHRIST. 1. This baptism is not the baptism of water. (1) It does not consist either of dipping or sprinkling. (2) It does not belong exclusively to infants or adults. (3) It cannot be given to any minister or layman of whatever church. (4) It is a baptism which the Head of the Church keeps wholly in His own hands. It consists of the implanting of grace into the inward man. It is the same thing with the new birth. It is a baptism, not of the body, but of the heart. It is a baptism which the penitent thief received, though neither dipped nor sprinkled by the hand of man. It is a baptism which Ananias and Sapphira did not receive, though admitted into church-communion by apostolic men. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Israel's Messiah:*—I. JOHN'S PROCLAMATION OF THE MESSIAH. 1. His person identified (ver. 30). 2. His calling declared (ver. 20). (1) Divine in its appointment. The Lamb chosen, provided, sent by, and consecrated and belonging to God.

(2) Saving in its character: to realize and fulfil all that had been foreshadowed by the paschal lamb, the lamb for burnt-offering, and the suffering Servant of Jehovah. (3) World-wide in its destination: not for Israel alone, or believers simply, but for humanity at large (John iii. 16; xii. 32; 1 John ii. 2; 1 Tim. ii. vi.; iv. 10). Upon the ground of Christ's expiation, a *bonâ fide* offer of forgiveness is made to the world (Eph. i. 7). 3. His dignity announced. (1) His higher being (ver. 15). (2) His loftier calling. (3) His nobler name. II. JOHN'S KNOWLEDGE OF MESSIAH. 1. When it originated. At the Baptism (ver. 33). Prior to this John may have had surmises, hopes, expectations, but not certain knowledge; neither have we without the Father's testimony, to which also Christ (John v. 37), John (1 John, v. 9, 11), and Peter (2 John, i. 16) appeal. 2. Whence it proceeded. From the Spirit. It was no deduction or conclusion of His own. From the same source proceeds all spiritual understanding of Christ or His truth (John xiv. 26, xvi. 13–15; 1 John ii. 20, 27, v. 20; *c.f.* 1 Cor. ii. 14). 3. On what it rested. (1) An open heaven. As in ancient times, to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12), Isaiah (vi. 1), Ezekiel (i. 1), Daniel (x. 5–6), and afterwards to Stephen (Acts vii. 5, 6), Paul (2 Cor, xii. 4), John (Rev. iv. 1). This a symbolic representation. The heavens had opened, that God's Son might come forth, and that Christ's brethren might enter in: for the outflow of grace to men, and for the entrance of men to glory. (2) A descended Spirit. Of this the dove an emblem. The permanent endowment of Jesus with the fulness of the Spirit convinced the Baptist. Lessons: 1. The twofold character of Christ's salvation. (1) The removal of sin. (2) The implantation of a new life by the Spirit. 2. The twofold condition of receiving Christ's salvation. (1) Repentance, symbolized by baptism. (2) Faith upheld in beholding the Lamb of God. 3. The twofold qualification for preaching Christ's salvation. (1) A knowledge of Christ. (2) An acquaintance with self. 4. The twofold evidence that Christ is the Son of God. (1) He can open heaven by removing sin. (2) He can qualify for heaven by imparting the Spirit. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Lamb of God*:—I. THE OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH. The Lamb of God was the original and universal sacrifice. The early worshippers were instructed to offer a lamb. A lamb was the morning and evening sacrifice. Isa. liii. has reference to it. John pointed to the substance, of which these were shadows: Jesus in all His humiliation, down to the moment of His expiring cry. To this believers of previous dispensations looked forward. John would have the faith of his hearers to coincide with that of Abel, Abraham, and the Old Testament saints. The way of life has never varied. Never has a soul been saved, never will a soul be saved, but by the Lamb of God. II. THE DUTY TO WHICH JOHN SUMMONED HIS HEARERS. 1. To receive the tidings he conveyed to them. No event had ever occurred like this. Man's attention in every age is imperatively called to this. It is the great central truth on which all history hangs. If rightly received, the message must tell on the entire character. 2. To banish from them whatever might oppose the reception of the message. The Jews had much to do in this way. The natural operation of the heart is to establish a righteousness of its own. Men depend on good character, station in the Church, the use of means. But we must be made to lose confidence in any such hope. 3. To rest positively on Christ. III. THE PARTIES CALLED TO THIS DUTY. 1. Generally all men, in every condition, of every character. 2. Those who thirst, and are conscious that they need a resting-place, an object on which to bestow their affections, to satisfy their hearts. 3. Those who are pierced by God's arrows of conviction. (*J. Beith, D.D.*) *The Lamb of God*:—I. THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE VICTIM. Gentleness and innocence are suggested by lambs generally. Besides this, the lamb selected for sacrifice was to be without blemish. And Jesus was gentle. "He did not cry," &c. This was not the gentleness of weakness, for He calmed the storm and raised the dead. He was "without spot"—"holy, harmless, undefiled." II. THE DEATH OF THE VICTIM. The lamb was slain in sacrifice. So the death of Christ was the chief feature of His life—predicted, prominent in His own mind, the chief feature of the gospels and epistles. III. SALVATION IS CONNECTED WITH THE DEATH OF THE VICTIM. Ancient prophecy spoke of Him as "wounded for our transgressions." He Himself said, "As Moses lifted up," &c. The apostles proclaimed salvation through His death. IV. CONSIDER WHAT, AS SAVIOUR, HE DOES. 1. He takes away the guilt and penalty of sin. It was not the guilt of separate sins that the Lamb of God expiated. It was sin itself. 2. He takes away the power of sin. He destroys sin itself. V. THIS HE DOES FOR ALL MANKIND. The whole world needed salvation, and we may infer that the supply is co-extensive with the want. As He commands the gospel *to* be preached *to* every

creature, there must be a gospel *for* every creature; and those who do not actually obtain salvation fail only "because of unbelief." (*Newman Hall, LL.B.*) *The Lamb of God:*—I. THE SAVIOUR DESIGNATED "The Lamb of God." II. HIS WORK DESCRIBED. "Taketh away the sin of the world." III. FAITH ENJOINED. "Behold the Lamb of God." IV. DUTY URGED. 1. Let the careless and impenitent behold Him. 2. Let those who are trusting in their own merits behold Him. 3. Let penitent sinners behold Him. 4. Let Christians, for their habitual comfort and strength, behold Him. (*Ibid.*) *The Lamb of God:*—We must admit two postulates. 1. That the world and all its inhabitants are sinners. 2. That there is a Saviour who takes away the sin of the world. Let me direct your attention to—I. THE BEING HERE MENTIONED. The Israelites found that the forgiveness of their sins was connected in some way with the sacrificial offerings, and therefore came too generally to suppose that there was some inherent virtue in the victims. They were pleased with the shadow instead of looking to the substance. The Baptist broke in upon this lifeless form of things, and, pointing to Christ, said, "Behold," &c. All types are now to merge in the Antitype. The communion bears something of the same relation as the morning and evening and passover lambs bore to Christ. Beware, then, of the mistake of the Jews. 1. In pointing to the Lamb of God, John conveys an important lesson to us. Men expect forgiveness either from the goodness of God or their own good works. Look not on these refuges of lies. Behold the only Being who taketh away sins. 2. Christ is called the Lamb of God, because appointed by God and accepted by God. II. THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF HIS FUNCTIONS. 1. He endured the Cross, not to raise the Jewish nation to a temporal sovereignty, nor to enrich mankind with wealth and pleasure, nor to acquaint the minds of the inquisitive with philosophy and science. Had that been so, He had been acceptable to Jews, politicians, and philosophers. But by taking away sin, the very ends sought for are most thoroughly achieved. Take away that, and you take away the world's darkness and the world's misery. 2. There are two great evils which sin has entailed. (1) It has brought us under condemnation, taken away our title to heaven, and left us outcasts. (2) It has subjected us so to its ascendency and power, that every affection and appetite is the minister of sin, and we are disqualified for the joys of heaven. To save us, therefore, Christ takes away the guilt and condemnation, and also the power and pollution of sin. 3. The salvation is universally offered, on the condition of faith. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORDS "BEHOLD," &c. We may suppose the Baptist addressing himself to—1. Angels. As ye wing your flight on errands of mercy, ye do behold Him; for into these things the angels desire to look. 2. Fallen angels. Behold the issue of your evil efforts, the promised bruiser of the serpent's head! 3. Sinners. Turn from trusting in your useless efforts. Why will ye die! 4. Ye people of God, behold the author of that joy and peace with which your hearts are filled. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The Lamb of God:*—I. A POINTING TO CHRIST. We can imagine these words spoken in heaven, and angels desiring to look into them. We can imagine them spoken in hell, and devils "beholding Him, but not nigh." But, alas! on earth how few point or look. The rich man points to his wealth, the young man to his pleasures, the Pharisee to himself; but those who belong to Christ point to Him. II. A NAME OF CHRIST. 1. Open your Bibles, and you will see this name above every other. View Him—(1) In the patriarchal days; in the sacrifice of Abel. (2) Under the law, as the Paschal Lamb. (3) In Psalm xxiii. (4) In Isaiah liii. (5) In the gospels. (6) In the epistles (1 Pet. i. 19). (7) In the Apocalypse. 2. He was God's Lamb because—(1) God's property was in Him. He was God's Son, Servant, Angel, Prophet, Messenger. (2) God's Name was in Him. (3) God's love was in Him. (4) God's power was in Him. III. A WORK OF CHRIST. He takes our sins away. 1. From the sinner's heart. 2. From God's Book. 3. From God's bar. 4. From God's sight. 5. To His cross. 6. To His grave. (*R. S. Brooke, M.A.*) *The Lamb of God:*—1. John had urged the duty of repentance. Now when Jesus made His appearance, John discloses the great object to be accomplished by Him—viz., the pardon of sin. For this mere repentance is insufficient, for it can never remove the penalty of a broken law. It only prepares the penitent to avoid transgression in the future by inspiring a sorrow for and a hatred of sin; so John did not tell the Jews that they would be forgiven because of their repentance; but urged it as an indispensable condition of securing Christ's blessing. When he had done this, he bade them behold the Saviour. 2. The term "Lamb"—(1) Has respect to disposition and character, and is significant of innocence, meekness, and unresisting submission

(Isa. liii. 7). But there were, doubtless, many others to whom the term could be applied besides Christ. But this did not make them saviours from sin. Had Jesus been only a lamb in this sense, He might have been thus qualified for a teacher. But would not John have added something indicative of his Teacher's office? To choose a lamb for illustration, and to mean by "taking away the sin of the world" the influence of sagacious instruction, is utterly confusing and unintelligible; and then, if Christ saves by His instruction, why was not Paul called a saviour of men? (2) But the term has respect to an atoning sacrifice, by which pardon of sin is secured. And it would be very natural for John, as a Jew, familiar with the Mosaic offerings, and with their application in Isaiah liii., to use the term in this sense. The same idea was familiar to Paul (1 Cor. v. 7), Peter (1 Pet. i. 18–19; *cf.* Exod. xii. 5), and John (Rev. v. 8–14). 3. Jesus is the Lamb of God. This cannot be a mere term of excellence, like "mountains of God," but either the Lamb who belongs to, or is provided by, God. The former would make an inept and frigid meaning; for John is showing the relation in which Christ stands to man. The latter, therefore, is the meaning. Every Jew had to provide and present as a sin-offering a lamb without spot or blemish. What each had done for himself, God now does for all men. (1) Christ takes away sin. The Hebrews employed the phrase as meaning to bear the punishment or consequences of sin, or to expiate sin, or to forgive it. Either of the first two meanings will answer well here (1 Pet. ii. 24; Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 29). So Christ takes away sin by removing its condemning and soul-destroying power. The Greek verb means first to lift up and then to raise up and remove, as one lifts a burden and conveys it away. And so Christ took the burden of our sins, and this load He carried away. (2) He takes away the sin of the world. Other conditions are required besides His expiatory death. The sinner must be penitent, and behold the Lamb with the eye of faith. This done, salvation is as wide as the world of men; and so the proffer is universal. (*Moses Stuart.*) *The Lamb of God*:—I. THE OBJECT WHICH WAS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. The abolition of the world's sin: a most desirable object. Were any one to offer to take away the world's sorrow, or its toil and trouble, or its care, what a benefactor he would be. But how much more when the Son of God comes from heaven and suffers to take away its sin. Because the sting and bitterness is nothing but that. But we are led aside from the truth by the consideration of second causes and immediate results, and so forget the nature of sin and disregard the Baptist's invitation. And yet sin is the universal curse, and those who are unacquainted with sorrow are sinful; and sin unrepented of will bring the bitterest sorrow. The need, then, of the abolition of sin is—1. Universal. 2. The greatest of our needs. Other needs man can remedy; but no man can help his brother here. 3. The most pressing. 4. In proportion we do not feel this, our sin is the greater. II. THE MEANS ORDAINED FOR ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT. Such a need in God's universe could not be without a remedy. This was provided in the Lamb of God, which expression looks back to Isa. liii. and Gen. xxii. Christ was the Lamb of God in being God's appointed sacrifice, and the sacrifice offered by God. He was the federal head of our race, the one Being in whom our race was gathered up, who took upon Himself the penalty of sin. His great qualification for this was his sinlessness. Two conclusions—1. That if Christ was the Lamb of God He must have been an adequate provision for dealing with the world's sin. 2. That He must have been the exclusive sacrifice for sin. There was no other means appointed by God; there can be no other means devised by man. III. THE METHOD OF APPLYING THESE MEANS. 1. Christ takes away the punishment of sin—sin with all its accidents and qualities. 2. Christ destroys the power of sin in the heart. 3. You cannot get rid of sin by resolutions or efforts, but only by faith in Him. There is in us a sinful will which prompts to sin. We cannot get rid of that by thwarting or discipling our sinful will. We can only do it by taking cognizance of a higher will in Christ. And as we believe in Him we submit to His will, and become inspired with a fresh will which prompts to good and not to evil. (*Stanley Leathes, B.D.*) *The Lamb of God*:—1. How long our first parents remained innocent is not revealed; but we scarcely read of their fall before we read also of their restoration. The gates of Paradise are hardly closed before the altar of atonement is erected at the entrance. The flame of the Cherubic sword is blended with the flame of the consuming sacrifice. The promise of salvation was sealed by blood, not of bears and lions, but of oxen, sheep, and lambs. Blood being put for life, the lesson taught was (1) that man was a sinner, and that sin must be punished; (2) that sin might be forgiven and the sinner saved. The offerer placed his hands upon the

victim and confessed his sin, thereby symbolically transferring his guilt. 2. But how can sin be transferred to a dumb animal (Heb. x. 4)? And yet the voice of the whole dispensation cries "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." How shall these discordant sounds be tempered into unison? Only by looking beyond the sacrifice to another which it represents. In Christ these seeming contradictions are reconciled. That which was pleasing in the sight of God for His sake, was abhorrent when considered apart from Him. The faith of old believers, therefore, was the same as ours, only darkened by the symbols which the Antitype has now abolished. 3. We cannot tell how far the doctrine of atonement was maintained without corruption in the age immediately preceding the Advent. The great mass of the people had undoubtedly lost sight of it; but others certainly felt their lost and wretched state, and looked with a prospective faith to the coming and dying of the Lamb of God. Their hopes were naturally stimulated by the Baptist. But he did satisfy them being a preacher of righteousness—not a sacrifice for sin. But having strengthened their sense of guilt and need of expiation by the preaching of the law, John led them to the altar and pointed to the Lamb of God. 4. Two to whom these words were addressed followed Jesus—a sufficient proof that they were waiting for Him, and prepared for His reception. But in what did their preparation consist? Not in personal merit; they were sinners. Not in superior wisdom; they were fishermen. In one point, it is true, they were peculiarly enlightened, and in that consisted their peculiar preparation to receive the Saviour. They knew that they were lost, and that He alone could save them; so that when their former master said, "Behold the Lamb of God," they followed Him at once. And so it has been ever since. In all cases the same preparation is necessary, a sense of need and a conviction of the Saviour's being able to supply it. 5. This doctrine lies at the basis of all efforts for the reformation (1) of the individual, (2) of the community. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Forgiveness of sins through the atoning sacrifice of Christ is a blessing which it is the glory of God to reveal, and the privilege of Christians to experience*:—I. SIN, WHICH IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW, JUSTLY EXPOSES THE OFFENDER TO THE PUNISHMENT OF DEATH. God created man upright; made him subject to law; encouraged his obedience by promises, and threatened disobedience with the penalty of death. Man transgressed: all men have transgressed; so the condemnation rests upon all. II. THE GRACIOUS GOD, THOUGH JUSTLY OFFENDED BY THE SINS OF MEN, HAS IN MERCY MADE PROVISION FOR THE RESTORATION OF ALL WHO REPENT AND BELIEVE. That death may be abolished, sin must be removed. Sin has been atoned for, and therefore can be removed by the sacrifice of Christ. It is removed by a penitent trust in that sacrifice. III. TO THE FAITH OF BELIEVERS THE DIVINE PROVISION WAS EXHIBITED IN THE TYPE AND PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (Levit. xvi.; Isa. liii.). In the former one victim was slain to represent the death of Christ; the other went away alive to represent Christ as living again after having borne our sins. IV. ALL THESE TYPES AND PROPHECIES WERE FULFILLED BY THE ATONING DEATH AND TRIUMPHANT RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD. V. THROUGH THE SACRIFICE AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, SINNERS OF ALL CONDITIONS ARE ENTITLED TO THE BLESSINGS OF REDEMPTION. Consider—1. The influence of these truths upon the mind (Rom. v. 1–5). 2. The encouragement hereby given to the returning sinner. 3. The madness of expecting salvation in any other way. (*T. Slatterie.*) *The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*:—I. WHO IS THIS LAMB OF GOD. Christ Jesus typified by the paschal lamb; which was—1. Without spot (Heb. ix. 14). 2. Separated the tenth day. 3. Killed. 4. The blood sprinkled on the post so that the destroying angel might pass over (1 Pet. i. 2; Heb. x. 22). 5. Roasted with fire. 6. It expiated sin typically, Christ really (1 John ii. 2). 7. It was meek and patient in all its sufferings: so Christ (Isa. liii. 7). II. WHAT SIN DOTH HE TAKE AWAY? 1. Originial (Rom. v. 19). 2. Actual (Eph. i. 7). 3. Habitual (Acts iii. 26). III. HOW DOTH CHRIST TAKE AWAY SIN? 1. He became man (John i. 14). 2. In the human nature He assumed He suffered death (Phil. ii. 8). 3. The human nature in Him dying, by that death He expiated the sins of human persons (Isa. liii. 5–6). 4. By this means He took our sins away from us, Himself becoming our sin-offering (2 Cor. v. 21). 5. And so He takes away whatever in sin is prejudicial to us; as—(1) The guilt. (2) The curse (Gal. iii. 13). (3) The strength of sin. USE. Behold this Lamb of God. 1. In the manger. 2. In the temple. 3. In the garden. 4. In the judgment-hall. 5. Upon the cross. 6. Ascending. 7. Now at the right hand of God. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The great work of Christ, and the great work of the preacher*:—I. THE GREAT WORK OF CHRIST. Sin always implies the existence of law, knowledge of law, capability of obeying

law, and actual departure from law. Christ came to take sin away. 1. This work is of all works most difficult. In some respects it is impossible. Its fact cannot be taken away, nor its memory, nor its influence; but its painful consciousness, its controlling power, its polluting influences, and its dawning consequences can. But this transcends all human power. Senators, sages, poets, priests have tried and failed. Christ alone can do it, and has done it. 2. This work is of all works the most indispensable. Sin is the foundation of all man's suffering, physical, political, social, religious. The work required is to dry up this fountain. Sin must be taken away from our literature, governments, institutions, hearts, before the world can be saved. This is the great work of Christ. II. THE GREAT WORK OF THE PREACHER. To point to the Lamb of God. This designation suggests—1. Sinlessness. 2. Sacrifice. Christ's was voluntary, all-sufficient, exemplary. 3. Divinity. Christ was God's messenger and atoner. The preacher's work, therefore, is not to deal in controversies or speculations. The world wants a Saviour, not a system or a creed. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The excellency of the Christian Atonement*:—I. Christ excels in the NATURE OF THE VICTIM. 1. The faultlessness of the Saviour. According to Judaism the lamb of sacrifice must be a year old, and without a blemish. Thus Jesus went through the four seasons—the spring, summer, autumn, winter of existence, without receiving or inflicting injury. Without blemish in the inward life, without spot in the outward character. Many are without spot to men, but are conscious of being full of spots unto God. Jesus was without spot to God. 2. His Divine appointment. According to Judaism, the lamb of sacrifice was separated from the flock days before it was slain. And Jesus was marked out from the foundation of the world. (1) This verse teaches us that a Lamb slain is the central idea of creation and that in this light the universe was planned. The idea of sacrifice is the scarlet thread that stretches from eternity to eternity. God sprinkled the door posts of creation with blood when He framed them. (2) The Lamb slain is also the centre of the Divine nature. Sacrifice is the deepest principle of God Himself. Christ was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world. In eternity the Father anointed the Son to be a priest and a sacrifice with the consecrating oil of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel does not create this principle, it only reveals it. God purchased His Church with His own blood. 3. His Divine nature. The Lamb of God is partaker of the nature of God. According to Judaism, the sacrificial lamb was to be brought up on the farm of the offerer: for this reason that it must cost some thought and pains, and consequently be something united to him by a tie of affection. And Jesus was a Lamb which God reared upon His own farm. "I was by Him as one brought up with Him"; according to the Chaldee paraphrase. "I was nursed at His side." But He was not only "of God." He was God. This it was that imparted efficacy to His sufferings. II. It excels in THE EFFICACY OF THE WORK. The Jewish sacrifices brought sin to remembrance; Christ's sacrifice took it away. 1. Look at Christ as bearing the sin of the world. But to bear it He must go under it. In the Old Testament to forgive means literally to carry. "Who is a God like unto Thee that pardoneth (lit. beareth) iniquity?" Other Gods pardoned. Jehovah carried sin; under the Old Testament in respect of covenant, under the New through Incarnation and imputation. 2. Christ bore sin away. "Christ hath wholly purchased us from the curse of the law" (Welsh translation). How? By fully paying. 3. Christ bore it away once for ever. The Jewish sacrifices had to be repeated; but Christ cancelled it once for all. III. It excels in the AREA OF ITS INFLUENCE. The Jewish sacrifices availed for one nation only. Christ's sacrifice is intended for the benefit of the world. 1. Sin, not sins; sin in its root, its deepest, bitterest nature. 2. The sin of the world. When the Great Western Railway was first made in South Wales, it was constructed on the broad-gauge principle; but the directors years afterwards judged it expedient to convert it from the broad gauge into the narrow gauge. In the history of the way of salvation, however, the contrary process was observed,—the narrow gauge under the Old Testament, and the broad gauge under the New. 3. All the sin of all the world. According to Judaism, a sacrifice was not left for all sins, such as adultery, murder, Sabbath desecration—sins committed with a high hand. Whoever was found guilty of these was to be "cut off from among his people." But the sacrifice of Christ covers all, not a single sin excepted. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Objections met*:—It has been said that the view of Christ's work here put into the Baptist's mouth could not have been entertained by him because—I. The pre-Christian times were not acquainted with the idea of a suffering Saviour. But this idea is not foreign to the Old

Testament, with which the Baptist may be presumed to have had some acquaintance. II. The disciples of Jesus were incapable of understanding this idea (Matt. xvi. 22). But though not understood by, the idea cannot be shown to have been strange to them; while, even if it was, that would not prove it to have been strange to John, who was reared as a prophet. III. The idea which was only at a later period in the Christian Church fully developed could hardly have been anticipated by individual reflection. But the Baptist refers to Divine inspiration as the source of his knowledge (ver. 23). IV. The Baptist expected a theocratic and not a suffering Messiah (Matt. xi. 3). But John's doubts were occasioned, not by Christ's sufferings, but by His delay in asserting His Messianic dignity. Besides, it is not safe to argue from the thoughts of a prisoner to the views of the same individual at liberty. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *John's call for attention*:—In that simple "Behold," we have the highest and crowning direction for the right reception of the Christ. It was a look that betrayed the whole world into sin and condemnation, and it is a look that again unites men with their proper Lord, and recovers them from their guilt and misery. But it must be an earnest look—a look of faith, —a look of appreciative confidence—a look which transfers the whole trust and affection of the heart to the object on which it rests,—a look which draws after it the entire wish and desire of the soul. Such a look Andrew had, when he rushed in search of his brother Simon, saying, "We have found the Messias!" Such a look Philip had, when he went to Nathanael exclaiming, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write!" (vers. 41–45). And such a look, my brethren, is in the power of every one of us this day. Oh the blessedness of our privileges! (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Christ the Passover Lamb*:—The Passover was close at hand (ii. 13). We know its significance, and what a fundamental importance the deliverance from Egypt had for the history of Israel as well as for its knowledge of salvation. This fact stands so alone that only the day of the new salvation is to be compared with it, and the latter again has such a fitting type in no fact of the Old Testament history as it has in the former. Now the Baptist knew that the time of the final closing salvation had dawned, and that Jesus was the one bringing it. Why should he not, above all, compare this salvation and Him who brought it with that first typical redemption of Israel? Then, however, that Lamb was the means of sparing the nation. For its sake destruction passed over the people. Thus now will Jesus be the means of sparing. (*C. E. Luthardt, D.D.*) *Christ the Lamb and the Lion*:—Doth not St. John call Christ "a Lion"? (Rev. v. 5). Why then doth the Baptist call Him a Lamb? The lion and the lamb, the prophet Isaiah tells us, shall both "dwell together" in the days of Christ: but may they both be together in the Person of Christ? not only in one place together, but also in one case together? Different respects may tie discordant titles unto one subject. His courage against Satan, whom He conquered, His patience among men, whom He suffered, declared there was met in one Messias the stoutness of a lion, and the meekness of a lamb. St. Bernard's distinction so determines it; He rose like a lion, but he suffered like a lamb. (*R. Clerke, D.D.*) *Christ bearing the sins of the world*:—The other day I saw a contrivance to judge a man's strength by the power of his breath—you breathe into the machine, and by the weight you lift will be accurately estimated the power of your lungs. And Jesus Christ keeps the stars floating by the power of His breath just as children keep bubbles on a summer eve; He breathes and the planets swim as feathers in a breeze; but He who upholds the stars with His word, who bears with ease the burden of ten thousand worlds, bends and staggers under the weight of your sins. "The Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on Him." Sin came from all directions; a multitude of sins from our own neighbourhood went that day on a pilgrimage to Mount Calvary; iniquity poured in from all quarters, and fell in terrible cataracts on the devoted head of the patient victim. "He was wounded for our transgressions," &c. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Praise to Christ the Lamb of God*:—A gentleman travelling in Norway went to see the church in a certain town. Looking up at its tower he was surprised to see the carved figure of a lamb near the top. He inquired why it was placed in that position, and was told that when the church was being built a workman fell from the high scaffold. His fellows saw him fall, and horror-stricken rushed down expecting to find him dashed to pieces. But to their surprise and joy he was almost unhurt. How had he escaped? A flock of sheep was passing by the church at the moment of his fall, and he fell amongst them and right on the top of a lamb. The lamb was crushed to death, but the man was saved. And the lamb

was carved on the tower at the height from which he fell to commemorate his escape. Shall we then not give the highest place of honour to the Lamb of God who was crushed beneath our load. (*F. E. Turner.*) *The value of Christ's sacrifice*:—How can one atone for thousands? asked the North American Indians of the missionary Brainerd. The missionary solved their difficulty by showing that one sovereign is worth two hundred and forty pence—one gold coin being equal in value to many copper ones, the difference in the metal making a difference in the value. Similarly the sufferings of one God-man are a sufficient propitiation for the sins of millions of mere men, the difference in the rank constituting a difference in the worth. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) How weighty must be the blood of the Lamb, by whom the world was made, to turn the scale when weighed against the world! (*Augustine.*) *Christ's work not frustrated by His rejection*:—I am aware the objection is often made, that "if Christ taketh away the sin of the world, and yet the vast majority of men die in their sins and are lost, Christ's work for many was wrought in vain." I see no force in this. I think we might as well argue, that because sin came into the world and marred creation, creation was in vain. We are not talking of the works of men, but of the eternal Word, and we must be content to see much in His works that we do not entirely understand. Though multitudes are lost, I have no doubt the last day will prove that nothing that Christ did for them was in vain. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The sacrificial lamb of the Mohammedans*:—It is noticeable that although modern Islâm rejects the idea of the sacrifice of Christ, the custom of sacrifice is still commanded; as, for instance, for certain offences during the Pilgrimage. Something approaching to the Jewish Day of Atonement is thus described by an American missionary in India: "On a great day with the Mohammedans of Calcutta they offered their yearly sacrifice, the atonement for sin. A lamb or a kid without spot or blemish is taken to the priest or moulvie; the person who presents the offering lays his hands on the animal's head, saying: 'For my head I give thine.' Then he touches the ears, the mouth, the eyes, &c., of the sacrifice, still repeating: 'For my ears, thy ears; for my mouth, thy mouth; for my eyes, thy eyes;' and so on till he has mentioned all that he has to say. Then he exclaims: 'For my life, thy life;' and as he pronounces these words the priest plunges a knife into the kid's heart, and pronounces an absolution for the sinner. Is not this a strange custom, showing that the Mohammedan also acknowledges the necessity of an atonement, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin?" (*S. S. Times.*) *The death of Christ the preacher's theme*:—In one of the old-fashioned mansions in the United States there is still to be seen a brass-bound clock upon the staircase-landing with the hands fixed at the minute and hour when Washington died. The grandfather of the present owner was a pall-bearer at the funeral of the great republican, and set the hands where they have ever since remained. Even so the preacher's finger must ever point the multitude to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Christ the preacher's theme*:—Among those who visited Dr. Carey, the great Baptist missionary, in his last illness was Alexander Duff, the Scotch missionary. On one occasion he spent some time talking chiefly about Carey's missionary life, until the dying man whispered "Pray." Duff knelt down and prayed, and then said "good-bye." As he passed from the room, he thought he heard a feeble voice pronouncing his name, and turning, found that he was recalled. He stepped back accordingly, and this is what he heard, spoken with a gracious solemnity: "Mr. Duff, you have been speaking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey: when I am gone say nothing about Dr. Carey—speak about Dr. Carey's Saviour." Duff went away rebuked and awed, with a lesson in his heart that he never forgot. (*Ibid.*) *We must look to Christ*:—When I was in Belfast I knew a doctor who had a friend, a leading surgeon there, and he told me that the surgeon's custom was, before performing any operation, to say to the patient, "Take a good look at the wound, and then fix your eyes on me, and don't take them off till I get through." I thought at the time that was a good illustration. Sinner, take a good look at the wound to-night, and then fix your eyes on Christ, and do not take them off. It is better to look at the remedy than at the wound. See what a poor wretched sinner you are, and then look at the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He died for the ungodly and the sinner. Say "I'll take Him," and may God help you to lift your eye to the Man on Calvary. And as the Israelites looked upon the serpent and were healed, so may you look and live to-night. (*D. L. Moody*). *Jesus the propitiation for sin*:—When our Lord was thus set forth by John, it is well to note the special character under which He was declared. John

knew much of the Lord Jesus, and could have pictured Him in many lights and characters. He might especially have pointed Him out as the great moral example, the founder of a higher form of life, the great teacher of holiness and love; yet this did not strike the Baptist as the head and front of our Lord's character, but he proclaimed Him as one who had come into the world to be the great sacrifice for sin. Lifting up his hand and pointing to Jesus, he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He did not say, "Behold the great Exemplar;" no doubt he would have said that in due season. He did not even say, "Behold the king and leader of a new dispensation;" that fact he would by no means have denied, but would have gloried in it. Still, the first point that he dwells upon, and that which wins his enthusiasm is, "Behold the Lamb of God." John the Baptist views Him as the propitiation for sin, and so he cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A saving message:*—It is told of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, that when about to preach in the Crystal Palace, Sydenham, in 1857, he went down a short time before the service to arrange where the platform should be placed, and whilst trying the various positions he cried aloud, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" A man was at that time at work in the Palace, who heard the text spoken under such unusual circumstances. It went with power to his heart, convinced him of sin, and led him to the sin-atoning Lamb, in whom he found forgiveness, peace, and joy. *The atonement and the Scriptures:*—A Socinian preacher once said to Mr. Newton, "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times; and it is very strange if the doctrine of atonement which you hold should not have been found by me." Mr. Newton replied, "I am not surprised at this; I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it. Prejudices from education, learning, &c., often form an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the candle; you must remove the extinguisher." *The great remedy:*—Hannah More relates that Dr. Johnson, on his death-bed, was in great distress of mind. Not being comforted by ordinary conversation, he desired to see a minister. Mr. Winstanley was named, and the doctor requested him to be sent for. Mr. Winstanley did not come, but wrote to the doctor as follows:—"Sir, —I beg to acknowledge the honour of your note, and am very sorry that the state of my health prevents my compliance with your request. I can easily conceive what would be the subject of your inquiry. I can conceive that on the near approach of death what you once considered mere peccadilloes have risen into mountains of guilt, on whichsoever side you look you see only positive transgression, defective obedience; and hence in self-despair are eagerly inquiring, 'What must I do to be saved?' I say to you in the language of the Baptist, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!'" When this was read to the doctor he anxiously asked, "Does he say so?" The consequence was that he was brought to the renunciation of himself and a simple reliance on Jesus as his Saviour. *Free trade with heaven established by Christ:*—Under the Old Testament no free trade was carried on between heaven and earth, no unrestricted commerce, for the duty was so high—a lamb being taken from one farm, a bullock from another, a heifer from the third, a goat from the fourth, and fowls from the poor, to pay the imposed duty; but the sacrifice once offered on Calvary for the sin of the world has, I am glad to tell you, established Free Trade for ever. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The message for sinners:*—John Wesley, preaching to an audience of scholars and noblemen, used the "generation of vipers" text, and flung denunciation right and left. "That sermon should have been preached at Newgate," said a displeased courtier. "No," said the fearless apostle, my text there would have been, "Behold the Lamb of God," &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) A young telegraph operator was anxious about his soul. After a sleepless night he went to his duties; while restless and absorbed in the thought of being a sinner he heard the click of his instrument, and with great astonishment and emotion spelt out this message:—"From H——, Windermere, to J—— B——, Warkworth. 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world'; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." This was sent as an answer to a letter from a young man who also was seeking peace. It acted as a double blessing, showing to both operator and receiver the way of salvation. (*Ibid.*) *The sin of the world:*—I think John the Baptist in this text speaks about sin as we think of a terrible epidemic from which individual men suffer, and which we are accustomed to speak of as that by which we are all affected. The symptoms may vary in individual cases; the course of the disease may sometimes be more or less rapid;

and there may be great differences in the pain which it inflicts on different men. When we speak of the cholera or some malignant fever, we regard those who suffer from it as smitten down by some terrible power which travels from house to house, and involves all its victims in one common peril; that some poison is in the blood of those who suffer; that they are all wrestling with the same ghastly enemy; and that they are all in danger of the same doom. Now it is thus that John the Baptist thought of sin. What we describe as the accidental lapses of individual men were to him the symptoms and the result of something vaster and more dreadful; the sins of individual men were to him only the revelations of an evil energy which had taken possession of the race. There was a great confederacy into which all men had entered, consciously or unconsciously—a confederacy against the authority of God, and against the eternal law of righteousness. Different men break different commandments; their individual transgressions vary according to their circumstances, their training, or their temper. But no man stands apart—no man refuses to share in the great revolt against the majesty of heaven. Where there is not a profligate, reckless disobedience, there is indifference to the Divine authority—an indifference which is just as fatal, and involves a separation from God as positive as if he had been an active antagonist to it. This is a common sin. This is a sin in which we are all sharers, and in which we still share if we are not redeemed, and constitutes an essential moral element and characteristic spirit of the world, but it finds expression in infinitely various ways. Now, I can imagine some of you saying—Did He take away the sin of the world? What signs are there that He has done it? Sin is here still. There is no solitary country the world over that is redeemed from it. It stains this century, as it has stained every century that has gone by. Will you consider it as guilt—guilt which one does recognize, and which fills the heart with terror, with dark and gloomy anticipations of the just penalty with which it must be visited. Well, millions upon millions who have appealed to Christ will tell you that its guilt has been taken away. Or will you consider sin as involving the terrible necessity of the separation of the soul from God. This is one of its worst and most malignant effects. We see, as the result of our sin, that we are driven away from that Divine presence—that our sin comes between us and the favour of Heaven—and we find that we cannot break through it, and speak to God face to face. God is holy, and by the necessity of His nature shrinks from contact with sin. Well, Christ has taken sin away even in that sense. If sin is no longer a dominant power in this world, there is something here that is stronger than it; there is the liberty into which we can enter through Christ Jesus our Lord. He has taken it away as the authority by which we were controlled, and through Him we are able to enter into the fullest freedom, and to keep God's commandments. I admit that sin has not disappeared from the world, but God has done His part towards causing it to disappear. He can give eternal life, but He cannot receive it for us; we must receive it. All He could do to take away our sin He has actually done; and we ought to rejoice with great exulting joy in the redemption that is wrought for us through Christ Jesus our Lord. Now there are two or three considerations I wish to impress upon you before I close, suggested by this subject. 1. In the first place, in this work of the Lord we are all deeply concerned. 2. Again, that which He has done excludes altogether the plea that you are helplessly under the power of sin. 3. Again this takes away the excuse for persisting in sin. 4. If you remain under the power of sin, it is by your own choice. All sin is, no doubt, the result of choice. 5. Finally, the truth that we have been considering excludes all hope that if we fail to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour that we shall ever obtain God's mercy and eternal life. (*R. W. Dale, M.A.*)

Vers. 30–34. **This is He.**—*The Redeemer's identification:*—I. IN HIS WORK as the Lamb of God. 1. The object offered in sacrifice. The Lamb of God applies to Christ (1) in His personal character. (2) In His sacrificial character. 2. The object or effect of the sacrifice "taketh away," &c. 3. The burden removed by the sacrifice: the world's sin. II. IN HIS PERSON (ver. 30). These words meet us for the third time. The human and Divine natures are exhibited in one sentence. How profoundly the Baptist believed in the pre-existence of Christ. III. THE MODE OF IDENTIFICATION. 1. I knew Him not. He did indeed know Him, and hence hesitated about baptizing Him (Matt. iii. 14). The son of Elizabeth must have known the Son of Mary. The Baptist means that he did not know Him as Messiah. 2. Jesus was revealed to John by the descent of the Holy Ghost. (1) The sign. The Dove emblematized the consecration of the Redeemer to His Divine work. (2)

The two baptisms—the one in water, the other in the Holy Ghost—the one that Christ might be made manifest unto Israel, and unto repentance for the remission of sins; the other not a sacrament that Christ was to institute for the Church, nor which any priest or minister could give; it was a baptism of regenerating grace—such a baptism as Simon Magus never had although baptized with water; such a baptism as the dying thief enjoyed although not baptized with water. (*Prof. Croskery.*) Notice—1. The evidences of Christ's excellency and Godhead when He came into the world are not cunningly devised fables, but most certain and infallible truths, for John bare record, saying, "I saw," &c. 2. Christ in His solemn entry to His offices was sealed from heaven, that so the Church may learn to embrace Him with all respect. Therefore doth the Spirit descend upon Him in this visible way, and the Father bear witness to Him (Matt. 3), all the persons of the Trinity manifesting themselves on Jordan's bank. 3. Christ is endowed with the Spirit from on high for executing of His offices, and it is made manifest that the Spirit is to be found on Him and sought from Him; for "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven upon Him," where the Spirit, who filleth heaven and earth, is said to descend in respect of that visible manifestation and sign of His presence. 4. The Spirit's descending like a dove, a meek, harmless and affectionate creature, pointed out what Christ is in His own nature to them that come to Him, even meek, harmless, loving, and not dreadful; what He is in the execution of His office, even He in whom the Father is well pleased and pacified, and He who bringeth the good news of assuaging the deluge of wrath, as Noah's dove of the drying up of the flood; and what He is in the operations of His Spirit upon His people, that they are made meek, harmless, and lowly as doves, not like birds of prey. 5. Albeit all Christ's members do receive of the Spirit in their measure, yet it is Christ's prerogative to have the Spirit resting on Him; not only as God is the Spirit of one essence with Him, proceeding from the Father and Him, and so is ever present with Him. But even as man by virtue of the personal union, the Spirit floweth and resteth on Christ, and efficaciously worketh in Him all Divine graces and virtues without measure, and immutably, so that none can come wrong to Him at any time for receiving of His Spirit: Therefore, it is said, "it abode upon Him" (Isa. xi. 2, 3). 6. Christ, in taking on our nature, did so cover His glory with the veil of our flesh and common infirmities that He could not be known by bodily sight from another man without Divine revelation and evidences from God; for, without this, John saith, "I knew Him not" (Matt. xvi. 17). 7. The Lord is very tender and careful of His servants, to encourage and confirm them in their calling and message; and will not fail to perform what He hath promised for that effect when He sendeth them out; for, John saith, he saw this sign in a peculiar way, as being to him an accomplishment of that promise given to him; for God had said to him, "upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending," &c., and now it was accomplished. 8. The Spirit resteth upon Christ, and was manifested to be on Him by a visible sign, not only for Himself and to point out His excellency, but for the Church's good, and to certify them that He received the Spirit to communicate unto His people. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *The Dove of God*:—We have here—I. THE CORONATION OF THE KING. 1. The actual descent of the Spirit. It is unnecessary to ask what was the objective material reality here. It is enough that this was no fancy, born in a man's brain, but an actual manifestation, whether through sense or apart from sense, to consciousness of a Divine outpouring and communication. 2. The purpose of this descent. The anointing of the Monarch. But a man is king before he is crowned. Coronation is the consequence and not the cause of royalty. And so the first purpose of this great fact is distinctly stated as having been the solemn pointing out of Messiah for the Baptist first, but in order that he might bear witness of Him to others. But this was not the beginning of His Messianic consciousness, nor of His Sonship. Before His baptism, and ere the heavens opened, or the dove fluttered down, He from everlasting was Son in the bosom of the Father. Christ's baptism was an epoch in His human development inasmuch as it was His first public assumption of His Messianic office, and inasmuch as an advance was made in the communication to his manhood of the sustaining Spirit as fully equipped Him for new calls. His manhood needed the continual communication of the Spirit, and because it was sinless it was capable of a complete reception of that Spirit. So we see in Christ the realized ideal of manhood. 3. The meaning of this symbol. To John the coming of the King was first and chiefly a coming to judgment. John sees two wonders: the Messiah in his Carpenter Cousin and the Spirit, which he thought of as searching and consuming, like a dove. The same as in Gen. i. 2,

where the word employed describes accurately the action of the mother bird with her soft breast and outstretched wings quickening the life that lies beneath. What then does it proclaim as to the character of the King. (1) Purity, as the very foundation of His royalty. (2) Meekness and gentleness, as the weapons of His conquest and the sceptre of His rule. The dove will outfly all Rome's eagles, and all rapacious unclean feeders with their strong wings, talons and beaks. II. THE GIFTS OF THE KING TO HIS SUBJECTS. 1. Christ has nothing that He keeps to Himself. He received the Spirit that He might diffuse Him through the whole world. Salvation is more than escape from wrath, more than pardon. We must rise higher and feel if we would understand the "unspeakable gift" which is the totality of the gifts of His indwelling Spirit. 2. Therefore Christian men are spoken of in the same language which is used in reference to their Master. "Sons of God," "Priests," "Lights of the World," "Anointed." 3. How full of rebuke and instruction is the symbol in reference to ourselves. The dove-like Spirit is offered to us. (1) Our hearts are like the wild chaos; but He will come, if we will let Him, and brood over our nature and recreate the whole. (2) The dove again was pure and fit for sacrifice: the heavenly dove comes as the Spirit of holiness, and then there is purity in the receiver and self-sacrifice. (3) The Dove that crowned the King dwells in the subjects and makes them, too, meek and gentle, and imparts the true force of Christian character. (4) Noah's dove came back with one leaf in his beak—the prophecy of a whole world of beauty and verdure. The Dove that comes to us, bearing some leaf plucked from the tree of life, is the earnest of our inheritance until the day of redemption. All the gifts of that Divine Spirit—gifts of holiness, gentleness, wisdom, truth—are forecasts of heavenly perfectness. To us sailing over a dismal sea, He comes bearing with Him a message that tells of the far-off land and the fair garden of God in which the blessed shall walk. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) As a dove did at that time bring tidings of the abating of the water, so doth it now of the abating of the wrath of God upon the preaching of the gospel. (*Augustine.*) The Holy Spirit manifested Himself here as a Dove; and at the day of Pentecost in tongues of fire; in order that we may learn to unite fervour with simplicity, and to seek for them both from Him. (*Ibid.*) The dove, the symbol of innocence and purity (Matt. x. 16), the abiding and the tranquil hovering over Christ, expressed the tranquil and equable movement of the power of the Spirit in Him, in contrast with the detached impulses given to the prophets (Isa. xi. 2). (*Tholuck.*) *The Great Atoner the Great Baptizer:*—The work of Christ, according to the Baptist, was to take away the sin of the world and to baptize with the Holy Ghost. It is not possible for believers to think too much of the first part; but it is quite possible for them to think too little of the second. These are the two pillars of our faith. The atoning sacrifice was offered and completed on Calvary once for all; but the baptism of the Holy Ghost is ever going on. Our Saviour died to be the Atoner; He lives to be the Baptizer. And our Saviour lives and reigns to baptize us not occasionally, but permanently; not fitfully and uncertainly, but surely. Were this baptism fully realized, there would be a vast increase of holiness, power, and success in ministers and churches: of Christian unity and charity. What encouragement have we for expecting this baptism? The announcement that Christ is as much Baptizer as Atoner, not the one without the other, or He would have laid the foundation and built nothing upon it. The atonement is the rock: the baptism builds the Church. So the gospels run up to the atonement, but the Acts start from the baptism. And so as the sinner seeks the one for salvation, so should the saint seek the other for service and testimony. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *The four baptisms:*—There are four baptisms mentioned in the Bible. The baptism of water, of repentance, of the Holy Ghost, and of fire. The baptism of water is the emblem of all, but that would be nothing without the baptism of repentance which it was intended to express; and the baptism of repentance will be unavailing for peace, holiness, heaven, unless it is accompanied by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that is never far reparated from the baptism of fire. The four make one complete whole, and are the basis of the Christian life. (*J. Vaughan.*)

Ver. 35-51. **The next day.**—*The first utterances of the Word:*—1. A searching question. 2. A gracious invitation. 3. An encouraging promise. 4. A Divine command. 5. A heart revelation. 6. An assurance of a present and an everlasting heaven. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Three ways to the Lord:*—There is only one way to heaven, "I am the way;" but there are many ways to Christ. One soul is led earlier, another later; one gradually, another by storm; one by sorrow, another through joy;

one by inner impulse, another by external influence. Here we learn—1. To adore the wisdom of God. Like a prudent gardener He deals with each of His plants according to its kind. One needs the sun, another the shade; one must be kept moist, another dry; one requires rich soil, another poor; one must be pruned, another supported; one needs tender handling, another will grow in any wind or weather. 2. To regard God's world with such big-hearted, patient love, that we no longer measure our neighbour by our own standard. 3. To learn to know ourselves. The lives of other children of God ought to be a mirror to us, and from them we can choose to suit our own particular aspiration, some favourite character by whose example we may be strengthened and edified. Here we have three ways to God. I. THE WAY THROUGH THE PREACHED WORD. 1. "Behold the Lamb," &c., is the heart of the Christian sermon. That is the aim of the whole Bible: Moses, the prophets, John, and the apostles. No matter the particular subject, this is the true end. (1) If we preach on the holiness and love of God, behold them here. (2) If about your duty, behold here meekness, gentleness, innocence, and obedience. (3) If reproof for sin, behold here the effect of sin and what is necessary for its removal. (4) If consolation, behold here its source. (5) If heaven, behold here its central glory. 2. The two disciples heard. (1) We often come short in the listening—work, and pleasure are preferred. (2) Those who listen, do they really hear? (3) Those who hear, do they "follow?" Following Jesus is the true end of hearing. For this purpose the Baptist willingly let them depart. You are to become converts, not to any human preacher, but to Christ. II. THE WAY THROUGH EXAMPLE which Peter took. Andrew cannot keep the blessed discovery to himself, and he could not have performed for his brother a nobler service, nor presented to Christ a nobler tribute of his love. What a lesson for—1. Preachers. 2. Parents. 3. Brothers. III. THE WAY OF EXPERIENCE. They all took this way, but it was in a special sense the way Nathanael took. 1. It is necessary that you come to the Lord personally and become acquainted with Him through your own experience to put to the proof what you have heard or read. Practice makes perfect; experience makes the Christian. 2. Whom will you find? A soul friend rich in love, who looks on your soul as a thing of value; one who has a profound insight into your heart; one who can supply all your need. 3. Receive Him—(1) for His own sake. (2) For the sake of the revelations He makes and for the rewards He bestows. (*K. Gerok, D.D.*) *The soul sought by Christ, and seeking Him:*—I. JOHN STOOD, AND TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES LOOKED ON JESUS AS HE WALKED. Was it by accident that Christ was walking there? No; He was walking to find them. They had not brought Him, persuaded Him, or arranged for His arrival. No needy heart has to furnish its Christ. Before it begins to seek He is near and waiting. Immanuel may be unseen, as our best possessions always are, but heaven has brought Him near. II. HOW DO MEN TREAT HIM? "They followed Jesus." Now begins man's part in the great reconciliation. Not every one, like Andrew, is called to be an apostle, but all are called to be disciples. But both must "follow." Will you look on a little while from curiosity, or momentary impulse, or will you thankfully and steadily take up His cross and go after Him? III. IT IS NOT CERTAIN WHETHER THE FIRST IMPULSE TO FOLLOW WILL PROVE A CONSTANT RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE. "What seek ye?" Rather a chilling question as it stands. He saw that the motives of these ardent disciples must be laid bare to themselves. What do you really seek? Is it for His sake or your own? God applies many touchstones. Time, spiritual disappointment, &c. Christ wants loyal, disinterested love, and there is therefore no lack of tenderness in His question. IV. NOW, THEN, COMES THE PLACE FOR A DEEPER EXERCISE OF FAITH, AND THE RISING BY IT INTO A HIGHER LIFE. Will the disciple bear the proof? Will he evade the question and simply follow along on the level of the old decency, saying all the old prayers, &c.? Notice the spiritual beauty of the answer. "Master (with a new and tenderer meaning), where dwellest Thou?" This is the least ostentatious, yet directest confession of a desire for closer communion. It is a confession of ignorance, a prayer for a hiding place. V. WOULD IT BE GRANTED ONLY FOR THE ASKING? "He saith unto them, come and see." Let that stand for the dispelling of all your doubt. There is no description of the house beforehand to excite wrong anticipation. Find out what the Christian life is by living it. "Eye hath not seen," &c. VI. "THEY CAME AND ABODE WITH HIM." If they had been like some they would have stumbled at their own unworthiness, as if God's favours were ever granted to merit. Faith takes God at His word. VII. AND NOW SEE PLAYING OUTWARD THE POWER WHICH HAS BEEN WORKING INWARDLY. It begins to testify for Christ. No sooner is the heart in actual fellow-

ship with Christ than it begins to ask what it can do for Him. There are two sorts of people: those that go and do the thing, and those that stand and wonder why it was not done after some other fashion. Andrew begins at the nearest point. "His own brother." There is no postponement for a complete plan, for times, for becoming "good enough." His heart is full, and he does what he can. How soon this spirit in the followers of Christ would bring the world to His feet. Conclusion: 1. What the one brother says to the other is a joyful recognition of the fulfilment of prophecy. 2. The message relating to "the Lamb of God" is the message that brings sinners to the Saviour. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *The first disciple:*—I. WE HAVE HERE THE FIRST BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. The beginning of anything great and good always wins for us a special regard. The tree grown from an acorn; the Amazon from the spring in the Andes. The interest is heightened in the case of moral movements. The Mayflower; the lonely monk who afterwards wrought the Reformation. Still deeper is our interest in the beginning of the kingdom of Christ. And it begins here with the Divine quietness which is characteristic of God's mightiest works. II. THE BEGINNING AND FIRST MOVEMENTS OF PERSONAL RELIGION. That begins when a person comes to Christ. 1. This does not imply that there is no value in what precedes. These men had heard the Baptist, were penitent, prepared, expectant. But as soon as opportunity was given they came, and so showed the sincerity of their repentance. 2. The first coming may be real and true, and yet not at once entire and decisive. They went back to Bethsaida, but an invisible Presence went back with them, and in a little while it became visible, and said, "Follow Me." So some time may elapse before the full surrender. But a faith in Jesus held long in secrecy is a perilous thing. III. THE DIVINE METHOD OF EXTENDING RELIGION AND OF MULTIPLYING THE NUMBER OF DISCIPLES. There is a beautiful exemplification here of the law of personal influence. The great preacher points to Jesus, and it takes effect. But how small that effect would be if it reached the hearers only. It led to Jesus first, and then the power of personal influence makes itself felt. In this way, in little more than a day, Jesus has five disciples. Surely this shows us what a sphere opens at once to every believer. He has found the pearl of great price, and without losing it himself he can offer it to his friend. This privilege is neglected or timorously used. There never was so much preaching, and for this reason we abate quieter and more personal efforts. But whatever one attains in spiritual things he is bound by the very law of the life he has received to try to communicate it to others. Because unwise speaking is worse than silence it does not follow that we are to keep silent always. There are some whom plain dealing suits; or you may have to watch, use gentle suggestion, &c. Conclusion: 1. If you have borne witness conscientiously, but without success, try silence, watch, pray, put books in the way. 2. If you have been long silent, afraid of wounding susceptibilities, of making religion repellant, and trying to reach in quiet ways without success, break silence for once. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The first five disciples:*—Order is heaven's first law, but variety is the second. We see this—1. In creation. 2. In providence. 3. In the work of grace. The operation is ever the same in kind, but different in manner. Here are four different methods of conversion. I. THE FIRST TWO DISCIPLES WERE THE FRUITS OF PREACHING. 1. The preacher—(1) Was divinely illuminated, as all gospel preachers must be. (2) Was unsuccessful at first, but tried the same message again and succeeded. (3) His subject was the only effective one—Christ the sin-bearer. 2. The process of conversion. (1) A spirit of inquiry was stirred up. They followed Christ as searchers, at His back. Christ turns round and faces them. He looks upon them, and then puts the modest question, the first words He spoke. It was a comprehensive question, too: "What seek ye?" Pardon, peace, purity, truth? "Come and see," and you shall have them all. The best way to be convinced of the power of the gospel is to try it. II. THE THIRD DISCIPLE WAS BROUGHT IN BY PRIVATE INSTRUMENTALITY. 1. The agent, Andrew. (1) As soon as a man is found by Christ, he begins to find others. (2) "First" implies that he did not give it up afterwards. (3) Relationship has a stern demand on our individual effort. Our first business is at home. (4) Simon was worth ten Andrews. We may be very deficient in talent, and yet be the means of bringing a great man to Christ. (5) Andrew's testimony was modest. "We." He gives the other disciple his share of the discovery. But it was positive also. Not "I think," or "trust," but "we have." 2. The process. (1) Christ describes Simon's present state—"the son of the timid dove"—explaining what he was. (2) He gave him a new name, indicative of the nature His grace would give. This is the general plan of conversion. Nature is discovered and

grace imparted; the old name supplanted by the new. III. THE FOURTH DISCIPLE WAS CALLED DIRECTLY BY THE VOICE OF JESUS. So are all men, for the voice of John or the voice of Andrew is the voice of Christ speaking through them; but in some cases there is no apparent instrumentality. Colonel Gardner was about to perpetrate a crime but was stopped on the brink of it by sovereign grace without any apparent instrumentality. 1. Christ spoke but two words. 2. To follow Christ is the picture of Christian discipleship in every form. Follow Christ—(1) In doctrine. (2) In faith. (3) In action. (4) In ordinances. IV. THE FIFTH DISCIPLE WAS A COMPOSITE CASE. There was—1. Preparation of heart "under the fig tree." 2. Philip's instrumentality. 3. Christ's Divine word which convinced Nathanael and led him to put his trust in the Messiah. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The first five disciples:*—I. A LITTLE REAL KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST PRODUCES THE DESIRE FOR MORE. They had heard the testimony of John. They prized his ministry, for it had done them good, but they now felt that Jesus could do more for them than John. II. THE TRUE WAY OF INCREASING OUR KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS TO FOLLOW HIMSELF. They might have stayed with John and asked for further information. How much there is to be known of Christ which human teachers cannot impart. What is it to follow Christ? 1. Attraction from Christ. 2. Faith in Christ. 3. Submission to Christ. III. THE SPIRIT OF DEVOUT INQUIRY ALWAYS MEETS WITH THE SAVIOUR'S SYMPATHY AND SMILE. 1. He awakens consciousness. He does not teach in the first instance. 2. He invites confidence. "What can I do for you?" 3. He offers a welcome. IV. IN FOLLOWING CHRIST THE BELIEVER FINDS MORE THAN HE EXPECTED OR IMAGINED. They remained with Christ and had fellowship with Him. The world often disappoints, but Christ gives more than we can ask or think. (*J. Spence, D.D.*) *The first disciples, or sons of the light:*—I. ANDREW AND JOHN, attracted towards the Light. II. SIMON AND JAMES, conducted to the Light. III. PHILIP AND NATHANAEL, invited by the Light. Lessons: 1. The greatest discovery a soul can make—the Christ. 2. The purest felicity a soul can enjoy—fellowship with Christ. 3. The noblest life a soul can lead—following Christ. 4. The loftiest calling a soul can pursue—commending Christ. 5. The grandest philantbropy a soul can practice—bringing men to Christ. 6. The sweetest commendation a soul can receive—to be an Israelite indeed. 7. The sublimest spectacle a soul can see—the Son of Man enthroned in an open heaven. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The early disciples:*—I. THE HERALDING OF CHRIST. The Baptist's ministry was—1. Brief. Only six months. 2. Popular. 3. Misunderstood. 4. Expectant. 5. Self-abnegating. II. THE MANIFESTATION OF JESUS IN HIS TRUE CHARACTER AND MISSION. 1. John says, Behold—(1) Not the great teacher. (2) Not the spotless example. (3) Not the triumphant king. (4) But the Lamb of God. 2. Jesus says—(1) "What seek ye?" An affectionate inquiry opening the way to conversation. (2) Come and see—an encouraging invitation. III. THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. By friendly service. 2. Brotherly affection. 3. Neighbourly zeal. 4. Conquest of prejudice. IV. THE RESULT OF PERSONAL EFFORT. Andrew helped to make the Pentecostal preacher. How little we know what hangs on our individual endeavours. The preacher may not be known beyond his flock, but one soul through his appeals may be the means of converting thousands. The Sabbath school teacher may toil on with half a dozen children, but amongst the number may be a Wilberforce. Let none then be discouraged. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The Redeemer choosing disciples:*—The leading characteristics of the gospel were to be exhibited in the disciples; their selection, therefore, was a matter of vast importance. I. THE REDEEMER CHOOSES DISCIPLES OF MEN OF ENTIRELY OPPOSITE CULTURE AND DISPOSITION. In John dwells paramount the meek, the restful, and the happy. The indicating words of the Baptist were appropriate to this disciple—"Behold the Lamb!" Simon is quite another man, rock-like, rough, pressing through all hindrances, and recoiling from nothing. 1. If diverse temperaments were necessary at the beginning, they are necessary now. 2. Each is good when it is animated by the Spirit of God. Excess and onesidedness, however, are to be deplored. 3. There are many gifts but one Spirit. Sternness and gentleness, fiery strength and patient meekness, can, and ought, in like measure to glorify Christ. Let them not be polished down into similarity. Let each be content with his gift and do what he can without envying another's. Common love and zeal should bind all together and beget mutual toleration. II. THE REDEEMER CHOSE THOSE WHO ACQUIRED THE HIGHEST FAME AND THOSE WHOSE NAME ONLY HAS COME DOWN TO US. John and Peter on the one hand, Andrew and Philip on the other. 1. These silent and unknown workers are not to be despised. 2.

Then among Christians such distinctions as famous and non-famous should have no place. The brilliancy of the one and the obscurity of the other does not lie in the difference of inner work, but in—(1) Outward circumstances. (2) Inclination. One mind is called to appear in the front; the other would rather conceal itself. The one works with quick and firm decision; the other is slow, silent, and sure. The one must have a wide field; the other keeps at home. Both are needful. III. THE REDEEMER'S CHOICE SHOWS US THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS OFTEN BEGIN IN AN UNLIKELY WAY. It is a mistake to desire the important to proclaim itself so at first, and when this is not the case to yield to disappointment and discontent. Present effectiveness depends on the unbiassed prospect of the future. Out of the most modest part in Christ's work something glorious will unfold itself. (*Schleiermacher.*) *The beginnings of the Christian Church*:—Vast as the Church is now, there was a time when it consisted of only two members. I. We see WHAT GOOD IS DONE BY CONTINUALLY TESTIFYING OF CHRIST. 1. The first time the Baptist cried "Behold the Lamb of God," no result seems to have followed. 2. When John repeated these words two followed Jesus. 3. This simple story is a pattern of the way in which good has been done to souls in every age. (1) By testimony. (2) By exalting Christ and not the Church, sacraments, or ministry. (3) By patient continuance in preaching the truth. II. WHAT GOOD A BELIEVER MAY DO TO OTHERS BY SPEAKING TO THEM ABOUT CHRIST. 1. Andrew spoke promptly to Peter. Who can tell what would have happened had he been silent and reserved, like many Christians now! 2. Of the first three converts, one at least was brought to Jesus by the quiet word of a relative. 3. The work of testimony must not be left to ministers alone. 4. Those who follow Christ must abide with him. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *The Apostle Andrew*:—A native of Bethsaida and brother of Peter. Very little known of him. Left the ministry of John for that of Christ. No sooner attached himself to Christ, than he sought a close intimacy with Him. He next brought his brother to Christ. Was formally called, together with Peter, to the apostleship (Mark i. 16, 17). Was present, and took a prominent part in, the feeding of the five thousand (John vi. 5, 9). Introduced the Greeks to Jesus (John xii. 21–22). Inquired with the three about the destruction of the Temple (Mark xiii. 4). I. HIS CONVERSION TO CHRIST. 1. His old master effected it. Religious teachers who have little souls are anxious to keep their disciples entirely under their own influence, and are jealous of greater teachers. 2. His old master effected it through the proclamation of a great truth. The cross is the converting power. II. HIS INTEREST IN CHRIST. 1. Expressed in the question addressed to Christ. "We want to know more of Thee." A desire which is ever the effect and evidence of true conversion. 2. Heightened by the reply Christ makes to them. "Come and see." Christ has nothing to conceal. He wishes the world to know all about Him. Do not judge from hearsay, but search for yourselves. III. HIS SERVICE FOR CHRIST. This and John xii. 23 indicates his desire to bring his fellow-men to Christ. 1. This can only be done by those who are themselves true disciples. They only have the spirit necessary to give emphasis to the invitation and the character which reflects Christ. 2. The true disciple will do it not as a dry duty, but as a delightful privilege. This is the highest Christian gratification. 3. This work is not bringing men to our systems and sects, but to Christ. 4. Unless men are brought to Christ, we do them no lasting service. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Andrew and John*:—I. DISCERNING THE LIGHT. Galilean fishermen, of deep religious susceptibilities, perhaps belonging to those who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. Leaving their boats, they repaired to the national rendezvous, where they received the rite of baptism at John's hands. When Christ was pointed out, they felt themselves, by personal consistency, intellectual conviction, and spiritual aspiration, shut up to seek his further acquaintance. So will the light still be discerned by all who prepare for it by penitence and faith (Isa. lxvi. 2; Zech. i. 3; Mal. iii. 7; Matt. iv. 17; Acts xx. 21; i John v. 9–12). Faith is the organ by which Christ's glory is discerned; Repentance the tear-drop that keeps the soul's eye pure and clean. II. FOLLOWING THE LIGHT. Many discern the Light who neither rejoice in it (iii. 19) nor walk after it (1 Thes. v. 5). Not so these, who no sooner beheld than they followed. 1. Promptly, as men who—(1) Realized their need (2 Kings vii. 3). (2) Knew the value of their discovery (Matt. xiii. 44–46). (3) Recognized the danger of delay (2 Cor. vi. 2; Heb. iv. 7). 2. Humbly: walking respectfully at a distance behind (Psa. xxxi. 1). 3. Sincerely: their reply to Christ's question teaching that openness and frankness which is indispensable in true religion. 4. Earnestly: embracing Christ's invitation at once, since the King's

business requires haste, and Christ's kingdom brooks no delay, and becoming so absorbed that they heeded not the lapse of time. III. FINDING THE LIGHT. Their judgments were convinced that Christ was the Messiah, and so will all those who turn towards the Light (John viii. 12; *cf.* Hos. vi. 3). In the order of nature, seeing goes before believing; in the realm of grace, a soul believes to see (John xi. 40; Psa. xxvii. 13). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The law of Christian increase* :—The most elementary mathematics treats of two laws of progression, which are distinguished by the terms "arithmetical" and "geometrical." The one grows by the successive addition of a fixed quantity; in the other, each successive term is increased by a fixed proportion of itself. Now, let the quantity added in a progression of the first sort be never so large, and the proportion in a progression of the second kind never so small, the last will eventually outstrip the first. But what is more important to notice is, that the arithmetical progression is the law of mechanical growth, while the other is the law of the growth of life. A tree does not grow by the addition of a certain number of twigs and leaves every year; but where a leaf was one year, there we find a twig with several leaves the next year. The human race itself follows the law of a living organism, and grows not by the addition of a certain number each year, but by a certain proportion of the population of the previous year. If, then, the Church is ever to overtake the world, it must grow, not by the arithmetical, but by the geometrical law; and as the world had the start, its rate of growth must be greater. The Church must be a living organism, and an organism of greater vitality than the human race. Its growth must be something out of itself, something proportionate to itself. The work of the individual is the true law of the Church's growth, stamped upon it from the very beginning. How easy it was for the three disciples to become six! Each man brings in one; that is all. And these men are not now apostles or ministers; they are private Christians—mere babes in Christ. What they did all can do. (*P. H. Hoge.*) *Small beginnings* :—Jesus gained one follower at His baptism—His baptizer; but this one was soon multiplied. John bears further witness to Jesus. Two of John's disciples hear his testimony, and at once leave their old master and follow the new. So now Jesus has three disciples. One of them, Andrew, was so glad that he had found the Messiah, that he started off and found Peter, his brother, and brought him to Jesus. So another follower was secured, making four in all. The next day Jesus calls Philip, and he obeys the call; so now there are five. Five are not very many; but still five are five times as many as one. Philip felt just as Andrew had done before him, and sought his friend Nathanael. Nathanael was rather hard to convince; so Philip said, Come and see for yourself. Nathanael came, and was convinced. So now there were six. This was only a small beginning, it is true; but most large things begin small. The locomotive that rushes along sixty miles an hour began its motion by inches. The giant tree of California was once only half an inch high. The Amazon at its source is narrow enough to allow a child to jump over it. The question is not so much, Was the beginning small? as, Is the growth rapid and enduring? How many disciples Jesus has to-day. Millions on millions. How have these millions of disciples been won? Mohammed won millions by the power of the sword. But Jesus never authorized the use of physical power to subdue men to His rule. Jesus' true disciples have all been won, just as those first six were won, by gentle means. One has persuaded one more, or eventually, as Peter, thousands. (*A. F. Schauffler.*) *John and Jesus* :—Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, came to join to Himself the Church. He said nothing, but merely came. It was His friend, the Baptist, who put into His the bride's right hand. (*Chrysostom.*)

Ver. 36. **Behold the Lamb of God!**—This is the main business of the preacher. Had John been an eloquent declaimer of repentance merely, he would have missed his life-work. As the stars called "the Pointers" always point to the Pole Star, so must ministers point to the Redeemer. The Baptist's eye was fastened on the Master, while he pointed to the Master. They preach Christ best who see Him best. I. LEARN THAT CHRIST IS THE LAMB OF GOD. 1. He is the chief of all sacrifices, the term "of God" often signifying "greatest," "noblest." (1) Because it contains all others. (2) Because it does really and for ever what the others only typified. 2. He is the Lamb of God's appointing; 3. Of God's providing; 4. Of God's offering; 5. Of God's setting forth to the sons of men (Rom. iii. 25). II. CONTEMPLATE JESUS UNDER THAT CHARACTER. 1. Christ, as the atoning sacrifice, ought to be the principal object of every believer's thoughts.

2. This is the grandest subject of thought in the universe. What are the sciences, the classics, poetry, in comparison? 3. No subject so well balances the soul as this. Other themes disturb the mental equilibrium, and overload one faculty at the expense of others. 4. This is the most needful subject of contemplation. Other things may be forgotten without serious damage. III. GATHER INSTRUCTION FROM JESUS UNDER THAT ASPECT. 1. Doctrinal. (1) The evil of sin. (2) The magnitude of God's love. 2. Experimental. Sin vanishes when Christ appears, and grief and fear. IV. Behold the Lamb of God WITH REVERENCE, as do angels and glorified spirits. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Beholding the Lamb of God*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO SEE WHEN WE LOOK ON JESUS? With what eyes? Time was when men saw Him with their natural eyes, and He was an offence. Time will be when every eye shall see Him, and He will be to many a terror. In heaven He is seen with glorified eyes. To us now He may be seen with the eye of faith. Using this, not having seen Him, we love Him and receive life from Him. What is the sight? 1. The great Creator (ver. 1). 2. The great Creator manifested in the flesh. 3. The Divine fulness for the salvation of men. (1) The full expiation of sin. (2) All the grace to be communicated to His saints. (3) Grace for grace. (4) All supplies necessary for living and dying, obeying and suffering, endurance and triumph, progress and perfection. II. FOR WHAT ENDS ARE WE TO CONTEMPLATE HIM. 1. That we may have tenderness of heart under sin. Here is a sight to soften stony hearts. 2. That we may have relief under conviction of sin. If He can take away the sin of the world, He can take away a world of sin in you. 3. That we may have courage and patience under all suffering. As He was in the world, so must we be. 4. That we may not stagger at the promises through unbelief. The Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Him. Shall we, then, disbelieve that those which concern us will be broken. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The Lamb of God*:—I. SEEN. 1. By whom? By the Forerunner, who had been preparing His way; as all will—first here in spirit, afterwards in body; first by faith, and afterwards by sight; who by humility, faith, and desire, make themselves ready for His coming (Matt. v. 8; John xvi. 16; 1 John iii. 2). 2. When? On the day after the preceding vision. Christ seldom puts His followers off with one sight of Himself: view follows upon view, according to growth in seeing and desiring. 3. Where? On the river's bank, as He was separating Himself from the Baptist to commence His own work. Christ is best seen at a distance from His servants. 4. Why? To be pointed out. For this same reason Christ appears to His servants now. II. POINTED OUT. 1. In what character? As the Lamb of God. Suggestive of—(1) Personal innocence or sinlessness. (2) The meek and unresisting patience with which he should carry on His work. (3) The propitiatory character of His mission:—the three main themes of the gospel ministry. 2. In what manner? With a Behold: to indicate—(1) The importance of the announcement. (2) The earnestness of the herald. (3) The liveliness of mind with which the announcement should be welcomed. 3. With what intention? To send men to Christ. 4. With what result? Two of his disciples follow Christ (Isa. lv. 11). III. FOLLOWED. 1. Promptly. Delay imprudent and dangerous. If Christ be what the Baptist says, there is no time to be lost. 2. Inquiringly. This is all that Christ desires at first. The chief complaint is that men reject Him without examining His credentials. 3. Finally. So will all who seek Him with the whole heart. 4. Exemplarily. They led the way to a larger movement. Lessons: 1. The proper business of the Christian ministry: to point out Christ to the world, and to point the world to Christ. 2. The necessary qualification of the ministry: to behold Christ, and have a personal insight into the character and work of the Saviour. 3. The encouraging reward of the ministry: to behold disciples going over to and following the Saviour. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Lamb of God*:—I. THE IMPORT OF THE APPELLATION. 1. It had respect to the personal character of Christ. He was a perfect pattern of (1) innocence and (2) patience. It was thus that He illustrated, in His own example, the nature and genius of the gospel dispensation, as superior to every other. 2. It had a distinct reference to the great design of His appearance and death. It marks out His sacrificial character, prefigured by the legal offerings, more particularly the paschal lamb, the most ancient and important. (1) The passover commemorated a great deliverance, and prefigured a greater. (2) The passover averted an inevitable destruction; so did the sacrifice of Christ. (3) In both cases there is no natural connection between the means and the end; the benefit is moral, not physical. The sprinkling blood was simply of Divine appointment, as a sign to arrest the progress of the destroying angel. So between the sacrifice of Christ and the expiation of guilt the relation is

moral, resulting from the will of God. (4) The personal qualities in the two victims are similar. The lamb was to be without spot or blemish; so was Christ. (5) The blood of the one had to be sprinkled, so that of the Other must be applied. (6) While many of the legal sacrifices were offered by individuals, the paschal lamb was required to be slain and offered by the whole congregation of Israel, it being understood that he who neglected this important sacrifice, would lose its benefit—would be cut off from the congregation. "Behold" [here] "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" (7) The time of slaying in both cases was the evening. (8) Not a bone was broken in either. (9) The paschal lamb was prepared by fire, signifying the agonies of the Lamb of God. How strangely mistaken, therefore, those who represent Christ's death as an example or a martyrdom for truth. II. THE SPIRIT AND DESIGN OF THE EXCLAMATION. It expresses the claim of Christ to attention from beings of every order. 1. Those who remain, as sinners, in their original character and state. There are three qualities which entitle an object to our regard: (1) Intrinsic greatness—*e.g.*, the wonders of the material world; those of the intellectual and moral universe; but here is something incomparably greater —Incarnate Deity. (2) Novelty. What so original as the Invisible Creator clothed in mortal flesh; the Ancient of Days cradled as an Infant; He who upholdeth all things sinking under a weight of suffering; the Lord of Glory expiring on the cross; the Light of the world sustaining an awful eclipse; the Sun of Righteousness immerged in the shadow of death? (3) Usefulness. The Lamb of God is the only Saviour. 2. Those who have repented and believed. The efficacy of this sacrifice covers all the needs of the spiritual life. 3. The redeemed in the world of glory. They owe their position and their continuance in it to the Lamb of God. 4. The holy angels, who may probably be secured in that felicity to which saints are promoted, by the mediation of Jesus Christ. 5. God Himself. To Him the Redeemer is an object of complacency and satisfaction. (*Robert Hall.*) *Christ's whole character must be studied:*—If you wish to look at a portrait of Raphael's, what would you think to see only the forehead uncovered, and then only the eyes, and so on, until all the features had been separately seen? Could you gain a true idea of the picture as a whole? Yet this is the way men look at the picture of Christ in the gospels, reading a few verses and mottoes here and there, and never considering the life in its wholeness and harmony. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *A two-fold use of the eyes:*—It is a beautiful remark of an old divine, that eyes are made for two things at least; first, to look with, and next, to weep with. The eye which looks to the pierced One is the eye which weeps for Him. Oh soul, when thou comest to look where all eyes should look, even to Him who was pierced, then thine eye begins to weep for that for which all eyes should weep, even the sin which slew thy Saviour! There is no saving repentance except within sight of the cross.

Vers. 37–39. **And the two disciples heard Him speak.**—*The first two disciples:* —I. THE FRUIT OF GRACE IN THESE TWO DISCIPLES. 1. They followed Jesus. When a man has become a doer of the Word, he ever seeks increased knowledge. 2. They acknowledged His high character as a Master on whose instruction they desired to wait. It is a blessed progress when the issue of outward preaching is to make men desire that inward teaching which is by the saving power of Christ. 3. They sought intimate acquaintance with Him. No short interview was sufficient. II. CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THE TWO DISCIPLES. 1. He took notice that they followed Him. Why did He not speak? Because He would honour His own word, as spoken by the Baptist, and give time for its proper effect. Christ knows those who are following Him, however hidden, silent, and feeble. 2. He set them on examining their purpose in following Him. 3. He gave them most welcome invitation and grateful entertainment. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *John and Andrew:*—I. It was not an accident that the first words which the Master spoke in His Messianic office were THE PROFOUNDLY SIGNIFICANT QUESTION, "What seek ye?" which suggests—1. The need of having a clear consciousness of what is our object in life. (1) Most men have never answered that question, but are driven by circumstances, and whose incoherent, unreflective lives are a shame to their manhood. (2) Others are full of low, unworthy aims. (3) If we would ask this question and answer it thoroughly we should not make so many mistakes. If we knew what we were really seeking we should know where to go and look for it. 2. These words are also a veiled promise. (1) Christ asks all such questions, not for His information, but for our strengthening. (2) The condition of the fulfilment of the promise is that a suppliant is conscious of His own wants, and turns to Christ for their supply. (3) Christ has

done what He has promised. No man can ask from Christ what He cannot or will not bestow. II. The second words which Christ speaks are A MERCIFUL INVITATION TO THE WORLD. The disciples' answer was simple and timid. They did not venture to say, "May we talk to you?" "Will you take us to be your disciples?" All they can muster courage to ask now is, "Where dwellest Thou?" At another time, perhaps, we will go to this Rabbi and speak with Him. His answer is "Come now!" 1. Christ is always glad when people resort to Him. When He was here in the world, no hour was inconvenient or inopportune. He was never impatient or wearied. 2. This invitation is a distinct call to first hand knowledge of Christ. 3. This is a call to the personal act of faith. "Come" and "see" are standing emblems of faith. III. The words of the Evangelist are A PARABLE OF THE BLESSED EXPERIENCE WHICH BINDS MEN'S HEARTS TO JESUS FOR EVER. 1. "Dwelt" and "abode" are the same words in the original, and express the close, still communion which the soul may have with Jesus Christ. 2. John had nothing to say to the world about what the Master said to him and his brother in that long day of communion. A lesson for a great deal of blatant talk about conversion and the details thereof. 3. The impression of Christ's own personality is the strongest force to make disciples. 4. The experience of the grace and sweetness of the Saviour binds men to Him as nothing else will. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The character of a leader shown by the character of his following:*—One gets an idea of the greatness of a chief of men from the greatness of those whom he gathers around him, and who carry out his plans. Thus, for example, one infers that Cromwell must have been a great-natured man, from the fact that he had Howe for his chaplain, Milton and Marvell for his secretaries, Blake for his admiral, and so on. *Noscitur a sociis*, and we might add, *a servis*. So we reason, perhaps unconsciously, in the case of other historic names. Speaking reverently, I would say, that in a parallel manner, we recognize the "sovran" greatness of our Lord in the fact that He gathered into His service and commanded men of such varied and magnificent natures as a Peter, a John, and a Paul; not to speak of men in other times. His heroes are no less wonderful than the most wonderful in the ancient days of Israel. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The difference between the conversion of John and the conversion of Paul:*—In the case of Paul, we find a man of powerful nature committed out and out against the cause of Jesus, thoroughly conscientious in his hostility, not merely standing out against the Gospel as a fraud or delusion, blasphemous in its every essence, but resolved to put it down. This man is suddenly arrested in the mid-career of his opposition. There is a mighty shock to his nature; and for three days he can neither eat nor drink. With John it seems to have been otherwise. We cannot indeed tell what the Baptist's ministry may have been to him; how the sorrows of death may have compassed him and the pains of hell gat hold upon him. But in coming to Jesus, he is "drawn," as with the cords of love and the bands of a man. There are those who think that all is not right with a man unless there is something approaching convulsion in the bringing of him to God. For myself, I entertain no manner of doubt that the great change is often accomplished thus. But the convulsion is not of the essence of the change. Often it is the sign of resistance and struggle against God, and has more to do with unbelief than with faith. Let us not limit God, or prescribe to Him, but accept His grace in whatever way it comes. (*Ibid.*) **Jesus saw them following.**—There are different causes of following one who is worthy of attention. A good man may be followed by an enemy from a desire to injure him; he may be followed in suspicion and doubt; he may be followed from mere curiosity; he may be followed in the hope of purely personal gain; he may be followed in loving devotedness. The following may be a good sign, or it may be an evil sign, on the part of those who follow. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **Rabbi.**—The Jewish terms of honour for their religious teachers were three. These were, in ascending honour, Rabh, Rabbi, Rabban, the last term being given in cases only of the extremest rarity. As regards the relation of the rabbi to the people, the Sages advised every man: "Chose for thee a Master, and withdraw from doubt;" that is, Chose for yourself a rabbi who can solve the legal and casuistical questions which perplex you. Jesus was not a rabbi in the strict sense; but the title was given to Him in point of courtesy by those who would learn from Him. (*A. F. Schauffler.*) **What seek ye?**—It is a blank cheque that He puts into their hands to fill up. It is the key of His treasure-house which He offers to us all, with the assured confidence that if we open it we shall find all that we need. Christ stands before us like some of those fountains erected at some great national festival, out of which pour for all the multitude every

variety of draught which they desire, and each man that goes with his empty cup gets it filled with that which he wishes. "What seek ye?" Wisdom? You students, you thinkers, you young men that are fighting with intellectual difficulties, "What seek ye?" Truth? He gives us that. You others, "What seek ye?" Love, peace, victory, self-control, hope, anodyne for sorrow? Whatever you desire, you will find in Jesus Christ. The first words with which He broke the silence, when He spake to man as the Messias, were at once a searching question, probing their aims and purposes, and a gracious promise pledging Him to a task not beyond His power, however far beyond that of all others—even the task of giving to each man His heart's desire. "What seek ye?" "Seek, and ye shall find." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **Where dwellest thou?**—By this example we are taught from the first rudiment of the Church—1. That we ought to draw such a relish for Christ as will excite our desire for profit. 2. That we ought not to be satisfied with a mere passing look, but that we ought to seek Christ's dwelling that He may receive us as guests. For there are many who smell the gospel at a distance only, and thus allow Christ suddenly to disappear, and all that they have learned concerning Him to pass away. (*Calvin.*) **Come and see.**—*Investigation the way to Faith:*—I. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH CHRIST'S EARTHLY FOLLOWERS GAINED FAITH IN HIS MISSION. Invited by Christ, they spend many hours with Him, and come away convinced of His Messiahship; He had nothing to conceal. The more they know the clearer His glory. In this He is a contrast to most of the world's heroes and an example to all teachers. II. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH STUDENTS OF CHRIST'S BIOGRAPHY GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST'S CHARACTER, proving it to be—1. Original. 2. Beautiful. 3. Perfect. III. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH STUDENTS OF HISTORY GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST'S INFLUENCE, proving its—1. Might. 2. Beneficence. IV. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH INQUIRERS FOR PERSONAL SALVATION GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST HIMSELF. This faith can only be possessed by those who hold intelligent, devout, constant communion with Him. (*Urijah R. Thomas.*) *A loving invitation.* At the beginning of the gospel Christ says, "Come and see;" at the close, "Come and dine." The first is for babes in Christ, the second for strong men. The first is the beginning of spiritual life, the second a high after privilege, and the result of it. The first is the Gospel's cry to those outside its pale, the second to those who have embraced it. Christ has nothing to conceal. Romanism may conceal its worship under the Latin tongue, difficult phraseology and polished periods may hide the teaching of professed protestants. We have here—I. AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO SINNERS. There are four ways by which persons are to "Come and see." 1. By observation. Many persons are careless; they will consider the last new novel, but concerning Christ they have no curiosity. 2. By diligent study of Holy Scripture. The worst read book is the Bible. People read a verse or half a chapter and think they understand it. But they do not read Shakespeare in that way. 3. By hearing the Gospel. What do you come to God's house for? To admire the eloquence of man? Go to the theatre or senate if that be your errand. To God's house we should resort to learn to see for ourselves the Lord Jesus. 4. By believing. The best way of knowing about Christ is to try Him. The only way of knowing His power to forgive sins is to trust Him to forgive yours. II. AN ADDRESS TO BEGINNERS IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST. We ought not to be satisfied with merely being saved. Our next business is to learn more of Christ. 1. For the understanding of doctrine. 2. For the fulfilment of promises. 3. For the ripening of experience. III. THE CRY OF THE GOSPEL TO EVERY SINNER. It is more pleasing to use the eye than the ear. You can keep children as happy as birds in the air with a picture-book, when they would probably go to sleep if you were to talk to them. Christ bids us use the eye. What is there to see? Christ—1. Incarnate. 2. Crucified, 3. Risen. Come and see. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Man inviting Christ to his dwelling*:—As He invited the disciples of John to see where He dwelt, so we should be able to invite Him to see where we dwell, and to look if there be in our habitations anything which betrays a spirit contrary to His. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) *The dwelling-place of Jesus*:—1. So humble and obscure that tradition, so industrious in marking every spot trodden by His blessed feet, fails to point it out. 2. In this lowly dwelling Christ first preached His gospel. 3. It was the first sanctuary of the Christian faith. Where does Christ dwell now? I. IN HEAVEN (Luke xxiv. 51; Heb. x. 12). 1. Then He is visible only to faith? 2. There He ever lives to make intercession. II. IN HIS CHURCH (Exod. xx. 24; Matt. xviii. 20). 1. There He is worshipped. 2. There we commune with Him. III. IN THE HEARTS OF HIS FAITHFUL PEOPLE (Prov. xxiii. 26; Eph. iii. 17). 1. In spite of

their unworthiness. 2. In response to faith and love. 3. To animate hope. (*John N. Norton.*) *A memorable day*:—I. FOR JESUS. The first fruits of His redeeming work. II. FOR JOHN. The beginning of a new life. III. FOR THE CHURCH. The day of its foundation. IV. FOR THE WORLD. A promise of its regeneration. Lesson; the importance of little things. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Experience of Christ better than description of Him*:—An affecting scene occurred in the streets of Baltimore. Two little sisters were looking through a large store window at the toys within, and trying to describe what they saw to a little blind sister who was with them. They were exhausting their feeble powers of description to bring home to the mind of their blind companion what they saw, although she listened greedily. But, after all, they failed to present anything more than an imperfect representation. The gentleman who saw the circumstance said that it was extremely touching, that they tried hard to describe the collection in the store, but they could not do it. That is just like trying to tell you of Christ. We may exhaust our powers of description, but the effect will be very moderate. You must come and see His beauties with your own eyes.

Vers. 40–41. **One of the two which heard John speak.**—*Andrew*:—I. THE EARNEST SEEKER AFTER SALVATION. 1. His mind had been prepared—(1) By the preaching of the Baptist—(2) By independent reflection and Bible study. 2. He came to Jesus with an openheartedness worthy of imitation. He had his own notions, doubtless, about the grandeur of Israel's Messiah; but was not offended when the solitary, unattended man was pointed out to him. Some, in the hasty revulsion of feeling, would have turned away in disdain. But Andrew's faith mastered his prejudice. 3. His search was marked by indomitable earnestness. He followed Jesus, and by addressing Him as Rabbi, puts himself under His teaching, and follows Him home. II. THE SATISFIED BELIEVER IN JESUS. 1. The openheartedness of Christianity. "Behold the Lamb!" "Come and see." There is no disguise, for none is needed. Christianity requires intelligence, reliance, not blind credulity. Ancient mythology and modern superstitions at Delphos, or Mecca, or Rome, had and have their reserve and mystery; but Christianity has light in herself, and studies no concealment. 2. The satisfactoriness of Christianity. When you come and see, there is always something to be seen. The search for Christ yields an intellectual and emotional satisfaction. The charge is warmly felt as well as intelligently realized. "We have found the Messiah." III. THE ENERGETIC MISSIONARY. 1. He proclaims the truth to his brother. 2. He resumes his secular duties. It was a great soul that could bear to be with Jesus at night, and to be fishing in the morning. 3. What a contrast between the first two brothers in the New Testament and the first two brothers of the Old. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *The conduct of Andrew* illustrates—I. The general duty of ENDEAVOURING TO IMPART TO OTHERS THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ENJOYED BY OURSELVES. There is all the difference here between natural and Spiritual things. The discovery of a hidden treasure would beget no anxiety that others should know of it. The discovery of a remedy for a direful disease would inspire eagerness in most men to give it a wide notoriety; but not necessarily in all cases, inasmuch as the discovery involves no change in the character. But the man who has lighted on heavenly treasure has found that, the direct tendency of which is to the overcoming of selfishness. A man renewed by God's Spirit, who does not desire and seek the renewal of others, is a contradiction in terms. The wealth acquired by the believer is kept through being dispersed; the cure accomplished through the blood of the Redeemer is a cure which is radical only in proportion as it seeks its own extension. Let, then, men take it as a test by which to try their own spiritual condition. Andrew findeth his brother Simon. He felt at once the communicative and diffusive nature of religion. II. The special duty of BEGINNING WITH THOSE WITH WHOM WE ARE MORE IMMEDIATELY CONNECTED. 1. Our own household and relatives have the first claim upon us; parents and masters are bound, if they would imitate Andrew, to provide first for their own children and servants; or parishioners or citizens are bound to provide for their own poor, before they attempt the relief of other parishes and other cities. To Englishmen, their necessitous countrymen especially come first, before they turn their attention to the African or New Zealander. There is nothing of selfishness in this. We must enlarge our operations with the enlargement of our ability. But God may be said to have parcelled out mankind into concentric circles, and he hath made it incumbent upon us that we go carefully round the inner circle before we pass on to the outer; so that, while benevolence is not to be churlishly limited, she is not to leave waste ground here, in her eagerness to spread

culture over some remote and savage section of the earth. 2. But as Andrew did not stop short at his brother, so home missions must expand into foreign. 3. The great lesson, however, is that we should care for the conversion of those with whom we were associated when unconverted. The merchant, who nearly lost his soul in hunting after gain, but who is now seeking treasure above—is he doing his best to cause those who were one with him in the struggle after perishable wealth to be one with him in labouring for the incorruptible? The young man who was the slave of vice, driven headlong by his passions, and who has now forsaken the haunts of licentiousness—is he striving to withdraw from those pleasures his former associates, and to lead them to take delight in heavenly things? The young woman whose whole mind was engaged in frivolous amusements, but who now seems awake to the solemnities of eternity—is it her endeavour to teach the thoughtless with whom she squandered away life that there is something more to be cared for than dress, and something more communicative of happiness than the dance? All such cases may be gathered under the "first" of our text. The converted man's first care will be for those with whom he has been intimately associated, either in relationship, or friendship, or business. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Andrew's ministry*:—I. WHATEVER THERE IS IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIP THAT CAN BRING MEN TO JESUS SHOULD HAVE ITS FULL AND FAIR PLACE. Many people who ought not only be more useful, but more happy and healthy, by sharing as far as possible their new found light and joy with those who are near and dear to them, have become the merest religious recluses. Sometimes it is difficult to bring any direct influence to bear. How important, therefore, that every indirect influence should be wisely employed. And all have this. II. THE VALUE OF THIS UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE. Let the fountain of our inner life be pure, and its manifold streams entering the most arid wastes will promote verdure and blessing in a hundred unforeseen forms. III. THE DIRECT INFLUENCE OF A PERSONAL TESTIMONY. Men need to be told of the source of blessing, and the burden of the testimony rests with those who have heard. There are some things, the knowledge of which would brighten men's lives, and these things you know. Tell them. God takes hold of the natural love of communicating, and uses it for the good of humanity. You are ready enough with your advice on most matters, be ready with these good news of God. IV. THE QUESTION OF PERSONAL CONVICTION AND EXPERIENCE. An inward intelligent experience will ever be the first demand of the Church. If we felt the power of the indwelling Christ, He would speak in us and work by us. If we have no light we cannot let it shine: but if we have we must not put it under a bushel, or it will go out. V. A WONDERFUL ENCOURAGEMENT TO MEN OF RETIRING DISPOSITION OR LIMITED CAPABILITIES. We never read much of Andrew; and since we cannot tell the possible result of any act or influence, however insignificant, it becomes us not to disparage anyone. And who shall call an action insignificant? Like a winged seed carried by the wind to some barren islet, bearing in its bosom the germs of all future loveliness and verdure; so blessed oft is the deed of a good man. (*G. J. Procter.*) *Coming to Jesus, a motive for bringing others to Him*:—I. TRUE RELIGION IS THE RESULT OF PERSONAL CONVICTION RESPECTING THE CLAIMS OF JESUS CHRIST. You must possess that religion or you can never impart it. "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." "He that believeth on Me shall never thirst, and from within him shall flow rivers of living water." The truth of Christ must first be known, and the knowledge of Christ is essentially connected with the love of Christ as the medium and material of that knowledge. We have in the narrative an illustration of the way in which personal religion commences. When directed to Christ, the first disciples were not satisfied with a passing glance, but they looked to Jesus and followed Him. Then commenced their friendship with Christ. There is an immense diversity in the operations of the Spirit. Some are brought at once out of darkness into light. Others by a gradual method: but the results are the same. They are brought to Jesus as the result of inquiry marked by prayer and solicitude. And there is everything in the character and religion of Christ to deserve and challenge inquiry. These things were not done in a corner; everything will bear the light. II. THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST WILL BE ANXIOUSLY CONCERNED TO BRING OTHERS TO HIM. Everything in religion is gloriously expansive. 1. Our object in all our Church operations is not sectarian, but to bring men to Christ. Keep this object before you in your families, neighbourhood, communities. If you aim at anything short of this you will fail to reach even your subordinate object. While, on the other hand, in enlarging our minds to the amplitude and sublimity of this higher object, we shall lay the most enduring basis for the accomplishment of even the

minor object. 2. Contemplate your responsibility. You have the great remedy for the world's moral diseases; you dare not keep it to yourselves. 3. Your opportunities. No man was ever disposed to do good who did not find ample opportunities as the member of a family, as a master or a servant, as a Church member. 4. Your encouragement: The command of Christ, the assurance of His presence, the success already secured, and the certainty of final success. (*J. Fletcher, D.D.*) *The magnet and the turning-point*:—No literature is more interesting or instructive than biography. Sacred biography has peculiar demands upon us. There is no part of the life of an individual which possesses more interest than its turning-point in the case of a statesman, soldier, merchant, but above all a Christian. Our text describes the turning-point of a man who stands conspicuous in sacred biography, the spiritual first moment of Peter. Notice—I. THE BEING WHO IS THE OBJECT OF ATTRACTION. 1. His name: Jesus, Saviour, who was perfect God and perfect man. 2. His title, Messias: inclusive of all His offices, Prophet, Priest, King, Lamb of God, Baptizer with the Spirit. II. THE WORK WROUGHT. "He brought him to Jesus." 1. Andrew was the instrument, and the means he used was the proclamation of Christ. Have you a brother? Bring him to Jesus. 2. God was the efficient agent (1 Cor. ii. 14; John vi. 44, 45). III. THE CONSEQUENCES RESULTING FROM THIS WORK. The Christian Church. (*J. T. Whitestone, A.B.*) *The Sunday-school teacher*:—I. THE GREAT OBJECT SOUGHT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. 1. Introduction to Jesus. 2. Interest in Jesus. 3. Instruction from Jesus. 4. Intimacy with Jesus. II. THE QUALIFICATIONS WHICH TEACHERS OUGHT TO POSSESS TO SECURE THIS GREAT OBJECT. 1. Sincere and ardent piety. 2. An enlightened knowledge of Christ and the method of salvation by Him. 3. An adaptation in the mode of instruction to the disposition of the child. 4. An exhibition of the practical effects of the knowledge of Christ in your conduct. III. THE SPECIAL EFFECTS RESULTING FROM THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS GREAT OBJECT. 1. Christ will be glorified. 2. The Church will be enlarged. 3. The world will be benefited. 4. Your labours will be rewarded. Conclusion: Notice—1. The importance of looking out for souls to bring them to Jesus. 2. The value of union. (*J. Sherman.*) *Simon Peter brought by his brother to Jesus*:—I. JESUS IS THE BEING TO WHOM MEN SHOULD COME. 1. What is it for men to come? Andrew and his brother came corporeally. The corporeal was the sign of a mental state which is equivalent to believing. 2. Why men should come to Christ for salvation. II. WHEN MEN HAVE COME TO JESUS THEY SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO BRING OTHERS TO HIM. 1. The argument by which this duty is confirmed. Christ has committed His cause into their hands. They are His property. He appeals to their love to Him and their tender concern for souls, to bring the world to Him. 2. The manner in which that duty must be performed. (1) By the exhibition of the truth in the exercise of the ministry, the circulation of the Bible, the spread of good literature, education, visitation, and the ordinary intercourse of domestic and social life. (2) By supplicating the influence of the Divine Spirit to sanction and bless the means employed. III. IN ENDEAVOURING TO BRING OTHERS TO CHRIST, MEN SHOULD CHERISH ESPECIAL ANXIETY AND EFFORT ON BEHALF OF THEIR OWN CONNECTIONS AND FRIENDS. This is beautifully illustrated in the New Testament. Andrew, the woman of Samaria, Cornelius, &c. 1. In justification of this principle, notice that—(1) The relationships of kindred or affection are formed under the physical or moral providence of God. (2) God has implanted or inspired in connection with these relationships certain affections which grow out of them and are appropriate to them. (3) The due culture of these affections issue in important results, and neglect and failure are fraught with great evils. (4) The solicitude ought to operate in matters which affect the interest and happiness of the soul. 2. The order of exertion will not disqualify or prevent from the larger and more expanded sphere of operation as regards the general welfare of mankind. 3. Inquire how you who have been brought to Jesus have fulfilled your obligations. IV. ENDEAVOURS TO BRING OTHERS TO JESUS, WHEN RIGHTLY CONDUCTED, ARE MUCH ENCOURAGED BY THE HOPE AND PROSPECT OF SUCCESS. 1. Success does frequently attend such endeavours, as is seen in the cases of Andrew and the Samaritan woman. And many a preacher, Sunday-school teacher, tract distributer, &c., could tell a similar tale; and so could parents and brothers. 2. Success in these endeavours is eminently and surpassingly delightful, because—(1) Of the value of the soul. (2) Of the opening up of channels of usefulness in connection with the cross of Christ. Who can tell where a single conversion will terminate? Think of Doddridge, Whitefield, Morison. (3) Of the connection of success with our everlasting reward. (*J. Parsons.*) *Simon Peter*:—I. THE WITNESS OF THE DISCIPLES. We see—1. How instinctive and

natural the impulse is when a man has found Jesus Christ to tell someone else about Him. Nobody said to Andrew, "Go and look for your brother!" If a man has a real conviction, he cannot rest until he has shared it with some one else. Even a dog that has had its leg mended will bring other limping dogs to the mender. How is it in the world? And are Christians to be dumb when worldlings are in earnest? This man before he was four and twenty hours a disciple had made another. Have you made one in the same number of years? 2. He first findeth his own brother. There was a second, then, that found somebody. Andrew found Peter before John found James. Each of the original pair of disciples brought the nearest to him in blood and affection to Christ. (1) Home, then, presents the natural channel for Christian work. It is a poor affair if all your philanthropy and Christian energy go off noisily in Sunday-schools and mission stations, and if the people at your own fireside never hear anything of Him whom you say you love. (2) But the principle has a wider application. Why has God placed you where you are? For business and personal ends? Yes, partly. But where a man who knows and loves Christ is brought into neighbourly contact with thousands who do not, he is thereby constituted his brother's keeper. If you live in luxury in your own ventilated and well-drained villa, and take no heed to the typhoid fever or cholera in the slums at the back, the chances are that the disease will find its way to your wife and children. And Christians who, living among godless people, do not try to heal them will be infected by them. 3. The simple Word, which is the most powerful means of influencing most men. Andrew did not argue. Some of us cannot do that, and some of us are not influenced by argument. The mightiest argument is, "We have found the Messias"; and if you have you can say so. Never mind how; anyhow. 4. Remember the beginnings of the Christian Church; two men, each of whom found his brother. Two snowflakes on the top of the mountain are an avalanche by the time they reach the valley. II. THE SELF-REVELATION OF THE MASTER. 1. He shows Himself possessed of supernatural and thorough knowledge. (1) The look described by an unusual word was a penetrating gaze which regarded Peter with fixed attention. It must have been remarkable to have lived in John's memory for all those years. (2) The saying was meant to imply more than natural knowledge. "Thou art Simon." "Thou God seest me," an unwelcome thought to many and to us unless, through Christ. 2. He changes Simon's name, and so (1) reveals His absolute possession of him. Jehovah changed the names of Abraham and Jacob. Babylonian kings changed the names of their vassal princes; masters those of their slaves; husbands those of their wives. We belong to Him altogether because He has given Himself altogether for us. (2) Reveals His power and promise to bestow a new character, new functions, new honours. Peter was by no means Peter then. Like the granite, all fluid and hot, he needed to cool in order to solidify into rock. But he eventually became all that Christ here meant him to be. No man's character is so obstinately rooted in evil but Christ can change its set and direction. He will not make Peter into a John, but He will deliver Peter from the defects of his qualities, and lead them up into a nobler region. The process may be long and painful, but it will be sure. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) "*Introductor to Christ*":—This is the appropriate name given by Bede to Andrew, who brought his brother and the Greeks (chap. xii. 20) to Christ. I. SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS BEGINS IN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. Before we can introduce any one to the Saviour we must have found Him ourselves. II. SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS OFTEN WORKS BY PERSONAL TESTIMONY. The prevalence of a blatant religionism should not hinder the Christian man or woman giving the witness not only of life, but also of lip, on all right occasions. III. SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS MAY BEGIN WITH THE MEMBERS OF OUR OWN HOUSEHOLDS. Sometimes the influence to be exerted must be indirect and quiet, rather than by appeal and word; but even then the time comes to speak, in order to lead others nearer to the truth who are of our own kith and kin. IV. SPIRITUAL USEFULNESS DOES NOT DEMAND OUTSHINING ABILITIES. St. Andrew, of whom we read little, led St. Peter, of whom we read much. (*Family Churchman.*) *Finding and following* (*cf.* Matt. iv. 19):—I. FOLLOWING TO FIND. Christ was found—1. By association with the godly. 2. By listening attentively. 3. By unhesitating action. 4. By reverential inquiry. II. FINDING TO FOLLOW. 1. The first to become a disciple is the first to be selected as an apostle. 2. After the definite summons he followed to serve. (*Tertius.*) *Christian service*:—I. Andrew FINDING Peter. 1. Andrew sought his brother at once. (1) John and Andrew set out to find their brothers. Andrew was the first to find his. (2) Andrew found his brother first and others subsequently. 2. Andrew

was not specially gifted; but what gift he had he used for Christ. 3. Andrew was not specially commissioned to go and convert others. The authorization was given later on. II. Andrew SPEAKING TO Simon. 1. Andrew did not preach or argue; he simply talked to him. 2. He talked earnestly. You have no fine language, or polished phrases, or balanced periods, but a few brief words coming hot from the heart. Intense earnestness has no leisure to indulge in the luxury of elocutionary flourishes. 3. His conversation was inspired by brotherly love. "His own brother," indicative of close, warm friendship. 4. His announcement was marked by incompleteness. Had he been asked to explain he would have been embarrassed. But imperfect teaching is often blessed. If you cannot speak the whole truth, speak half of it. Potato planters are never afraid of splitting the seed if they can only secure an eye in each half. See that your fragment of truth has an eye in it. 5. His talk was characterized by much assurance. "We have found," not, I think, or I hope. Religious dogmatism is much deprecated in certain quarters. You may dogmatize as much as you like against theology, but you are warned under heavy penalties not to dogmatize in its favour. But the dogmatists are the successful evangelists after all. III. Andrew BRINGING Simon to Christ. 1. Our chief aim should be to lead men to Christ, not to any particular sect. Proselytization is not conversion. 2. Creeds and theologies should be subordinated to Christ. Men should be brought to Christ, not to our own system of divinity. If creeds stand in the way of Christ, then away with creeds. They are for edification, not conversion. 3. Christ should be placed above the Bible itself. It is possible for men to read it diligently and yet stop with it, instead of making their way to the interior court to contemplate the inner radiance. There is not a town or house in Great Britain but there is a way from it to London; so there is not a subject named in the Bible but it is directly or indirectly connected with Jesus. IV. Christ RECEIVING Simon. 1. Jesus beheld him, took stock of him, formed a correct estimate of him; looked, as the word implies, with the eyes of the mind as much as with the eyes of the body. 2. Christ saw that possibilities of good lay in Simon; doubtless the possibilities of evil also. But the Saviour estimates character not by the evil but by the good. God singles out every grain of virtue that may be hid in our deepest nature. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*)

The first home mission:—We cannot tell certainly who was the first foreign missionary. But we know who was the first home missionary—Andrew. I. THE SPRING of all true home mission work. Andrew had himself made acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ. We must come into personal contact with Christ, be in the house with Him, learn to know Him as the Lamb of God. In the degree in which men have been in the house with Christ, and have learned to know Him, will they be ready to go out with the message to others. II. THE OBJECT of the first home mission. It was not enough for Andrew to speak to his brother about Christ, his aim is to bring him as close to Christ as he himself had been. We should be satisfied with nothing less. Here is a lesson for parents with their children, for a teacher with his scholars, for a minister with his hearers. We must neither begin nor end with ourselves. In this object of Andrew, notice—1. He was perfectly sure that Christ was willing to receive his brother. It does not appear that Christ had said anything about this. And Andrew does not seem to have thought it needful to ask Christ. He knew it from the way in which He had welcomed him. 2. Andrew is sure that he himself can have his own share in no way diminished. There would not be less of truth and love falling to his lot when Peter came to have his part. If a man covets land or wealth or power, the more he gives away the less he possesses. But let a man bring others to the treasures of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his own share will be increased. III. THE PLACE of this mission. 1. There are some who say we should have no foreign missions till our own country is redeemed. But these people forget that when Christ said, "Preach the Gospel among all nations," &c. He did not say stopping at Jerusalem. They forget that if the apostles had acted on this principle we should have been heathen still. They forget, moreover, that it was only when the Church of Christ began to think seriously of the foreign heathen that she had her thoughts turned to the home heathen. We generally find that those who are always talking of confining our attention to the home heathen are those who do least for them. 2. But this surely we may say, that in our zeal for the foreign heathen we are not to forget our own kinsfolk; and here are some reasons—(1) They have not the only claim upon us, but they have the first claim. "Go home to thy friends," &c. (2) And even for our own sakes we must think of home. We cannot let masses of ignorance and sin

and wretchedness fester and grow, without bringing a blight on our own Christianity. It is like having an unwholesome marsh beside our house; it spreads malaria and fever and ague. Think of your children living in this atmosphere, and of the danger to them in the sights and sounds and associations around them. (3) In the home mission field there is opportunity for every one of us to do something personally. Few of us can go to the foreign field. But there is always a sphere not far from our own door. (4) It seems to be part of the Divine plan that this opportunity should be given to Christians for the benefit it brings to themselves. It is thus we are to be like our Master, "going about doing good," and to grow always more like Him in the work of doing it. As the Church labours for the world around her, she would feel the duty of arising and shaking herself from the dust and putting on her beautiful garments. IV. THE TIME. Andrew did not wait till he had been made an apostle, or even a regular disciple. He began at once. If we never think about doing good to the souls of men till we are licensed, we should think seriously if we ought to be licensed at all; and if, when we are licensed or ordained, we look upon our work as a task, and measure carefully what we have to do and what we have not to do, we should ask ourselves, "Is this not the place of a hireling?" And the same lesson comes home to all. A man may never think of being a minister or missionary; but he is not thereby freed from the duty of beginning at once to speak a word to his brother about the Gospel of Christ. And it is not necessary to wait for a great deal of knowledge; let us use the knowledge we have, not pretending to more. All cannot speak in public, teach in the Sabbath-school, go from house to house and influence strangers, but what one is there who has not some neighbour, by whom his word will be regarded? Like that of Andrew, it may be simply "We have found the Christ." But it will serve the purpose if it leads the man to where he will learn more. This is, indeed, all that any of us, if we are true speakers, need to say, "We have found the Christ; He has met our need, answered our desire. He will meet yours; will you not come and see?" V. THE SPIRIT of the first home mission. Andrew went to his brother from his interest in him. He did this naturally, not from calculation, but because he had it in his heart. It is in this spirit we must go to our fellow-men, whether they be closely related or not. They are our brethren, with the same nature, needs, sins, sorrows, destinies. It is love to Christ and love to men that are the secret of power in Christian persuasion. We shall never have great success otherwise. Andrew did not say to his brother, "Go;" he took him by the hand and led him. VI. ITS SUCCESS. Andrew gained his brother—a great encouragement. Perhaps we may see much fruit, even here. In any case, if our work be sincere and loving and prayerful, if we go out from Christ to men that we may bring men to Christ, the work will not be in vain. We may touch one who will touch many more. A humble soldier may draw in some young recruit who may become a leader among thousands and subdue kingdoms. Conclusion: If the work is to be well and perseveringly done, there should be common counsel and co-operation. Many are afraid to commit themselves. Andrew, indeed, went alone—he could do nothing else; but our Lord sent them out two and two, and brought them together again to speak and hear about their work. (*J. Ker, D.D.*) *Christian missions*:—We have here the first step in the history of the Gospel, and an indication that it was to survive the ministry of its founder. I. THE PREPARATION OF THE MEN. 1. In the wilderness was the first missionary college. 2. John was the teacher. 3. His lesson was the atonement of Christ. II. THEIR CALL BY CHRIST. 1. The seed sown in the wilderness bore fruit, when Christ by His invitation quickened it into life. 2. They obeyed the call and followed Jesus. 3. They attached themselves to the higher Master and became pupils in the higher school. III. THEIR USEFULNESS IN THE CAUSE OF CHRIST. 1. The fruit now become seed to develop in other hearts and lives. 2. Andrew brought his brother to Christ: only one man, but had the Church gone on at that rate the world would long since have been converted. 3. We have no right to expect that Christ should spread His Church. That is our work in co-operation with Himself. Conclusion: Pleas on behalf of the missionary effort here exemplified. 1. Christ's commission: "Go ye into all the world," &c. 2. Christ's example. Christ never asked us to do what He has not done. 3. The purpose of the Christian Church as set forth in the parables and prophecies. It is a living growing body to spread by its inherent Divine vitality. 4. The nature of our call to the work. (1) The call of Christ, "*Come* follow me," "*Go* ye into all the world." This call reaches modern counting-houses and workshops as well as ancient custom houses and fishing stations, to spread the gospel at home, in the town, in the country, in

the world. (2) The call from within—the call of conscience impelling us to rescue others from the danger from which we have been saved—the call of Divinely-kindled love. (3) The call of the heathen unconscious of their darkness and sin. 5. The extent of the investments already made. An investment makes a man a partner in the concern, and the greater the investment the more difficult or dishonourable is it to try to get out of it. During the past 1,800 years the Church has been investing her men, her energy, her money. We must not, we dare not draw back. By the blood that has been shed and successes attained we are pledged to go on with this work. (*R. Maguire, D.D.*) *Gospel propagation:*—I. THE KIND OF WORK TO BE DONE. 1. Not to swell denominational ranks, although that may be a consequence. 2. But to (1) "Find," (2) "Tell," (3) "Bring." II. THIS WORK CAN ONLY BE DONE BY THOSE WHO HAVE FOUND CHRIST THEMSELVES. 1. Not unbelievers—2. Not worldly professors. 3. But those who love and are in union with Christ. III. THE SPECIAL DIRECTION OF EFFORT. Our brother: 1. Literally. 2. Socially. 3. Nationally. 4. Universally, for "God hath made of one blood all the nations of men." IV. THE ULTIMATE AIM. To bring our brother to Jesus. V. THE SPECIFIC MEANS—individual personal effort. 1. Subscription to a missionary society does not relieve us from this. If you were to see a man drowning it would be a poor excuse for not helping that you gave a sum to the Royal Humane Society. 2. Andrew himself brought his brother to Christ. 3. Andrew brought his brother to Christ before he was commissioned to do so. The grand weakness of our Church membership is the failure to realize that every man who is made a Christian is made a missionary. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The aim and methods of Christian work:*—The ambition of every Christian is to leave the world better than he found it. The instincts of Christian life, the example of the Master, the needs of the world, and the blessedness of doing good strengthen its ambition. Various methods are open to us—education, philanthropy, hospitals, civil and religious liberty, civilization: all of which are sanctioned by Christ, but were subordinate with Him to the great work of preaching the gospel. And what He did Himself is set forth in the earliest labours of His disciples. I. THE AIM OF ALL CHRISTIAN WORK IS TO BRING MEN TO CHRIST. Other methods of usefulness are to be honoured, but they fail to reach man's deeper needs, and at best only secure present happiness, and leave moral character unrenewed and eternity unprovided for. But even here the highest happiness is not to be secured by temporal means. This is only to be had by union with Christ. Therefore, God Himself sets us the example of evangelism (Titus. iii. 4), and now sends the Holy Spirit to reveal the things of Christ. II. THE METHODS BY WHICH THIS END IS TO BE GAINED. 1. We must try it with the members of our own families. The charity of the gospel begins, but does not end, at home. The healed man was commissioned to tell his friends what great things had been done for him. The apostles were commissioned to begin at Jerusalem. (1) What more fitting than this. (2) What more profitable. (3) Yet what more neglected. 2. We must make the office and work and teaching of Christ our chief theme. "Messias"—(1) Prophet; (2) Priest; (3) King. 3. The quiet talk of private men may effect our purpose as well as the preaching of public teachers. Andrew was not in office. (1) We must not undervalue the ministry, only it is not substitutionary but supplemental. It does not set aside individual effort: it trains, guides, and completes it. (2) Public preaching has disadvantages of its own: it is necessarily general and indiscriminate; its hearers pass on the message to the next pew. Preaching scatters the seed, but talk afterwards presses it into the soil; and in this talk the private Christian has the advantage over the public minister. 4. It will be more easily done by simple announcement than by discussion. There are exceptions, but as a rule arguments only raise objections to shield the conscience and to gain time. What we want is fewer appeals to the reason and more to the heart. 5. We must rest largely on our own experience. "We have found" this does not require genius or learning. If we have been to Christ ourselves we can tell others the way. 6. We must make it our chief business to bring men to Christ—(1) Directly. Not to this teacher or that Church; (2) Promptly. There is no time to lose. (*J. Angus, D.D.*) *Finding the Messiah:*—I. HOW GREAT MAY BE THE EFFECTS WHICH FOLLOW IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD FROM WHAT WOULD APPEAR TO BE A VERY TRIVIAL CAUSE. It was a passing remark of the Baptist, to all appearance, which was the means of Andrew's conversion. 1. But we must remember that that remark fell on prepared minds. The severe life of the Baptist, and his lofty teaching—recalling the great Elijah—must have made a profound impression on them. They were present when John denied before the agents of the Sanhedrim that he was the Messiah, and declared that he was only

the forerunner of One who was of a higher order of Being than himself. On the following day Jesus presents Himself; and then John solemnly refers to Him, and explains that this was the Person of whom he had spoken on the day before—the Son of God. Then, on the third day, John said much less, but his short sentence crowned the preparatory work. 2. All this seems to show that outward circumstances, persons, language are only a part of a complex providential agency. The deepest causes are unseen, and wait like the tinder for the spark, the passing word or influence which shall set them in motion. II. THE COMPARATIVELY SMALL STOCK OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE UPON THE STRENGTH OF WHICH ANDREW SETS TO WORK TO BRING ANOTHER INTO THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST. 1. He had heard of the Messiah all his life; but there was, and there continued, up to the hour of the Ascension an earthly and mistaken element in his idea of Him. A meaning had been read into Jewish prophecy for generations which did not belong to it. The Messiah was to be a rival to Cæsar on a more splendid scale. He also failed to grasp the vast consequences to the world of Christ's coming. 2. But the one simple truth that he did grasp sufficed to kindle every affection and power of his Spirit; to concentrate in its analysis every ray of his understanding. He had seen enough of Jesus in a few hours to know that John was right; that Christ was one whom he could perfectly love and trust; and that the best thing he could do for his brother was to bring him to Jesus. 3. Here St. Andrew reads an important lesson. There is no doubt a great deal of forward ignorance in religious questions which is willing to set the Church and the world to rights on subjects the first elements of which have not been mastered. But there is also a great deal of false modesty which declines plain and practical duties on the ground of insufficient knowledge. But the great truths which moved Andrew and move us are the simple truths about which, amongst Christians, there is no controversy, and which are learned by experience. No Christian need delay to testify to Christ because he is not a theologian. He may at least do as well as Andrew. III. RELIGIOUS TRUTH CANNOT BE HOARDED LIKE MONEY, like a discovery for which a man wishes to take out a patent. It belongs to the race, and in the first instance to those who stand by the appointment of providence nearest to its possessors. Andrew found his own brother. Go thou and do likewise. Conclusion: 1. Consider the untold capacities which lie buried in men who as yet know nothing of grace and truth. Peter takes precedence of Andrew. 2. The reflex blessing of every sincere effort for Christ and His kingdom. Every teacher knows more of his subject after he has taught it. He that watereth is watered himself. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Christian fraternity*:—Andrew was before all else a good brother. In the great church at Rome, which is dedicated to him, no other inscription could be found suitable, except "Andrew, the brother of Peter." Before casting his nets on Jew or Gentile, he first bethought him of the one fellow-creature who was near to him by the ties of home and family. "Blood is thicker than water" in sacred as well as in social life. "If a man loves not his brother," &c. This is a principle which needs to be asserted as a corrective of the excesses of the missionary or proselytising spirit; but it also contains within itself some of the best methods of the true conversion of the world. I. It exemplifies the undoubted truth that THE BEST MODE OF DIFFUSING CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD is by converting our own brethren who have settled abroad. The chiefest missionary, who was especially the Apostle of the Gentiles, in every case made his own Jewish countrymen the nucleus round which the heathen converts were to be gathered. This is a practical lesson for all of us in respect of foreign missions. Every English settler in a distant land is already, by his good or evil conduct, a missionary for God or for the devil; nay, every country in Europe, according as it holds up Christianity in a repulsive or an attractive form, repels or attracts the outside world from the light of the Gospel. It is said that some of the Japanese envoys who lately visited the nations of Europe and America had come with the predisposition to establish Christianity on their return, but that after witnessing its actual fruits they in disappointment relinquished the project. Let us first find and convert our own brethren, and we shall then go with clean hands to convert the Jew, the Turk, the heretic, and the infidel. This is a missionary enterprise in which every man, woman, and child can bear a part. In this way the Home Mission becomes the mother of all missions. II. But the same principle also points out to us THE BEST ACCESS TO THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE UNKNOWN STRANGERS OF HEATHEN LANDS. In every heathen country there are those whom we may call our own brothers, for the nobler qualities which raise them above their fellows, and bring them nearer to the civilized and the Christian type. Often, indeed, this fraternal sympathy has been rendered impossible on the one

hand by the impurities, the cruelties, the follies of heathen nations, on the other hand by the pitying scorn, or the iniquitous dealing, with which the European has looked down on what are called the inferior races of mankind. But happy are those Englishmen and missionaries who have made it a point first to find their own brothers in those strange faces. Livingstone was never tired of repeating that he found amongst the native races of Africa the same feelings of right and wrong that he found in his own conscience, and that needed only to be enlightened and developed to make the perfect Christian. Bishop Patteson won the hearts of his simple converts by treating them as his brothers, detecting the Christian beneath the heathen. III. There is one further application of the principle, viz., THE DUTY, obvious, though often neglected, OF SEEKING FOR OUR CO-OPERATORS IN THIS, as in all good works, NOT THOSE WHO ARE FAR AWAY, BUT THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE AT HAND. Let us cultivate by all means a friendly intercourse with all Christian people throughout the world. But an intimate, organic union can only be with those who are near at hand, or of the same race and nation and culture as ourselves. It is because the work of evangelizing the heathen has a direct tendency to bring all English Christians together that this (St. Andrew's) day is doubly blessed; blessed alike in what it gives and in what it receives. Let us first find those of our own communion. But next to our own Church, and before any combinations with foreign Christians, however estimable, let us find out our own brethren in the British Islands, who, however parted from us, are yet heirs of the same national traditions and of the same inspiring future. Such are our brethren amongst the Nonconforming communions of England, whose praise for their missionary zeal is in all the Churches. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Our brother:*—You are wealthy, and that poor man who lives near you is your brother. Or you are poor, and your brother is that wealthy neighbour of whom you think with envy and anger. Our brethren are not confined to those who can enter into our thoughts and sympathies; they are also those whose narrowness and ignorance make mutual sympathy and intelligence impossible. They are not only those who are honest and respectable, but they are those who are under the ban of society, outside the frontiers of decent and civilized life. Our brethren, they are not only our near relatives by blood; nor our fellow-townsmen or countrymen; they are not confined to the races which are now in the van of civilization, or have played a great part in the world's affairs. They are also the races on whose rights civilization is apt to trample with heartless selfishness. They are the natives of Australia and America; they are the Maories of New Zealand; they are the islanders of the Pacific. Our brethren are everywhere. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The difficulty of bringing a brother to Christ:*—It would seem the most natural thing in the world to urge one's own brother to share in one's faith before looking elsewhere for a new believer. Yet, as a matter of fact, one is more likely to shrink from speaking on the subject of personal religion to a brother who is out of Christ than to one who is a comparative stranger. A reason for this is that one's own shortcomings and failures are so well known to a brother, that one often hesitates to urge the importance of a truth he is supposed to illustrate, but which he feels he represents unworthily. Andrew seems to have avoided this difficulty by saying nothing about himself to Peter. If Jesus were more prominent in the thoughts and words of believers, there would be less thought of self, and less embarrassment on that score, in pleading His cause with those who are yet aloof from Him. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Christ the inspiration of Christian effort:*—The Egyptian Memnon is represented as keeping silence all the dark hours of the night, but bursting forth into mystic strains of weirdlike music every morning just as the first rays of the sun kiss his lips. Like that idol, John and Andrew and Philip lived mute and inactive; but when the first beams of the Sun of Righteousness began to play around their hearts they began immediately to speak. The flowers require not to be sternly told to grow and blossom and make themselves beautiful; let the sun but shine and they will do it out of the gladness of their own hearts. Birds need not an almanack to apprize them that the month of May, the season for open-air concerts, has arrived. And once men have been in the presence of Christ they require no elaborate certificate to empower them to go and tell others of His beauties—the fire burns, and speak they must. Commission or no commission, be not ashamed to tell others that you have found the Saviour. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *Personal testimony:*—I was reading the other day about a minister who preached an elaborate course of lectures in refutation of infidelity for the special benefit of a man who attended his church. Soon after the man came and declared himself a Christian. The minister said to him, "Which of my discourses was it that removed your doubts?" The reply was, "Oh,

it was not any of your sermons that influenced me. The thing that set me thinking was that a poor woman came out of the chapel beside me and stumbled on the steps, and I stretched out my hand to help her, and she said, 'Thank you.' Then she looked at me and said, 'Do you love Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour?' And I did not; and I went home and thought about it; and now I can say I love Jesus." The poor woman's word, and her frank confession of her experience, was all the transforming power. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The value of private Christian effort*:—The Niagara excites our wonder, fills us with amazement, perhaps with awe; but one Niagara is enough for a continent. That continent, however, requires tens of thousands of silver fountains and lucid brooks; and let me tell you—those clear springs and busy streams, whose names have never been registered in any geography, prove an inestimably greater blessing to America than the mighty Falls, whose fame fills the world. And God, now and again, once or twice in a century, raises a man great and gifted, a Niagara of a man, in whose presence the world trembles and admires. Yet the Church depends more for its prosperity upon the ten thousand happy souls who quietly and unobtrusively scatter blessings broadcast in every neighbourhood and throughout the length and breadth of our beloved country. Though you be but slender rills, yet let not the slender rills think they may as well cease flowing. God fructifies the world by small rivers; He saves the world by private Christians. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *What is a missionary*:—The term comes from the associations of olden times, when tyrants ruled and made sport of human life. In those days when the world was not gladdened by the "glad tidings of great joy," and upon the occasion of the gladiatorial combats, when one of the antagonists had smitten his opponent to the dust, he then had the right of life or death over that man. But the conquered man had one source of appeal, and by the lifting up of his finger he could appeal to the prince, and that prince had the power, if he chose, to send a courtier from his side down to the dust of the arena to separate the combatants and deliver from death the man who was appointed to death. The sending of that message was called in the Latin a mission, and the person sent a missionary. So down in the dust of the arena of this world are Satan and man. It is a deadly conflict. Man is smitten and undermost. He appeals to the King of all; yea, before he appeal the King of all anticipates. His only Son comes on a mission, and rescues man's prostrate soul from Satan's power. (*R. Maguire, D.D.*) *The joy of finding the Messiah*:—There was joy in the breast of the geometrician of Syracuse when he uttered his glad "Eureka" in the hearing of people who deemed him mad; there was joy in the soul of Newton when the first thought of gravitation burst upon his wondering view; there was joy in the spirit of Columbus in that moment of serene triumph over doubt and mutiny, when the tiny land birds settled upon the shrouds of his vessel, bearing upon their timid wings the welcomes of a new world; there is joy for the gold-finder when the rich ore glistens in his cradle; joy for the emigrant when after years of absence and hardship he first glimpses his boyhood's home again; joy for the child when he is let into another and yet another of the marvels of the world, and claps his hands for very joy and wonder; joy for the poet when he sends a glad thought careering through the world and stirring the pulses of mankind; but oh! of all the joys that human hearts can be thrilled by, commend me to that when the glad disciple clasps a brother's hand and says, "We have found the Messiah." Then all doubt ceases, and fear is banished from the mind, and condemnation lifts its shadow from the spirit, and sweet peace nestles in the breast, and holy love throws itself upon the believing heart, and a new-found sense of reconciliation pulsing through the veins makes all creation more beautiful and brings a rarer melody than the music of the spheres, and throws a brighter azure upon the opening heavens. Is this joy yours? (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *What would happen if the example of Andrew were followed*:—If every disciple to-day were to call only one other person to Christ in each year, and that one were to call one other, how swiftly the world would be wholly converted! There are to-day millions of true believers in the world. But if there were only one hundred, see how quickly the work would grow. In less than twenty-five years the world would be converted, for this would double the number of disciples each year. First year, 100; second year, 200; third year, 400; fourth year, 800; fifth year, 1,600; sixth year, 3,200; seventh year, 6,400; eighth year, 12,800; ninth year, 25,600; tenth year, 51,200 ("Well," says some one, just here, "that is rather slow progress, only 51,200 in ten whole years." Go on, however, ten years more, and see how your numbers will look then); eleventh year, 102,400; twelfth year, 204,800; thirteenth year, 409,600; fourteenth year, 817,200;

fifteenth year, 1,634,400; sixteenth year, 3,268,800; seventeenth year, 6,537,600 (it's growing now); eighteenth year, 13,075,200; nineteenth year, 26,150,400; twentieth year, 52,300,800; twenty-first year, 104,601,600; twenty-second year, over 209,000,000; twenty-third year, over 418,000,000; twenty-fourth year, over 836,000,000; and in the twenty-fifth year, over 1,600,000,000, or more than the population of the whole earth. This shows the power of "ones" multiplied. (*A. F. Schauffler.*) *One convert wins another*:—Some time ago one of our people, who had herself been a drunkard, was standing at one of the open-air services on the waste, when she observed a woman who had formerly been one of her bad companions suddenly leave the crowd and walk quickly away. Hurrying after her, she found this poor drunkard in great distress about her soul. "Oh!" she said, "I listened to the speakers; but when I saw you standing there so wonderfully changed from what you used to be, I could stand it no longer." She was induced, however, to return to the meeting, and then to attend the service in the hall, where she found salvation. She is now another living witness of the power of Christ to save the drunkard. May God preserve her faithful unto death! (*General Booth.*) *Dealing with individuals*:—Richard Baxter adopted the method of individual dealing with the parishioners of Kidderminster, bringing them to his house, and taking them apart one by one. He tells us that, because of it, he had reason to believe that more than a third of the grown-up inhabitants of the place were converted to God. The late Mr. Grant of Arndilly was so intent upon this habit of individual intercourse that in three months he had dealt with fifteen hundred souls, while the refrain of all his letters was "Speak a word for Jesus." *Those who have found Christ must speak of Him to others*:—"I was visiting at my brother's one time," says a lady, "when Richard, his little boy, stopped suddenly in his play, and looked steadily at me for a minute. 'What are you thinking about?' I asked. 'Are you a Christian, auntie?' 'I hope so, dear.' 'But you never speak of Jesus; if you loved Him very much, would you not talk about Him sometimes?' 'We may love a person without speaking of him,' I replied. 'May we? I did not know that. You love to talk of your brothers and sisters, and your papa and mamma, don't you, auntie?' 'Yes.' 'And then you speak of other people and things you like; but you speak no word for Jesus. Don't you love Him, auntie?' 'Yes.' 'Then I should think you could not help speaking of Him sometimes.'" (*Sunday School Union.*) *Mission work must begin at home*:—You will never make a missionary of the person who does no good at home. If you do not seek souls in your own street, you will not do so in Hindostan. If you are of no use in Whitechapel, you will be of no use on the Congo. He that will not serve the Lord in the Sunday-school at home, will not win children to Christ in China. Distance lends no real enchantment to Christian service. You who do nothing now are not fit for the war, for you are in sad health. The Lord give you spiritual health and vigour, and then you will want no pressing, but you will cry at once, "Here am I; send me!" Oh, my friends, go at once to your families, to your workshops, and declare the name of Jesus! Oh, for more spiritual life! This is the root of the matter. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A word in season*:—On Thursday last I picked up some "bread" which I had "scattered on the waters" more than ten years ago. I was preaching in Essex, and at the close of the service a gentleman came up and said, "Do you remember preaching a sermon on the 14th February, 1869, on the text, 'Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed'"? "Oh, yes," I said, "I do remember the subject and the occasion." "That was the sermon that changed this heart. Mine has been another life from that night." Ten and a half years that bread was floating on the waters! "Thou shalt find it after many days." (*J. Thain Davidson, D.D.*) *Speak earnestly*:—There was a dying man upon his death-bed, and he was visited by his Christian brother. The dying man said, "I am dying. I know that I am lost, but I cannot help putting some of my ruin at your door. I believe you to be a Christian, I know you to be a Christian, but I do not recollect that you ever solemnly addressed me about my soul. You believed I was perishing, and yet you did not speak to me; therefore, as I cannot conceive you to be inhuman—for you were always a kind brother—I suspect you do not believe, as you say you do." His brother said—"I was afraid of offending you. I did speak to you once or twice." The brother replied, "You ought to have taken me by the shoulders. You ought not to have let me be lost. I cannot acquit you." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Ver. 42. **And he brought him to Jesus.**—*Everyday usefulness*:—We are intensely

desirous of a revival of religion, and we look for it through some extraordinary agency. God works in this way sometimes; but while waiting for it we miss actual opportunities. Our proper course is to do what we can and God will be sure to bless it. I. THE MISSIONARY DISCIPLE. 1. His character. (1) He was a sincere follower of Jesus. Men who have not made Christ's acquaintance experimentally are not fit to work for Him. An unconverted man in the pulpit is an impostor and exposes himself to extraordinary peril. (2) He was a young convert. He beheld the Lamb of God one day and found out his brother the next. Those who have learned but their A B C let them tell that. (3) He was a commonplace disciple, yet he became a useful minister. So servants of Christ must not excuse themselves because they are not greatly gifted. 2. His manner was (1) Prompt, (2) Persevering. II. HIS GREAT OBJECT. 1. To bring Peter to Jesus. This should be our aim—(1) Not to a party. To recruit one regiment from another is no real strengthening of the army. (2) Not to bring men to outward religiousness merely. To make the Sabbath breaker a Sabbath keeper and a Pharisee, to make the prayerless the heartless user of a form of prayer, you but take one poison from him to expose him to another. (3) Many, alas! are satisfied if they get to the priest, church, sacraments. 2. We may bring men to Jesus—(1) By prayer. (2) By putting them in the way of being informed about the Gospel. (3) By our example. (4) By occasionally, and as opportunity serves, giving a word of importunate entreaty. III. HIS WISE METHODS. 1. Being zealous he was wise. (1) He used what ability he had. (2) He set great store by a single soul. (3) He did not go far afield to do good. Many Christians do all the good they can five miles away, when the time taken up by going there and back might be well spent in their vineyard at home. Andrew goes to Cappadocia in his after life, but he begins with his brother. 2. How did Andrew persuade Peter? (1) By narrating his own experience. What you have experienced tell to others. (2) He put the good news before him in an earnest fashion. IV. THE SWEET REWARD ANDREW HAD. He won his brother's soul. In your Sunday-school class or in your home there may be an unconverted Wesley or Whitefield. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *This highest voluntary influence:*—I. It was BENEFICENT. What a universe of good was involved in the simple act of bringing this man to Jesus! 1. What a service was rendered to Peter! His soul translated into a new world. 2. What a service to the disciples of Christ! The introduction of a frank, generous, bold, inspired nature. 3. What a service to the whole world! God alone knows the good Peter did from Pentecost onwards. All this service must be referred to the simple act of Andrew. From one little act may issue an influence for good that may go on widening and deepening for ages. II. It was NATURAL. Andrew went to Peter, not as an official, but as a man, a brother. What is wanted to bring men to Christ is—1. Common sense, not learning, genius, culture. 2. Love to Christ. Andrew's heart was touched and inspired with loving sympathies for Christ. What is wanted in this work is not the influence of the scholar, philosopher, or priest, but of the man. It is the man, not the preacher, who converts. When the man is lost in the preacher his power is gone. III. It was HONOURABLE. To introduce a man to Christ is to introduce him to one who in philosophy is infinitely greater than Socrates, in wealth infinitely richer than Crœsus, in royalty infinitely greater than a Cæsar. The work of authors, sages, statesmen, warriors contemptible compared with that of bringing men to Christ. IV. It was EXEMPLARY. 1. Andrew's is an example that all can imitate. 2. An example that all should imitate: an universal duty, not binding on any particular class, but pressing on all relations, all social grades, all intellectual types. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Thou art Simon, . . . thou shalt be called Cephas.**—*Simon and Peter:*—Christ changed Simon's name. 1. As a sign of His authority and of taking entire possession of him, as a king might alter the name of some man whom he had captured. 2. As a promise of transforming power. 3. As a prophecy of his future office and importance in the Church. The Aramaic Cephas is the equivalent of the Greek Peter, "a stone." The alternation of these names afterwards is indicative of the following lessons. I. THE DANGER OF THE NEW AND BETTER NATURE FALLING BACK TO THE OLD. Where "Simon" is employed in the Gospels it is suggestive of the apostle's uninspired and unregenerate humanity. 1. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee." There we see the exquisite delicacy with which Christ points the too presumptuous man away from his own fancied strength to the weakness of his humanity. 2. "Simon, sleepest thou?" Where is Peter? He would have kept awake. 3. "The Lord hath appeared unto Simon." This was from the apostles—all the rest are

from Christ—all knew about his fall, that he had ceased to be the rock, and that his precedence and influence were gone. 4. "Simon, son of Jona (same as text), lovest thou Me?" Christ puts the fallen apostle in his place, makes him go back to the very beginning. He must go through the wicket-gate again. II. THE FORGIVING LOVE WHICH DISCERNS THE TRUE MAN BELOW ALL HIS SIN. 1. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired . . . I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow," &c. Here is Christ's clear recognition of the better nature subsisting even whilst it appears to be smothered beneath the worse. Condemning the sinner, Christ would not break the bruised reed. 2. "Go, tell the disciples and Peter"—an incident recorded only by Mark, Peter's mouthpiece. "Tell Simon" would have been a rebuke; "tell Peter" is a smile of forgiveness, and an outstretched hand to grasp the sad hand of the denier. III. THE GRAND POSSIBILITY THAT THE NEW MAN MAY TRIUMPH. No more is heard of Simon, with two exceptions. 1. Cornelius is directed to send for "Simon, who is called Peter," because outsiders would know him best by the one name, Christians by the other. 2. James, at the council of Jerusalem, calls him Simon, out of old and familiar friendship. Elsewhere it is always Peter. The transformation had now become complete. Effusive, impulsive daring is changed into steadfast, bridled courage. If once he "was to be blamed," that showed that he was still a man, and not a faultless, impossible monster. The sand has been put into a hydraulic press and comes out sandstone, strong and tenacious. This transformation is inexplicable without the Resurrection, the Ascension, and Pentecost. IV. THE WHOLESOME REMEMBRANCE BY THE MAN HIMSELF OF WHAT HE WAS, JOINED WITH THE THANKFUL RECOGNITION OF WHAT HE IS. In his Second Epistle he introduces himself as "Simon Peter." Probably the long disused name had vanished from the memory of that generation; but the old man reverts to it. Through the mist of long years he remembers what he was, and recalls his old unsanctified self; but he is not afraid to call himself Peter. He is conscious of the higher life not his own which was promised him on the never-to-be-forgotten occasion mentioned in the text. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Personal influences:*—Whitfield made it his wont wherever he stayed to talk to the members of the household about their souls—with each one personally; but stopping at a certain house with a colonel, who was all that could be wished except a Christian, he was so pleased with the hospitality he received, and so charmed with the general character of the good colonel and his wife and daughters, that he did not like to speak to them about decision as he would have done if they had been less amiable characters. He had stopped with them a week, and during the last night the Spirit of God visited him so that he could not sleep. "These people," said he, "have been very kind to me, and I have not been faithful to them; I must do it before I go; I must tell them that whatever good thing they have, if they do not believe in Jesus they are lost." He arose and prayed. After praying he still felt contention in his spirit. His old nature said, "I cannot do it," but the Holy Spirit seemed to say, "Leave them not without warning." At last he thought of a device, and prayed God to accept it. He wrote upon a diamond-shaped pane of glass in the window with his ring these words, "One thing thou lackest." He could not bring himself to speak to them, but went his way with many a prayer for their conversion. He had no sooner gone than the woman of the house, who was a great admirer of him, said, "I will go up to his room; I like to look at the very place where the man of God has been." She went up and noticed on the window-pane those words, "One thing thou lackest." It struck her with conviction in a moment. "Ah!" said she, "I thought he did not care much about us, for I knew he always pleaded with those with whom he stopped, and when I found that he did not do so with us, I thought we had vexed him, but I see how it was; he was too tender in mind to speak to us." She called her daughters up. "Look there, girls," said she, "see what Mr. Whitfield has written on the window, 'One thing thou lackest.' Call up your father." And the father came up and read that too. "One thing thou lackest!" and around the bed whereon the man of God had slept they all knelt down and sought that God would give them the one thing they lacked, and ere they left that chamber they had found that one thing, and the whole household rejoiced in Jesus. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Personal effort:*—I recollect several persons joining the Church who traced their conversion to the ministry in the Surrey Music Hall, but who said it was not that alone, but another agency co-operating therewith. They were fresh from the country, and some good man, I knew him well, I think he is in heaven now, met two of them at the gate, spoke to them, said he hoped they had enjoyed what they had heard; heard their answer; asked them if they were coming in the

evening; said he would be glad if they would drop into his house to tea; they did, and he had a word with them about the Master. The next Sunday it was the same, and at last, those whom the sermons had not much impressed were brought to hear with other ears, till by-and-by, through the good old man's persuasive words, and the good Lord's gracious work, they were converted to God. (*Ibid.*) *One soul precious*:—"Oh," says one, "I have had so little success; I have had only one soul saved!" That is more than you deserve. If I were to fish for a week, and only catch one fish, I should be sorry; but if that happened to be a sturgeon, a royal fish, I should feel that the quality made up for lack of quantity. When you win a soul it is a great prize. One soul brought to Christ—can you estimate its value? If one be saved, you should be grateful to your Lord, and persevere. (*Ibid.*) *The searching question*:—I shall now put a question which I daresay has passed through your minds before, but which I would like to tarry there. How many, my dear friend, were you ever the means of bringing to Jesus? You believe that they must perish everlastingly, unless they have faith in Christ. How many have you personally prayed for? How many did you ever break your heart about? How many have you ever talked to concerning Him who is the only Saviour? To how many have you borne your testimony of His kindness and His grace? Upon how many have you laid the tender hand to press them to follow after the Saviour? Ah! well, the questions sound so trite as I put them, and perhaps as they come to your ears you are weary with them as being so commonplace; but by the great day of the appearing of our Lord, when He shall require of you an account of your stewardship, I implore you answer those enquiries, even if they humble you in the very dust. If the answer be painful, seek for the future that your course be mended, and as servants of Christ yearn over souls. (*Ibid.*) *Rareness of personal effort for souls*:—In hundreds of cases I have put the question pointedly, "Do you know that you have been instrumental in leading one soul to Christ?" only to hear the sad confession that there has been no effort made in that direction. (*A. G. Pearson, D.D.*) *Individual effort*:—Do not forget individual souls. There is a great rage nowadays for large congregations and for prominent work; but do not forget individual souls. I think it was Rowland Hill who used to say that if he had a number of bottles before him, and he were to dash water over them, a drop might go into this one and a drop into that; but he said, "If I take one bottle and pour water in I fill it up to the brim." And so it is with individual souls. There is a personality in the application which cannot be estimated if we are speaking face to face in an honest, manly way. Is not this the best way to do Christian work? (*W. P. Lockhart.*) *How to win souls*:—I come from a house from which there is a considerable contingent attending this service this morning, and the question last night was how we should be awakened in time. They resolved to do it by detachments. One young fellow woke up the servant, and some others woke the young ladies, and they each had some one under their care, and knocked at the door until they were answered. It was best done by dividing it, and by giving to each one a special department in the work. And so we do our work best by dealing with individual men. (*Ibid.*) The great secret of the success of Harlan Page was that he always aimed at the conversion of some individual; wrestling in prayer with God, and in affectionate entreaty with the sinner, till he saw his wishes realized. By following this plan, although he was in humble life, active work, and often in deep poverty, he lived to see more than a hundred brought to God as the fruit of his zeal and intercession. *Example brings men to Jesus*:—The Rev. J. A. James, the well-known minister of Birmingham, says, in one of his lectures: "If the present lecturer has a right to consider himself a real Christian, if he has been of any service to his fellow-creatures, and has attained to any usefulness in the Church of Christ, he owes it, in the way of means and instrumentality, to the sight of a companion, who slept in the same room with him, bending his knees in prayer on retiring to rest. That scene so unostentatious, and yet so unconcealed, roused my slumbering conscience, and sent an arrow to my heart; for, though I had been religiously educated, I had restrained prayer, and cast off the fear of God. My conversion to God followed, and soon afterwards my entrance upon college studies for the work of the ministry. Nearly half a century has rolled away since then, with all its multitudinous events; but that little chamber, that humble couch, that praying youth, are still present to my imagination, and will never be forgotten, even amidst the splendour of heaven and through the ages of eternity."

Vers. 43, 44. **Jesus . . . findeth Philip.**—I. THE SEEKING CHRIST. This is a chapter of seeking and finding. Christ asks Andrew and John, "Whom seek ye?" Andrew "findeth his own brother and saith unto him, We have found." Then, again, Jesus finds Philip, and Philip Nathaniel, and both the Messias. There are two kinds of finding: a casual stumbling on the thing we were not looking for, and that which is the result of seeking. Thus Jesus found Philip, who was unexpectant and undesirous. That is what Christ often does. There are men, like the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, seeking what they want in a hundred different places, and then, when expectancy has died down into despair and apathy, the veil is withdrawn and Jesus seen there beside them. But there are others, like Paul and like Matthew, on whom Christ lays a sudden hand and blesses without their seeking. And so in this story He will welcome Andrew and John when they come seeking. But when these are won, there remains that other way by which He drew Philip to His heart by the sudden revelation of His love. 1. Whether we seek Him or no, Christ is seeking every man. "The Son of Man is come to seek," &c. 2. He seeks us each in a thousand ways—by the motion of His spirit-stirring conviction; by our restlessness and dissatisfaction; by disappointment and losses; by the brightness and goodness of earthly providences. II. THE WORD OF AUTHORITY. Sheep follow a shepherd, travellers a guide, soldiers their captains. This is a call to accept Him as a teacher, but the whole context shows that they recognized Him as the Messiah. So it is more: it is a call to—1. Faith. 2. Obedience. 3. Imitation. 4. Communion. III. THE SILENTLY AND SWIFTLY OBEDIENT DISCIPLE. Philip says nothing, but he yields. 1. How quickly a soul may be won or lost. Philip's decision was trembling in the balance. It might have gone the other way. A moment settled it. Objections to instantaneous conversions are unphilosophical. Hesitations may be long, but decisions are matters of an instant. 2. Why people are kept back from yielding to Christ's invitation. (1) Other duties which seem more important. (2) The non-conviction of the need of a guide. These are excuses, not reasons, manufactured to cover a decision which has been taken before on grounds which it is not convenient to bring up to the service. Follow Christ. This is—1. Safe. 2. Right. 3. Blessed. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Moral imitation:*—I. MAN'S MORAL CHARACTER DETERMINES HIS DESTINY. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" in his—1. Experience, whether happy or miserable. 2. Prospects, whether terrific or inviting. 3. Influence, whether useful or pernicious. 4. Relations. (1) To God, whether approved or condemned. (2) To the universe, whether a blessing or a curse. II. MAN'S MORAL CHARACTER IS FORMED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF IMITATION. This is seen in children, and the Romans, recognizing this, placed in their vestibules the busts of great men, so that the young might be reminded of their virtues. The seed of a child's action is not teaching, but deeds. III. THE FORMATION OF A GOOD CHARACTER REQUIRES A PERFECT MODEL. Sir Joshua Reynolds found after years of study that he had been imitating, not Titian, whom he desired to make his model, but a forger. After this he resolved to make nature his model, and thus became a great master of his art. According to his model, so will a man be. One reason why human character is so depraved is because the perfect model is little known and less appreciated. IV. THE ONLY PERFECT MODEL IS JESUS CHRIST. Who is the most imitable character? 1. He who has the strongest power to command admiration. 2. He who is most transparent in character. 3. He who is most unchangeable in the spirit which animates him. Conclusion: Follow Me. 1. This is an epitome of the moral laws of God. 2. Herein is man's life and perfection. 3. Imitate Christ by inbreathing His moral spirit. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The call of St. Philip:*—No trumpet summoned the soldiers of the Cross to the battle-field; no hand like that at Belshazzar's feast came forth to beckon him; no miracle made them take up a distinctive post. And, yet, what a call this was! how noble, singular, useful, profitable! Such a call came to Judas, and he sold it. I. THE ORIGIN OF THIS CALL WAS THE WILL OF CHRIST. Jesus "goes forth" in search of every sinner. But the mere "going forth" of Christ is not enough. There must be an exercise of His secret power. This power is pervasive, leavening, and so works upon man's free-will that it comes into union with the heavenly will. Without this there can be no discipleship. II. THE POSITION IN WHICH THIS CALL PLACES THE PERSON BY WHOM IT IS RECOGNIZED AND OBEYED. It makes him a follower, and when man becomes a follower—1. He abridges his right over himself, his property, time, &c. 2. He sets aside his own wisdom, and accepts that of His Master. 3. He follows always, even unto the end. III. IN THIS CALL THERE IS—1. Exclusiveness, jealous refusal to admit of any division of the heart. 2. Mystery.

(1) It separates us from the nothingness and delusions of the world. (2) It joins us to the invisible and heavenly. (3) It opens up new hopes, scenes, and sources of immeasurable wealth. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *Delaying Christian profession:*—The command is for instant obedience. A common objection is, "I have no confidence in my future strength. I must wait until I am stronger before I profess to have devoted my whole life to Christ." Reply—I. YOU ARE LIVING ONLY IN THE PRESENT. The future is not. For you there may be no earthly future, for you may die to-night. Your responsibility is for the now. II. DUTIES WILL COME NOT IN THE MASS, BUT ONE BY ONE. Strength for each is all you will need. III. YOU WILL GROW STRONG FOR COMING DUTIES ONLY AS YOU PERFORM PRESENT ONES. No one can step to the top of the pyramids; but he can climb one block; and from that he can reach another. Says Robert Browning: "I see a duty and do it not, and therefore see no higher." IV. GOD'S GRACE IS PROMISED ONLY FOR TIME OF NEED. No man to-day can be prepared for to-morrow's duties. V. GOD'S STRENGTH IS OUR ONLY STRENGTH, AND THAT IS PLEDGED. "I will be with you even to the end of the world." He "will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that you are able, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape." (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The motive for following Christ:*—It is related in the annals of the Ottoman Empire that when Amurath II. died, which was very suddenly, his son and destined successor, Mohammed, was about a day's journey distant in Asia Minor. Every day of interregnum in that fierce and turbulent monarchy is attended with peril. The death of the deceased Sultan was therefore concealed, and a secret message despatched to the prince to hasten at once to the capital. On receiving the message he leaped on a powerful Arab charger, and turning to his attendants, said, "Let him who loves me, follow!" This prince afterwards became one of the most powerful sovereigns of the Ottoman line. Those who approved their courage and loyalty by following him in this critical moment of his fortunes, were magnificently rewarded. There is another Prince—the Prince of peace—who says to those around Him, "Let him who loves Me, follow." *The method of following Christ:*—Faith includes works; loyalty involves service; love carries devotedness. It is not merely that, if we have trust in another, we ought to conform our conduct to the directions or suggestions or wishes or example of the trusted one; but it is that, if our trust is a reality, it will show itself in our conduct. It is folly for a child to tell of his love for his mother if he has no regard to her wishes; it is folly for a patient to say that he believes in his physician if he pays no attention to that physician's prescription; it is folly for a soldier to say that he is devoted to a commander whom he will not obey in the heat of a campaign; it is folly for a man to say he has faith in Jesus if he does not seek to follow Jesus. Jesus says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*)

Vers. 44–59. **Philip findeth Nathanael.**—The equivalent of Theodore. He is probably to be identified with Bartholomew, for—1. The mention of him here and in chap. xxi. 2, shows that he occupied a prominent position among the disciples. Those with whom he is classed in each case are apostles. 2. No mention is made of Nathanael in the Synoptists or of Bartholomew in St. John; while the latter name is a patronymic (son of Tolmai), like Barjona (Matt. xvi. 17), and Barjesus (Acts xiii. 6). 3. In the list of apostles Bartholomew is coupled with Philip by St. Matthew (chap. x. 3), St. Luke (chap. vi. 14), St. Mark (chap. iii. 18). So that the six first are the six first called. In chap. xxi. 2, Thomas is added as in Acts i. 13. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Nathanael and Bartholomew:*—It is a melancholy fact that the festival of this gentle and guileless apostle should be for ever associated with the treachery and malice of the cold-blooded massacre in France in 1572. (*John N. Norton.*) *Nathanael:*—I. HIS EFFORTS AS A GENUINE TRUTH SEEKER. 1. He hearkens to information concerning the truth. 2. He renounces a prejudice against the truth. 3. He prosecutes an inquiry in search of truth. In this he is influenced—(1) By the words of Philip. (2) He is greeted by Christ. (3) He is struck by conviction. II. HIS SUCCESS AS A GENUINE TRUTH SEEKER. He found in Christ—1. A Divine Teacher. 2. A Divine King. III. HIS BLESSEDNESS AS A GENUINE TRUTH SEEKER. 1. He saw great things. 2. He would see greater. (1) A new universe. (2) A new class of intelligences. (3) A new order of ministry. (4) A new centre of attraction. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Nathanael:*—I. IN A STATE OF PREJUDICE. 1. Philip went to him in the fulness of his heart, expecting that he would be as glad to hear as he was to tell. 2. But Nathanael receives the announcement with coldness. He had formed an ill opinion of the place, and therefore of all connected

with it. 3. Prejudice is very common, and in religious matters is very pernicious, and men should be on their guard against it. It may prevent them receiving salvation. 4. How should we treat it? As Philip did—"Come and see." Apply this to Bible doctrines, experimental religion, foreign missions. This only will dispel prejudice. II. AN ISRAELITE INDEED IN WHOM IS NO GUILE. Nathanael dropped his prejudice and acted as a man of candour. He was sincere, not sinless. How common is insincerity in word and act! How beautiful is fair transparency of character, after the image of Christ, in whom was no guile! Nathanael was also sincere towards God. Not that this must stand alone; it must qualify other graces: sincere repentance, faith, love, &c. This sincerity is uncommon. Witness the easy way in which men confess themselves miserable sinners. III. A CONFESSOR OF CHRIST. 1. Making his confession, which was—(1) Well grounded. (2) Ample. 2. Encouraged by Christ. Christ would encourage all young converts by showing them good things to come. (*J. Hambleton, M.A.*) *The character of Nathanael:*—It was necessary that our Lord should have a certain number constantly associated with Him. He might have had many; He chose few. He might have had those of the highest classes; He chose from the humblest. As when iron is touched by the loadstone it draws other iron after it, so when Philip was touched by Christ, he seeks to draw his friend. Nathanael was a cautious, incredulous man, but he was sincere. Notice—I. SINCERITY IN A PROFESSION OF RELIGION IS ESSENTIAL TO HAPPINESS AND SAFETY. Christ distinguished Nathanael from other nations and from his own. He had the real thing as well as the appearance. Our Lord, therefore, takes his sincerity under His own discipline, and by thus commending, it shows that it is the grand fundamental thing in religion. You are called Christians, but have you that which the name imports? In Nathanael there was no deceit, no wish to impose upon himself and others. This was evidenced by his secret devotion under the fig-tree. Examine what you are in secret, for then you are before God. Be a real Christian, not one in show. II. TRUE SAVING GRACE IS CONSISTENT WITH GREAT IMPERFECTION IN KNOWLEDGE. Nathanael needed information. It was requisite that he should go and see, which, faithful to the light he had, he did. 1. The first effect of knowledge is the discovery of our ignorance. So Nathanael was tractable and teachable. We are not to conclude against the possession of true saving knowledge because it is small, if it possesses the soul. 2. Proficient Christians should learn from this how to regulate their conduct towards the immature. We must remember that grace works gradually. Do not force the great doctrines of Christianity on young converts. III. CHRIST KNOWS ALL, AND WILL ONE DAY TELL US OF ALL THAT WE HAVE DONE IN SECRET. 1. Our secret sins. 2. Our secret penitence. 3. Our secret prayers. 4. Our secret charities. IV. A READINESS TO BELIEVE UPON SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE IS VERY PLEASING TO CHRIST, AND WILL BE REWARDED WITH GREATER COMMUNICATIONS. (*J. Leifchild, D.D.*) *Nathanael:*—I. THE ADVANTAGES OF OCCASIONAL SOLITUDE. It is alone—1. That we disengage ourselves from the world. 2. That we obtain a knowledge of ourselves. 3. That we can be familiar with God. II. HOW FAMILIAR OUR SAVIOUR IS WITH OUR MOST PRIVATE CONCERNS. 1. To know all persons and things infallibly is the prerogative of God only. 2. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." 3. Let the righteous rejoice, and the broken-hearted penitent be encouraged. III. SINCERITY IN RELIGION IS A QUALITY WHICH OUR SAVIOUR CALLS UPON US TO ADMIRE. 1. Because of its rarity. 2. Because of its excellence. IV. THERE MAY BE TRUE GRACE WHERE THERE IS AT PRESENT LITTLE LIGHT. 1. Let us not, then, conclude that a man is a stranger to grace because he is unable to go all our lengths in sentiment. 2. Nor let us be anxious to force upon him doctrines he is not prepared to receive. V. WHERE GRACE IS REAL IT WILL IN DUE TIME BE ATTENDED WITH CLEARER LIGHT. (*W. Jay.*) *Nathanael's prejudice and confirmation:*—I. NATHANAEL'S PREJUDICE EXPRESSED, AND PHILIP'S REPLY. 1. Nathanael looking for the Messiah, but had the prophecy of Bethlehem in his mind. Hence his difficulty, and his unreasonable imputation of the character of Nazareth to Christ. The objection of the Samaritan woman was that He was a Jew, others that He was a carpenter, &c. But these not more unreasonable than modern objections. 2. Philip's reply was such as became a disciple. Let Nathanael know Christ as he knew Him, and all objections would be removed. II. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS TO NATHANAEL'S CHARACTER. Nathanael's prejudice did not prevent his taking Philip's advice. He approaches, and before he or Philip open their lips, Christ's testimony is given. 1. An Israelite indeed is genuine, in the spirit, not in the letter. 2. In whom is no guile, because an Israelite

indeed; no Judas, no dissembler. III. NATHANAEL'S INQUIRY INTO THE SOURCE OF CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIM, AND THE ANSWER. The inquiry evidenced Nathanael's sincerity. Christ's reply met Nathanael's state of mind. No minister is ever first with those who are called: Jesus has been working in them previously. As the trees of Eden could not hide Adam, neither could the fig-tree hide Nathanael from his Lord. IV. NATHANAEL'S CONVICTION AND CONFESSION OF JESUS. 1. Rabbi, the promised prophet. 2. The Son of God. 3. The King of Israel. Notice the satisfactoriness of this testimony. V. CHRIST'S EXPRESSED SATISFACTION, AND HIS PROMISE OF FUTURE CONFIRMATION TO BE GIVEN TO HIS DISCIPLES. Christ had already given Nathaniel an evidence of His glory in His omnipotence, but there were greater things in store: the things which were to prove Christ to be the Son of God with power. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The preaching of Philip*:—I. INFINITELY DIFFICULT. The connection of the name of the Messiah, of whom Moses and the prophets did write, with Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. II. PERFECTLY DECIDED. We have found Him. III. IRRESISTIBLY CONFIRMED. Come and see. (*Lange.*) *Finding Christ the great treasure*:—In Golconda, if a slave find a diamond of extraordinary value, he takes it up to the Government, and the Government gives him his liberty. If some of those who are this morning the slaves of sin, while they are seeking for God, would find this Pearl of great price, the hour of their emancipation would come, and the King would make proclamation from the throne, saying, "Go free! You have found the Pearl! Be one of My jewels!" (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Bringing companions to Christ*:—The bee-hunter in America puts a piece of honeycomb into a box, and catches a bee. He then covers the box, and very soon the bee fills himself with the honey. Being let loose, it finds its way home, and in a little time returns, but not alone. He brings his companions with him, and in turn they bring their companions, till the box is filled with a full swarm of bees. Let every Sunday scholar, and every attendant at a Christian church, do likewise. If they have tasted that Word which is sweeter than honey, let them bring their companions and neighbours with them, till the school and the church be filled with devout and thoughtful hearers. *Philip and Nathanael*:—I. THE PREPARATION. A soul brought to Christ by a brother. Two men, friends before, had their friendship riveted and made more close by this sacredest of all bonds, that the one had been to the other the means of bringing him to Jesus Christ. Note 1. The hesitation of Nathanael. His prejudice was—(1) Harmless, and soon melted when Christ beamed upon him. (2) Natural. We all know the jealousies of neighbouring villages. But this prejudice brings into relief what a real obstacle to His Messianic recognition our Lord's lowly origin was. We have got over it. But Judæa was then ruled by the most heartless of aristocracies, that of cultured pedants. Why did Christ come from "the men of the earth" as the rabbis called outsiders? (1) In accordance with the general law that reformers always come from outside these classes; and in politics, literature, science, as well as religion, not many wise and mighty are called. (2) Because He was the poor man's Christ, and because His word was not for any class. 2. Philip's invitation. (1) He did not argue. (2) "Come and see" carries in it the essence of Christian apologetics. The wisest thing is to push Christ forward and let people look at Him and let Him make His own impression. And, on the other side, you have not done fairly by Christianity until you have complied with this invitation. II. The second stage: THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN CHRIST AND NATHANAEL, when we see a soul fastened to Christ by Himself. Christ manifests His Messiahship by a supernatural knowledge of him. 1. Before he had come, before Christ could read him, or learn anything about him—while he was coming, Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite," &c. The reference here and in ver. 51 is to Jacob. At Jabbok the crafty Jacob became Israel. So Nathanael was one of God's princes who had wrestled with Him in prayer. How was the guile drawn out of him? See Psa. xxxii. 2. Nathanael's astonishment. Under the fig-tree he must have wrestled in prayer, confessed his sins, longing and looking for the deliverer. Yet so solitary was it, that Christ's knowledge of it led to the glad confession, "Thou art the Son of God." Nathanael was right. So was the woman of Samaria when she drew the same conclusion from the same premises. 3. This was the first miracle that Christ wrought. His supernatural knowledge is as much a mark of His Divinity as any other of His earthly manifestations. (1) This omniscience shows us how glad Christ is when He sees anything good in us. Not a word about Nathanael's prejudice, but cordial praise that he was an honest, a sincere man, following after God and truth. (2) This omniscience is cognizant of all our inward

crises and struggles. We can all look back to some place or other, under some hawthorn hedge, or boulder by the seashore, or back parlour, or crowded street where some never-to-be-forgotten epoch in our soul's history passed unseen by all. Let us rejoice to feel that Christ sees all these moments. III. THE RAPTUROUS CONFESSION which crowns the whole. 1. Where did Nathanael learn these great names? From the Baptist's proclamation of the Son of God and the kingdom of heaven. 2. The enthusiasm of this confession. It is no mere intellectual acknowledgment, but warm loyalty and absolute submission. So the great question for us is not, Do I believe, as a piece of my intellectual creed that Christ is the Messiah? &c. That will save no man. What we want is the element of rapturous acknowledgment, loyal submission, absolute obedience, unfaltering trust. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Philip and Nathanael*:—I. NATHANAEL HIMSELF. He was—1. A guileless man, childlike, simple-hearted, transparent, neither credulous nor mistrustful, honestly ready to receive testimony and to be swayed by the force of truth. 2. An earnest seeker. "We have found the Messiah" would be no gladsome news to any one not looking for the Messiah. This is the universal condition of finding. 3. Ignorant up to a certain point. He knew not Christ although so near his home, like so many now so near His gospel. He knew not Christ although he knew his Bible. Again the parallel holds good. 4. Prejudiced. Yet his prejudice was excusable, for it was due to the faulty testimony of Philip. Jesus was neither of Nazareth nor the son of Joseph, which shows us how a blundering and prejudice-raising testimony may notwithstanding be owned of God. 5. A godly man up to the measure of his light—a man of secret prayer. II. NATHANAEL'S SIGHT OF JESUS. 1. Though prejudiced he was candid enough to investigate Christ's claims. If you are prejudiced give the Gospel a fair hearing. 2. He came to Christ with great activity of heart. As soon as he was told to "Come and see," he came and saw, without waiting, as many do, for Christ to come to him. Indifference and lethargy the crying curse of the present day. 3. He saw Jesus—(1) Not merely with his bodily eyes, but—(2) With his mental eyes he formed a just judgment of Christ. He saw one who could read his thoughts and knew his secret actions. So we must see the Divine in Christ to be saved. III. CHRIST'S SIGHT OF NATHANAEL was not that of an acquaintance or a physiognomist, but of a searcher of hearts. He saw—1. His guilelessness. 2. What he was doing under the fig-tree known to no one but themselves. What this was we can only surmise. As devout Easterns are accustomed to have a special place of prayer, Nathanael may have been engaged under the fig-tree—(1) In confession of sin, and Christ brought it to his recollection, which convinced him that He knew the secret burden and the resultant peace. (2) In heart investigation. (3) In earnest prayer like Jacob at Peniel. (4) In making some solemn vow. (5) In sweet communion with God. 3. And so Christ sees all sincere seekers, their tears, their prayers. IV. NATHANAEL'S FAITH. 1. Note its grounds. Christ's omniscience, as in the case of the Samaritan woman and Zacchæus. So some sermons seem made for certain people, although the preacher is ignorant of them. It is Christ's word piercing the hidden depths and revealing secrets. 2. Its clear and comprehensive character. The Son of God to be adored; the King of Israel to be served. 3. Its positiveness. "Thou *art*." V. NATHANAEL'S AFTER-SIGHT. 1. He had owned Jesus as the Son of God; he was to see Jesus in His glory as the Son of Man; Christ in His mediatorial capacity as the great link between earth and heaven. 2. The providence of God as ruled by Jesus Christ, who ordereth all things for the good of His Church. 3. The second coming of Christ in His glory. These greater things were afterwards. Christians should not clamour to know all about Christianity at first. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Philip and Nathanael*:—I. HOW VARIOUS ARE THE PATHS BY WHICH SOULS ARE LED INTO THE NARROW WAY OF LIFE. 1. Philip does not seem to have been moved by the preaching of the Baptist. 2. He was not drawn by the outspoken declarations of a brother like Peter. 3. He was called directly by Christ Himself. 4. Though the earliest disciples entered by different roads, they reached the same way, served the same Master, and at length reached the same home. From which facts we may deduce—1. That there are diversities of operations answering to diversities of needs. All cannot be converted in precisely the same manner. 2. That we must beware of making the experience of other believers the measure of our own. II. HOW MUCH OF CHRIST THERE IS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. Christ is its sum and substance. 1. The promises pointed to Him. 2. The types prefigured Him (John v. 39). III. THE GOOD ADVICE PHILIP GAVE NATHANAEL. 1. Wiser counsel it would be impossible to conceive. If he had rebuked Nathanael's unbelief he

might have driven him back for many a day. Had he reasoned with Nathanael he might have confirmed his doubt. By inviting him to see for himself he showed his entire confidence in his own assertion and his willingness to have it proved. 2. Let us never be afraid to deal with people about their souls. Christianity courts inquiry. IV. THE HIGH CHARACTER WHICH JESUS GIVES OF NATHANAEL. 1. He was a true child of God. He had that which grace alone can give. 2. He was a genuine son of Abraham. A Jew inwardly. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Philip and Nathanael*:—I. THE CALL OF PHILIP. 1. Christ "findeth him." It was not by chance, although the circumstances may have seemed so to Philip. It was without any concurrence of his. Christ is found of them who sought Him not. The arrangements were Christ's. And whatever the agency now, Christ is the seeker and finder. 2. Christ said "Follow Me" for the first time. (1) An invitation. (2) A command, as all sovereign invitations are, requiring obedience. (3) Implying grace to accept. The followers of Christ—(*a*) Look to Him as sheep to a shepherd; as the Israelites to the pillar of cloud; as soldiers to their captain. (*b*) And, obeying, separate themselves from sin, from the world, from self, from every connection inconsistent with following Him fully. (*c*) Abide with Him. II. THE CALL OF NATHANAEL. 1. Philip findeth him, being qualified by being found himself. On the same day he was made a disciple he conferred not with flesh and blood, but as Christ's instrument finds his friend. (1) Philip's faith, "We have found Him of whom Moses," &c. All Scripture treats of Christ and faith in that leads to faith in Him. (2) Philip's partial ignorance. "Son of Joseph." "Nazareth." This ignorance at once placed him at a disadvantage, and was the occasion of prejudice, as is the ignorance of many Christians now. Observe the faithfulness of Scripture in not concealing the infirmities of the saints. But his intention was upright, and Christ honoured it by leading Nathanael through Philip to Himself. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Philip and Nathanael*:—I. THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL WHEN RECEIVED INTO THE HEART, IN URGING MEN TO ITS PROPAGATION. Discoverers of hidden treasures have no motive for making them known. Discoverers of a remedy for a direful disease have a powerful motive for making it known, but not necessarily the disposition. But you cannot have a man who, renewed by the Spirit of God, does not seek the renewal of others. The wealth received from Christ is kept by disbursement; the cure accomplished by His blood is radical only as it seeks its extension. And gratitude to the Redeemer impels to a proclamation of redemption. So Philip felt the communicative and diffusive nature of true religion. II. THE RECEPTION WHICH THE GOSPEL MEETS WITH EVEN FROM MEN OF OPENNESS AND SINCERITY. Men have their prejudices, like Nathanael, founded on some mistake or misapprehension, and these in process of time take the form of incontrovertible principles, just as proverbs are often quoted till they almost pass for Bible texts. 1. "Can deliverance be obtained from one who died as a malefactor?" Yes. "Out of Nazareth," out of shame and death we procure deliverance: for the substitute must take the place of the guilty and bear his doom. Examine and you will see you are putting Nazareth for Bethlehem, falsehood for truth, disgrace for glory. The very circumstances which cause the gospel to appear so humiliating are those which give to it its majesty and power. 2. "Can any virtue come out of a system which bases everything on faith?" Yes. Of all systems for the encouragement of personal holiness there is none like the Christian. For the man who looks to be freely justified by Christ knows that his justification cannot be evidenced but by sanctification. 3. Let, then, all who have taken up a taunt against the gospel, till they have virtually made the taunt itself gospel, learn that though they may be candid, like Nathanael, they may, like him, risk an immeasurable loss out of adherence to a surmise or saying which they have only to investigate to prove erroneous. III. THE TREATMENT WHICH A PREJUDICED MAN SHOULD RECEIVE FROM A BELIEVER. Philip declined all controversy, though a fairer opening could hardly have been offered. His anxiety was to bring his friend into personal communication with Jesus. This was the method that had succeeded with himself, and he felt that it could not possibly fail with another. There was great wisdom in this; for it does not often happen that men are convinced by argument. So, to persuade a man to read the Bible is better than to draw him into a debate on its evidences. There is no evidence of Christianity like that which a man knocks out for himself with the simple apparatus of a Bible and a conscience. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The communicativeness of the gospel*:—Seed hath a natural warmth and life in it, by which it increaseth and produceth more seeds like itself; so God's Word, cast into the good ground of a believing heart, hath a supernatural heat, it being as fire, and lively power to frame and dispose men like itself, to make

them of fleshly, spiritual; of blind, quicksighted; of dead in sin, alive in grace. And as one grain quickened produces several ears, and many grains in each, so one Christian converted and receiving this power in himself, gaineth many to God, wishing that every one were, as he is, except the bonds of his sins. Philip, being called, finds Nathanael, and brings him to Christ; and the woman at the well calls all the town. (*Dr. Lake.*) "*We have found*":—The whole world may be divided into three classes and orders of men: those who, having found God, resign themselves up to His service; those who, having not yet found Him, do indefatigably seek after Him; those who have neither found Him, nor are inclined to seek Him: the first are happy and wise; the third are unhappy and fools; the second must be owned to be wise, as they own themselves to be unhappy. (*Pascal.*) *Testimony bearing*:—Discoverers in the natural world frequently, for prudential reasons, keep silence as to their discoveries. When Galileo first turned his glass on the planet Saturn he saw, as he thought, that it consisted of three spheres close together, the middle one being the largest. Being not quite sure of his fact, he was in a dilemma between his desire to wait longer for further observation and his fear that some other observer might forestall him. To combine these Galileo wrote a sentence, "I have observed the highest planet to be triple." He then jumbled the letters together and made the sentence into one monstrous word, and published *this*, which contained his discovery, but under lock and key. He had reason to congratulate himself on his prudence, for within two years two of the supposed bodies disappeared, leaving only one; and for nearly fifty years Saturn continued to all astronomers the enigma it was to Galileo, until in 1656 it was finally made clear that it was surrounded by a thin flat ring, which, when fully seen, gave rise to the first appearance in Galileo's small telescope, and when seen edgeways disappeared from view altogether. With an instinct that makes the newly saved Christian long that others may share his joy, he, however, goes everywhere, saying, "We have found the Messiah; this is the Christ." (*H. O. Mackey.*) **Can any good come out of Nazareth.**—*Judge not a man by his surroundings*:—I. In the INTELLECTUAL world. Can a man become a scholar without a university training? Hugh Miller, &c. II. In the POLITICAL world. Can a man who was a rail-splitter in his youth make a good President? Lincoln. III. In the SOCIAL world. Frequently a man whom society learns to respect is of humble parentage, and *vice versâ*. IV. In the ECCLESIASTICAL world. Examples of pure Christianity in Roman Churches—Anselm, Bernard, Newman. Noble pagans, Socrates, Epictetus, &c. V. In the MORAL world. Some of the most distinguished saints in obscure conditions. The purest diamond—where is that? Precious metals too. (*G. F. Green.*) **Come and see.**—*How to learn the excellence of Christ*:—Prejudices often find expression in spite of one's consciousness of them, and of the protest of reason. All that is needed to betray them is simply an occasion. Such an occasion was given Nathanael by Philip's mention of "Nazareth." The best response to a sneer, as a rule, is silence. Christ's manner, for the most of us, is the wisest and most dignified—"answering not a word." Nevertheless, it is allowable to transfix a prejudice, or turn aside a sneer, if we can do it as effectually as Philip. He neither admits nor denies the force of Nathanael's objection. His answer is a challenge whose reasonableness Nathanael himself could not deny—"Come and see!" The excellence of Christ may be learned in part: I. FROM REPORT; OR, THE TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES. "We have found Him," &c., is substantially the testimony of every honest inquirer. Also the Samaritan woman (chap. iv. 29), whose testimony brought many of her people to Him. The whole New Testament is but a report of witnesses of the person, character, teachings, &c., of the Son of God. II. BY INTERCOURSE WITH HIS DISCIPLES. Nathanael heeded Philip's terse advice; he went with him to see Christ. True Christian example is an illustration of Christ Himself. Christ's excellence, reproduced in His disciples, may be learned even by His bitterest enemies. Said a fierce Papist to Bishop Jewel: "I should love thee, Jewel, if thou wast not a Lutheran—in thy faith thou art a heretic, but, surely, in thy life thou art an angel." Lord Peterborough, when visiting Archbishop Fenelon, heard no argument from him on the claims of Christianity. The venerable prelate let logic alone, and simply lived such a life as he was wont to do when there were no infidels about to witness. The exclamation of the deist was, "If I stay here much longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself." "Come and see," thou unbelieving friend! Mingle with Christians—not to mark their inconsistencies and expose their faults. A better motive is his who is ever looking for excellences: and these will be found even in the humblest of Christ's disciples.

III. By personal realization. You cannot know the excellence of a thing without personally testing it. What do you know of a fruit you have never tasted? The sight of food relieves no one's hunger. "If any man will do His will," &c. Christianity is a grand temple, the interior of which you have never seen. It is famous the world over. Crowds of all ages and nationalities have entered it, and, gazing upon its grandeur, have been lost in wonder, exclaiming, "The half was not told me!" But you are without, looking listlessly at a single rose-window, and asking, "What is there here to admire?" But "come and see." Let me take you, as Philip took Nathanael, into the temple. Then shall its glory burst upon you overwhelmingly! This personal test, or experience, is the only proof of gospel blessings which thousands of Christians can urge without fear of successful contradiction. Conclusion:—1. Christ would be more appreciated if He were more thoroughly known. 2. Once Scripturally known, Christ needs no longer to beg for men's regard. *Come and see:*—I. The qualifications for seeing Christ. 1. Deep conviction and penitence on the part of gross sinners. 2. Guileless sincerity on the part of those who, like Nathaniel, have not gone so far morally astray. II. The necessity of seeing Christ. 1. Argument about an absent person most inefficient. 2. Personal contemplation alone efficient. III. The means of seeing Christ. 1. Earnest unprejudiced study of the facts of Christ's history and of His words. Come out of the world and compare it with the Christ depicted in the Gospels. 2. Clear patient meditation on Christ's commentary on His character and mission to the Church. (1) Not as Rome would have us do, behold Christ in her ecclesiastics, rites, councils, and visible head. Often have these things created a Nathanael-like prejudice. But (2) In the blended lives of Christ's saintly followers who constitute the true Church. (3) In the regenerating effects which the Church, through Him, has produced in the world. 3. Actual intercourse with Christ Himself. (1) We have often wished for bodily contact, a knowledge of Christ after the flesh. This would be very precious, but, as St. Paul shows, might bring no real knowledge. 4. The vision of faith the highest and best means of enjoying the manifestation of Christ. This vision (1) Is progressive. (2) Becomes a power of vision in every other direction. The believer sees Christ everywhere. (*T. Islip.*) *The proverbial disrepute of Nazareth:*—The whole of Galilee was a despised region in the eyes of the more polished Palestinians of the South. The Galileans were accused of being rude, illiterate, and devoid of culture. Their pronunciation was said to be so thick that it led constantly to mortifying blunders, as when one could not tell from the word used whether a Galilean peasant had come to the market for an ass (*khamor*), wine (*khemer*), sheepskin (*immer*), or wool (*'immar*). A Galilean woman, inviting her guest to table, said: "I am going to give you milk to eat." In her thick Galilean pronunciation it actually sounded: "May a lion eat you!" Other such ambiguities are mentioned as occurring in the rude speech of the Galileans. Worse than all, the Galileans were said to be loose on points of doctrine, so that a bad odour of heterodoxy hung over the province. It was not to Galilee that the Judæan would naturally have looked for a great theological teacher. Nazareth shared, of course, in the reproach of the province to which it belonged. The town was simply a typical Galilean village, filled with a warm-hearted, and perhaps (as the Talmud suggests) a warm-tempered people, who had little sympathy with the learned casuistry of the Judæan rabbis, and were therefore looked down upon as ignorant rabble. There is little reason for charging special moral turpitude against the people of Nazareth. The Judæan simply looked down upon Nazareth as the urbane inhabitant of a great city is supposed to look down upon a backwoods settlement. The inhabitants of a college town in the East would hardly turn to the new settlement of Nosuchplace, in Blank Territory, for a teacher of culture. That was the way the Judæan felt with regard to Nazareth. (*S. S. Times.*) *Nathanael's prejudice:*—Suppose you were told that a peasant out of Rossshire was a man on whom the whole history of the nation hung. Would you believe it without first saying, "That is a strange place for such a person to be born in"? Galilee was a despised part of Palestine, and Nazareth was a proverbially despised part of Galilee; and this Jesus was a carpenter's son that nobody had ever heard of. It seemed to be a strange head on which the Divine Dove should flutter down, passing by all the Pharisees and Scribes, all the great and wise. Nathanael's prejudice was but the giving voice to a fault that is as wide as humanity, and which we have every day of our lives to fight with—the habit of estimating people and their work, wisdom, and power to teach us by the class to which they are supposed to belong, or even by the place from

which they come. "Can a German teach an Englishman anything he does not know?" "Is a Protestant to owe anything of spiritual illumination to a Roman Catholic?" "Are we Dissenters to receive any wisdom or example from Churchmen?" "Will a Conservative be able to give any lessons in politics to a Liberal?" "Is there any other bit of England that can teach Lancashire?" Take care that whilst you are holding up your hands in horror against the prejudices of our Lord's contemporaries who stumbled at His origin you are not doing the same thing in regard to all manner of subjects twenty times a day. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The power of prejudice*:—A man was stoutly asserting that there were no goldfields except in Mexico and Peru. A nugget dug up in California was shown him as convincing evidence against his positive statement to the contrary. So far from being disconcerted, he quietly answered: "This metal, I confess, is extremely like gold; and you tell me that it passes as such in the market. All this I do not dispute. Nevertheless, the metal is not gold, but auruminium; it cannot be gold, because gold comes only from Mexico and Peru." In vain was he told that the geological formation of California was similar to that of Peru, and that the metals were similar. He had made up his mind that gold existed only in Mexico and Peru; this was a law of nature; he had no reason to give why it should be so; but such had been the admitted fact for years, and from this opinion he would not swerve. (*John N. Norton.*) *The power of prejudice*:—It is a great pity that this way of estimating the value of suggested truth is so common in our day. "Can a minister know anything about science?" is the sneering question on one side. Yes; and on the other side the equally scornful question often comes, "Can a scientist who is not a Christian believer bring out facts that a Bible student ought to ponder?" "Is there any truth worth considering in the outside religions of the world?" asks some "orthodox" believer, who answers his question in the negative before he asks it. And some "liberal thinker" puts his question, in a like spirit of confident denial, "Is any 'orthodox' truth worth believing in these days of religious progress?" It is the old spirit, and much the old question, of the provincial bigot of Judæa, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" (*H. G. Trumbull, D.D.*)

Ver. 47. **Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.**—This is a chapter of "beholds." We are first to "Behold the Lamb of God," and then to behold a man of God. Nathanael was simple, straightforward, honest, "an Israelite indeed." In this he was not like his great progenitor, Jacob, who was a supplanter, and not a prince with God till that memorable night when the angel wrestled with him, and withered his carnal strength. Then, in the weakness of that simplicity which laid hold upon the mighty One, Jacob became Israel (Gen. xxvii. 36; xxxii. 28). A sincere and simple character was not common in our Lord's day. It is despised by many at this day. It was greatly appreciated by our Lord, who has the same character in perfection, and is truly called "the holy child Jesus." This characteristic of guilelessness is—I. A HAPPY SIGN IN A SEEKER. We will illustrate this by Nathanael's procedure. 1. He is the sort of man to whom disciples like to speak (ver. 45). 2. He is outspoken with his difficulties, and therefore his friends see how to meet them (ver. 46). 3. He is ready to apply the proper tests (ver. 46). 4. He is honest in his use of those tests. Our Lord saw that Nathanael was no captious critic nor idly-curious observer (ver. 47). 5. He is open to conviction if fair evidence be supplied. As soon as our Lord proved His omniscience Nathanael believed (ver. 48). 6. He is ready to make confession (ver. 49). 7. He is prepared to proceed far in the school of Christ. The Lord promised him the sight of greater things because he was prepared to see them (vers. 50, 51). An Israelite is the man to know "the King of Israel" (ver. 49). An Israelite is the man to understand the famous dream of the father of all Israelites (ver. 51; Gen. xxviii. 12). II. A VITAL POINT IN A BELIEVER. The truly upright man, and he only, can be a Christian. 1. A sense of pardon removes the temptation to guile: we cease to excuse ourselves when pardon is received (Psa. li.). 2. A reception of Christ as "the truth" causes guile to be hated. 3. A truthful assurance of the gospel prevents a hypocritical faith. 4. A complete consecration to the Lord puts an end to a double-minded life, and to all false aims and maxims. 5. A sense of the presence of God makes guile appear absurd. 6. A brave faith in God causes it to appear mean and cowardly. III. A SURE PRODUCER OF OTHER QUALITIES. 1. It makes a man love his Bible. Nathanael was familiar with the law and the prophets. 2. It makes him pray. He is an Israelite (Gen. xxxii. 28). 3. It leads him to be much alone. "Under the fig-tree" (ver. 48). 4. It makes him wear his heart in his countenance. "Behold

an Israelite indeed." 5. It prepares him to behold the pure and true glories of heaven. Who among us is renowned for cleverness, craft, shrewdness, and the critical faculty in general? Let him be afraid of the much-admired quality of cleverness. The absence of simplicity is by no means a healthy sign. Let us be true in any case, and may the Lord teach us His truth! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A high eulogium:*—A professor of religion who is what he appears to be, and appears to be what he is. I. THE PROMINENT FEATURES OF THIS CHARACTER. 1. Regeneracy; newness of heart. This its foundation. 2. An earnest desire and endeavour to know the truth: at first-hand; not through a priest. 3. A deliberate purpose and steady intention to please God in everything. The Pharisee prays to get popular applause; Nathanael retires under a fig-tree. 4. Uniformity and consistency. The heart answers to the life, the life to the heart. II. THE EXCELLENCIES OF THIS CHARACTER. 1. It is estimable, and is held in esteem. Without it a man is a worthless character, however otherwise distinguished. 2. It is pleasing to God. 3. It brings peace to its possessor. 4. It secures hereafter its great and everlasting reward. (*John Brown, D.D.*) One of the rare commendatory words of Christ spoken on a most rare occasion. 1. Bestowed upon a man who spoke contemptuously of his birthplace; was prepossessed against himself; had, immediately after an hour of earnest devotion, fallen again under a prejudice. 2. Was bestowed for the very reason that He was without guile. (*Lange.*) *The Israelite indeed* is—I. A MAN WHOSE HEART IS TRUE TO GOD. Our hearts are so—1. When we seek our happiness in Him, and not in the gratification of the "desire of the flesh," &c. 2. When we find our happiness in Him, *i.e.*, when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. 3. When this love is persistent and permanent. II. A MAN WHOSE WORDS ARE SUITABLE THERETO. When there is no guile in the heart there is none on the lips. In this is implied—1. Veracity—speaking the truth from the heart; the putting away of all wilful lying in every kind and degree. Roman casuists distinguish lies into—(1) Malicious—such as are told with a desire to hurt. These no one defends. (2) Harmless—such as are supposed to do neither good nor harm. Men excuse these; but no Nathanael can speak them, and Paul condemns them (Eph. iv. 25). (3) Officious—those spoken with a design to do good. About these there has been much controversy. Some maintain them to be innocent, and even meritorious. But Paul teaches (Rom. iii. 7, 8)—(*a*) That the good effect of a lie is no excuse for it. (*b*) That it is a mere slander upon Christians to say they teach men to do evil that good may come. (*c*) That if any teach this or do it their damnation is just: which is all applicable to this kind of lies. 2. Sincerity. As veracity is opposite to lying, so is sincerity to cunning. Cunning is confounded with wisdom. But wisdom is the faculty of discerning the best ends and the fittest means of attaining them. The two great means of cunning are—(1) Simulation—the seeming to be what we are not; (2) dissimulation—the seeming not to be what we are. If we are engaged with artful men, we may use silence and reserve without cunning; but we may not speak the truth in order to deceive. This is perhaps not inconsistent with veracity, but it is with sincerity. When we speak at all, we should speak the naked truth from the heart. 3. This is properly termed simplicity, which implies—(1) Not only the speaking no known falsehood; (2) not only designedly deceiving no one; but (3) speaking plainly and artlessly to every one in a childlike though not in a childish manner. This excludes the using of empty compliments. 4. This sincerity and simplicity has an influence on the whole behaviour which, though it be far enough remote from clownishness, ill-breeding, roughness, and surliness, is plain and free from disguise. Conclusion: This, then, is real solid virtue. Not truth alone, nor conformity with truth; not love alone, but truth and love united. (*John Wesley.*) *Christian simplicity:*—Several bishops once asked Bishop Atterbury: "Why will you not suffer your servants to deny you when you do not care to see company? It is not a lie for them to say your lordship is not at home; for it deceives no one: every one knows it means only, your lordship is busy." He replied: "My lords, if it is (which I doubt) consistent with sincerity, yet I am sure it is not consistent with that simplicity which becomes a Christian bishop. (*Ibid.*) *An Israelite indeed:*—I. HIS PORTRAIT. 1. He is a converted character. 2. His profession and his conduct agree. 3. His words and his heart harmonize. 4. He is known by his zeal for God's glory. 5. He is distinguished by his compassion for souls. II. THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING AN ISRAELITE INDEED. The advantages are great—1. To his family. 2. To the sphere in which he moves, whether high or low. 3. To the Church of Christ. 4. To himself. III. IN CONCLUSION: 1. "Behold an Israelite indeed." "Mark the perfect man," &c. 2.

Admire him—admire Christ in him. 3. Be thankful for him. 4. Imitate him in life. 5. Rejoice in his blessedness in heaven. (*A. Fletcher, D.D.*) *The true Israelite is*:—I. A TRUE SON OF ABRAHAM. Nathanael was so called not because he was a descendant of Abraham, but because he resembled the patriarch in his faith and piety. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed." "They who are of faith are the children of Abraham." Faith, then, is the characteristic of the true Israelite. Nathanael was ready to believe. Faith is the primary virtue of the Christian life. II. IN COVENANT WITH GOD. The Jews were ever ready to boast of this, but the Baptist and our Lord corrected them. Whoever cordially and unreservedly takes God for his God, Christ for his Redeemer, the Holy Spirit for his Sanctifier, is in covenant with God. III. A WORSHIPPER OF THE TRUE GOD. All other nations worshipped idols. Every true Israelite is a temple of God. From the altar of his heart he offers the incense of sincerity and affection. To God he gives the best of his services. The worship of God is not formal and burdensome, but delightful. He shows his sincerity also by his secret worship. IV. LIKE THE PATRIARCH FROM WHOM HE TAKES HIS NAME; a wrestler with God. V. HAS THE PROMISE OF AN INHERITANCE, only not an earthly, but a heavenly. Conclusion: 1. The conduct of Philip must be highly approved, and should be imitated. 2. Although good men are subject to be prejudiced, when they have the opportunity of being better instructed the prejudices give way to cordial attachment. 3. Our Lord is the witness of every action of our lives, and especially of every exercise of devotion. 4. Sincerity in religion is essential. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Of sincerity toward God and man*:—I. TOWARD GOD. Our piety is, then, sincere—1. When the chief reasons and predominant motives are religious. A religious or rational motive is that which regards God and another world in opposition to men and present temporal advantages. 2. When it is rooted in the heart, and is a living principle within us. 3. When men are religious in secret as well as in public. 4. When there is a constant tenor of goodness in the general course of life. 5. When our obedience to God is uniform and universal. 6. When it holds out against persecution and the fiery trial. II. TOWARDS MAN; and so it signifies a simplicity of mind and manners in our conversation and carriage towards each other; singleness of heart discovering itself in honest openness; speaking as we think, performing what we promise, and being what we seem to be. III. CONCLUSION. Let us be sincere in our religion, never making use of it to serve any base or unworthy ends; and be straightforward in speech and conduct in our intercourse with men. To this end the following considerations are offered:—1. That sincerity is the highest commendation and the very best character that can be given of any man (Josh. xxiv. 14; 1 Chron. xix. 17; Psa. xv. 1, 2, xxxii. 2). 2. That this virtue is rare. 3. That the want of it will quite spoil the virtue and acceptance of our piety and deprive us of its reward. 4. Insincerity is a vain and foolish thing. It is designed to cheat others; it really deceives ourselves. 5. Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance, and many more. It is hard to act a part long. A dissembler must be always on his guard. Insincerity is very troublesome to manage. 6. That it is not worth while to dissemble, considering the shortness and uncertainty of our lives. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *Nathanael*:—Finest paintings or portraits are those which fill the eye and fix it by their natural unadorned simplicity; in which there is nothing superfluous, nothing to call the attention away from the distinctly defined character marked in the features. Inferior courtly artists, such as Lawrence, spend much time in haberdashery, in dress, in attitude, in the studious introduction of the scenery in the background. Vandyke, Velasquez, Reynolds, care usually only for feature, form, character. We have such a portrait here. It arrests us. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" one of the first and foremost of the little group in which the human manifestation of the Church had its origin. I. I would make some preliminary remarks on the first impressions given to us by this story and character of Nathanael. 1. In spite of the high eulogy of our Lord, I cannot but say what a bad impression in fact he makes upon us at first. He seems to come before us as a narrow mind, a mind influenced by prejudices. Qualities are mixed in all, even as a beech has beautiful qualities and grave defects—it is very graceful, but it is more subject to the worm, it has little strength, and it shrinks. Let us do justice, even often, to the narrow mind. If it cannot receive us, let us receive it; if it will not contain us, let us retain it. Let us, whenever we can, form affectionate sentiments of nations, of communities, of men; if they are true, you only do them justice; and, if they are false, though your opinion does not alter and make them lovely, at least you are

the more lovely for holding such sentiments. Being with Jesus ought to enlarge the most narrow mind: it enlarged Nathanael's, he was certainly narrow. 2. Preliminary remark. It is obvious that Christ knows some who do not know Him. "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee." II. But it is time we turn from these merely negative, from what some may regard as, at best, these doubtful aspects of the character of Nathanael, to the positive encomium of our Lord, I may even say the splendid designation of our Lord. That designation, I need not say, comprehends two developments of the man. An Israelite indeed—his Church character. That narrow suspiciousness which proclaimed the Jew, does not prevent his right here—an Israelite indeed; "for he is not a Jew which is one outwardly." 1. In the first place he was one, as we have in some measure already seen, who was not merely by birth a Jew; his heart was interested in the destiny of Israel; he had entered into the mystery of the Divine separation. Israel led a separated life, and that is the idea of consecrated life; "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned amongst the nations"; that is the first idea of Israel—sequestration, separation. 2. The life beneath the fig-tree, whatever it might be, justifies the idea that he was an earnestly holy man. Our Lord's designation implies that he had some divinely secluded life, in which he realized the origin of the term Israel. That term is indeed somewhat dark, but it no doubt speaks of one who had seen God face to face—it had its origin when the name of Jacob was changed, and he was called Israel, in the night of Peniel. Nathanael itself was a fine name; like so many of the Hebrew names it spoke of God. The affix, *El*—the hallowing, consecrating name of God—how often we find it in the Hebrew names! *Eli*ab, God of my Father; *Eli*zur, God my Rock; Shelumi*el*, God my Peace; *Eli*asaph, God will increase; *Eli*shama, God will hear; Gamali*el*, God will recompense; Pag*iel*, Son of God my Interceder; Nathana*el*, God hath given. So the Israelites, we may believe in no light spirit, honoured God in conferring names; and Peni*el*, or the Face of God, was the place where the old patriarch believed he had seen God face to face; and Nathanael had his Peniel. 3. Once more, this Israelite indeed was such, not only by his isolation, his sacred sequestration, his earnest wrestling, his Divine communions, but by his hopes. As I have said, promises can only avail to those who can use them. No Israelite indeed can rest in his heart without the fulfilment of the Divine promise that the Son shall have the "uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." Let us turn to the foundation of all this in his personal individual character. He was pure in heart, he was a guileless man, "in whom is no guile." He solved his prejudices against Christ by immediately going to Him. Oh that all hearts prejudiced against Christ would do so! This is magnanimity, this is conduct of which only a great and pure and guileless mind is capable. I think it was also to this temper of mind the splendid designation of our Lord was addressed. Behold he comes—the man incapable of doubting, and turning, and duplicity, and sophistry; incapable of attempting to make the white appear black, or the black white, or the worst best, or the best worst. Here is a man who can dare to be true. We are to believe that it was beneath the fig-tree's shade that such Divine purity and guilelessness were attained and studied. (*E. Paxton Hood.*)

Ver. 48. **When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.**—What was he doing there? Something good evidently. The following suggestions have been made: I. THAT HE WAS THERE FOR GRATEFUL CONTEMPLATION. A tradition says that at the massacre of the innocents he was hidden by his mother beneath the fig-tree in her garden at Bethlehem. This is too remote a reference, having occurred thirty years before. II. THAT HE FIRST HEARD OF CHRIST BENEATH THE FIG-TREE. When Philip found him he was seated beneath his own fig-tree. But this was known to Philip and perhaps to others. Our Lord's allusion was obviously to some circumstance understood only by Nathanael. III. THAT IT WAS FOR PRAYER WITH RESPECT TO SOME SPECIAL DIFFICULTY. No doubt Nathanael's devotions were the reverse of those of the Pharisees. But this suggestion is too vague. IV. THAT IT WAS FOR THE SPECIAL STUDY OF GOD'S WORD. No doubt Nathanael was waiting for the consolation of Israel. On one memorable occasion, as he sat there with the sacred roll spread out on his knee, light suddenly dawned. The scripture was Genesis, the life was that of Jacob, the passage the vision of the ladder (ver. 51), and above all a voice speaking of a seed in which all the families of the earth should be blessed. On that day perhaps Philip summoned him to the presence of the Master. Conclusion: 1. How do you spend your hours of privacy? Some in

sinful thoughts, shameful deeds. Let the sinner know that God sees him. 2. Experience proves the worth of meditative prayer (Matt. vi. 6). 3. Resort to your fig-tree frequently. (*S. Buss, LL.B.*) *Christ's knowledge of His people*:—I. Their CHARACTERS He understands. II. Their CONDUCT He observes. III. Their THOUGHTS He discerns. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ the Witness of our secret hours*:—I. WHAT THIS INCIDENT TEACHES US OF CHRIST. His Divinity. Let us leave the trite and well-trodden method of proving this, and try a simpler way. Jesus demands our adoration as more than man, and on the ground that He alone of all the minds that have lifted up the world with intelligence has the power of reading all men's thoughts and hearts and experiences through and through. The leaders of thought have never been equal to this. Had they even pretended to it they would have been set down as miserable jugglers. A general knowledge of human nature is all that the acutest have attained. The limit of this is soon attained and is not always accurate. But here is a man who all through life knew what is in man. He wanted no information about the diseases He cured. He saw the lack of self-sacrifice in the young man. He judged faultlessly the Pharisees, Judas, Pilate, the faithless wife, the woman that was a sinner. How could He be a Saviour without knowing our real state? the Light of the world without its lying open to His inspection? the Judge without comprehending every secret motive, error, sin? II. WHAT THIS INCIDENT TEACHES US OF NATHANAEL AND OF THE BLESSING HE RECEIVED. 1. He was not a faultless character, but genuine, lowly, teachable, having a soul open to receive spiritual light. 2. The blessing imports—(1) That which falls on all genuine unconscious goodness that hides itself from men, and therefore is more precious to God. This is one of those new gracious ideas which the gospel brings into the world. Not only is righteousness independent of station or publicity, but it is acceptable to God and a sign of spiritual purity in the degree that it turns to God alone for its Approver. (2) Attainments are of slow growth. It needs time to form habits. But sincerity in the religious life is indispensable at the very outset. This was Nathanael's one promising, solid grace. Hence the encouragement held out to genuine repentance and the unsparing condemnation of hypocrisy. (3) The modest and faithful performance of a lower duty prepares the soul for the higher services and privileges. The man that was true under the fig tree afterwards sees angels of God, &c. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Nathanael under the fig-tree; or, religion in secret*:—I. IT IS IN SECRET THAT TRUE RELIGION HAS ITS ORIGIN. Thus we perceive that the rise of religion in the soul must necessarily be out of sight. The new creation is accomplished by the secret agency of the Holy Spirit. The origin of great rivers is sometimes wrapped mystery; they rise in some inaccessible regions on which human eye has never gazed. For centuries the sources of the Nile were unknown; to discover them was the highest ambition of many an adventurous explorer; but till very recently every attempt had been of no avail. Indeed, the fountain-heads of some of our own rivers lie far away from the haunts of men. If you would trace the Severn to its source, you must ascend the height of Plinlimmon, and there, in a dreary, wild, secluded region, you will find the obscure fountain, where the noble river rises. Truly, this is not an unapt representation of the beginning of the Divine life in the soul. II. IT IS IN SECRET THAT TRUE RELIGION IS MOST IMPORTANT. This is manifest when we consider that—1. Man is a lonely being. It may be a startling statement, but it is profoundly true. Between man and man there lies a wide distance; beyond a certain point they cannot approach each other; thus every one stands emphatically by himself. A casual visitor to a large town is frequently overwhelmed with a painful sense of loneliness. Man is alone in most of those circumstances which make up the sum of his existence. His thoughts and reflections, his hopes and fears, are for the most part unknown to his bosom friends. The stage of a theatre is generally so decorated as to present a very gorgeous appearance. You might imagine that those who move and talk upon it live in a kind of fairy land. Beautiful forms chatter and dance, amidst sunny groves and laughing streams. All this, however, gives you but a very erroneous idea of what those men and women are in real life. Still, were you allowed to go behind the scenes, where they retire after having played their parts, you might form a sounder estimate of their actual character; but the proceedings there are never beheld by the crowd of spectators who fill the house. But a man's religion follows him into the most retired places; it leaves its impress upon his most private actions; it forms and fashions his most secret meditations. 2. Religious declension invariably begins in secret. This shows how jealous we should always be of the integrity of our inner life. Think of a

stream, which, as it winds its way along the meadow, supplies man and beast with its crystal waters. But one day it becomes suddenly thick and troubled. What can be the cause? Somebody has been tampering with the fountain-head. It is in secret that the foundation of our religion is laid. And if the foundation be not firm, the superstructure must be in danger. 3. We can form a more accurate judgment of our religion from our secret life than from anything else. There are two distinct spheres wherein a man's religion may be tested; namely, in public and in secret. Some profess religion from the love of praise—some from a baser motive still, the love of gain. But such motives as these can have no possible influence upon us in secret. III. TRUE RELIGION IN SECRET IS ACCOMPANIED BY TRUE RELIGION IN PUBLIC. We have a remarkable instance of this in the case of Nathanael. When called upon to act in public, he practised the principles which he cherished in secret. 1. He who has God's love in his heart cannot altogether hide the fact from others. Religion is not a latent principle, buried up in the depths of the soul; for it displays itself in works of righteousness before the world. 2. The secret life of man cannot but tell on his public life. If a man commune much with God in secret, he cannot be otherwise than God-like in public. Unconsciously to himself, he sheds abroad a powerful influence wherever he goes. (*A. Rowlands, B.A.*) *The secret side of religion*:—I. RELIGION HAS A SECRET SIDE TOWARDS GOD, AS WELL AS AN OPEN SIDE TOWARDS MAN. There is a part of religion that is strictly private and personal. From the secret good in Nathanael we may draw the conclusion that there is more good in the world than we know, more good in men than we can see. II. THE SECRET SIDE OF RELIGION IS THE SURE TEST AND SIGN OF ITS REALITY. From Christ's words to Nathanael we may gather—1. Christ bases His estimate of men upon what is inward rather than what is outward, upon what is secret and private rather than upon what is public and open. 2. Christ pursues a method of judgment with men far different from that taken by the world. 3. The secret side of religion is the surest sign of its reality, because free from many evils which often are associated with the public and open. III. THE SECRET SIDE OF RELIGION HERE SHALL BECOME THE OPEN SIDE HEREAFTER. Christ honoured it in Nathanael, and, to the amazement of the man, made it known. He will recognize and honour and make known the secret goodness of all His servants by and by. Sometimes the secret life of religion becomes openly known here. Hereafter comes the grand and complete revelation. "Your Father, that seeth in secret, shall reward you openly." In religion, and in the service of Christ, let every man be true to his own nature. Let no man despise his brother because his brother is not as himself. Let Nathanael be Nathanael, and let Peter be Peter. Behind our open life and public duties let there be a secret life with God, of thought and prayer. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *The Old Testament and the New*:—There is an analogy between what is here said at the opening of the Gospel and what is written at the opening of the Old Testament of the law in the Book of Genesis. I. The two portions of Scripture REPRESENT THE REIGNING PRINCIPLES OF THE TWO DISPENSATIONS, EACH BY A TYPICAL OCCURRENCE ON ITS THRESHOLD. 1. There, at the garden of Eden, man a transgressor, conscious of his guilt, hides himself under the leaves of a tree to escape the punishment he deserves and dreads, and there the eye of the Almighty searches him out with a summons to judgment. 2. Here, at the introduction of the Gospel, just when the Lamb of God appears to take away the world's sin, man seeks the same covering, not to hide himself from God, but to draw near to Him for communion; and here the same searching eye discovers him, not for rebuke, but for encouragement and blessing. Adam was ashamed and hid himself; in Nathanael there was no shame needing to be hid. II. THE TWO CHARACTERISTIC MOTIVE POWERS OF THE TWO PARTS OF REVELATION, both necessary, the terror of the law, alarming and rousing the conscience, and the attraction of grace moving and melting the heart. Not a jot or a tittle passes from the law till all is fulfilled, because conscience burns in us with its perpetual fire, and in his weakness and self-love every man needs to know that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," yet none the less are we Christians to be mindful that we live under the new dominion of mercy, when no faintest movement of faith is forgotten, and no retiring act of holy obedience is unnoticed and unrewarded. (*Ibid.*) *The fig tree*:—The advantages of the fig tree as a shade are shown in the following: "As we approached, one of the camel-drivers, pointing to a cluster of six large fig trees, cried out, 'Tacht etteen,'—under the fig tree? And soon we felt the pleasantness of this shade; for there is something peculiarly delightful in the shade of the fig tree. It is far superior to the shade of a tent, and perhaps even to the shadow of a rock, since not only does the mass of heavy foliage completely exclude the rays of the sun, but the

traveller finds under it a peculiar coolness, arising from the air gently creeping through the branches. Hence the force of the Scripture expression, 'When thou wast under the fig tree.'" (*Mission to the Jews from Scotland.*)

Ver. 49. **Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.**—*The earliest creed:*—Remarkable as not being formulated by an ecumenical council, a learned rabbi, a matured and educated Christian, but by a simple guileless Jew who had only his Old Testament to learn from, and at his first interview with Christ. Acquaintance with the Bible and communion with Christ the best qualifications for a creed maker. Would that all had learned this—would that all would learn it. Concerning this creed, notice—I. Its BREVITY. Compare it with its successors: the Apostles', the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the more modern Confessions of particular Churches: each adding something to its predecessor, until the mind is burdened and confused by the multiplicity of propositions. 1. This growth is accounted for by the rise of successive heresies against whose denials or affirmations the Church has protected itself by successive negative or positive articles. 2. This growth is only an expansion of and deduction from the primitive statement: an evolution of what has been involved in germ. 3. This growth has not always been a safeguard against the errors condemned. Churches with the most elaborate creeds have widely departed from the truth. 4. This growth adds nothing to the saving power of the simple confession of the text. All who with guileless heart profess Christ in the words of Nathanael will without doubt be saved everlastingly. II. Its SUFFICIENCY. 1. Rabbi. Christ is the Supreme Teacher. (1) Inspiring prophets and apostles. (2) Imparting instruction personally. His teaching is simple, profound, beautiful, vivifying. (3) Giving the Spirit of Truth to guide into all truth. 2. Son of God who became the Son of man to redeem. (1) His Divinity. (2) His Atonement. (3) His brotherly sympathy. 3. King of Israel. (1) To reign. (2) To rule. (3) To conquer. (4) To reward His servants and punish His enemies. III. Its DEFINITENESS. 1. Most creeds are made up of a number of abstract propositions, and are a general testimony of the confessor's theological soundness to the world. Hence their feeble moral effect on the confessor. His mind may be sound, but his heart may be heretical. 2. This creed was a brief statement of faith in Christ made to Christ Himself. The *Te Deum* is a better confession than the Athanasian or Nicene symbols. It touches and inspires while it gives expression to the feelings of the heart. IV. The METHOD OF ITS DELIVERY. 1. Prompt, without study or reluctance. 2. Positive, without misgiving about it or speculation beyond it. 3. Final; Nathanael never outgrew it, although he doubtless filled up the outline. V. The OBLIGATION IT INVOLVES. 1. Discipleship: (1) Docility. (2) Study. (3) Continuous proficiency. 2. Saintship: (1) Trust. (2) Affection. (3) Reverence. (4) Holiness. 3. Loyalty: (1) Obedience. (2) Active service. (3) Fidelity unto death. VI. The REWARD IT SECURES. 1. Instruction from the Rabbi. 2. Salvation from the Son of God. 3. Everlasting blessedness from the King of Israel. (*J. W. Burn.*)

Vers. 50-51. **Greater things than these.**—I. This FAVOURED MAN. 1. He was a man who honestly made inquiries which fairly suggested themselves. He did not invent doubts and raise questions. When Philip said Nazareth his mind went to the prophecy about Bethlehem; hence his question. When Christ read him he naturally asked for the sources of Christ's knowledge. 2. A man who honestly yielded to the force of truth. Christ's omniscient knowledge he felt to be an irresistible proof of His Messiahship. 3. A man who in simple honesty believes much upon the evidence of one assured fact. From Christ's knowledge he infers His teachership; His Divine Sonship; His sovereignty. Such is the man who obtains the blessing of the text. II. The GRACIOUS REWARD. The words imply—1. That his perceptions would be more vivid. "Believest thou . . . thou shalt see." Faith develops into experience, experience into actual vision. 2. That other truths should be discovered. (1) More of Christ's Godhead. From omniscience to omnipotence; from knowledge of the heart to power to change the heart. (2) Christ's human sonship. Godhead not half so wonderful as when it comes to be united to humanity. (3) An opened heaven. He who knew the secrets of his heart would establish relations between his heart and heaven. These blessings are for guileless believers only. Christ cannot do mighty works because of unbelief. III. The SPECIAL SIGHT. Intercourse between earth and heaven by way of the Mediator. 1. The angels ascend first to carry Christ's upward messages and our

prayers and praises. 2. Angels descend with blessings to man through Christ. *C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The first promise* :—Notice this incident—I. AS A GLORIOUS END WHICH MERGES INTO A STILL MORE GLORIOUS BEGINNING. 1. The Lord who receives His disciples. He first appears as "walking alone," waiting for the Father's first gift. The preparations for the kingdom are complete, but as yet He is without an avowed disciple. How will He win them? (1) The first announcement which sent men to Christ was "Behold the Lamb of God." This is the sovereign secret of our Lord's attraction all through time. (2) But He who takes away our sins also seeks. Two disciples follow Him, but find Him not till He turns with the searching question: then He finds Philip. 2. Those who come to Him. (1) They are representatives of the devout in Israel waiting for His coming. (2) They represent those who are prepared by repentance and faith. (3) They illustrate the manner in which His disciples come to Him. Two by the preaching of another. Two seek their fellows and communicate the glad tidings. One is directly sought by Himself. 3. The communion between Christ and His disciples that day begun. It was reserved for the last to declare on behalf of all what Jesus was to their devotion: Divine Son, Supreme Lord. This, however, to them was but the beginning of joys, and the Redeemer promises greater things. II. THIS FIRST PROMISE is an encouragement to the faith of these humble disciples, and a prologue to all the wonders of redemption. 1. Our Lord here utters in figurative language the mystery of His mediation between heaven and earth. Christ here gives us in His first exposition of those Scriptures which testify of Him the meaning of Jacob's vision. The disciples were to see the Son of Man opening heaven and earth. 2. But though the Son of Man is the great word here, the angels have their specific meaning, viz., that heaven is always open to earth, that abundant blessing answers to abundant prayer, and that Christ's servants have all heaven ministering to their good. Both worlds are thus made one, and earth to us, as to Jacob, becomes the gate of heaven. What an encouragement to expect larger communications! We need not make the angels the bearers of our prayer: that office Christ appropriates We need not make them bearers of the Divine response: that office the Holy Spirit appropriates. They are nevertheless the symbols and instruments of the providence of God. Their ministry to Christ he has transferred to us. 3. This glorious introductory saying which passed from prophecy to promise now returns to pure prophecy again, and our Lord fore-announces the day when heaven and earth shall in the fullest sense be made one. (*W. B. Pope, D.D.*) *Believing and seeing* :—I. OUR LORD'S PROMISE TO HIS NEW DISCIPLES. The words may be translated either as a question or an affirmation. In either case they are a solemn and glad recognition of Nathanael's belief. Here is the first time that Christ uses the word. It was the epoch in history when Christ first claimed and then accepted a man's faith. The "greater things" have a proper fulfilment in the gradual manifestation of Christ's person and character which lay all unrevealed yet. "If you continue to trust in Me," you shall see unrolled before your eyes the great facts which will make the manifestation of God to the world. Light is here thrown upon—1. The relation between faith and discipleship. (1) The two terms are synonymous. (2) Our Lord uses the word without any definition of what they were to believe: He Himself, and not thoughts about Him, is the true object of faith. (3) Nathanael's creed was widely different from ours, and yet his faith and ours are identical. 2. The connection between faith and sight. There is a great deal about seeing in the context. A double antithesis: (1) "I saw thee"—"thou shalt see Me." (2) "Thou believest"—"thou shalt see;" *i.e.*, in the loftiest region of spiritual experience you must believe first in order that you may see. (*a*) Unless we trust Christ and take our illumination from Him, we shall never behold a whole set of truths which when once we trust Him are all plain to us: God, man, yourselves, duty, destiny. (*b*) If we trust Him we get light on things which are mist and darkness except to faith. The world says, "Seeing is believing,"—which is true in regard to outward things. Believing is seeing in regard to God and spiritual truth. 3. The connection between faith and progress. Christ like a wise Teacher stimulates His disciples with the promise of "greater things." Here is something which will give you ever new powers and acquirements, and ensure you against stagnation. Everything else gets worn out sooner or later. II. OUR LORD'S WITNESS TO HIMSELF. Mark how with superbly autocratic lips He bases this great utterance upon nothing else but His own word. "From henceforth," *i.e.*, from the first hour of His official work. The promise is that in no vision of the night like Jacob, but in practical, working reality ye shall see that ladder again, and the angels moving upon it in their errands of mercy. The ladder is Christ; He is the sole

medium of communication between earth and heaven, the ladder with its foot on the earth, in His humanity, and its top in the heavens. (1) Christ is the medium of all revelation. (2) In Him the sense and reality of separation between heaven and earth through sin are swept away. (3) By Him all Divine blessings angel-like descend. (4) By Him prayers and desires rise to God. (5) If we ever enter heaven at all we shall enter it through Him alone. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The glory of the Mediator*:—I. THE OMNISCIENCE OF HIS INTELLECT. II. THE WONDERFULNESS OF HIS DISCLOSURES. 1. The heavenly world. 2. This world in connection with angelic agency. 3. This angelic agency is rendered through His mediation. III. THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF HIS CAUSE. "Hereafter," &c. Because:—1. Time develops prophetic truth concerning Him. 2. Time affords opportunity to execute the mighty plan on which every victory is sketched. 3. It is future time that must and will unfold the results of His great undertaking. (*J. H. Hill.*) *The dawn of faith and its consummation*:—Christianity is not a mere set of doctrines, but a life of faith in and through Christ. This is well illustrated in this chapter. These early disciples differed in temperament and in their methods of reaching Christ, but they had one faith in common. Men have been ever asking, How does this faith begin? To what does it lead? These questions are answered here. I. THE DAWN OF FAITH. Christ's words imply the great fact of experience from which faith rises. 1. What was that fact? (1) Not the proof of Christ's miraculous power contained in the fact that Christ saw him although unseen. This might prove Christ to be a teacher sent from God, but no such miracle could prove Him to be the Redeemer and object of saving trust. Christ rejected belief founded exclusively on miracles. Miracles were imperative in the case of the Jews. (2) But the fact that Christ saw into him and penetrated the deep necessities of his heart. Nathanael had probably been praying under the fig-tree. Prayer unveiling the soul before the heart-searching glance of God reveals the real man. Nathanael knew therefore at once that Christ was acquainted with his doubts, sorrows, aspirations. He therefore who thus knew him could deliver him. The same heart-searching glance rests upon us. Here, then, faith begins. "Lord, Thou knowest all things," "Thou art the Son of God." 2. That fact is the dawning of a faith that must continually grow. Two things necessary to the strengthening of belief. (1) Its evidence must be certain. Faith in Christ rests upon the deepest of all kinds of certainty—experimental evidence. The evidence of testimony may fail, the certainty of reasoning may be destroyed. But when we know whom we have believed nothing can overturn our conviction. Here is the only cure for doubt. (2) Its power must advance with advancing life. When faith in Christ as the only satisfier of the soul's need is reached, every new experience in life brings new proofs of its power. II. THE CONSUMMATION OF FAITH. Christ declares Jacob's dream to be fulfilled in Him. The greater things are those which Jacob dimly realized. 1. The felt presence of God. 2. The sacredness of life. "How dreadful is this place!" &c. 3. Union with the angelic world. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Israel and the Israelite*:—I. THE NARRATIVE IN EVERY LINE THROWS US BACK ON NATHANAEL'S GREAT ANCESTOR. 1. We may learn how hard it is for a life to get rid of moral stain. Jacob's life was purified by hard afflictions ere it was changed to Israel, the prince that prevailed with God. 2. A character may be so cleansed from moral stain that opposite virtues may be associated with the life. Jacob the supplanter was recovered from his guile. 3. The reflection cast upon the old patriarchal life is full of grace when one is welcomed to the love of Christ by the words, "Behold an Israelite indeed." II. NATHANAEL. 1. His requirements. We are apt to have no great thoughts of a simple guileless life. We associate it with a kind of weakness, and think of it as likely to be imposed upon and led astray. No doubt there is danger. This, like every other grace, wants cultivating; pruning as well as developing. And Christ expects cultivating in this disciple just as in the zealous Peter, the ambitious James, the thoughtful Andrew and Philip. 2. The promise that met that requirement. How helpful the vision was to Jacob! The reality was still more helpful to Nathanael. (1) Literally it was fulfilled at the baptism, after the temptation, in the agony, and at the resurrection and ascension. (2) Morally it was fulfilled in the establishment of relations with heaven through the Lamb of God. 3. Circumstantially it was fulfilled in the fruits of Nathanael's missionary life. (*T. Gasquoine, B.A.*)

Ver. 51. **Hereafter ye shall see the heaven open.**—*The verities of Christ*:—1. Nothing is more characteristic of our age than its questioning and doubt. (1) Science has opened many fields in all of which much is yet unsolved. (2) Philo-

sophy has unsettled much that was once believed. (3) The growing complications of society force upon us questions to every one of which jarring answers are returned. (4) The Church is so divided that she is unable to guide herself, much less the world. Hence thousands are asking whether there can be any certainty for man. 2. There was another age which resembled ours—the age when the old-world civilizations broke up: when Greece and Rome were bankrupt, and when Israel's sun turned into darkness. In that dark age He came who could meet doubt with certain truth. 3. The Truth still lives who had and still has a message for a doubting age, and for those who received Him there was and is now certainty and rest. 4. This amen has altered some memorable amens—amens which He has marked with reiterated affirmations; the unusual form showing us—(1) That we need light; and (2) That He will not withhold the light we need. 5. The "Verily, verily" is only employed by John because he sets forth Christ in His higher relations, and therefore conveys transcendent truth that requires emphasis. 6. Not one of the verilies refers to the Church, but all refer to the peculiar forms of eternal life which are only outwardly manifested in the Church; and will survive its failure. 7. This revelation of eternal life is distinctive of St. John. The other apostles have each their special truth suited to some stage of the Church and individual. (1) Paul's comes first, meeting us with words relative to our ruin and the righteousness which is by faith. (2) James meets our advancing needs touching the moralities which belong to Christian doctrine. (3) Peter comes next with words of our present suffering and future glory. (4) Once more we advance and come to John's witness to the new life which the sons of God are called to manifest. 8. It is this teaching of John's which the reiterated amens sum up, showing us the course and stages of eternal life in Christ. Twelve of these are distinguished. (1) The home of the new man: heaven, long shut, is reopened (i. 51). (2) We enter this home by a new birth (iii. 3, 5). (3) The law of the life of the new man (v. 19–22). (4) His meat (vi. 26–58). (5) His liberty (viii. 31–35). (6) His divinity (viii. 48–58). (7) His service (x. 1–18). (8) His sacrifice and its results (xii. 24–26). (9) His lowliness (xiii. 1–32). (10) His glory (xiv. 8–14). (11) His sorrow and joy (xvi. 16–25). (12) His perfecting (xxi. 15–23). (*A. Jukes, M.A.*) *The verilies of Christ teach us three lessons:*—I. As to the authority of the Teacher. The Jews were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes, "which suggests a contrast with other teachers." 1. Put side by side with the autocratic ring of this "Verily, verily I say unto you," the formula of the prophets—"Thus saith the Lord." 2. Contrast again the bare utterance of His own word as a reason for our acceptance of His sayings with the teaching that was busy around Him. One rabbi says this and another that, and so on through all the wearisome Talmud. They drew their authority from their faithfulness to tradition. Christ steps forward as a fresh fountain of certitude. 3. Contrast His teaching with the tone of modesty suitable to mere thinkers who have learned their truths. The philosopher may argue, Christ asserts. Now, what business has Christ to talk in this fashion and demand that I should take from His lips anything He chooses to say? The only answer is, that He is the Word, the Truth of God. II. As to the certitude and importance of the lesson. Other teachers have to say, "Peradventure," "This I deem to be true." Jesus says, "Most assuredly." 1. In our day of uncertainties and unsolved problems the world wants more than ever to listen to that voice. Much is dark and doubtful, but here at least is a central core of hard rock that no pressure can grind nor any force shift. 2. Think of the difference between the freshness and adaptation of Christ's words and the film of old-fashioned untimeliness which has crept over all other ancient utterances, and say what is the secret of this immortal youth. It is because they are free from all admixture of human limitation and transitoriness, and so fit every generation, and are to every generation the source of certitude. 3. Classify the utterances to which this formula is attached. First, those which refer to Himself. He asserts—(1) His Divine nature (John viii. 58). (2) His absolute unity of being and identity of action with the Father (v. 19). (3) His place as the medium of all communication between earth and heaven (i. 51). (4) That He is the way by which all men enter the fold of God (x. 7). (5) That He is the infallible Teacher (iii. 11). (6) That He is the God-given source of life (vi. 32). (7) The certain granting of all prayers offered in His name (xvi. 23). (8) The necessity for His death, that His mission may be accomplished (xii. 24). Secondly, those which refer to us. (1) Union by faith with Him is the condition of our life (vi. 53, viii. 51, v. 24). (2) The necessity of a new nature ere we can see or enter the kingdom (iii. 3, 5). (3) The promise of our complete assimilation and

conformity with Him on condition of our faith (xiii. 16, 20; xiv. 12). Thirdly, those which contain predictions of a near or remote future which could only be made from supernatural knowledge (xiii. 21, xvi. 20, xiii. 38, xxi. 18). Fourthly, those which lay bare to men the hidden foulness of their nature (vi. 26, viii. 34). III. As to the backwardness of the scholars. 1. Verily implies that they to whom it was addressed had dull ears, whose languid attention needed to be stimulated, or that the words which He was going to utter were too great to be easily believed, or too unwelcome to be swiftly accepted. 2. It is a warning against prejudice and sluggish apathy. 3. It is a solemn appeal to us to permit no indifference to come between us and His Word. Two things are required of us as His scholars. 1. That which it is degradation to give to man, but which is blasphemy to withhold from Christ. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." 2. The absolute certitude of His message has for its correlative our unwavering steadfastness. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The first "Verily, verily"—the home of the new man*:—1. The first question of the Old Testament is, "Where art thou?"—God's question to fallen man. The first of the New is, "Where is He?"—asked by men who have just been awakened to feel their need of a Saviour. God's question reveals man's state that he is not where God placed him; man's question draws forth the purpose of God's heart, that, fallen as we are, He is with us, our Tabernacle. 2. This first verily teaches both these truths. Heaven, man's proper home, long shut, is now opened, and that all man has lost shall be restored through the Heir, "the Son of man." The old man by disobedience lost his home; the New Man comes back again to the opened heavens as His dwelling-place. 3. These words were spoken by one who had just had heaven open to Him, and He comes forth to tell men how they are to enter. 4. Heaven is not far off; it is the spirit-world which is lost or shut only to the natural man. What will be manifested at death may be anticipated here. 5. Take some examples of this "opened heaven." (1) That which took place at Christ's baptism. This is fulfilled to Christ's members. The Spirit like a dove abides on them; for the mark of the beast is gone, and the voice from heaven proclaims their sonship. (2) Christ's transfiguration is recorded to teach a communion with saints who are not far from us. But this blessing is not without its peril, inasmuch as it awakens in imperfect disciples thoughts which if followed out would give to creatures a place and honour which belongs to God alone. Hence Peter wanted three tabernacles; but is called back to "Jesus only" by the voice, "This is My beloved Son," &c. (3) Peter's vision (Acts x. 9–16), which taught him that we should call no man common or unclean. (4) John's visions in the Apocalypse, revealing the glory of the Son of man and the endless bliss of His brethren. 6. Whenever man's true home is opened the servants (angels) also are seen, ever near. (1) Ministering to man's wants (1 Kings xix. 5, 6). (2) Directing his steps (Gen. xvi. 9). (3) Barring his way if he turns aside from God (Numb. xxii. 24–26). (4) Present in the assemblies of believers (1 Cor. xi. 10). (5) Specially related to little children (Matt. xviii. 10). (6) Rejoicing over repenting sinners (Luke xv. 10). (7) Ministering to the heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 14). (*A. Jukes, M.A.*) *The positiveness of Jesus*:—This expression is one of the signs and evidences of the originality of Jesus Christ. It occurs more than seventy times, and was a characteristic which separated His conversation from that of other men. There were and are examples enough of mere dogmatism. 1. The scribes, whether of theology or science, will open their books and say, "It is written," and that is the end of all controversy. 2. The bigot will hold fast to the letter of his creed and anathematize all who do not hold it. 3. Ignorance will stand firm upon tradition and swear to all passers by, "I know." Everywhere there has lived the man who could not be mistaken. But the assurance of Jesus Christ was wholly different. 1. Nor was it like the positiveness of the prophets of old who proclaimed, "Thus saith the Lord." 2. Nor like the confidence of the philosopher in his reasonings, the naturalist in his verifications. Christ's verilies precede rather than conclude His teachings. He gave no demonstrations. 3. Nor with the religious faiths of His disciples. Faith is for us an achievement, and after the struggle Jesus comes and says "believe." But no Christ came to Jesus, nor is there in His positiveness any trace of conflict. He believed spontaneously and directly out of His own consciousness of God. This positiveness marked Christ's teaching from the beginning when He spoke to His mother in the Temple; and never afterwards was there a hesitating note. This peculiar quality appears when we reflect on the subjects on which He was absolutely sure. They are those on which other men are not sure. (1) His verilies have nothing to do with natural truths which we can discover or demonstrate. (2) Nor with matters of

history which scholars may search out. (3) Nor with such things as Sanhedrims wrangle over. (4) But with vital, spiritual, eternal truths not otherwise discoverable by man. Learn, then: 1. That over against all our human ignorance, sinfulness, and need, the gospel is one grand affirmation of God; an assertion of those things of which we most need to be made sure. 2. If we want true hearts and strength to do and dare; if we would learn the secret of cheerful, patient lives; if we wish to live with all our souls for noble purpose, and with great faiths and immortal hope, there is a verily waiting to impart to us its power and its peace. 3. Christian unity is only to be realized upon the high plane of this positiveness, and along the lines of these great spiritual affirmations. 4. There is some verily speaking to each at all times and everywhere. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*) *Heaven opened*:—I. A CERTAIN FACT: Christ has come forth. II. A BLESSED GOSPEL: Christ's appearing a manifestation of Divine grace. III. A JOYOUS HOPE: Christ's coming forth suggests the possibility of man's going in. IV. A GLORIOUS PREDICTION: the reinstitution of fellowship between earth and heaven predicts the assimilation of the former to the latter. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Verily* is simply the familiar "amen!" which properly is an adjective meaning "firm or steadfast," and is used in two connections. Sometimes it precedes an assertion which it confirms, in which case it may be paraphrased by "Thus it certainly is." Sometimes it follows a prayer which it sums up and reiterates, and in that case it may be paraphrased by "So may it be." Doubled it has the force of a superlative, "Most assuredly." It is heard only from the lips of Christ. It becomes no other lips. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Angels ascending and descending*:—Some of these angelic appearances had already taken place. An angel announced the conception of Christ to His mother. An angel, accompanied by a multitude of the heavenly host, proclaimed His birth to the shepherds, and after His temptation angels came and ministered to Him. These instances of angels descending on the Son of man had taken place before this period, and Nathanael knew them not; but there remained other manifestations of the same kind, which were yet to be afforded. An angel appeared to Him, and strengthened Him in His agony. At His resurrection an angel rolled away the stone from His sepulchre, and two angels sat, the one at the head, the other at the feet where the Lord had lain. And, lastly, angels attended His ascension, and as an angel had announced His first coming, so angels foretold to the witnesses of this great event that the same Jesus who had been parted from them should come again in like manner as they had seen Him go up into heaven. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) *Jesus a ladder to heaven*:—To the north of Scotland lies an island called Bressay. It is one of the Shetland Islands, and its shores are very rocky. On the south coast of Bressay is a slate-quarry. The workmen had to descend the cliff to it by means of a ladder. One evening, a violent and sudden storm drove the quarrymen from their work. The ladder was left fastened to the cliff. The night was very dark and stormy. A ship which was struggling with the waves was driven close to the island. Her crew beheld with terror the white foam of the breakers as they dashed against the rocks. They knew that, if their ship were stranded, they must be wrecked. Still the howling winds drove her forward. The waves dashed over her, filled the cabin with water, and drowned the wife of the captain. The sailors now climbed into the rigging. They were at the mercy of the furious wind and of the raging sea. They gave themselves up for lost. Many prayers and cries for deliverance were uttered. On came the ship, and struck against the shore. The poor seamen felt that death was almost certain. On the summit of the cliff was safety; but how could they reach it, who were helplessly dashed at its foot? But just as the ship struck near the rock, their terror was changed to joy. Close beside them, on the steep face of the cliff, was a ladder. It seemed as if placed there on purpose for them. In haste they sprang from the rigging, mounted the ladder, and reached the top of the cliff in safety. The vessel went to pieces so quickly that, by the next morning, hardly a trace of her was left.

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1-11. The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. *The miracle at Cana*:—I. THE OCCASION ON WHICH THE MIRACLE WAS WROUGHT. 1. The time. The third day after the interview with Nathanael. 2. The place. Cana,

about nine miles from Nazareth. Called Cana of Galilee to distinguish it from another town of the same name in Ephraim. 3. The company. (1) The mother of Jesus there probably on the ground of relationship. It has been supposed that the wedding was in the family of Cleopas or Alphæus, whose wife was Mary's sister. (2) The most interesting and instructive fact is that Jesus was there. In Him the social element was prominent. In this respect He differed totally from His forerunner. He may have meant to teach those of His disciples, who had been followers of the Baptist, the great lessons of human intercourse, marriage, &c. (3) Jesus' disciples Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael and John. II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO IT. 1. The fact stated "They wanted wine;" Mary called Him aside and told Him so. 2. The manner in which the announcement was received. (1) Not disrespectfully. (2) Yet in the way of mild censure which rebukes Mariolatry. (3) Because the proper season for the exercise of His Divine power had not arrived. 3. The appropriate advice that was given. Christ requires universal and prompt obedience. III. THE FEATURES BY WHICH IT WAS DISTINGUISHED. 1. Nothing could be more simple. There was no pomp or parade. 2. Nothing could be more extraordinary. No means were used. 3. Nothing could be more convincing. Deception was impossible. IV. THE CONSEQUENCES WHICH ENSUED. 1. The display of Christ's glory. 2. The confirmation of the disciple's faith. (*The miracles of the Lord Jesus.*) *The miracle at Cana*:—1. After all those years of quiet and obscurity Jesus manifested Himself not as the Son of Mary, but as the Son of God. 2. He showed His power not to a hermit of the desert, but to a social gathering, teaching us the sanctity and blessedness of domestic life. 3. He commenced His ministerial life not as a stern preacher of righteousness beside the sea which covered the sins of Sodom, but as a helper of innocent rejoicings at a marriage feast. While we love our sins our place is by the Dead Sea; but if we heed the call to repentance, we pass from the desert to the feast. The narrative teaches us important lessons. I. NEVER ACCEPT A FORM OF RELIGION WHICH MAKES PEOPLE GLOOMY AND MOROSE. The people who would shut all the sunshine out of life and stifle its innocent laugh, and hush the happy song, have not read the gospel of Jesus aright. There are times for separation, but as a rule it is in the midst of our daily round that Jesus works His miracles of mercy. II. THE SANCTITY OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE. No marriage can be blessed unless Jesus and His disciples are invited. It is quite possible to go through a form of marriage which is quite legal, but which is a mere contract, and has no mark of holy matrimony about it. When we see marriage contracts for money, or position, or to hide the results of sin, we may be sure that Jesus has not been invited, and that there can be no blessing. III. JESUS IS EVER WORKING THE SAME WONDERFUL CHANGE AND IS SHOWING FORTH HIS POWER. All nature is a miracle lesson. 1. The seed sown in weakness is raised in power, and we learn that as God gives us our daily bread so He gives us the True Bread from heaven. 2. Every growing vine with its clustering grapes shows us the miracle of water made wine, telling us that Jesus is the True Vine, and that we are the branches, and that without Him we cannot live. 3. The thorn receives the rains of winter and returns them glorified in the rose of summer; the helpless chrysalis takes unto itself wings, and flies as the beautiful butterfly. And the same miracle is shown in our Lord's dealings with men. He came to raise and put new strength into fallen humanity. The miracle was wrought on the first disciples—on Peter who denied his Master, but was changed into a pillar of the Church, &c. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *The miracle at Cana*:—In three points of view this miracle seems strange. 1. It has not that visible stamp of Divinity which is the peculiar glory of most of Christ's miracles. They do not disturb, but restore the true order of nature. In these we see the victims of disorder emancipated, and disorderly forces remedied. They show the Son of God engaged in a conflict with physical as well as moral disorder, and exhibit on a small scale what the cross exhibits on a large. 2. Christ's treatment of His mother seems contrary to the tender spirit we should have expected. 3. The other miracles recorded by John were in connection with discourses to which they led and revealed the inner glory of His grace and truth. But the fact that it was wrought in connection with a domestic scene will help us to clear up these difficulties. It was fitting—(1) That He should here break away from His mere earthly relationship to mother and home. (2) That He should here inaugurate that ministry which differed from His wilderness experience and the habits of the Baptist. His object was to hallow the legitimate enjoyments of life, and conquer the world, not turn His back upon it. 4. The particular form of the miracle illustrates—(1) The enriching power of

Christ, His power to improve and perfect the sources of human gratification. Though not repeated in form, the miracle is constantly repeated in spirit in the greater sweetness of the poor man's morsel and the poor man's life when flavoured with God's blessing. (2) The generosity of Christ who giveth liberally and upbraideth not: afterwards shown in the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and foreshadowed in prophecy (Isa. lv. 1). 5. It is in thorough harmony with the Johannine miracles. Of the eight, three bear on the elements of bodily nourishment, and spiritually on the nourishment of the soul. It is also in harmony with Christ's teaching in John: the parable of the living bread and of the vine: the vision of heavenly refreshment through Christ in the Apocalypse. (*W. G. Blaikie, D.D.*) *The miracle at Cana*:—I. THE PLACE WHICH THIS MIRACLE HOLDS AMONG THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST. The first. 1. As indicative of the general character of those which followed. The product of Christ's omnipotence and good will. 2. As the beginning of those wonders which had as their object to manifest forth Christ's glory. II. THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE MIRACLE WAS WROUGHT. 1. The failure of the wine perhaps through the unexpected advent of Jesus and His disciples. 2. Mary's appeal based upon her anxiety for the credit of the entertainers and comfort of the guests. 3. Mary's faith in Jesus not merely as her Son, but as the Son of God. 4. Mary's modesty and humility: she demands nothing, and prescribes nothing. 5. The displeasure of Jesus tenderly teaching Mary—(1) That her relationship was no ground on which she might make application, and that her former claims on this ground had passed away. (2) That in all matters connected with His great work she was no more to Him than other believers. (3) That as He was David's Lord so was He hers. (4) That what He was about to do was not to be done for the reason for which she desired it. 6. Christ's announcement of His hour: His, not Mary's; the time of the total failure of the wine. III. THE MIRACLE ITSELF. 1. Expected by Mary. 2. The preparation and co-operation of the servants. 3. The arrival of the hour. 4. The drawing forth of the water made wine. 5. The surprise of the governor. IV. THE THINGS IN WHICH WE ARE INSTRUCTED BY THE MIRACLE. 1. The anticipation of ecclesiastical corruptions. (1) The Roman depreciation of marriage. (2) The Romish distinction of meats; that a man is holier for what he eats or from what he abstains. (3) Mariolatry. 2. The duty of temperance and self-denial amidst the profusion of temporal mercy. The great abundance tested self-restraint. The same principle applies to all enjoyments—dress, furniture, reading. 3. The superior excellency of the Gospel's dispensation. (1) As contrasted with Moses' first miracle turning water into blood. (2) The kingdom of God is not meat and drink. 4. The sanctifying influence of Christ's presence. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The miracle at Cana*:—Notice—I. THAT RELIGION ENLARGES THE PLEASURES OF SOCIAL LIFE. Christ's presence did not interfere with the ordinary proceedings. There was no look on His face that chilled the company. He made no protest against the glad music of the nuptial chant. No one expressed the wish that Jesus had stayed at home. The wedding feast would have been a wretched failure had He stayed away. And religion is misunderstood if it is supposed to lessen the happiness of life. A good deal of worldly pleasure is feverish, delirium which religion condemns, but it rules out no innocent pleasure. It commands men to rejoice always. What untold miseries it has swept away. There is more happiness in the Christian cottage than there was in Cæsar's Palace. II. THAT SOCIAL LIFE IS THE MOST PROMISING SPHERE FOR RELIGIOUS USEFULNESS. Christ did not feel out of place here, although a careless observer might think it better for Him to be in the Temple teaching. He was here because of His perfect sympathy and to do good. Social life furnishes the Christian with his great opportunities. Faithfulness in religious exercise not the whole of duty. The Christian in society is the foremost preacher. He is there to bear witness to the sympatby of religion with everything that is wholesome, and to protest against everything that is pernicious. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The relaxation of Jesus Christ*:—I. Our Lord had passed through the conflict of the wilderness and the initial stages of His work as the caller of men, and had, moreover, come off a long journey. He therefore NEEDED RELAXATION and found it at a wedding feast, and in the company of his friends. Showing us that no man can or ought to be incessantly engaged in strife or labour. If he does he will prematurely wear out or break down. Time for rest and unbending is urgently required after any severe strain to body or mind. II. The previous work and conflict was PROFOUNDLY RELIGIOUS; so was the relaxation. The danger in our relaxations is to accumulate other burdens by forgetfulness of self or God. "Whether therefore ye eat or

drink do all to the glory of God." III. CHRIST UTILIZED THE HOURS AND MEANS OF RELAXATION FOR DISTINCTLY RELIGIOUS ENDS. His aim is ever to leaven society religiously. 1. By the manifestation of His glory, so that—2. His disciples may believe on Him. IV. CHRIST EMPLOYED IN HIS RELAXATION THOSE INFINITE RESOURCES OF HIS FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS, which even in the wilderness He could not be induced to exert on His own behalf. He declared to Nicodemus that He could do exceeding abundantly above all he could ask or think; here He fulfilled the declaration. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Christ at a feast*:—Learn: I. HOW HONOURABLE IN THE SIGHT OF CHRIST IS THE ESTATE OF MATRIMONY. 1. Society is never in a healthy condition, and true religion never flourishes where marriage is lightly esteemed. 2. Christ's blessing and presence are essential to a happy wedding. II. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT IS LAWFUL TO BE MERRY AND REJOICE. 1. True religion was never meant to make men melancholy, but the contrary. The Christian has no place at races, balls, theatres, &c., but he has no right to hand over to the devil innocent recreations. 2. It is not easy to hit the mean between the lawful and the unlawful. But the golden rule is Luke ii. 49. 3. While we should take our gladness into religion we should take our religion into the world. III. THE ALMIGHTY POWER OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. An act of will without any visible means. 2. The same power is at the disposal of His people. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The wedding feast*:—I. ATTENDED BY CHRIST'S FRIENDS; those connected through blood and by grace. Marriage though not a Christian sacrament is a religious ordinance (Gen. ii. 24; Matt. xix. 5; Mark x. 7; Eph. v. 31); honourable in all (Heb. xiii. 5), and when the parties are well matched by affection and religion, a matter for hearty congratulation. Ordained for the happiness of the individual and the development of the race, it is calculated, when undertaken "solemnly, advisedly, and in the fear of God," to promote the welfare of husband and wife, and to secure a home for godly upbringing of children (Mal. ii. 15). II. GRACED BY CHRIST'S PRESENCE. The first wedding on earth attended by God (Gen. ii. 25). Not strange, therefore, that Christ should have set a mark of honour on His Father's institution; while it was peculiarly appropriate that He should inaugurate His mission by placing His hand on the springs of humanity, lifting up this holy ordinance which perhaps had suffered more than any other by the fall and restoring it to its pristine dignity and beauty. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The wedding feast*:—I. CHRIST'S MINISTRY OPENS ON A SCENE OF HUMAN HAPPINESS 1. God Himself is essential happiness and would have us happy. 2. We are disposed to make God the sharer of our sorrows; He here teaches us to make Him the partner of our joys. II. CHRIST'S FIRST APPEARANCE TO THE WORLD WAS AT A WEDDING. A standing protest against the tendency to make it a virtue to abstain from marriage. This tendency was denounced by Paul as one of the most pernicious doctrines of false teachers. III. OUR LORD'S FIRST MIRACLE WAS WROUGHT IN CONNECTION WITH AN EVENT, THE BRIGHTEST AND MOST INNOCENT IN HUMAN LIFE. It was not to the sinful outcasts of society that He gave His first and special manifestation of Himself, but to those who were keeping His laws and exercising aright the natural affections He had given them. Heaven always comes nearest to the purest home. The gospel prefers to receive men at their best, not at their worst, and to gather into its treasury of grace, not the wrecks of human life, but the rich spoils of its youth and strength. IV. THE MIRACLE TOOK PLACE AT THE VILLAGE OF THE ISRAELITE, INDEED IN WHOM THERE WAS NO GUILE. This disciple had the blessedness of the pure in heart who see God. He who manifested Himself to the sleeping patriarch in a dream at the top of the ladder, revealed Himself to Nathanael in waking reality at the foot, as a servant ministering to the necessities of others, and enriching the enjoyments of human life by His blessing. He who appeared to Jacob in a fleeting vision for the purpose of establishing a covenant relationship with a particular family and nation, has opened up by His Incarnation a free intercourse between God and man. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *Human feasts*:—I. WHAT THEY ARE BY NATURE. II. WHAT THEY BECOME BY SIN. III. WHAT THEY AGAIN BECOME ONLY BY THE GRACE OF CHRIST. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Marks of the grace of Christ*:—I. THAT CHRIST GIVES US THE MOST PRECIOUS FOR NOTHING. II. MAKES A GLORIOUS THING OUT OF COMMON. III. GIVES THE BEST LAST. IV. GIVES ACCORDING TO HIS OWN TIME, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR IDEAS. (*Harless.*) *The water, the wine, and the wedding*:—I. THE PATHETIC VALUE THERE IS IN THE SIMPLEST FORMS OF HUMAN LIFE. A little village mentioned four times in the Bible, and then only by one writer, now extinct, and yet having a sweet, bright fame throughout Christendom, so that Pilgrims go to look up its ruins. A common wedding has made it immortal, while

the names of great cities have perished. 1. A most significant sanction of the marriage relation. The New Testament scheme of faith and practice was inaugurated in direct sympathy with human hearts and established in the centre of the family institutions. II. JESUS OUR LORD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS, or if of any of the poor. Jesus is present at every true marriage. III. JESUS NEVER SET HIS MOTHER UP TO BE A MADONNA. He deeply respected her, but did not allow her to dictate to Him. In "Woman" there is no reproach. It is the same word as that addressed to her on the cross. But in "What is there now which is common to you and me," He intends to suggest His independence. IV. A NOBLE MOTTO FOR EVERY SINCERE CHRISTIAN (ver. 5). Mary was neither humbled nor discouraged. V. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE SON OF GOD OVER NATURE. Three characteristics of this miracle: its mystery, its magnitude, its morality. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Christ and society*:—Christ here at the outset exemplifies one great rule of His self-manifestation, "The Son of man came eating and drinking," regardless if cavillers say, "Behold a man gluttenous and a wine bibber." His very miracle was a multiplication of the materials of feasting, acting Himself on what afterwards became the law of the gospel. "Use hospitality one to another without judging," &c. Christ came not to take a few out of the world, but to transform the world itself; and presented Himself at a marriage feast to redeem things "which should be for our health" from being turned, through godless abuse into "occasions of falling." I. Observe how RELIGION BEFORE AND WITHOUT CHRIST HAS DEALT WITH SOCIETY. Its effort and prayer has been to be "taken out" of it to save itself. But this instinct, right in itself, has been shown in ways suicidal. Selfishness bad in nature, is worse in religion. Christ's Epiphany to society was an original idea among the religious. The dream of every religion but the Christian was celebate monasticism. Even Christianity has relapsed into it literally, and also morally in the selfishness which marks out certain persons, phrases, recreations as signs of a world lying in wickedness. Far less difficult would Christian duty be if we might quit the world and have done with it, but we cannot and dare not. This parable of our Master's life shows us this. II. How CHRIST DEALS WITH SOCIETY. He finds in the world homes beautiful with natural affection, and tables spread with God's bounties. Into this, with the treacherous ashes above and the latent fires below, Christ comes and says, "Use this world as not abusing it," and by His presence helps us to obey His precept. Realize, then, this sanctifying presence in business, *e.g.*, or pleasure, and we shall realize that which will quicken both with Divine life. We shall then be there to exert the same helpfulness to others through Christ, as Christ exerted at this feast. 1. Jesus was there with His disciples, not a solitary Messiah. 2. Let the disciples now take the Master with them. For some, alas! this would be irksome, and so they either go without Christ, or else stay away. The former is sinful, the latter faithless. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christian festivity*:—Some people think that the age of miracles has passed; everybody knows that that of marriages has not. I. JESUS NOT ONLY TOLERATES THE SOCIAL USAGES OF LIFE—its festivities among the rest—BUT ENCOURAGES AND SANCTIFIES THEM. Some gloomy people frown upon the common signs of cheerfulness, but for this habit we have here the eternal antidote. II. WE NEED CHRIST AT SEASONS OF SOCIAL FESTIVITY AS MUCH, OR EVEN MORE, THAN AT OTHER TIMES. Pure religion is never unseasonable. If we think we give our worship to God, and stop the devil's mouth by an occasional indulgence, the devil will soon get our worship too. There is no more fatal mistake than to think that if we pay our dues in the House of God, we may please ourselves in the house of man. Jesus should be always bidden at our seasons of joy; for be sure that if we do not send Him our invitation, the devil will come without one. III. THERE IS AN EXQUISITE TENDERNESS IN OUR LORD'S BINDING HIS DISCIPLES TO HIM at this marriage feast. He does not speak to them of the cross as yet. He speaks as they are able to bear it. Coming after His long fast in the wilderness, He breathes no asceticism. He who had been so hardly pressed for bread, turns water into wine. He will train us as we need to be trained. IV. IF CHRIST IS SHUT OUT FROM THE HOUSE OF FEASTING, WE MUST NOT WONDER AT HIS ABSENCE FROM THE HOUSE OF MOURNING. (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) The ministry began at a marriage festival which ended on Calvary, and its glory was manifested by both. I. THE FUNDAMENTAL, ORIGINAL, AND ULTIMATE CONDITION OF LIFE IS BLESSING. Life begins in Eden, passes by Gethsemane and Calvary, and ends in heaven. It is God's will that man should be everywhere and always blessed. Misery lies not in God's making, but in the devil's marring. II. OUR LORD SOUGHT TO SEVER HIMSELF AT ONCE AND ABSOLUTELY FROM THE ASCETIC SPIRIT. He came to add to the mirth of all feasts, the brightness

of all homes, the gladness of all songs. He was absolutely free from the monkish idolatry of sorrow. He simply went about His Father's work in whatever direction it might be. III. CHRIST REVERSED THE DEVIL'S UNIFORM METHOD AT FESTIVALS. Did ever any one get the best of the world's wine, or the devil's, at the end of the banquet? But whatever He gives has an infinite store behind it. Hence we are saved by hope. The pain and toil are for the moment, the joy grows into eternity. IV. CHRIST SHOWED THE TRUE SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE. The joy sympathetic with the joy of the Lord. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Lessons of the incident:*— 1. Temperance amidst plenty. 2. The profusion of Divine gifts. 3. Christ's presence changes the circumstances of His people. 4. Christ turns the lower into the higher; the common to the valuable. 5. Christ does not work till the necessity is felt. 6. Christ works according to His own will, without human interference. (*Family Churchman.*) *General analysis and illustrations of the Cana miracle:*— The company at this wedding may represent the Church of Christ, which is often represented as the guests called together to a marriage feast. Jesus, and His mother, and His disciples were there; thus it is in the Church. The former circumstances of the marriage, wherein they wanted wine, represent the state of the Church before Christ came; or rather, before the evangelical dispensation was established. The latter circumstances of the wedding, wherein they had plenty of wine, represent the latter state of the Church, after the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, and especially after the fall of Antichrist. The wine represents the spiritual supplies of His Church, the grace and comforts of the Holy Spirit, which are often represented by wine in Scripture. Their wine ran low, and was just out; so formerly the Old Testament Church had a supply of wine; but when Christ came into the world it was just out—they had in a manner no wine. But when Christ came and ascended up to heaven, He soon gave His Church plenty of wine, and much better wine than ever the Jewish Church had enjoyed; as it is said, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." So again, before the glorious times of the Church commence, the Church's wine runs very low, and is almost out; what they alloy with is water—human learning, sapless speculations and disputations, and dead morality. Formerly the Christian Church had wine, as in the times of the primitive Church, and in the times of the Reformation; but now their wine is almost gone. But after the beginning of these glorious times their water shall be turned into wine, and much better wine than ever they had before. The mother of Jesus may represent the more eminent ministers of the gospel, or the public ecclesiastical authority, as exercised in synods, public schools, &c. They, in a dark and dead time of the Church, complain to Christ of their unsuccessfulness, of the want of wine in the Church, and look to Him for a supply. But they must not expect an answer till Christ's time is come; their prayers are not answered till then, and then they shall be fully answered; their prayers are not rejected, they are offered up with incense. The cries of the souls under the altar, that cry, "How long, Lord, holy and true?" are not rejected; but yet it is said to them that they should wait till God's time comes. The servants represent gospel ministers; they have a command from Jesus' mother, *i.e.*, from the Church in her public authority, to do whatsoever Jesus commands. Whence we may note, that the way to have a plentiful effusion of the Spirit with His Word and ordinances, is for ministers to be faithful in their work. They are to fill up the water-pots of purification with water; that is all they can do. They can, in the use of the ordinances of God's house, and the appointed means of grace and purification, be instant in season and out of season; they can fill the water-pots up to the brim; they can be abundant in preaching the Word—which, as it comes from them, is only water—a dead letter, a sapless, tasteless, spiritless thing—but this is what Christ will bless for the supplying of His Church with wine. (*Jonathan Edwards.*) *The popularity of this Cana miracle:*— From a very early period the Church has recognized the importance and significance of the miracle. Of the fifty-two marble sarcophagi originally found in the catacombs of Rome, and now preserved in the Museum of St. John Lateran, no less than sixteen have carved upon them a rude representation of Jesus touching with a rod two, three, four, five, or six water-pots standing on the ground—the number varying according to the skill of the artist, or the space at his disposal. In the frescoes and mosaics of numerous churches and consecrated buildings, the incident has been depicted in a great variety of ways; and Tintoretto exhausted his genius, in giving expression to its wonderful beauty, in his great picture in the church of Santa Maria della Salute in Venice. With commentators in all ages, the miracle of Cana has been a favourite and fertile theme for exposition. No miracle will more

thoroughly reward a careful study than that which meets the inquirer at the very threshold. It is the "gate beautiful" by which he enters the sacred temple of Divine truth. It is the illuminated initial which represents, in a pictorial form, the nature and design of the kingdom of heaven as revealed unto men. It is an acted parable of the whole gospel; a type and image of all the work of Jesus, opening up a vista of light far into the ways of God. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*)

Cana.—Two places claim the distinction of being the Cana of the gospel—the one a ruined and deserted village, called Khurbet Cana, about half-a-day's journey to the north-west of Nazareth; and the other, called Kefr Kenna, lying much nearer, on the present main road from that town to Tiberias and the lake district. The great weight of evidence derived from name, site, history, and present remains, is on the side of the latter place, which is still one of the most prosperous villages in Galilee. Like Nain, its situation is exceedingly picturesque. It is perched on the slope of a low hill, at the head of several valleys forming natural roadways leading down on the one side to the sea-coast, and on the other to the Lake of Galilee. In front is a rich bottom, which becomes a lake or a swamp in the rainy season. In this respect Cana resembles the villages of Italy, which are nearly all built upon isolated heights, rising up from extensive marshy plains, not only for the sake of security, but also for the purer air and wider outlook. Its Greek name, which has no Hebrew, Chaldee, or Aramaic form, means a reed; and was doubtless derived from the reeds which still grow in abundance in the marshy plain below, and utter their mournful wail as the winds pass through them. Several well-known places are similarly named for the same reason, as Cannæ, Canneto, Cannossa, and Cannes. The houses of the modern village are embosomed among orchards of pomegranate trees, whose dark-green foliage and scarlet blossoms form in April a scene of enchantment. The fig-tree still casts its grateful shadow over the white roadway, and at the foot of the hill there is a deep, cool well, the only one in the neighbourhood, from which the water used at the marriage feast must have been drawn. Remains of ancient edifices testify to the hoary antiquity of the site and its former importance. The foundations of an early church and monastery, erected by Syrian Christians in commemoration of the marriage feast, may still be traced. The buildings were entire long before the Moselm power was established in Galilee; and various pilgrims from the West visited them from time to time during a period of nine hundred years. Our own English St. Willibald, who was a palmer in 722, stayed one day in Cana, and prayed in the church; and, four hundred years later, another English pilgrim, Sæwulf, saw and reported regarding the convent, called after the ruler of the feast, "Holy Architriclinos," the only building in Cana then that was not wholly destroyed. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*)

Eastern marriage customs:—An Oriental wedding is very different from an Occidental one; and there is as much variety of usage in the accompaniments of this ceremony in the East as in the West. In all cases, however, the marriage ceremonies are among the most prominent ceremonies of private life, as much display being made as the circumstances of the contracting parties will allow. Among the wealthy inhabitants of towns, however, the ceremonies of marriage are both protracted and complicated. Six or seven days after the conclusion of the betrothal contract, the well-to-do bridegroom begins to illuminate the street in which he lives with swinging lamps and flying flags in token of the coming festivities. During the evenings of these days festivals are held at the bridegroom's house. The chief entertainment is given by the bridegroom the evening before the marriage. On the day of the marriage the bride goes in procession to the bridegroom's house, preceded by music, dancers, mountebanks, and walking beneath a canopy. The procession seeks a circuitous route, and takes several hours before it reaches the bridegroom's house. Here the party is entertained with a repast. At sunset the bridegroom leaves the house, and goes in procession to a mosque to say the proper ceremonial prayers. Then the procession returns slowly, preceded by music and lanterns. When the procession reaches the house, pipes, coffee, and sherbert (sweetened water, for the Mohammedans do not drink wine) are set before the company. The bridegroom then visits his bride, whose face he now sees for the first time. Upon his announcement that he is satisfied with his bride, the women without raise the zaghareet, or shrill cries of joy, which announce the happy event to the whole neighbourhood. The bridegroom then returns, for a little while, to his friends who are feasting below, to receive their felicitations on the completion of the marriage. (*S. S. Times.*) *Marriage happy where Christ is acknowledged*:—

When Philip Henry was settled at Worthenbury, he sought the hand of the only daughter and heiress of Mr. Matthews, of Broad Oak. The father demurred, saying that, though Mr. Henry was an excellent preacher and a gentleman, yet he did not know from whence he came. "True," said the daughter; "but I know where he is going, and I should like to go with him." Mr. Henry records in his diary long after the happiness of the union, which was soon after consummated: "April 26th, 1680. This day we have been married twenty years, in which time we have received of the Lord twenty thousand mercies—to God be glory!" Sometimes he writes, "We have been so long married, and never reconciled, *i.e.*, there never was any occasion for it." His advice to his children with respect to their marriage was, "Please God, and please yourselves, and you will please me"; and his usual compliment to his newly-married friends, "Others wish you all happiness. I wish you all holiness, and then there is no doubt but you will have all happiness." (*Life of Philip Henry.*) *The blessing of marriage:*—That is the great blessing of marriage, that it delivers us from the tyranny of *Meum* and *Tuum*. Converting each into the other, it endears them both, and turns a slavish, deadening drudgery into a free and joyous service. And by bringing home to every one's heart that he is something better than a mere self, that he is the part of a higher and more precious whole, it becomes a type of the union between the Church and her Lord. (*J. C. Hare.*) *Religion for joy as well as for sorrow:*—Religion is just as necessary for prosperity as for adversity. There is no happiness so happy but His presence can make it happier; and they who seek to have Him at their bridals can count more confidently on Him in their sufferings and at their death-beds. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The miracles of nature and the miracles of Christ:*—He that made wine on that day at the marriage feast in those six water-pots, which He commanded to be filled with water, the same does every year the like in vines. For as what the servants put into the water-pots was changed into wine by the operation of the Lord, just so what the clouds pour forth is changed into wine by the operation of the same Lord. But at the latter we do not marvel, because it happens every year; by constant use it hath lost its wonder. And yet it suggests a greater consideration. But since men, intent on a different matter, have lost the consideration of the works of God by which they should daily praise Him as the Creator, God has reserved to Himself the doing of certain extraordinary actions, that, by striking them with wonder, He might rouse men as from sleep to worship Him. A dead man rises again; men marvel: so many are born daily, and none marvel. If we reflect more considerately, it is a matter of greater wonder for one to be who was not before, than for one who was to come to life again. (*Augustine.*) *The transformation of the mean:*—He made wine of water; not wine without water. It is not the nature of His work to make a new order of creatures for saints, or a new order of faculties for religion, or a new planet for that future world wherein dwelleth righteousness; but it is His office to take the common man as he is, and the heavens and earth which now are, and by a new and supernatural putting forth of power upon them, to evolve from the one a pure, holy, and royal being, and for the other a fitting home and dominion for him for ever. Precious as are those living jewels of His which the Saviour eventually gathers into the glorious cabinet of the world to come, they are in their origin mere men and women, of like passions with ourselves—ordinary humanity ennobled and transformed by supernatural grace into eternal kings and priests. Christianity, in its highest achievements and results, is simply the miraculous power of Jesus made effective in and upon the common elements of nature—the gladdening transfiguration of the common into the noble, the sinful into the holy, the earthly into the heavenly. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*)

Ver. 3. **When they wanted wine.**—I. The wine supplied was IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY. The produce probably of their own industry in the vineyards around. Wine in Bible lands was not an occasional luxury as with us, but a part of the daily food of the people. A simple, natural beverage, very different to the branded wines of this country, but intoxicating, nevertheless. Such wine was among the first oblations to the Divinity (Gen. xiv. 18). Wine and bread, in conformity with this principle, are the essential elements of the Holy Supper, because they are the essential elements in the support of life in the East. II. THERE IS A NATURAL HARMONY BETWEEN THE FRUIT OF THE VINE AND THE BRIDAL FESTIVITY. The richest juices of the vine plant are prepared and stored up in those parts which are specially associated with the propagation of the species. For aught we know, the reproduction of the vine might be accomplished without the

exquisite goblets of the grape cluster; and so the marriage rite can take place without any festivity. But God loves not a mere utilitarianism; and it is as natural that wine should form part of the festivities of marriage as that beauty and gladness should crown the accomplishment of the common purposes of the world. III. Understanding the importance attached to wine on such an occasion, we can realize THE CALAMITY OF ITS FAILURE. "Without wine there is no joy," a common Jewish saying. It may have been caused by the poverty of the host, or through the unexpected arrival of Jesus and His disciples. Anyhow it was an intense mortification. Why? Because we all desire to appear prosperous. Poverty is hard to bear; but its disclosure is a thousand times worse. Not because poverty is a disgrace; but because man was made for happiness, and without it he feels that he has fallen from his natural place. This is owing to sin. There was no scarcity in Eden. IV. Viewed in this light, it is a most striking coincidence that OUR LORD'S FIRST MIRACLE SHOULD BE WROUGHT TO RELIEVE WANT. The kingdom of heaven meets humanity where the law has left it stripped and destitute. V. This failure teaches us THE FAILURE OF THE WORLD'S JOY. It was the highest and happiest occasion on which want intruded itself. What a testimony to the insufficiency of even the richest feast of worldly attainment or experience. Marriage, the crowning bliss of life, with all its dear ties and affections, comes to a close. VI. JESUS COMES TO US AT EVERY CRISIS OF WANT, and provides for us what we ourselves cannot supply. Christ, received as guest, becomes host, and out of His fulness supplies all our need. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *What kind of wine was it?*—The miracle took place a few days before the Passover, and this festival usually fell on the 30th of March. The wine that was drunk at the feast must therefore have been kept for six or seven months from the previous vintage. It must, in consequence, have undergone the process of fermentation, for, without this, no organic juice could have been preserved for such a length of time. Fermentation is a natural process, which takes place in all watery solutions of vegetable substances containing saccharine matters; and depends entirely upon the growth of a microscopic fungus called the yeast-plant, which develops with extreme rapidity into myriads of minute cells or vesicles, and while doing so resolves the sugar in solution into alcohol and carbonic acid gas. The spores, or seeds, of this fungus exist in enormous quantities everywhere; and no vegetable juice can be exposed to the air for however short a time without receiving some of them; and if the temperature and other conditions be suitable, they begin at once to grow and multiply, thereby producing fermentation and liberating alcohol. Even in ripe grapes, while they are hanging on the vine, this yeast-fungus is often developed, causing vinous fermentation. It is impossible, therefore, to produce an infusion of grapes from which these ubiquitous germs are absent—unless the juice is boiled and the vessel hermetically sealed; and even then, so tenacious are they of life, we cannot be sure that we have got rid of them, as Pasteur's recent researches abundantly testify. And wherever these germs are present, the process of fermentation begins, and is carried on with greater or less rapidity according to the temperature. In a warm climate it goes on with extraordinary vigour. There is no such thing, therefore, as unfermented wine. The juice of the grape when immediately squeezed out may be so called; but if it is kept for a few days under ordinary conditions it inevitably undergoes the vinous fermentation. (*Ibid.*) *God honours our leaning upon Him:*—A circumstance happened to me yesterday. I cannot help telling it to you. I received a note from one of the trustees of the Orphanage to say that the running account was so low that, when the cheques were paid on Friday morning, we should have overdrawn our banking account. I did not like that state of things; but I did not fret about it. I breathed a prayer to God that He would send money to put into the bank to keep the account right. Last night, at nearly ten o'clock, I opened a letter that came from Belfast, and it had in it a cheque for £200, being the amount left as a legacy. I wrote across my acknowledgment, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together!" That amount put the account square for the time being; and although the Orphanage has no ready money to go on with, still that does not matter, God will send more means during the week, and at all other times when the expenditure calls for it. At the moment when I opened the letter, and found the £200, I felt as if my hair stood on end, because of the conscious nearness of the Lord my God. My brother, Hugh Hanna, when he sent that cheque, and sent it on that particular day, did not know that it would come just when I was praying to God for help in a time of trouble; yet it came exactly when it was sought for. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

Trouble carried to Christ:—"What do you do without a mother to tell all your troubles to?" asked a child who had a mother of one who had none. "Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus; He was mother's friend, and He's mine." "Jesus Christ is in the sky; He is a way off, and He has a great many things to attend to in heaven, it is not likely He can stop to mind you." "I do not know anything about that," said the orphan; "all I know, He says He will; and that's enough for me."

Vers. 3, 4. **The mother of Jesus saith unto Him they have no wine.**—I. THE MIRACLE WAS WROUGHT AT THE SUGGESTION OF A MOTHER, and was the result of the promptings of human affection. The first influence that reaches the senses of a child is from the mother; and whatever miracles of blessing have been done in the world may be traced to her. "She who rocks the cradle sways the world." Jesus was like all human beings in this respect. And now He has entered on His life's work, it is fitting that He should receive the first call to the exercise of His power from His mother. II. THE IMPORT OF THE WORDS OF MARY. Some regard them as a passing remark; others as a delicate hint that they should retire. These explanations inadequate. Mary expected some unusual manifestations of Christ's power, and drew attention to the want of wine to excite His sympathy and help. She knew that there were no ordinary means of procuring wine, and that a crisis had happened in His life which was in keeping with what she knew about Him. Now, therefore, was the time to show to the world who He was. But mingled with this there were selfish elements: personal pride in the expectation of His achievements, and anxiety to keep her old motherly influence over Him. III. JESUS' REPLY. Just as He assured her in the Temple that He must be about His Father's business, so now He told her that a higher motive than a mother's authority must regulate the manifestation of His glory. The blessings of heaven are bestowed, not according to a capricious favouritism, but according to a fixed principle of Divine government. At first sight the reply seems repellent; but—1. In those days "woman" was a title of respect. When the true dignity of woman is recognized, that is the best name by which she can be known. Emperors have called their queens by this name, and Jesus used it in His tenderest message on the cross. 2. Christ avoided calling Mary His mother for the same reason that He refused to acknowledge David as His Father. Henceforth He was not to be known as her Son, but as the Son of the Eternal Father. 3. "What have I to do with thee," a common phrase indicating the conclusion of all debate. It has no severity in it, and may have been uttered in a tone and with a gesture that could not be reported. Anyhow, Mary's feelings were not hurt, as is seen from her expectant words to the servants. IV. THE SON HAD NOW BECOME LORD EVEN OF HIS OWN MOTHER, and her happiness could only be secured by obedience to Him. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The anxious mother*:—I. THE SOLICITUDE SHE FELT. While it becomes the friends of Jesus to be careful for nothing (Phil. iv. 6; Matt. vi. 31; Luke x. 41), Mary's distress was—1. Natural, seeing that the wine failed through the arrival of her Son and His companions. 2. Beautiful, inasmuch as it was sympathy with others. 3. Permissible, because a habit enjoined by Christ (Mark xii. 31; Luke vi. 31, x. 26; John xv. 17; Rom. xii. 10; Phil. ii. 4). II. THE REQUEST SHE MADE. That Christ should establish His Messiahship by miracle. 1. In turning to Christ in her emergency, Mary acted with propriety, teaching us where to go with our troubles as they arise (Heb. iv. 15; 1 Pet. v. 7). 2. In prescribing to Christ the manner of His help, her example must be eschewed; Christ then, as now, regulating all His movements by the will of the Father (Eph. i. 11). 3. In failing to grasp the character of Christ's mission, she represents the dulness of the natural heart (1 Cor. ii. 14). III. THE REPROOF SHE RECEIVED. 1. Inconceivable that there was any contempt in it (1 John iii. 5; 1 Peter ii. 22). In this let Christ be our exemplar (Eph. vi. 2). 2. A respectful reminder that henceforth He had passed beyond His earthly home, and had entered upon engagements in which the will of God was supreme (chap. iv. 34, vi. 38). (1) Whom Christ loves He reproves when they go astray (Heb. xii. 6; Rev. iii. 19). (2) There are higher obligations than those due to parents (Acts. iv. 19). (3) In all matters connected with religion and conscience (James iv. 12). IV. THE COMFORT SHE OBTAINED. Repelling the suggestion of a public demonstration, He intimated by some explained sign that His assistance would not be wanting. So it is ever His custom to mingle mercy with judgment (Psa. ci. 1). V. THE TRUST SHE DISPLAYED. With quiet confidence she directed the servants to hold themselves in readiness to execute

any instructions He might give, symbolizing the faith which is ready to interpret and cling to Christ's hints of favour, whether found in His Word or Providence. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Mine hour is not yet come.**—*Christ's hour*:—I. CHRIST'S HOUR WAS THE TIME FIXED BY THE FATHER. No outward event or motive could decide when it was right for Him to do a mighty work. He waited obscure and inactive for thirty years, until the hour appointed had come for beginning His public ministry; and when He entered on its career, all its incidents were regulated by the Father's predetermined purpose. II. THE ULTIMATE REFERENCE IS TO THAT POINT OF HIS LIFE MOST DECISIVE OF ALL, THE HOUR OF HIS GLORIFICATION. But the way lay through the valley of the shadow of death. The hour when He was glorified was the hour when His work was finished. Jesus, therefore, connected the hour of His greatest triumph with the hour of His greatest defeat: and everything that promoted His glory made sure His death. The converse on the Transfiguration Mount was about His decease (see also chap. xii. 23–29). All this was realized here in anticipation. He saw the inevitable connection between the miracle and His hour of doom. We need not wonder, therefore, that He should hesitate before performing an act involving such tremendous issues. His mother knew nothing of all this, and His gentle words of rebuke struck a note which He meant to vibrate in her heart like the memorable word of Simeon in the Temple. It is striking that we hear no more of Mary in St. John until she stands beside the cross. III. This foreshadowing of the cross by the first manifestation of Christ's glory is TYPICAL OF A COMMON HUMAN EXPERIENCE. The marriage indicated the commencement of the most serious part in the drama of life, in which self-sacrifice is continually necessary. Marriage is nature's preparation for death. Death empties the world and marriage is ordained to replenish it. The happiest hour of life is thus intimately connected with the saddest. And so with all the glories of man. Triumph and success come late in life and are associated with ebbing strength and failing desire, which rob them of nearly all their pleasure. IV. WITH PURIFIED FAITH AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT MARY ENTERED INTO HER SON'S DESIGN. Her command to the servants proves the greatness of her faith. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The supreme hour* (*cf.* John xvii. 1):—I. A DESTINY FORESEEN. It has been maintained that there is a fixed plan and destiny for each life. What then about the multitude of wicked and suffering lives? And yet it is impossible that God should not have some plan and purpose for all: for Divine Providence is the care for the whole and for each part. Otherwise chance and accident would be governors of the world. To get out of this order and follow our own blind wills, however, is possible. We are ever treated as creatures to whom choice is offered. God will not compel us; but He will guide our lives if we will trust Him. But we can choose to stand in antagonism to His purposes. All sin does this. Yet there is a Sovereignty which is able to see all contingencies and provide for every catastrophe. Therefore there is a work for each to do and a time to do it in. We come into life for a purpose. What that is seems hidden. We learn by experience. Christ's mission, of course, was of transcendant importance; but He comes possessed of a conviction that He is sent to do a special work in a special hour. This is constantly on His lips. There was to be nothing accidental. He completely foresaw and foretold His destiny, What that was stands out clear in its own light—death for our salvation. Take that away and what is left? Like music without the leading part, the air, there may be harmony, but there is no meaning. So as Christ knows it is coming He prepares Himself and His disciples for it. And when it comes He cries "It is finished." II. A FORESEEN DESTINY TRIUMPHING OVER ALL OBSTACLES. What wonderful preservations there were which prevented any failure. The thought of Christ's possible failure is overwhelmingly terrible. Yet He was tried in every possible way. The devil tried Him by his temptations; His friends by their endeavours to seize Him as a madman; the Pharisees by their invitations; the people by their attempt to crown Him; His townsmen by their attempt to assassinate Him. Twice the reason is said to be "because His hour was not yet come." The hour came, not a moment too soon or too late, but at the appointed time. Conclusion: 1. A word of comfort to His servants in times of anxiety about their lives and work. If we have surrendered ourselves to God let us accept our lot and place without fear. 2. A word of encouragement to workers whose results seem so meagre. Be still, live on, every pulse beat brings the hour of glory nearer. 3. Let no man fear premature death, "A man is immortal till his work is done." (*W. Braden.*) *Our hour*:—1. THE HOUR THAT STRIKES WHEN GOD CALLS TO HIGHER DUTY, better thoughts, purer purposes, more unworldly aims than are common in this lower life. Neglect that and you have lost a great possession. You may

succeed elsewhere, but you have suffered the supreme loss. You are not watching for it: it may come and go and leave you a wreck. II. THE HOUR CALLS IN SPECIAL MOMENTS OF TEMPTATION. Every soul has in it its special strand of sin. We find it out by contemplating what is hardest for us to give up, what we most like, what we least like to do. The call comes and our hour approaches. III. Then there is THE LAST HOUR WHICH BELONGS TO US ALL, about which it is impossible to speak since none of us have died. But it is coming quickly. Prepare for it. (*Canon Knox-Little.*) *Our hour*:—I. NO HOUR IS UNIMPORTANT. It may seem to be, and be treated as trivial. But an architect will tell you that every stone in a building is necessary for the strength and symmetry of the whole. So with life. Its hours are of untold value in relation to each other and the great whole. II. ANY HOUR MAY BE TO US THE MOST MOMENTOUS HOUR OF ALL. There may come quite unexpectedly some solemn event which may change the whole purpose and current of our life. A letter, a friend's call, a casual visit to a stranger's house, may result in beginning a business or finding a wife. This may not be the supreme hour, but it assuredly leads to it. It is one link in the chain of hours; take away that one and all the possibilities of the future are gone. The present hour contains the germ of our destiny. III. TO EVERY LIFE SOME GREAT AND SOLEMN PERIOD COMES, a decisive period, a turning point, one which condenses in itself all others, and for which all others have prepared—just as the hundred years of patient culture have prepared the aloe for the single year in which it flowers. It may come in youth of middle age. Then what we are is proved and what we shall be decided. (*W. Braden.*) *Christ's treatment of His mother*:—The phrase τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί is a literal translation of the Hebrew מַה־לִּי וְלָךְ (Jos. xxii. 24; Judges xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; 1 Kings xviii. 18; 2 Kings iii. 13; Matt. viii. 29, xxvii. 19; Mark i. 24). It is also found in the classics. The radical idea appears to be: "What have we in common? Our relations are wholly different." The formula there is used to express unwillingness to be disturbed or hindered by any one. It always implies reproof, although sometimes a friendly one merely (2 Sam. xvi. 10), here, "Mingle not thyself in my concerns; we pursue different aims and thou comprehendest me not." If Christ, then, did not consider this as a suitable occasion for the performance of a miracle, why does He, nevertheless, follow His mother's suggestion? Because it could not, on the other hand be regarded as an unsuitable one, for it offered Him an occasion for proving His philanthropic disposition. As Messiah He uttered the reproof, a sa son He complied with the request. The address γύναι is not disrespectful, but solemn, (*cf.* the address from the cross xix. 26). Augustus thus addresses Cleopatra: "Take courage, O woman, and keep a good heart." That the look of Jesus expressed more than His words convey, may be gathered from the address of His mother to the servants. (*A. Tholuck, D.D.*) The sense is what have I as God to do with thee a woman? Dost thou suppose that the Divine power by which I work miracles can be set in motion by thee because thou art the mother of My humanity? Hence Christ who loved and revered His earthly mother (Luke ii. 51; John xix. 26) teaches us to begin with love and reverence to our Heavenly Father. "The hour of My weakness derived from thee has not yet come; but it will come, and when that hour of human infirmity arrives, and when that infirmity of which thou art the mother, hangs on the cross, then will I own thee." John xix. 26, 27 is the best comment on this text. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) Mary catches at the little unobtrusive word, not yet, and with great penetration infers from it, then it will come! (*Herberger.*) *The reasonableness of this incident*:—If this miracle was one of the manifestations of Jesus as the Son of God, can anything be more natural or consistent than that it should be introduced by words which declare that He could not be in subjection to any earthly authority, while yet the act itself was an act of ministry to even the commonest necessities of the sons of Earth? Is not this apparent contradiction accomplishment of His work, the exhibition of Him in His complete character? He will not be the servant of His creatures, not even of His mother; He obeys the will which all are created to obey. He will be the servant of His creatures. He is come into the world for that end. He is doing the will of His Father when He is stooping to the lowest of all. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Mariolatry*:—Jesus Christ Himself is the expression of the fatherly and motherly nature in God. But this great truth was lost sight of in the dark ages; and the strange idea arose that even Christ Himself was what God was formerly conceived to be—a stern and angry judge, needing intercession and appeased with difficulty. The manhood in Him, from its very sinlessness, was supposed to be implacable; and therefore the pitying,

compassionate womanhood was personified by His mother, who acted the part of intercessor between Him and a guilty world. She was a human being, having all a human being's experience of sin, its temptations, trials, and sorrows; having the consciousness of weakness in herself, teaching her how hard it is not to sin, which would necessarily make her compassionate towards others. We all know how, step by step, she has been raised from that position of participation in human sin and sorrow to an exemption from it. We can trace this gradual ascent in the pictures of her which represent her first as alone; then with the infant Saviour in her arms; then with Christ crowning her; then kneeling before Him; then sitting a little lower; then on a level with Him. And now there is a tendency to place her above Him; for there are more churches dedicated to her than to Him. In Rome God the Father is almost unknown, and God the Son has ceased to be an object of adoration. The Father is pictorially represented as an old man, and the Saviour as a little child; and both are made subservient to the Virgin. But there is a Nemesis in this last monstrous development. By the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, thus paying Divine honours to her, she is removed further from the sympathies of men, and the attraction of her intercession will ultimately be weakened. What made her worship so alluring was the mistaken idea that just because she was a tender human being—a loving, sainted mother—having the knowledge of sin, she would be less severe towards the frailties of men. But this charm she will lose by her deification. She will come to be regarded as a stern and implacable judge, having no sympathy with men, because she is herself withdrawn from the possibilities of their frailties; and the confiding trustfulness with which prayers are now offered to her will cease to be felt. Indeed, the change has already taken place, and the supposed mother of the Virgin, called St. Anne, is now invoked to entreat her daughter to ask her Son to be propitious to the suppliant. Where is to be the end of such meditatorship? May not the Virgin's grandmother be also brought in? And if the Virgin is to be regarded as conceived without sin, must not her mother also—and so on—back to Adam; and thus the doctrine of the Fall and of original sin be done away with altogether, and with it the standing-ground and necessity of the Church? How simple and satisfactory the truth itself which is thus so strangely perverted! (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*)

Ver. 5. **Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.**—*Implicit obedience to Christ*:—That is a remarkable claim. It is almost startling to be told that, without leaving room for our own opinion, whatever a certain voice says to us we are to do. That claim can be made for no created intelligence. But it can be made for Christ. And this is the language of one who, so far, knew Him best on earth. Never before, nor since, has mother been able to say of son that 'tis well to do whatever he requires. Nor is our personal witness wanting; it is evident that the world's miseries are due to disobedience to Him; and it acquires a more extraordinary significance when we remember that He hath something to say about everything we do or ought to do. He not only assumes to guide at crises, but at every step. I. WHAT MUST PRECEDE THIS OBEDIENCE. 1. Subjection: Ye are not your own; He has a right to me by His redemption. I cannot take my own course or follow my own will without robbing Him. 2. A listening for His voice, a training our ear to recognize Him. For though He may have something to say, and indeed may say it, it does not follow that we hear. How can we hear whenever He speaks, how be sure that it is He? It is easy to follow caprice or self-will, and think we are following Him. Whatever He says is in harmony with this Divine Book; to know what He says we must come here, and if coming here we sincerely say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth!" He will speak. But we cannot always retire to search the Book, nor even pause to consider what is right—how can He control us then? Obey; obey and you will come instinctively to know your Lord's will, as (as one has said) "by copying perpetually a master painter's works, we can at last recognize his touch unerringly." 3. A determination to trust Him. For it demands courage to commit ourselves blindly to another. It were easy to do something that He tells us, but—"whatsoever" Ah! many a time He will say do this, go there, lay down that joy, take up that burden, when it will seem to be wrong; then it is when the text comes home to us, that we need courage to obey, and may fail through fear. Courage is wanted to take the first bold plunge into the sea, but when we find its sustaining power is trustworthy, we fear no more: so with the will of Christ. But how can we bring ourselves to that abandonment. Only by remembering that Christ cannot lead us wrong. Infinite wisdom! Infinite love! II. WHAT THIS OBEDIENCE INVOLVES. 1. It is con-

trary to questioning. We may not discover it at once; for gracious purpose He may keep us waiting, but ere the time for action comes He will reveal enough. Then questioning should end. He will not debate with us. It is not unlikely that He may call us to strange things—things as strange as when He called Abram, or Moses, or Jonah, or Peter. Now, when those strange commands come, which seem to involve so much risk, and which lead into the dark—then is the time to recall this word, and to act upon it. 2. It is contrary to delay. Delay is disobedience. When we dare not reply "I will not," we sometimes reply "I will, but not now," and quiet our conscience with the idea that this is not refusal. Jesus said, "Follow Me!" and he answered, "Lord, suffer me first," &c., and the Lord said "No." So we respond to some of His commands, "Lord, suffer me first to do something else," "Seek ye first the kingdom," &c. 3. It is contrary to consideration of cost. It is well to settle with ourselves that we cannot follow Christ without soon, and often, coming to what is hard. "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross," &c. 4. It is contrary to inquiry about other matters. For it is one of our most dangerous temptations to neglect clear duty because of what is not clear. What is clear may be but little, a mere foothold on "a pavement of mist," but plant the foot there if so Christ bids, and He will show more, at length bringing him that obeys as far as He knows to the rock and the day. We are apt to confuse others' tasks with ours. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." III. WHAT FOLLOWS THIS OBEDIENCE. 1. It prevents hardness of heart. Young men and women with whom Jesus pleads, there are old men here who would tell you that once Christ's voice was clear to them, but that now they catch but murmurs of a voice far off, and who would entreat you to respond to Him now. Hardness is the certain result of refusal. 2. It proves that we are Christ's. What is Obedience—(1) Is the mark of a Christian. "Hereby we do know that we know Him," &c. (2) The test of service: "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not what I say?" (3) The test of love: "If ye love Me," &c. 3. The way to success. You have heard it said that religious principles will not do for business. But can anything be more hopeless than to go against the God of Providence on whose side all things work. But let the text guide you in the office and the workshop, in public life and the social circle, and this will be the issue—judge if it be success or no! A peaceful conscience repose in the Divine care, unclouded fellowship with God, and at last, "Well done," &c. (*C. New.*) *Perfect obedience*:—To obey God in some things of religion, and not in others, shows an unsound heart; like Esau, who obeyed his father in bringing him venison, but not in a greater matter, viz., the choice of his wife. Child-like obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the loadstone draws. (*T. Watson.*) *Obedience must be cheerful*:—A musician is not recommended for playing long but for playing well; it is obeying God willingly that is accepted; the Lord hates that which is forced, it is rather paying a tax than an offering. Good duties must not be pressed nor beaten out of us, as the waters came out of the rock when Moses smote it with his rod; but must freely drop from us as myrrh from the tree, or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet smelling savour to God. (*Ibid.*) *Submission without reasoning*:—Payson was asked, when under great bodily affliction, if he could see any particular reason for this dispensation. "No," replied he, "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand; God's will is the very perfection of all reason." *Implicit obedience*:—Manton says that, "John Cassian makes mention of one, who willingly fetched water near two miles every day for a whole year together, to pour it unto a dead dry stick, at the command of his superior, when no reason else could be given for it." And of another it is recorded, that he professed that if he were enjoined by his superior to put to sea in a ship which had neither mast, tackling, nor any other furniture, he would do it; and when he was asked how he could do this without hazard of his discretion, he answered, "The wisdom must be in him that hath power to command, not in him that hath power to obey." These are instances of implicit obedience to a poor fallible human authority, and are by no means to be imitated. But when it is God who gives the command, we cannot carry a blind obedience too far, since there can be no room for questioning the wisdom and goodness of any of His precepts. At Christ's command it is wise to let down the net at the very spot where we have toiled in vain all the night. If God bids us, we can sweeten water with salt, and destroy poison with meat, yea, we may walk the waves of the sea, or the flames of a furnace. Well, said the Blessed Virgin, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." My heart, I charge thee follow thy Lord's command

without a moment's question, though He bid thee go forward into the Red Sea, or onward into a howling wilderness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Obedience to Christ*:—I. THE RIGHT THAT MARY HAD TO SPEAK. The right of—1. Experience. Without this speech the history of Christ's life would be sadly incomplete. Omit it, and what would our position be? (1) We should hear the voice of heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son;" (2) The voice of the Herald, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (3) The voice of the Church, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" (4) The voice of the world, "Never man spake like this man;" (5) The voice of friends, "The holy one of God;" (6) The voice of Justice, "I find no fault in Him." But we want to hear another voice, that of home. And here we have it from her whose lips kissed Him, whose hands caressed Him, who had Him under her eye from childhood to manhood, and her testimony is, "Whatsoever He saith," &c. 2. Modesty: What gives point and force to her words is that she is no garrulous woman, making her son the subject of constant commendation. Only this once does she testify to Him. And there was a strong call in her to speak now. Up to this time Jesus had been a private man and had belonged to herself. But henceforth He was to be the public Messiah, and her Son no longer. Mary here renounces her exclusive right to Christ, and in parting from him says, "Whatsoever," &c. 3. The tacit approval of Christ. Mothers are partial. Was, then, Mary's love too strong for her judgment? The best answer is that Christ, who was least open to flattery, did not chide her: but afterwards, in laying down the terms of discipleship, used His mother's words, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." II. THE ADVICE THAT MARY GIVES. 1. It is not enough to have Christ's words. The Bible as a mere possession is either neglected altogether or treated as a charm. 2. It is not enough to study Christ's words, even with the closest attention and the firmest belief; although that is a blessed privilege. 3. The whole duty and creed of man is to do whatsoever Christ commands. To this we are pledged by the pattern prayer, and in this we have a supreme example in Christ Himself. III. HOW ARE WE TO OBEY? 1. By loving Him. 2. By aiming at the perfection that is in Him. (*P. Robertson.*) *Obedience to Christ*:—I. THIS ADVICE MEETS A FELT WANT. There are times in life when we want the responsibility of decision divided—times of utter baffle ment and perplexity. A friendly recommendation is sometimes helpful, but what is wanted is supreme dictation. Christ steps in here as the commander of the people and says, "Lo," "Come," "Do," "Stand." II. THIS ADVICE WAS GIVEN BY CHRIST'S MOTHER, who had lived with Him a whole generation, and after all that experience felt warranted in offering it—the most magnificent tribute to Christ that was ever offered: that He was worthy of perfect obedience. III. THIS ADVICE HE ENFORCES HIMSELF. 1. His commands are imperative and final. He never prefers a request or revises a decision. 2. His commands brook no emendation, diminution, or enlargement. 3. His commands require prompt and implicit obedience. IV. THIS COMMANDMENT IS EXCEEDING BROAD. 1. Follow Me. 2. Love one another. 3. Wash ye one another's feet. 4. Go ye into all the world. 5. Do this in remembrance of Me. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Instant obedience*:—The right path into the meaning of this saying is found in an interior view of the three states of mind represented in the little group. 1. That of Mary, who speaks. 2. Of the servants to whom she speaks. 3. And of the Saviour for whose decisive word she and they are waiting. On the part of Mary there was evidently a mixture of perplexity, impatience, reverence, and trust. The impatience was sufficiently reproved and restrained. His "woman," &c., dispelled her rising complacency, and placed her on that level of human dependence where, with all her loveliness, beauty, and sanctity, she must ever remain. Christ's word was a call for increased faith. For thirty years Mary had carried in her soul the memory of the strange events which signalized His birth, &c. As yet He had given no supernatural sign. Was it not almost the "hour?" Just at this point of uncertainty she stood, but when she looked at Him all her doubts fled, and all fears sank to rest in one resolution of trusting obedience. "Whatsoever," &c. I. Whatsoever HE saith. One voice is singled out, and that has supreme authority. Some master every human being has. There are as many masters as there are interests, tastes, passions, &c. When we come to the moral life, men are at liberty to choose as they will. "Choose now this day," &c. Choose Christ and live for ever, choose any other master and you will die. "No man can choose two masters." II. As there is but one voice of supreme authority, so THERE IS BUT ONE PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIAN DUTY—instant, active obedience. 1. How many of the failures and miseries of life creep in between the hearing of God's command and the doing of it. Men mistake speculative for practical truth; put matters of feeling in place of

action. Some problem of Providence is conjured up as if a man had a right to keep his repentance and faith waiting till he can fathom it; some obscure dogma which should be left to clear itself is set up as a stumbling-block; moods of depression and discontent; conflicting claims of family or friends, or between action and contemplation. These must be cast off and left behind, not by thinking over them, or spasmodic efforts to manufacture feeling, but by a more prompt, unremitting doing of Christ's will. Jesus saith "fill the water-pots," &c. Our homely opportunities are our water-pots. Fill them with such water as you have. Whether the water shall be made wine is for Him to decide, not us. Be about the Master's business. Go to the nearest duty. 2. Another kind of difficulty is cured by prompt obedience—indecision as to begining to serve Christ. It is not till our part is done that the firkins are filled, that the supernatural energy will change the heart into the new creature. Believe: faith is the power: but the proof and fruit of faith is not separated from it—"Arise, and wash away thy sins;" bring forth fruit meet for repentance; bear witness to the Redeemer; have charity for one another. III. ONE OTHER WORD COMPLETES THE SCOPE OF THE LESSON. "Whatsoever." 1. What it should be, His mother and the servants did not know. It turned out no very difficult task, although it might have been. But it was a great trial of their faith. How was the water to remedy the want of wine? How are our prayers to move the Everlasting Arm? How shall bread and wine feed the heart, &c. And then there are other trials which need this bread "whatsoever" to cover them. When you begin to calculate the consequences of your obedience, when your flesh cries out that the sacrifice hurts—1. You will want this "whatsoever." 2. What a holy power and beauty this obedience will yield in our dwellings. Draw out and bear to every guest in the Father's house. Christ takes these old and common water-pots of our mortal relationships, our household affairs and every day dispositions and employments, and then, if only we are ready with our obedience, fills them with that new wine to which He so often compares His gift of life. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *Prompt obedience:*—A story is told of a great captain, who, after a battle, was talking over the events of the day with his officers. He asked them who had done the best that day. Some spoke of one man who had fought very bravely, and some of another. "No," he said, "you are all mistaken. The best man in the field to-day was a soldier who was just lifting up his arm to strike an enemy, but, when he heard the trumpet sound a retreat, checked himself, dropped his arm and without striking the blow. That perfect and ready obedience to the will of his general is the noblest thing that has been done to-day." (*Pulpit Treasury.*) *Christ's orders:*—"Sir," said the Duke of Wellington to an officer who urged the impossibility of executing the directions he had received, "I did not ask your opinion; I gave you my orders, and I expect to have them obeyed." Such should be the obedience of every follower of Jesus Christ. The words which He hath spoken are our law, not our judgments or fancies. Even if death were in the way, it is "Not ours to reason why, ours but to do or die." (*Ibid.*) *A word for everybody:*—I. The UNIVERSALITY of the command "whatsoever" II. Its AUTHORITY, "He saith." Who? 1. Our Creator. 2. Our Preserver. 3. Our Redeemer. 4. Our Master. III. Its INDIVIDUALITY. "You." Masters, servants; parents, children; ministers, hearers; the aged, the young; the man of many talents, the man of one; doctors, artists, poets, labourers. IV. Its SPIRIT, "Do it" thoroughly, cheerfully, at all times, everywhere. (*Dr. Jarbo.*) "Ye are not your own," &c.; therefore "Whatsoever He saith," &c. *What does He say?*—I. LABOUR NOT TO BE RICH (Prov. xxiii. 4, 5, xxviii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10). Yet the sin of the age is over anxiety to be rich. He saith by St. Paul (Col. iii. 2). II. BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD (2 Cor. vi. 17; Isa. lii. 11). What a falling off from this command there is in dress, amusement, &c. III. GO WORK THIS DAY IN MY VINEYARD. There are so-called Christians who are quite satisfied if there are no great blots in their lives, without caring about the blanks; indeed their life may be called one great blank. Each one, however, is expected to cultivate his talent. To this end it is not necessary to be a minister. While there are young to teach, sick to visit, poor to be relieved, institutions to be supported, Christ to witness, no special vocation is required. IV. LOVE AS BRETHREN. "By this shall all men know," &c. (John xvii. 20, 21). And yet see how the different regiments of the Christian army, instead of fighting against the common foe, are turned against each other, and the world says deridingly, "Settle it first among yourselves, and then we will listen to your claims." We are not likely to see eye to eye on all subjects; let us therefore be tolerant of each another's opinions and feelings. V. HITHERTO YE HAVE ASKED NOTHING IN MY NAME;

ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE. How remiss we are in the duty of prayer, public, social, private, family. VI. PHIL. IV. 8. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 6-9. **Six water-pots of stone.** *The significance of the water-pots* :—I. THE USE OF OLD MATERIAL FOR NEW PURPOSES. In the natural word vegetable life grows out of the mould of vegetable decay. The tabernacle was constructed of Egyptian materials and many of the laws and customs had an Egyptian form. Prophecy took shape from political circumstances. When Christianity became the dominant religion, it absorbed all that was excellent in previous religions. In Rome every church is built out of heathen ruins. In short, it is an universal principle in religion to make a heavenly use of ordinary things, just as Christ used the water-pots of the law for the first blessing of Christianity. II. THE CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN ALL PARTS OF REVELATION as one harmonious scheme of grace. The old and new covenants are not antagonistic but complimentary. Jesus was foretold by Jewish prophecy, born under the law, lived a Jew, choose Jews for His disciples, and conformed to Jewish customs. And when the two roads diverged through Jewish unbelief it was Christianity that maintained the true tradition as is shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews. III. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE OUTWARD AND THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE INWARD. These people were keeping the natural ordinance of God in all its purity and also doing what the law required for their purification. The water-pots represented the best side of Jewish faith and life; but their emptiness declared their insufficiency and their number and size, their unsatisfyingness. However frequent and copious their ablutions, they could not remove sin. The law could make nothing perfect. It did not touch the heart. The wine of grace imparts an inward life and thoroughly cleanses moral impurity. IV. THE NEEDS AND PROVISION OF ATONEMENT. The wine with which the water-pots were filled spoke eloquently in its origin—being the sacrifice of the vine, the life-blood of the grape, crushed out of it when trodden under foot of man in the wine-press—of that atoning blood of Him who is the True Vine poured forth on the cross, which cleanses from all sin. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The water-pots* :—We are struck with several peculiarities of these water-pots. They were not made by the potter out of clay, but were hewn by the carver out of the compact limestone of which the rocks in the neighbourhood were formed. They were constructed of stone, as the ecclesiastical canon enjoins fonts to be, since that material is less liable to impurity. In all likelihood, therefore, they were not closed-up jars with a narrow orifice, as they are usually represented in paintings, like the wine amphoras of clay which we see among the ruins of ancient cities, such as Pompeii and Rome; but large massive stone basins or tazzas, with wide mouths, like those which the Greeks and Romans constructed of marble, alabaster, or porphyry for their numerous lustrations, of which we see splendid specimens in our great art museums, and especially in the Vatican sculpture gallery. This shape would approximate more closely to that of the sacred laver in the Temple, which they would doubtless take as a model for these domestic utensils, intended to form a link of connection between the ceremonies of public and private worship. Owing to their large size and great weight they were not movable, but were fixed in one spot, in the hall or vestibule, or near the entrance of the house, in a position analogous to that of the laver in the Temple, which was also a fixture. Another thing that strikes us is the enormous capacity of these water-pots, which were capable of containing from sixteen to twenty-four gallons each. The frequent ablutions of the Mosaic and of the subsequent traditional law required a large supply of water. Vessels so massive as these must have lasted for many generations; and there is a probability that some trace of them, or of others like them, of the same date, may have survived down to a comparatively late period. They were placed in the vestibule of the house and each guest as he arrived removed his travel stains with their contents; and large as was the quantity of water which they held, the company was so numerous that the whole six were emptied. (*Ibid.*) *The water-pots in the way of Christ* :—An artist was painting a large picture of this marriage feast. A friend came to see his work and his first remark was, "What lovely water-pots!" The painter immediately blotted them out, saying, "I want you to look at Christ, not at the water-pots." What a lesson for the teacher, "I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." What a lesson for the disciple, "Consider Jesus the Apostle and High Priest of our profession." What a lesson to the penitent sinner, "Looking unto Jesus": not His beautiful Church, nor His learned ministers, but Him. **Fill the water-pots with water.**—About the

miracle generally, note—1. The wine was harmless, or Christ would not have made it. 2. The great quantity is accounted for by the great number of guests. At Eastern weddings often an open house is kept, and they last several days. The miracle was simple and unostentatious, as near the course of nature as the supernatural can go. Learn from this to do good works quietly and naturally. I. THE PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN OUR LORD'S MODE OF PROCEDURE. 1. As a rule, when Christ is about to bestow a blessing He gives a command. The blind man was sent to Siloam: the palsied man had to stretch forth his hand; Jairus' daughter was commanded to arise; and Lazarus to come forth. The same principle holds good in grace. The sinner must repent and believe, to be saved: Zion must awake and arise before she can be blessed and multiplied. 2. Christ's commands are not to be questioned, but to be obeyed. Had the servants been like modern captious critics they would have objected: that what was wanted was not water but wine. And sometimes Christ's command does not seem pertinent to the point in hand. The connection between faith and salvation not always apparent. Sometimes the command may seem trivial and some other duty preferred. But the connection and importance must be left with the Commander. 3. Whenever we get a command it is always wisdom to carry it out zealously "up to the brim." Do not be afraid of an overplus. 4. Our earnest obedience is not contrary but necessary to our dependence on Christ. Faith without works is dead, being alone. To leave all to Christ is not faith but laziness. 5. One action alone is not sufficient. The water was only water although the water-pots were full. Even so after sinners and saints have done all they could, nothing is done till Christ speaks the word of power. 6. Although human action in itself falls short of the desired end, yet it has its place, and God has made it necessary by His appointment. (1) It was not necessary in itself that the water-pots should be filled, but it was necessary that all should be open and above board. It was just the same with Elijah, who filled the trenches with water to show that there was no concealed fire. (2) It was instructive to the servants. The master did not know, but the servants did. So earnest believers who do the work now are those who know about it. II. THE APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES. Let us see how to carry out the command. 1. Use in the service of Christ such abilities as you have. Jesus chose what was ready to hand. The pots and the water. So Christ employs men, not angels. If those He chooses have no golden chalices let them fill their earthen vessels. The servants improved what they had: for the water-pots were empty and they filled them. Let the preacher improve his gift of learning, fill his intellect to the brim, and expect Christ to turn the water into wine. 2. Use such means of blessing as God appoints: Scripture study; attendance at the means of grace, &c. 3. Use the means heartily. What is worth doing at all is worth doing well. 4. Remember when you have done all you can there is a great deficiency left behind. After the most strenuous industry water is still water. 5. Trust in Christ to do the miracle. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Filling the water-pots*:—I. THE SERVANTS. 1. Their faith was kindled by Mary's. It was apparently a foolish and capricious thing they were asked to do. Why should they be taken away from a useful work to one of supererogation? The guests had washed, and no more water was required. The first miracle thus brought out the necessity of faith for the work of Christ. 2. Their effort was needed also; just as much in its way as the power of Jesus: viz., to fill the water-pots, and to draw, and to bear. The first miracle, therefore, was wrought in accordance with God's law of labour, in which man cooperates with Himself. II. THE COMMAND OF JESUS. Notice—1. The emptiness of the vessels, significant of—(1) The emptiness of Jewish rites which had no efficacy in themselves. (2) The induced insufficiency occasioned by Pharisaism which emptied the institutions of the Law of all their meaning by their abuse of them. As a man by pouring water into a full cup displaces some of the water already there, so by their works of supererogation they made the Law of none effect. (3) The emptiness of the institutions of Judaism of the significance they once possessed. They had served their purpose. The fulness of time had come. 2. The word of Jesus indicates—(1) That He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it. (2) As He Himself did so He commands others to do: fill the water-pots, invest the latter with its significance, put the element of truth into the empty form, teaching and doing what it requires. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *Human effort the necessary condition of Divine help*:—I. THE EXTREMITY INTO WHICH THE GUESTS WERE LIKELY TO BE BROUGHT. 1. Under this extremity the servants did not give way to foolish speculation or gloomy forebodings. They made Jesus acquainted with it. 2. Having obtained instruction from Christ they rendered a prompt and absolute obedience. They offered no sug-

gestion. Had the thought occurred to them they would have dismissed it. Christ is ever ready to guide the perplexed, but demands their obedience. Had the servants partially or wholly disobeyed there would have been no relief. II. THE HELP WHICH WAS AFFORDED IN THEIR EXTREMITY. The aid rendered was—1. Appropriate. Wine was needed and wine was made. 2. Opportune. Christ did not wait until the wine had failed and the host humbled. 3. Abundant. 4. Secured the commendation of those who were unconscious of it. (*J. S. Exell, M.A.*) *Why the water-pots were filled:*—I. TO REMOVE ALL APPEARANCE OF DECEPTION. It was not a small quantity down at the bottom where it might have been mixed with the dregs of wine by sleight of hand. The quantity was so great that there was no possibility of collusion. The water was seen in the mouth of the vessels. II. TO AFFORD A WEDDING PRESENT TO THE YOUNG COUPLE. Jesus was no mean, niggardly giver. He did things in a royal way, and symbolised here both the qualitative and quantitative excellence of the gospel, the plenteousness as well as the power of His redemption. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *Surplus wine:*—The quantity of water changed into wine was very great—about 135 gallons—and the true reason of the large surplus beyond present need was that there might be in this residue—as in the twelve baskets remaining over and above the barley loaves after the miraculous feeding—a visible and abiding proof and record of this mighty work; and that whenever the wedded pair brought forth any of this wine from time to time, to welcome and regale any of their friends, they themselves might be reminded and speak to others of His divine love and power which produced it; so that the effects of the miracle might extend far beyond the time and place and circumstances of its first operation; and that the water made wine might diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel and become a fountain of living water for the salvation of souls. The bread of the loaves could not be kept long; and, therefore, in that case the surplus produced was less. But the good wine of Cana might be preserved for many years. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *The secret nature of our Lord's work:*—Jesus did not even speak. There was no pomp of circumstance. The attention of the guests was not arrested. The wine took its place among the ordinary refreshment of the table. I. CHRIST'S UNIFORM WORK WAS SO QUIET AS NEVER TO STARTLE THE SPECTATORS. It was so with His Incarnation; His early life; His ministry, in which He did not cry or lift up His voice; His wonderful works, which were done in humble villages for the benefit of poor persons. II. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST CAME AND COMETH WITHOUT OBSERVATION, as an artic summer steals into the very bosom of winter, and ere the ice and snow have passed away, bright verdure creeps over the earth, and hosts of brilliant flowers laugh in the sunshine as if by magic. The very essence of God's kingdom is secrecy. It is the kingdom of Him whose glory is to conceal a matter. The dawning of the day and of the year cometh without observation. III. THE METHOD OF THIS MIRACLE AFFORDS US MUCH COMFORT AMIDST THE ANXIETIES CAUSED BY THE DISCOVERIES AND SPECULATIONS OF SCIENCE. What though science is showing us that God is working in nature by uniformitarian methods, and not by cataclysms! What though it should reduce the field of the miraculous, and bring much of what we thought were the wonders of God's supernatural dispensations within the cycle of natural law! Such a conclusion, satisfactorily established, ought not to shake faith, because such a method would be in entire harmony with what Jesus has revealed of the kingdom of God in nature and in grace. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The naturalness of the miracle:*—There are many speculative difficulties about miracles. We are used to reasoning up from them to Christ; may we not reason from Him down to them? Given a Being like Christ, and the miracles are but the fitting framework of that Divine picture. The sick healed, the bread multiplied, the water turned into wine, the winds hushed, the dead raised, all these cease to be unnatural—"His name is wonderful." Therefore the supernatural is His natural element; supernatural works are natural to Him. For the believer the Person of Christ witnesses to His miracles. For the unbeliever, the miracles witnessed to His Person. (*Bp. Alexander.*) **The governor of the feast.**—In primitive times the person at whose charge an entertainment was given, was chief manager of it. He distributed to every guest his portion. Those to whom particular respect was due were helped to the best parts, and to a larger share, as in the case of the mess of Benjamin. In after times this custom was laid aside as illiberal and invidious, and the guests were allowed to help themselves. But at these entertainments of a later age a master or governor was usually elected by the guests, whose business it was to determine the laws of good-fellowship, and to see that every man was duly supplied. The guests were obliged to be in all things conformable to the commands

of this important functionary. He was called an architriclinos, meaning literally one who presided over an entertainment, where there were three sets of cushions arranged for the guests to recline upon at table. He was not a servant who had charge of dishes and provisions, and appointed to serve the guests, but a friend of the bridegroom, and was appointed by him as the chairman of the banquet, to insure that all things should be done properly and in order. This is clearly proved by the authority which he is seen to possess, the freedom of his conduct at the feast, and the terms of equality and intimacy upon which he stood to the bridegroom. The name of his office was given to the Christian convent, erected in Cana by the Empress Helena, which was known far on in the Middle Ages as the "Holy Architriclinos." (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) **They bear it.**—At what precise point the wonderful transubstantiation took place—whether it was in the filling of the water-pots with water, or in the transferring of their contents into smaller vessels—we are not told. There is a veil over this as over all creative acts, and we cannot trace beginnings. Severn, the friend of Keats, painted in Rome a picture of the Marriage of Cana; but he did not complete it. He represents the servants in it pouring the water out of one vessel into another. The water issues from the vessel clear as crystal; but in the arc formed by its descent it is refracted into a red colour. There can be no doubt that the painter caught the true idea of the transformation. What the servants drew out as water they received into their vessels as wine. (*Ibid.*) *The governor of the feast:*—A vessel was let down into the pitcher, and was then carried to the ruler of the feast, who would distribute the wine in it to the guests. Ruler rather than "governor." The same English word should be used throughout the two verses. What exact office is denoted by the Greek word is uncertain, as it occurs nowhere else in the Bible, and is very rare in the classical authors. The chief English commentators (Alford, Wordsworth, Trench) are agreed that he was chosen by the guests from among their own number, but this opinion has not commanded the general assent of scholars; and there seems more reason to think that the person intended is what we should call the "head-waiter," whose duty it was to taste the viands and wines, to arrange the tables and couches, and to be generally responsible for the feast. (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) **Tasted.**—This word supplies a strong incidental argument against the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. The occasion before us is the only known occasion on which our Lord changed one liquid into another. When He did so change it, the reality of the change was at once proved by the "taste." Why is it, then, that in the pretended change of the sacramental wine in the Lord's Supper into Christ's blood the change cannot be detected by the senses? Why does the wine after consecration taste like wine, just as it did before? The pretended change of the bread and wine is contradicted by the senses of every communicant, and that which contradicts our senses we are nowhere required in God's Word to believe. (*Bp. Ryle.*) **The servants knew.**—The guests took no part in the preparation for these miracles, did not contribute their own shares of faith and labour, and consequently were not aware that the heavens had been opened, and the ladder of communication between heaven and earth set up in the midst of them. Their hands were idle, and therefore their eyes were veiled. Only the servants knew, and they knew because they had helped Christ to perform the miracle by drawing the water, by doing what they had to do. The revelation came to them through their work, and was the reward of it. The secret of the Lord was with them because they had done the will of God. And is not this true of all work which is a revelation? It is not in idle speculation, in mere theorizing and musing, in standing looking on with folded hands, that we understand the plans and purposes of God, but when we enter into the field and work along with Him. It is in doing the will of God that we know the doctrine that it is of God. Doing God's will puts a spiritual telescope into our hand, whereby we can see the things that are unseen and eternal, which the mere eye of speculation could never see; or a spiritual microscope, which enables us to see wonderful things in God's law, which the mere eye of curiosity could never discern. The teacher who instructs others becomes wiser himself by so doing. Engaging in the work of converting souls, we can sympathize with the Divine Son, who left the Father's house and came to seek and save that which was lost. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*)

Ver. 10. **Thou hast kept the good wine until now.**—We learn—I. THAT CHRIST HAS SYMPATHY WITH HOUSEKEEPERS. The wine gave out and Jesus came to the rescue. Don't fret when there is a scant supply in your household, but trust in

God and do the best you can and He will help you. Christ is the best adviser and most efficient aid. II. CHRIST DOES THINGS IN ABUNDANCE. A small supply would have been enough, but Christ gave one hundred and thirty gallons of the very best wine. Everything God does He does plenteously. 1. In nature. 2. In grace. III. CHRIST DOES NOT SHADOW THE JOYS OF OTHERS WITH HIS OWN GRIEFS. Christ knew what was coming for Himself, but He hid His own grief to kindle their joy. So don't you infuse your own griefs into your children. They will have trouble enough by and by. Be glad that they cannot appreciate yours. Keep back the sorrows as long as you can. Let them enjoy life while they may. IV. CHRIST IS NOT IMPATIENT WITH THE LUXURIES OF LIFE. The wine, that could have been dispensed with, ran short, and yet Christ replenished it. There is no more harm in honest luxury than honest poverty. There is no more religion in a new coat than in an old one. The world was once a paradise and will be one again. V. CHRIST HAS NO IMPATIENCE WITH FESTAL JOY; the very miracle augmented it. The children of God have more right to laugh than others: no joy is denied them. VI. CHRIST COMES TO US IN OUR EXTREMITY. When the wine had given out, and before there was any embarrassment thereupon, He came to the aid of these people. 1. So often in extreme poverty Christ has come to the relief of His people. 2. In the despair of conscious guilt. 3. In death. VII. CHRIST GIVES HIS BEST LAST. 1. In Christian experience. 2. In glory. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *Infinite resources:*—Notice—I. THAT GOD MOVES BY A HIGHER LAW THAN MAN UNDERSTANDS (Isa. lv. 8, 9). 1. Men give their best first, but God adopts the principle of gradual development. 2. Men give sparingly, God gives abundantly. II. THAT MAN IS SOMETIMES PRAISED FOR BLESSINGS THAT COME DIRECTLY FROM THE DIVINE HAND. 1. In legislation the politician is praised, and few ascribe the blessing to the Great Fountain of government. 2. In social life men have praised parental discipline, or scholastic education for a high tone of morality, whereas few acknowledge the Source of Purity. (1) It is here that infidelity has erred; it has stopped at second causes and paused at the bridegroom, instead of inquiring for Christ. (2) So with science; but science is only an agent. It may be a botanist, but who started the vital fluid? A geologist, but who wrote the rocky page? An astronomer, but who built the world? (3) So with professing Christians. III. THAT GOD SOMETIMES PRESENTS THE RESULT WITHOUT REVEALING THE PROCESS. In some departments of the moral universe processes belong exclusively to God, and results to man. In the discipline of our nature God conducts the mysterious process; whereas in the dissemination of the gospel man is required to undertake the agency. These three great principles may teach us—1. To recognize the Divine hand in every advancement. What have we that we did not receive. We should be humble, therefore. 2. Never to distrust the resources of God. You have never drunk the best wine which God can provide. He has unsearchable riches. 3. To repress inquisitiveness, and cultivate gratitude. Take thankfully what God provides. (*Joseph Parker, D.D.*) *Five characteristics of Christ's working:*—I. APPROPRIATENESS. Christ does the right thing, in the right place, at the right time. The people did not want bread, nor clothes, nor health. Had they been rich the miracle would have been unnecessary; at an earlier period it would have been premature. And in His providence over our life Christ does nothing out of place or superfluously. II. MYSTERY. Christ simply willed and the water was made wine: no one knows how. 1. So in physical life. 2. Human life. 3. Spiritual life. III. SELF-ABNEGATION. The bridegroom received the credit for Christ's act. 1. So in life the employer gets the credit for the skill and strength of the employee. 2. So in morals human cleverness and power get the credit for successes which should be given to the goodness of God. 3. So in the Church the means of grace are allowed to usurp the place of the Giver of grace. IV. PROGRESS. The best last. This is the law by which Christ governs men. 1. By His providence. 2. Through His Spirit. V. UNOSTENTATIOUS GENEROSITY. The need of which the guests were ignorant was anticipated by Christ. (*J. W. Burn.*) *Satan's banquet and Christ's:*—I. THE HOUSE OF SATAN, in which are four tables. 1. The table of the profligate—a gay table. The governor comes in. He has a bland smile and a robe of many colours. He brings—(1) The wine-cup of pleasure. The young man takes it, and sips at first cautiously. He does not intend to indulge much. But how sweet it is! He drinks a deeper draught, and the wine is hot in his veins. How blest is he! He drinks and drinks again, till his brain begins to reel with the sinful delight. This is the first course. (2) Now, with a leer, the subtle governor riseth. His victim has had enough of the best wine. He brings in another, all flat and insipid—the cup of satiety. "Who hath woe? who hath

redness of the eyes? They that tarry long at the wine," figuratively and literally. The profligate soon discovers that all the rounds of pleasure end in satiety. "Give me something fresh," he cries; and gaiety itself grows flat and dull. (3) The governor commandeth another liquor to be broached. This time the fiend bears the black goblet of suffering. He who rebels against the laws of God must reap the harvest in his own body here. (4) The last course remains—the grave. The profligate dies, and descends from disease to damnation. 2. There is another table, all clean and comely. The wine on it seems to have no intoxication in it. How contented are the guests! It is the table of self-righteousness. Satan, like an angel of light, brings forth a golden goblet containing the wine of—(1) Self-satisfaction. This wine makes the drinker swell with self-important dignity. (2) This cup is eventually replaced by that of discontent and unquietness of mind. As confidence is wanted, it is found wanting. (3) This is removed, and the cup of dismay is brought in. How many a man who has been self-righteous all his life has, at the last, discovered that the basis of his hope has gone. (4) The last course must be the same as that of the profligate, inasmuch as Christ has been rejected. 3. The third table is crowded with most honourable guests—kings, princes, mayors, aldermen, and great merchants. (1) Satan brings in a flowing cup, and says: "Young man, you are starting in business; get rich as fast as you can." The youth drinks, and says: "I have abundance now: my hopes are indeed realized." (2) But next comes the nauseous cup of care. Riches canker his heart. (3) After this comes the cup of avarice, which increases the burning thirst of which many have died clutching their money-bags. (4) Then there is the cup of loss, in which money and the satisfaction it once gave perish. 4. The fourth table is set up in a very secluded corner for secret sinners. Satan steps in noiselessly (1) with the cup of secret sin. "Stolen waters are sweet." (2) After that he brings the wine of an unquiet conscience. (3) A massy bowl filled with black mixture, the fear of detection, next has to be quaffed. (4) Discovery is the last cup. "Be sure your sin will find you out," if not in this world, in the next. II. THE HOUSE OF THE SAVIOUR. 1. Come and sit at the table of Christ's outward providences. (1) The first cup is often one of bitterness—the worst wine first. Christ seeks no disciples who are dazzled with first appearances. (2) After the cup of affliction comes the cup of consolation. (3) The cup of glory. 2. The table of inward experience. (1) The first cup is the bitter cup of conviction. (2) This gives place to the cup of forgiving love. (3) The cup of everlasting bliss. 3. The table of communion. (1) The cup of communion with Christ in His sufferings. (2) The cup of His labours. (3) The cup of good wine, communion with Christ in His resurrection and triumphs. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The feast of the Lord*:—I. FOR THE BELIEVER CHRIST KEEPS THE BEST WINE TILL THE LAST. 1. There are some of God's best beloved who have never known what it is to get out of the depths of poverty, affliction, profitless toil, to whom it will indeed be true, when death gives them their discharge, that Christ has kept the good wine till the last—riches, happiness, rest. 2. This will be equally true of God's favoured ones. The most highly favoured, who had been caught up to the third heaven, declared that he only saw through a glass darkly, and that there was a higher heaven yet. There are many aspects of the heavenly state, and in each of these the principle of the text holds good. 1. Here on earth the believer enters into rest by faith, and enjoys the peace which passeth all understanding. But drink of that as we may, the good wine has yet to come. The present peace is dashed by cares and doubts and disquietudes. 2. Heaven is a place of holy company. Here we have some of that wine, but our companions are compassed with infirmity. There the just are made perfect. 3. In heaven there is perfect knowledge. On earth we know much that makes us happy, but heaven is a place of complete and endless manifestations and joys. II. CHRIST'S REASONS FOR DOING THIS. 1. To make a broad distinction between His dealings and Satan's. 2. Because it is His good pleasure. 3. That He may give us an appetite for the good wine. 4. That He may be glorified by the trial of your faith. III. LESSONS: 1. Hasten towards the place where the good wine is kept. 2. If the best things are to come, let us not be discontented. 3. Why should we envy the worldling? (*Ibid.*) *Christ's method and the world's*:—I. THE WORLD'S METHOD IS TO GIVE THE GOOD WINE FIRST. 1. The gay world, to the young, presents the appearance of a feast where everything is provided that can please the eye and gratify the taste. But experience strips off the disguise. Enjoyment brings satiety, and long ere the cup is drained the soul turns from it in dislike. There is not a more miserable creature than the man to whom the world has given all its blessings and has nothing more to promise. The novelty of this world's pleasures is their

greatest charm. 2. Take the case of the drunkard. He is dissatisfied with the low life of drudgery he leads, and pants after a higher life and a freer atmosphere. So he drinks to drown his sorrows and to promote his joy. But the hour of elation passes, and leaves a grievous sense of bodily discomfort and a profound sense of self-contempt. More so with the confirmed drunkard. It is long since he drank all the good wine which his lust could give him; and now he is drinking the bitter dregs of the wretched wine which "biteth like a serpent," &c. There was a time when the tottering frame was instinct with health and vigour, and the palsied hand had a grip of iron, and the bloated face was full of comeliness and intelligence. 3. Nor is it otherwise with the avaricious man. How precious was the first piece of money that came long ago as a reward of industry. But as he drank deep of the golden cup of wealth the first fresh glow of happiness disappeared. Care and anxiety grew with fortune, and wants with the means of gratifying them. 4. So with the ambitious man. The first draught of ambition's cup is indeed the sweetest; all that follows is often bitterness and loneliness. The fruit is fair to the eye; but in the mouth it crumbles into ashes. It lures but to disappoint; it tempts but to betray. II. OUR LORD'S METHOD IS TO GIVE THE BEST WINE LAST. 1. This is illustrated in His own life. He drank the poorest wine first and then the best. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the cursed death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. 2. So with the disciples; they drink of His cup and are baptized with His baptism. The law of His kingdom is first the cross, and then the crown; first suffering, and therefore glory. His blessings are not like random sunbursts through the clouds, or the irregular overflowing of an intermittent spring, but form parts of a gradually unfolding series. They are bestowed in proportion as our necessities arise and our faculties expand. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The best last:*—The world presents us with fair language, promising hopes, convenient fortunes, pompous honours, and these are the outside of the bowl; but when it is swallowed, these dissolve in an instant. Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face, and honey in the lips, but when we "have well drunk," then comes "that which is worse," a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a caitiff disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when, after the manner of purifying of the Christians, we fill our waterpots with water, watering our couch with our tears, then Christ turns our water into wine—first penitents and then communicants—first waters of sorrow and then the wine of the chalice; for Jesus keeps the best wine to the last, not only because of the direct reservation of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory, but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays, such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward. (*Jeremy Taylor.*) **Well drunk.**—*Taste educated:*—At first the palate distinguishes with the utmost nicety the quality of the wine; but afterwards, as more of it is drunk, the keen edge of the taste is blunted, and it cannot distinguish between the different kinds, so that an inferior wine at this stage might be substituted for a superior one without the guests being any the wiser. The extraordinary pitch of perfection to which the sense of taste may be educated is shown by the experience of those who are employed, in docks and warehouses, to discriminate between samples of different kinds of wine and tea; but these men use the utmost caution in the exercise of their peculiar gift. They are careful only to employ a very small quantity of the article experimented upon; and they confine their trials within very narrow limits. Excess or familiarity destroys the sensitiveness of the nerves, and tends to deaden the impressions produced upon them. So alive are some musicians to this physiological fact, that they will not touch an instrument that is out of tune, lest their sense of harmony should be impaired. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*)

Ver. 11. **This beginning of miracles.**—*The miracles of Christ:*—Miracles are not only a proof but a part of revelation, and carry their own weight of truth quite independent of their testimony to the authority of the whole. Christ's miracles—I. IDENTIFY THE GOD OF NATURE WITH THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPEL, and show that the Word was God, and that all things were made by Him. Believers in Christ do not need their witness, but should follow up their teaching, and study in nature the wisdom and power and goodness of Christ. II. ILLUSTRATE THE WIDE BENEFICENCE OF THE GOSPEL. They would have been equally cogent as proofs of His Divine authority if there had been no element of mercy in them; and it is humiliating to

reflect that had they been miracles of judgment the people would have been more willing to listen to His words. As it was, they were the outcome of the wealth of compassion that filled His heart, and teach us something of the present range of His love. III. PROVE THE ILLIMITABLE POWER BY WHICH EVERY GOSPEL PURPOSE WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED. The words, the promise, and the power that performs are eternally linked together. No power, therefore, can prevent the accomplishment of the great purposes of salvation. All fears, then, should be banished. There is no danger that the miracles of Christ do not prove to be under His control. IV. SHOW THE DIVINE EARNESTNESS WITH WHICH GOD PRESSES UPON THE ATTENTION OF SINFUL MEN THE CLAIMS AND MERCY OF HIS GOSPEL. (*W. H. King.*) *The miracles of nature:*—Men cry out for signs, but we may see miracles enough every day. I read that Aaron's rod budded, and I am astonished. But last spring I saw a cause of greater astonishment—thousands of bare rods budding and blooming blossoms in the hedges. I saw no one do it, and yet the trees were being daily clothed with thicker foliage. Was not that wonderful? I read that the manna came down daily from heaven to the wilderness, and I am amazed. But I see a cause of greater amazement every year: I see your bread coming, not down from heaven, but up from the earth, a much more unlikely place, every day in the spring. Is not that wonderful? I read that Elijah, hiding by the brook Cherith, was daily fed by two carnivorous ravens, and I am filled with wonder. But there is a cause of much greater wonderment in the fact that millions upon millions are daily fed with abundance of bread and meat, without a single raven under God's sun to cater for them. I read that Jesus Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes, and that the fragments that remained filled twelve baskets full—there was more at the end of the meal than at the beginning. But this year I witnessed a greater miracle: I saw the barley and the wheat increasing, "some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold"; and the loaves and the fishes, notwithstanding the enormous consumption, are more numerous to-day than they have ever been before. Nature is a standing miracle. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The beginning of miracles:*—There are five reasons why this should be the first. 1. As marriage was the first institution ordained by God, so at a marriage was Christ's first miracle. 2. As Christ had showed Himself miraculous a little while ago by a fast, so He doth now by an extraordinary provision at a feast. When He would not makes stones bread, it was not because He could not. 3. He would not make stones into bread to satisfy Satan, but He was willing to turn water into wine to show forth His glory. 4. The first miracle wrought in the world by man was transformation (Exod. vii. 9), and the first miracle wrought by the Son of Man was of the same nature. 5. The first time you hear of John the Baptist, you hear of his strict diet, and so the first time you hear of Christ in His public ministry, you hear of Him at a marriage feast. (*Lightfoot.*) This miracle cannot but have a representative character. We may observe—I. ITS ESSENTIAL CHARACTER. A sign of sovereign power wrought on inorganic nature, not on a living body. II. ITS CIRCUMSTANTIAL CHARACTER. The change of the simpler to the richer element. In this respect it may be contrasted with the first public miracle of Moses, which commences the record of Old Testament miracles. III. ITS MORAL CHARACTER. 1. The answer of love to faith. 2. Ministering to human joy in one of its simplest and most natural forms (*cf.* Matt. xi. 18, 19). In each respect the character of the sign answers to the general character of Christ as—1. A new creation. 2. A transfiguration of the ceremonial law into a spiritual gospel. 3. An ennobling of the whole life. In addition, notice that the scene of the sign—a marriage feast—is that under which the accomplishment of Christ's work is most characteristically prefigured (chap. iii. 29; Matt. xxii. 2, xxv. 1; Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 2). (*Bishop Westcott.*) *The water made wine:*—Let us now look at the FACT, the mode, and the motive of this miraculous act. That it was a miracle, a creation-miracle, the turning of water into wine, stands on the face of the record. Every attempt to reconcile belief in the record with an evasion of the creative act implied in it has been a failure. Such suppositions as that the spiritual elevation of the guests under the power of the Lord's discourse made them think that to be wine which was only water (Ewald), or that He gave to that which still remained water the force and sap of wine (Neander) or even that this was a supply of wine produced in the ordinary way and providentially arriving in the nick of time at the believing prayer or omniscient foresight of the Saviour (Weiss), will not satisfy the fact, nor the plain and honest meaning of the recording Evangelist, an eye-witness of the wonder. Some of those who rest in the fact of the miracle and regard it as creative have vainly attempted to conceive and describe the MODE in which it was wrought. It

has long been usual to suggest that this act may be thought of on the analogy of nature's work; that what was done here in a moment was the same thing which is done in countless vineyards year by year. "The essence of the miracle," says Olshausen, "consists in divinely effecting the acceleration of the natural process." So also Augustine long ago. The analogy is tempting, but we gain nothing by it as an explanation. Indeed, it is impossible, and after all inept. There is no real parallel. We can trace these processes in nature; but here we can trace no process. We should have to imagine not only accelerated processes of nature, but also those artificial changes, anticipated and condensed, by which the fruit of the vine becomes a beverage—the ripening of the wine as well as of the grape. There are no natural laws by which water in a well or in a jar will change into wine. Nature never would do this, however long time you gave her. Finally, for the PURPOSE. One of the main difficulties, according to some expositors, is the absence of sufficient motive. This is a miracle, they say, without a moral end. It is placed at the outset of the Fourth Gospel, with the evident intention of showing—1. That Jesus struck a key-note to His ministry so entirely contrasted with that of the Baptist, whose disciples these first followers of Jesus had originally been. 2. Nor can the objection about the triviality of the occasion justify itself, as if it were the mere relieving of a dinner-table dilemma. Rather the reverse is the true inference. The gracious Lord has sympathy with all needs, the finer as well as the commoner. He who multiplied the loaves for the relief of a hungry congregation might increase the store of wine for the resolving of a social perplexity. The minor graces and courtesies of life are taken account of, in Christianity, as well as the stern realities. 3. But, indeed, to search for an exact necessity as motive here is to miss the whole point. These wedding guests could have done without more and better wine. It is a miracle of superfluity if you will. The well-spring of grace and truth in Jesus Christ overflows at the first onset. He is come to give life, and more abundant. It is placed in the front of the miracle-record not merely to point a contrast between the Saviour's ministry and that of the Baptist, but to show how the new economy surpasses the old. This whole transaction reveals His glory as the Bringer of the final and highest dispensation. In Jesus Christ, God "has kept His best till last." In fine, it is plainly meant that we should see in this work an epitome of the Lord's entire miraculous activity. In it, all His glory is His grace and love. In the Nature miracles we are to note how always He is "not ministered unto, but ministers." (*J. Laidlaw, D.D.*)

The beginning of miracles:—All beginnings have a wonderful interest to us. There is a peculiar pleasure in tracing a broad deep river, that bears upon its bosom the commerce of a nation, to its source far up among the mountains, in a little well whose overflowing waters a child's hand could stop; or in going back to the origin of a mighty nation like the Roman, in the drifting ashore, at the foot of the Palatine Hill, of the ark that contained the infant founders. Institutions, social or benevolent, that have been established for ages, derive a fresh charm from the consideration of their first feeble commencement, and the contrast between what they were then and what they are now. There is a mystery about a cloud coming all at once into the blue sky, a star appearing suddenly amid the twilight shades, a spring welling up in the midst of a sandy plain. It seems as if something new were being created before our eyes. A sense of awe comes over us, as if brought into contact with another world. I have had this curious feeling when coming unexpectedly upon the habitat of a very rare plant. This peculiar charm of novelty belongs especially to the origin of sacred institutions—to the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the performance of the first miracle, the formation of the Christian Church, and the production of the New Testament writings. The thought that there was a time when these things had no existence, that for thirty years Jesus wrought no miracle, that the first believers in the gospel in Judea, Corinth, and Rome had no New Testament, gives a vividness to the feelings with which we regard them, brings back the freshness that has evaporated with long familiarity. The miracle of Cana comes into the midst of the previous natural life of Jesus like a star out of the blue profound, like a well out of the dry mountain side, like a rare, unknown flower appearing among the common indigenous plants of a spot. It brings us out of the narrow wall that hems us round, to the verge of God's infinity, where we can look over into the fathomless gulf. It is the first act of the new creation, in which a new life-potency entered into what at the time existed, and called forth a new development. It gave to the stream of the world's course a new motion and a new direction, without which it would have become a stagnant bog—a dead sea. It is the base of that wonderful miracle structure

of the gospel, of which the resurrection is the pinnacle. (*H. Macmillan, D.D.*) *The first miracle*:—How well fitted this miracle is, in its character, to introduce the train which succeeded it; to open the wonderful order of instructions, doctrines, and works which was afterwards developed; to be, as it was, the first miracle. The glory of the natural day is not manifested forth in the morning by a blaze of meridian splendour. The light is mild and soft which first peeps from behind the hill-tops, or flushes from the bed of ocean. So it was with "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." Its first manifestation by miracle was like the spreading dawn. It blended with the joyous accompaniments of a festive occasion and the kind sympathies of domestic life. It came like a nuptial blessing to a young pair who were just commencing the journey of life together. By-and-by we shall see it among the sick, the maimed, and the blind, healing infirmities, and restoring the lost faculties of sense. By-and-by we shall see it in the dark death chamber and the darker tomb, dispelling the darkness and raising the dead. Then we shall find no want of elevation. Then our minds will be filled and overpowered by its sublimity. But now let us do justice to its loveliness, and admire its first approach to the children of men. (*F. W. P. Greenwood, D.D.*) *Christ's first miracles*:—The first of a series gives the key to the whole. The first animals or plants have been combining types, *i.e.*, have united in themselves the characters of several families now widely separated. So the earliest human lives were typical. The first notes of a song suggest all that is necessary to make the harmony. And the first miracle enters into all the other miracles that Jesus did, and combines in itself the elements of them all. 1. It is a work of mercy. 2. It is an emblem of a higher spiritual blessing. 3. It is a prophecy of the new genesis. Like an illuminated initial letter, which contains in itself an illustrated epitome of the contents of the whole chronicle, it appropiately begins the series of Christ's beneficent works by a beautiful picture of the nature and design of them all. I. IT LINKS THE WORK OF THE SECOND ADAM WITH THAT OF THE FIRST. Adam's disobedience turned paradise into a wilderness. Christ's obedience turns the wilderness into paradise. II. IT SHOWS THE RESTORATION OF NATURE AS WELL AS HUMANITY. Man's sin brought barrenness: Christ's work restores fruitfulness. And as nature shared the effects of the fall with man, it will participate also in the effects of redemption. This miracle is the first step in the process. III. IT COMBINES THE GOSPEL WITH THE PRECEDING DISPENSATIONS. Moses could only sweeten the waters of Marah—only ameliorate the bitter spring of human sin, and reform men. Jesus turns the water into wine and regenerates men. IV. THE OCCASION WAS ONE OF TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE. In this respect it is the first in order of rank as well as time. 1. As a human institution marriage stands at the head of all others, originating in paradise and surviving the wreck of the fall. 2. As a type of heavenly mystery it stands first in importance and significance. (1) The union of those attributes of love and power in God, from which creation had its birth and has its continuance. (2) The union of Divine influences and human experiences in the soul which forms the kingdom of heaven within. (3) The union of the Saviour and the Church. V. THE MIRACLE WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT OF ALL, if any gradation can be allowed. There was here no co-operation of faith. It was not the purification and assistance of a natural function, but a creation *de novo*. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The miracle as a sign*:—I. OF CHRIST'S MISSION. It was none the less significant because wrought for a temporary purpose. Man's need of Christ appears in trifling as well as conspicuous ways. Food is commonplace, but it is an universal need. 1. The act was significant of the joyous and abundant feast He was about to spread for all people. 2. The moment in which it was wrought, when the wine had failed, is a sign of the fact that Christ waits till man's own powers are exhausted before giving His grace. Hence He delayed His advent till the world was exhausted with its efforts to find peace and holiness. The pagan religions were exhausted. Philosophy had failed to solve the problems of life. So we do not receive the fulness of Christ till convinced of our helplessness and ready to depend on Divine grace. 3. The nature of the miracle, the creation of the wine out of water, not out of nothing, is a sign that—(1) He had come not to create a new world, but to transform the old; (2) Not to establish a new religion, but to transform Judaism; (3) Not to produce new characters, but to regenerate sinners. He has poor material to work upon. Human nature is as weak and cold as water. But as He made good and warming wine, so He will strengthen our humanity and fill it with the love of God. II. OF THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST. 1. Of His grace and glory (chap. i. 14, 17). 2. Of His naturalness. He was thoroughly at home, and revealed the natural union of a pure humanity with a Divine life; sympathizing

with human joys, as at Bethany with human griefs. Religion does not break the sweet ties which God has formed between man and man. 3. Of His mindfulness of His great object. We see this in His conversation with His mother, which shows us to remember in society that the chief end of man is to glorify God, and that no earthly joy or work must be allowed to unfit us for that. (*G. T. Purves.*) *The miracle as a sign*:—In respect of—I. NATURE. 1. It was a miracle in itself, apart from all surrounding circumstances. What is an everyday occurrence in one climate may be a rare wonder in another. To an inhabitant of the tropic the freezing of water would be a miracle. The feats of a chemist would pass for supernatural in the first, but be put down as strictly natural in the nineteenth century. But Christ's miracles are miracles all the world over and all the ages through. 2. The miracle was not performed till nature was exhausted. His hour did not come till the wine had actually failed. This always characterizes His interpositions. All He cured were incurable. This is a sign that we may calculate on His presence in extremity. When your earthly wine is all gone, He will come to your relief. 3. This miracle in its results is repeated every year. Miracles are explanatory notes revealing the secret processes of material phenomena, signs of the power that is everywhere and always at work. He turned the water into wine once; He does so still. II. SOCIETY. 1. It was performed in a wedding. John the Baptist was an ascetic; will Christ be one? The Jews looked for a king; will Christ then claim the throne? Christ was not an ascetic, for He went to a wedding. He was not a dignitary, for it was a wedding of ordinary people. This was a sign then that He belonged to Society. 2. The miracle was performed at the feast. Jesus was always the antagonist of suffering and the source of joy. The thing here signified is that if there is a time to weep there is also a time to rejoice. 3. It was performed at a marriage feast for the purpose of beneficence, to point out the difference between the Old Testament miracles and those of the New, and to show the different character of the two dispensations. 4. It was a miracle of luxury. Wine was not needful to maintain life; loaves and fishes were. This is a sign then that man does not live by bread alone, but is permitted to go after the beautiful in every form. Is it sinful to have pictures whilst the heathen be unreclaimed? There is no reason why Englishmen should be half-civilized because Kaffirs are altogether barbarous. Because the potato is the more useful plant of the two, that is not to say that the rose is unnecessary. 5. The miracle is a sign that self-restraint should be practiced in the midst of abundance. III. CHRIST'S PERSON. 1. He had not to acquire glory, but only to manifest it. He manifested it here as the Sovereign of nature. 2. As a consequence His disciples believed in Him. They did so before. This confirmed them. Miracles cannot convince unbelievers. It was the disciples, not the guests, who believed. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The first miracle of Christ the speaking expression of His life and work*:—I. OF HIS PERSON, in which the earthly human nature becomes a heavenly: the essential, genuine Vine (chap. xv. 1). II. OF THE POWER OF HIS LOVE which transformed the water of earthly need into the wine of heavenly joy: brings forth judgment unto victory, makes blessedness out of Divine sorrow. III. OF HIS DIVINE WORKS, in which is everywhere reflected His main work of bringing to pass the new birth of mankind from the earthly kingdom into the heavenly. IV. OF HIS LAST WORK. The glorification of the world. (*J. P. Lange.*) *The beginning of signs: or the sacredness of common life*:—I. CHRIST'S SYMPATHY WITH THE RELATIONSHIPS AND GLADNESS OF MAN'S LIFE. That was a new thing in the world, the sign of a new spirit that was to pervade mankind. There is a strong tendency in human nature to associate lofty morality with rigorous sternness of life: the prophets; John the Baptist; monks. But here Christ mingles with the gladness of a wedding feast, and exerts His supernatural power to supply a festive need. This implied—1. That earthly life was to be glorified by the heavenly. 2. That human love is not to be carnalized, but made Divine. 3. That human relationships do not clash with the love of God, but are to become powerful instruments for aiding it. 4. That no sphere is too common for Christ to sanctify. II. CHRIST BESTOWED ON COMMON THINGS A HIGHER POWER IN ORDER TO AWAKEN HUMAN GLADNESS. This signifies the elevation by Him of the natural into the Divine, of the common into the uncommon. Here again was a new thing to the world. To Christ's eye nothing was commonplace; not the lowest man nor the plainest life. His mission was to glorify the old and familiar. III. Combining these two features, we see that LIFE IN ALL ITS COMMON RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMON TOILS IS TO BE A MANIFESTATION AND SERVICE OF CHRIST. In human friendship we are to serve Christ, and in our daily work to glorify Him. Life throughout, with

its joys and sorrows, is to be transformed. How is this to be done? Notice—1. That the character of a man's deeds is determined by their inner motive, not by their outward form. 2. This sanctity is attained through the power of Christ's love. IV. THE RESULTS WHICH WOULD FLOW FROM THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS. 1. Life would become a constant manifestation of Christ. 2. Life would be a constant education for the heavenly. 3. It would give us the assurance of eternal fellowship. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Miracles as signs*:—The term "sign" denotes in its simplest usage—1. A means of identification (Luke ii. 12; 2 Thess. iii. 17). 2. A proof or evidence furnished by one set of facts to the reality and genuineness of another (2 Cor. xii. 12). 3. A symbol or emblem (Ezek. iv. 3). Now the miracles of Christ were signs in all these three senses. They identified Him as the Messiah foretold in prophecy; they authenticated Him as the Son of God, and furnished evidence of the truth of the claims which He put forth; and they were emblems in the material sphere of the blessings which He came to bestow in the spiritual, and of the manner in which they were to be received by those whom He designed to benefit. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) **Manifested forth His glory.**—*The first miracle an Epiphany of Christ*:—This glory is undoubtedly Christ's Divine glory "full of grace and truth"; the effulgence of His perfections translated so as to bring them within the reach of sense. And when John says that Christ manifested forth His glory he implies that although it had been almost entirely hidden for years, yet, like the sun behind the clouds, it had all along been lying below the surface. The miracle rolled away the clouds from the face of the sun. I. CHRIST'S GLORY WAS SEEN IN HIS ENTIRE CONTROL OVER NATURE. Power over nature always excites our admiration. But why is it that the man of science, whose genius can tame or discipline steam or electricity, wins so deep and universal an enthusiasm? Not because the feat has the charm of novelty, nor because it is an enrichment of man's life and an addition to his comfort, but because there is in him, at an immeasurable distance, an approximation to God. And yet we can explain it by natural causes which fall within the range of experience. But a miracle passes that line. And since we know that order is a principle which belongs to the very life of the Creator as well as to His administration, we conclude that He will not depart from His ordinary rules without some reason, and that no one but Himself can dispense with them. And thus in a miracle God is actively present, not as authorizing anarchy, but suspending some lower law to give play to some higher. The outward miracle arrests man's reason and imagination to behold in it the manifested glory of the Lord of Nature. Had we witnessed it, should we have recognized it as what it was? Yes, if we can say with the *Te Deum* that earth as well as heaven is full of the majesty of God's glory. No, if we see in nature only the operation of self-existent laws. II. THE GLORY OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH, an unveiling of the laws whereby the King of the new spiritual empire would govern His subjects. 1. Nature is ever being silently changed into something higher and better than when Christ found it. What is Holy Scripture but the water of what might have been a human literature changed by the Spirit of Christ into the inspired Word of God? That which was mere good-nature becomes Divine charity by grace: that which was only well-exercised reason or far-sighted judgment becomes faith: all the natural virtues are transformed into the spiritual. So it was at the first. The Sanhedrim were perplexed at the intellectual and moral power of the illiterate apostles. The Roman proconsuls were bewildered at the majestic constancy of poor men and weak women and children. And so it is now. 2. The law of continuous improvement from good to better and from better to best. The real Giver of the good wine does not fascinate by the charm of His earliest gifts and then give to the jaded faculties His poorer graces. In His service the spiritual senses do not follow the law of bodily decay, they gain with advancing years, and require and receive higher nutriment. III. THE GLORY OF HIS CONDESCENDING AND TENDER CHARITY. 1. Christ here began that life of condescension before men which was involved in His incarnation, and which He followed heedless of slander and misconstruction. 2. Christ here shot forth a ray of that glorious love which redeemed the world. His whole action is marked with tender consideration; He saves this poor couple from the disappointment of being unable to entertain their friends; He adds to their store, but in such a manner as to lay them under no embarrassing obligation to Himself. So God bestows His blessings so unobtrusively that we forget the Giver, but here, as ever, would teach us to imitate Him when we bestow ours. (*Canon Liddon.*) *The lesson of Epiphany—peace and plenty through Christ*:—Consider this miracle in the light of the service for the Second Sunday in Epiphany. I. THE COLLECT, which is a prayer for peace.

The Collects are supposed to collect the subject of the Gospel and Epistle. But the gospel is a miracle of plenty, a contrasted idea to that of peace. There may be lavish plenty when there is no peace—there may be deep peace when there is little plenty. And yet in the deepest, truest sense of the terms they are one. Their separation is only temporary and accidental. For what is peace? Perfectly satisfied desire. Disquiet is want of satisfaction. But in spiritual and intelligent creatures there must be the satisfaction of the whole nature. If man be body, spirit, and soul, if any one of these be unsatisfied, he cannot be at rest. In vain you satisfy animal appetite and intellectual craving, if the hunger of the spirit be unappeased. And men are not at peace, because of the first great mistake that man made in his first sin when he withdrew the food for his soul. This food is God. Man's sin was the determination to have the feast of body and mind without this spiritual element, and the sin and misery of man ever since has been to sit down to a banquet from which he has banished God. And God forbid that without Him there should ever be peace: because it is the lack of this plenty disquieting his soul that leads him to God. God teaches this truth in—1. His Word. 2. His providence. Lest man should lose himself in sensual delights God drove him from Eden. Sometimes God shows us how poor the gift is without the Giver; sometimes how blessed the Giver is without the gift, and better by giving Himself with the gift. This is the highest of all states, even heaven itself. This the true peace and plenty our Father meant us to have. It is our sin that has set them in antagonism. II. Now turn to the GOSPEL. We see Christ giving back to men the lacking plenty of their feasts. The wine had run low. He renews it in lavish abundance that He may tell us in symbol that for the renovated man the amplest enjoyment of God's gift is consistent with perfect peace. Christ has come to tell us that we need Him and may have Him in all our joys. III. THE EPISTLE teaches us that there is an Epiphany amongst men as there was once an Epiphany to men. In the Gospel Christ gave Himself and His best gift to us. In the Epistle Christ calls upon us to show Him forth to men by giving ourselves and our gifts to others. That is the very reason He gave Himself to us. "Freely ye have received; freely give"; fill to the brim the means of helping another's need: your material, intellectual, and spiritual wealth. (*Bp. Magee.*) *The glory of the Virgin Mother*:—1. For thirty years Christ had done no miracle: which is itself worthy to be called a miracle. He was content to live in obscurity till His hour was come. This is true greatness. In all the works of God there is a conspicuous absence of haste. Six slow days and nights of creative force before man was made. Two thousand years to discipline and form a Jewish people: four thousand years of darkness, ignorance, and crime before the fulness of the time. Whatever contradicts the Divine plan must pay the price of haste—brief duration. 2. St. Paul speaks of the glory of woman as distinct from that of man. Their provinces are not the same, and the qualities which are prominent and beautiful in the one are the reverse in the other. The glory of her who was highly favoured among women was different from that of her Son in degree—the one was human, the other was more: in order the one manifesting the grace of womanhood, the other the majesty and wisdom of manhood in which God dwelt. The glory of the Virgin consisted in—I. HER CONSIDERATENESS. There is gentle womanly tact in the words "They have no wine." Unselfish thoughtfulness about other's comforts; delicate anxiety to save a straitened family from the exposure of their poverty. So in old times, with thoughtful hospitality, Rebekah offered water to Abraham's wayworn servant. So Martha showed her devotion even to excess. So the women ministered of their substance. II. SUBMISSION. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Here is the true spirit of obedience. Not slavishness, but loyalty to and trust in a person whom we reverence. Submission at the outset of the Bible is revealed as woman's lot and destiny. The curse of obedience, as that of labour, transformed by Christ into a blessing. This blessing twofold. 1. Freedom from doubt. Mary felt no perplexity at the rebuke. A more masculine mind would have been made sullen and sceptical. Mary could not understand, but she could trust and wait. So with the Syro-Phœnician woman. Mental doubt rarely touches women. Soldiers and sailors do not doubt. Prompt, unquestioning obedience is the soil for faith. 2. Prevailing power with God. The Saviour's look promised, probably, more than His words. Prayer is a deep mystery to the masculine intellect. "How," says Logic, "can man's will modify the will of God? Where, then, lies the use of it?" But there is something mightier than intellect, truer than logic—the faith that works by love. III. PURITY OF HEART AND LIFE. 1. Gradually the recognition of this became idolatry. Why? Before

Christ the qualities honoured as Divine were probably masculine—Courage, Wisdom, Truth, Strength. But Christ proclaimed Meekness, Obedience, Affection, Purity—graces distinctly feminine. Men sought to give these new ideas embodiment, and they found them embodied in the Virgin Mother. 2. The only corrective for this idolatry is the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ. His heart had in it the blended qualities of both sexes, and when we have learned that in Christ there is all that is manly and all that is womanly, we are safe from Mariolatry. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The glory of the Divine Son*:—I. THIS GLORY DID NOT BEGIN WITH THE MIRACLE, THE MIRACLE ONLY MANIFESTED IT. And if instead of rousing men to see the glory of Christ the miracle merely fastened attention on itself, the whole intention of a miracle is lost. To the wise man the lightning only manifests the electric force which is everywhere, and which for one moment has become visible. As often as he sees it it reminds him that the lightning slumbers in the dew-drop, in the mist, and in the cloud, and binds together every atom of water that he uses in daily life. But to the vulgar mind the lightning is unique, a something which has no existence until it appears. So to the half-believer a miracle is the one solitary evidence of God. But to the true disciple a miracle only manifests the power and love which are at work everywhere. It is not more glory, but only glory more manifested when water at His bidding passes at once into wine. And if you do not feel as David felt, God's presence in the annual miracle, and that it is God which in the vintage causeth wine to make glad the heart of man, this miracle would not have given you conviction of His presence. "If you hear not Moses and the prophets," &c. This deep truth of miracles most men miss. They believe that Jesus was Divine because He worked miracles. But it is by power less Divine that the same Being bears witness to truth, forgives His enemies, makes it His meat and drink to do His Father's will? II. IT WAS THE GLORY OF CHRIST TO DECLARE THE SACREDNESS OF ALL THINGS NATURAL. 1. All natural relationships. John the Baptist's was the highest form of religious life known to Israel. His was a life of solitariness. Christ goes to a marriage to declare the sacredness of feelings which had been reckoned carnal and low. For it is through our human affections that the soul first yearns after God, and it is to them that the Infinite reveals Himself: and by an earthly relationship God has typified to us the only true espousal—the marriage of the soul to her eternal Lord. 2. The sacredness of all natural enjoyments. To say that this was a religious ceremony is sophistry; and to say that although Christ was there it would not be safe for us to go, is to overlook the fact that His disciples were there. No! the temptation was past, the ministry of John was over; and now the Bridegroom comes into the world in the true glory of the Messiah—not in a life of asceticism, but in a life of godliness; not separating from life, but consecrating it. The ascetic life is more striking, easier, and more reputable. But the life of Him who was called "a man gluttonous and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," was far harder, but it was heavenlier. (*Ibid.*) *The manifestation of Christ's glory*:—I. The manifestation of Jesus Christ is the only true essence of our Christianity. II. The manifestation of Jesus Christ is the true evidence of our Christianity. III. The manifestation of Christ to others is the one great evangelistic duty of the Christian and of the Church. (*Bishop Barry.*) *The peculiar glory of Christ*:—Moses was not said to manifest his glory when he turned water into blood; nor Paul, nor Peter, nor any of the apostles, to manifest their glory in the miracles which they wrought. Why this peculiarity of language in the case of Christ? Was it not from the peculiarity of His person—God as well as man? (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) *The glory of conquest*:—As the first ray of the morning reveals the glorious light which is soon to flood heaven and earth, so the first miracle of Jesus revealed the glory of Him who had come to subdue all things unto Himself. (*G. T. Purves.*) *Christ at a wedding*:—You nowhere read of His being at a funeral. Why? Because marriage belongs to the primeval order of creation, but funerals do not. Marriage is a part of the original programme of the universe, but death is an intrusion. He, therefore, went to a marriage to vindicate the Divine order; He did not attend funerals because they are incursions upon that order. He was the Everlasting Life, and consequently could not join in the procession of death. Indeed, each time He met death in His sojourn through the world, He could not but grapple with him and compel him to give up his prey. (*J. C. Jones.*)

Ver. 12. **After this, He went down into Capernaum.**—*Christ at Capernaum*:—It is not needful to inquire what His errand was there, and upon what occasion His

mother and brethren went with Him; whether because Joseph was now dead, and so He took care of His mother, or because they would convey Him on His way, or because His brethren were to go up to Jerusalem with Him; only this voyage was before that (Matt. iv. 13), when He came to dwell in Capernaum, for then John was cast in prison (Matt. iv. 12), but now he was not (John iii. 24). I. Christ was content to submit Himself to the wanting of a certain abode and settled dwelling in the world, that He might sanctify our pilgrimage and tossed condition to us, and to invite His followers willingly to be removed from place to place, as He hath service for them. So much are we taught by this His removal. II. Christ hath errands in eminent places as well as obscure, and will not despise them for their eminency more than the base for their baseness; and He can make the work of His kingdom in a land advance from obscure beginnings and places, to be more eminent and conspicuous. So much may we gather from Christ's going out of obscure Cana to Capernaum, a chief city in Galilee. III. As it is wisdom in Christ's own to go still in His company, so others also may be with Him so long as His way and theirs lieth together, or when He is working gloriously and His gospel hath credit; for, after this miracle, we find not only His mother and disciples, but His brethren or kinsfolk with Him, who yet believed not in Him (John vii. 5). IV. Christ may stay longer or shorter while, and do little or much in a place, as He pleaseth; and particularly He stayeth or removeth according as may contribute to advance the great work of His glory and of sinners' salvation; for He continued there not many days, as having more to do at this time in Jerusalem. (*D. Dyke.*)

Vers. 13–17. The Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. *Christ's first passover*:—I. HIS ATTENDANCE AT THE PASSOVER. One of the three great annual festivals which all males were required to attend. None excused but the sick and the disabled. God made the ordinance peremptory, to teach—(1) That His worship and service were the chief things. (2) That God's house was to be the centre of the moral universe, and that all nations would flow to it. Christ's attendance showed—1. His fulfilling of all righteousness. He came not to destroy. 2. His communion with believers of the Old Testament. Partaking of their sacraments, He declared Himself of one body and spirit with them, just as by instituting sacraments for New Testament believers He declared Himself of one body and spirit with them. Thus Christ is the bond of both dispensations. 3. Himself and His mission to the nation. The promise was that He should come to His temple. Here the people could identify Him if they chose. II. THE CONDITION IN WHICH HE FOUND THE TEMPLE, AND HIS INTERFERENCE THEREWITH. The market was going on in the outer courts of the Gentiles. The sheep, &c., were sold there to save the inconvenience of individual Jews bringing their offerings from a distance. The money-changers were there, to exchange foreign money for the half-shekel of the sanctuary. The abuse consisted in making God's house a house of merchandize, in which the priests themselves profited. Christ interfered to show His official assumption and exercise of legitimate authority in His own house. The cattle were driven out, the money-tables overthrown; but the doves ordered to be taken away, so that they might not be harmed. Nothing harmful or cruel was done. In this interference we see His glory as the "Son of God" and His administrative authority as "King of Israel." Unsupported Himself, all fled before Him. III. THE CONVICTION WROUGHT IN THE MINDS OF HIS SERVANTS (ver. 17). 1. We have here the love of Christ, and His earnestness for their salvation and God's glory: typical of His whole work. 2. Christ's example to us. (1) Our zeal must begin with ourselves. (2) Must concern itself with God's honour and man's salvation. (3) Must be actuated by love. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The temple market*:—I. THE MARKET. 1. Described. Jerusalem was in all its glory. Its inhabitants were astir in the early morning, enjoying the cool of the day and the excitement of the season. The streets were blocked by crowds from all parts, who had to make their way to the temple past flocks of sheep and droves of cattle. Sellers of all possible wares beset the pilgrim, for the feasts were the traders' harvests. Inside the temple space the noise and pressure were, if possible, worse. The outer court was in part covered with pens for sheep and oxen. It was, in fact, the yearly fair of Jerusalem, and the crowds added to the din and tumult, till the services in the neighbouring courts were sadly disturbed. 2. Accounted for. It seems strange that the priests should have permitted it, but the explanation throws light on Christ's conduct. The priests made pecuniary profit of it. The sale of doves was almost wholly in

their hands, and the rent for the rest was very large. The money-changers were usurers and tricksters, and augmented the priests' revenue out of their unlawful gains. 3. Christ's indignation was, therefore, natural. He had come fresh from the manifestation of His glory, with all the enthusiasm natural to a Jewish prophet and inspired with His Divine mission, to testify to the nation as a whole where it could be best reached. Behold, then, His Father's house invaded by a troop of mercenaries and hucksters! II. THE EXHIBITION OF CHRIST'S WONDROUS MORAL POWER. There was no physical power displayed, nor any exciting contention with the profaners of the temple. The scourge was only an emblem of power and chastisement, the sight of which was sufficient, and at which they all unresistingly fled. How could one man effect such a clearance, unknown, a Galilean, with no formal authority, priestly power, or following? It was perhaps due to the "solar light" of His countenance, behind which was the unspeakable power of perfect holiness (Matt. xvii. 2), which made Him attractive to the virtuous and devout, but awful to mere money-grubbers. They were dumb and helpless, because conscience-stricken, in the presence of Incarnate Righteousness. III. THE PROFOUND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ACT. Spiritual cleansing. The temple may be considered as a symbol—1. Of the heart defiled by selfishness and sin, to be cleansed by the expulsive power of Christ's love. 2. Of society or the world, to be cleansed by Christ's redeeming grace. 3. Of the Church, to be cleansed from superstition, and worldliness, and bigotry, by truth, purity, and charity. (*J. E. Flower, M.A.*) *The profaned temple*:—I. THE SIGN AND ITS APPLICABILITY. The temple a symbol of the temple of humanity, built of living stones. To cleanse this He entered on His ministry; and if He had a right to do the greater work, He had a right to do the lesser. II. THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE SIGN. 1. All men are created to form part of God's temple. The Divine idea of humanity is an organic whole—Christ the centre, the shrine; human hearts grouped round Him forming the courts. Contrast the ideal with the actual. Yet in the midst of chaos God is working out His purpose, and will not rest till the idea is realized. 2. Men have misused the courts as markets. Commerce is good, but its place is outside the heart, not inside. It defiles when it intrudes on the sanctuary. Yet how hard even in the most sacred seasons to exclude their profane associations. Business for most is more absorbing than God and His will. 3. Christ has power and authority to cleanse the courts. (1) With His scourge He may drive away the property which usurps His Father's place. (2) He may scatter the money-changers' money, and leave him at leisure to reflect without it. (3) He may speak His orders to those who defile the sanctuary with lighter profanations through judgment and disease. 4. The time will come when the temple shall be purified. In the Revelation we see the design perfected. A city without a temple, because itself is a temple. There shall be gold there, and all the good things of the earth shall be sanctified to Divine uses. (*C. A. Goodhart, M.A.*) *The purging of the temple*:—I. APPROPRIATE TO—1. The place: the metropolis, the centre of the Theocracy, the predicted theatre of Messiah's self-revelation (Zech. ii. 10, 11; ix. 9). 2. The time: at the passover, when the paschal lamb, of which He was the antitype, was about to be offered, and when the vast crowd gathered afforded a favourably opportunity for impressing the national mind and conscience. 3. The condition of the temple: whose forecourt, reserved for the worship of proselytes, was transformed into a market and fair under the pretence of religion—a melancholy, because faithful, picture of the secularization of the Jewish religion by the Pharisees. 4. The character of Him who carried it through. The Father's Son had a right to purge His Father's house. II. SUPERNATURAL. As much so as the turning of water into wine. The manifest insufficiency of the means places it in the same category as John xviii. 6. Its suddenness also surprised, and inward consciousness of guilt paralyzed, the traders. Natural and supernatural causes were thus combined. III. SIGNIFICANT. Designed to be a revelation to the ecclesiastical authorities of His Messiahship (Psa. lxix. 9; Mal. iii. 2–6). IV. SUGGESTIVE. Recalling to the disciples the words of the Psalmist, it confirmed their recently formed convictions. V. ALARMING. It startled the Sanhedrim, who recognized the Messianic character of the action, but wanted to know whether He was Messiah. Secretly they must have dreaded this. But because He was different from what they expected, they declined to receive Him. They trifled with their consciences by asking for a sign. They preferred the darkness, although the light had now conspicuously dawned. Lessons: 1. The duty and privileges of the ordinances of religion. Christ at the passover. 2. The need of purity and order in the sanctuary—Christ purging the temple court. 3. The

danger of a worldly spirit intruding into the domain of religion—the traders in the sacred edifice. 4. The propriety of being zealously affected in Divine service—Christ's example. (*T. Whitelaw, M.A.*) *Christ's principles of action:*—Had Christ appeared as a teacher it would have been a great benevolence: but He would hardly have had so wide-spread an influence. Teaching was only one part of His task, the other was to ordain a fellowship. So He needed to appear as the reformer of religion. The temple was the centre of religious life: here then the reformation must begin. See then the principles of Christ as a religious reformer. I. HE DID NOT COME TO DESTROY, BUT TO PURIFY AND FINISH. But why trouble Himself about an institution that was to pass away? (ch. iv. 24). The answer is that Jesus did wish to erect the new on the ruins of the old, but since so much depended on the old, this, when reformed, should attach itself to that. We should be like Christ in this, not to destroy but to reform and build up. II. THE ZEAL OF THE REDEEMER WAS INTENDED TO BANISH EVERYTHING THAT MIGHT ENTANGLE MEN AGAIN IN WORLDLY THOUGHTS AND ANXIETIES. The really devout and upright as well as the frivolous might see no evil nor distracting influence in these things. The temple was large enough. All these arrangements had to do with religious life. Was it not a matter of indifference whether they were carried on within or in the neighbourhood of the temple. Those whose thoughts would be disturbed by them would be disturbed without them. But human prudence is one thing; the judgment of Christ another. Whatever draws men to and keeps men near God must be kept pure and free from desecration. The weakness of the human heart forbids the worldly and the Divine mingling with one another. The germ of the Jewish corruption lay in the mixing of the two. Let then our church, life ordained by that Lord who here cleared the temple, be free from foreign admixture. III. WHAT RIGHT HAD CHRIST TO ACT IN THIS WAY? Did He not overstep the bounds of His authority. No, according to the free customs of that people and age it was competent to any one to assail anything that was at variance with public law. There was ever scope for honest zeal. Christ found it so, and would have us find it so and lift our voices for what is right and good, to win public opinion to them. We Christians are a priestly people called to keep pure the temple of God upon earth. (*Schleiermacher.*) *Christ at Jerusalem:*—We see—I. HOW MUCH CHRIST DISAPPROVES OF IRREVERENT BEHAVIOUR IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. Are there none who bring to church their money, their lands, their cattle, &c.; who bring their bodies only to a place of worship and are "almost in all evil, in the congregation" (Prov. v. 14). II. HOW MEN MAY REMEMBER WORDS OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH LONG AFTER THEY ARE SPOKEN, and may one day see in them a meaning which they now do not see (vers. 19, 22). Sermons preached to apparently heedless ears are not all lost and thrown away; nor are texts taught by teachers or parents to children. There is often a resurrection of the good seed sown after many years (1 Cor. xv. 58; Eccles. xi. 1). III. HOW PERFECT IS OUR LORD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMAN HEART (vers. 24-25). He saw beneath their superficial faith that they were not disciples indeed. This thought ought to make hypocrites and false professors tremble. They may deceive men but they cannot deceive Christ. But it is a word of encouragement to real Christians. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Transition:*—It is impossible not to feel the change which at this point comes over the narrative. I. There is A CHANGE. 1. Of place: Jerusalem and Cana. 2. Of occasion: the passover and the marriage feast. 3. Of manner of action: the stern Reformer and the sympathizing Guest. II. THE SPIRITUAL LESSONS WHICH THE TWO SIGNS CONVEY ARE ALSO COMPLEMENTARY. 1. One represents the ennobling of common life and the other the purification of Divine worship. 2. One is a revelation of the Son of peace, the other a revelation of the Christ, the Fulfiller of the hope and purpose of Israel. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The desecration of the living temple:*—Alas! that even in the restored and consecrated temple of man's soul, scenes are at times enacted, of which the sacrilege in the Jewish temple was but a feeble emblem. It is a desecration, not of a material building but of God's spiritual house—the merchandise, not of sheep and oxen but of sins. The pollution is not in the "outermost court of the Gentiles, but in the inmost sanctuary where God delights to dwell"—in man's heart. Too often is there rebellion, even in the believer's soul, against the authority of the Lord; and giving to Him a divided heart. Too often are the living temples thronged with carnal things, earthly affections and desires. Too often is the lowing of oxen and the bleating of sheep heard, and the tables of the money changers planted, within the precincts of God's house. Alas! how often is the silent and solemn devotion of the believer's heart distracted by the noise of

conflicting passions, and its purity defiled by low and grovelling affections. Holy thoughts and desires, like the poor, despised Gentiles, are turned out of their proper place, and thrust into a corner. Oh, this is monstrous incongruity. Have you not here a temple which you have sacrilegiously profaned; and has not your passion for sordid gain and worldly occupation so entirely engaged and absorbed you, that all your feelings and faculties seem to be expended on earthly vanities, and your affections settled down to the dust? You profane that which God has made holy—that which He has set apart for Himself, and where He would delight to dwell. "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." (*W. Chalmers, M.A.*) *Money changers* in the temple are those who pursue secular interests in the church; and God's house is made a house of merchandise, not only by those who seek to obtain money or praise, or honour by means of holy orders, but by those also who exercise the sacred ministry, or dispense sacred gifts, with a view to human rewards and not with simplicity of intention. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*)

Ver. 17. **The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up.**—I. ZEAL FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE HOUSE. 1. It is the duty of the Church to provide convenient places for the public worship of God. Over-building is a lamentable waste of strength; but under-building is a sin. The Church who neglects to provide proper accommodation for the fast growing population of the country, is guilty of a grievous breach of Christian trust. 2. The house of God should be in consonance with the most chastened taste. Beauty is as cheap as ugliness. The flat roof was prevalent in antiquity, but Christianity, elevating the human mind, has given us the dome and the spire. Our conscience, like David's, should smite us when our house is better than God's. 3. The same zeal which prompts us to build and beautify should prompt us to pay, and not leave a burden of debt to coming generations; but those who inherit the burdens should believe in the strength of God and remove them. Many have been obliged to go through the bankruptcy court because of too much liberality in the cause of the devil; none through over liberality in the cause of God. II. ZEAL FOR THE ORDINANCES OF THE HOUSE. 1. The means of grace, the ordinary services; if we neglect the means we shall not have the grace. God promised to be a "small sanctuary" to the Babylonish exiles; so He will be to those who are in sore captivity through affliction. But if in health, God expects you to be in the assembly of His people. The social character of Christianity must be thus maintained. 2. Two institutions in particular go under the name of ordinances. About these there has been much controversy. Extremes are to be avoided—(1) That they are miracles. (2) That they are empty ceremonies. True zeal shuns both extremes. 3. There must be zeal not only for but in ordinances. Warmth is always attractive and contagious. One of the objects of the gospel is to warm man's natural frigidity. Fervour in the pulpit, in the prayer-meeting, &c., imperative. "But it is not respectable!" God preserve us from respectability, then. But there is enthusiasm enough in political and social gatherings and in business. III. FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF THE HOUSE. 1. Wickedness should be rebuked. Purity must be maintained at all costs. Some churches need the scourge of small cords to drive out the men who, by their negligence or immorality, disgrace the altars of God. 2. Virtue should be fortified. In the family and the Church, discipline should aim at the development of goodness, so that the doctrine of God our Saviour may be adorned in all things. 3. Our interest in the holiness of the Church should be all aflame with sacred zeal. In proportion as we are zealous for God, He will bless our efforts at evangelization. IV. FOR THE DOCTRINES OF THE HOUSE. It is the Church's vocation, not that of the ministry as an official order to defend the faith. 1. Zeal for the doctrine implies mental hostility to error. The tendency of to-day is to tolerate not only heretics, which is right, but heresy, which is wrong. 2. Whilst opposing heresy, our chief concern should be the vindication and exposition of truth. Zeal not for sect and party, but for the truth—particularly the cardinal truth of the cross. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Christ's zeal:*—I. ITS SPHERE. We cannot confine it to the temple or any other ecclesiastical structure. 1. The universe, in all the glory of its interminable spreadings, is the house of God. There is not a lonely spot which is not full of Deity. 2. And when we divide this universe into sections we know that there is some scene honoured above others with the Almighty's presence—where angels cluster, and where the Creator may be said more emphatically to dwell. 3. The whole company of the faithful upon earth constitute "the house of God"—builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. 4. Nay, there is not

a solitary individual, over whom the great change has passed, who is not tenanted by the High and Lofty One. II. CHRIST'S ZEAL WORKING IN THIS SPHERE. Zeal devoured the spirit of our Saviour, and in driving out the traffickers from the temple we can recognize the workings of the principle, but we cannot limit it to this. We gather from the expression—1. That Jesus was consumed with a lofty desire to benefit the denizens of the universe. 2. Over the inhabitants of heaven Christ poured His amazing solicitudes. 3. An ardent longing to rescue this world from its degradation, and to build up its desecrated fragments into a temple of the living God, throbbed in the heart of Jesus of Nazareth. Confined, as it might have seemed, to a single race, its effect branched out into every quarter of the house of God, and orders of intelligence which needed not to be brought to the Saviour might have been confirmed and sustained by that which put man within the circles of acceptance. 4. Viewing God's house as including the believing remnants of Adam's descendants, we see Him entering on His course as the sun enters on his march in the firmament. His soul yearned over those who had destroyed themselves. He entered into the nature on which rested the awful curse; and when the race He had come to redeem rejected Him, the zeal of God's house kept Him fast on His pathway of pain. (*H. Melvill.*) *Christ's zeal:*—I. The OBJECT of zeal—"Thy house." The Jewish temple as symbolizing—1. The Old Testament Church. 2. The world of sinners. 3. Corrupted Christian communities. II. The NATURE of zeal. True and godly zeal, says Bp. Jewell, eateth and devoureth up the heart, even as the thing that is eaten is turned into the substance of him that eateth it; and as iron, while it is burning hot, is turned into the nature of the fire, so great and just is the grief that they which have this zeal conceive when they see God's house spoiled, or His holy name dishonoured. III. The MANIFESTATION of the zeal. 1. In rigidly expelling the defiling and the false. 2. In replacing and building up the pure and the true. *The zeal of Christ:*—It is said that sometimes when a crowd see a vessel that is going to pieces, and hear the cries of the drowning men, they seem as if they were all seized with madness, because, not being able to give vent to their kindness toward the perishing ones by any practical activity, they know not what to do, and are ready to sacrifice their lives if they might but do something to save others. Men feel that they must work in the presence of so dreadful a need. And Christ saw this world of ours quivering over the pit. He saw it floating, as it were, in an atmosphere of fire, and he wished to quench those flames and make the world rejoice, and therefore He must work to that end. He could not rest and be quiet. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The zeal of our Lord to be imitated:*—Let the zeal of the house of God ever eat thee. For example: seest thou a brother running to the theatre? stop him, warn him, be grieved for him, if the zeal of God's house hath now eaten thee. Seest thou others running and wanting to drink themselves drunk? Stop whom thou canst, hold whom thou canst, frighten whom thou canst; whom thou canst, win in gentleness: do not in any wise sit still and do nothing. (*Augustine.*) *Commendable zeal:*—The most remarkable examples of zeal are found in the records of the early itinerant ministers. Richard Nolley, one of these, came upon the fresh trail of an emigrant in the wilderness, and followed it till he overtook the family. When the emigrant saw him he said, "What? a Methodist preacher! I quit Virginia to be out of the way of them; but in my settlement in Georgia I thought I should be beyond their reach. There they were; and they got my wife and daughter into their church. Then I come here to Chocktaw Corner, find a piece of land, feel sure that I shall have some peace from the preachers; and here is one before I have unloaded my waggon!" The preacher exhorted him to make his peace with God, that he might not be troubled by the everywhere present Methodist preachers. *Christian zeal necessary:*—A young Brahman put this question to the Rev. E. Lewis, of Bellary—"Do the Christian people of England really believe that it would be a good thing for the people of India to become Christians?" "Why, yes, to be sure they do," he replied. "What I mean is this," continued the Brahman, "do they in their hearts believe that the Hindoos would be better and happier if they were converted to Christianity?" "Certainly they do," said Mr. Lewis. "Why, then, do they act in such a strange way? Why do they send so few to preach their religion? When there are vacancies in the Civil Service, there are numerous applicants at once; when there is a military expedition, a hundred officers volunteer for it; in commercial enterprises, also, you are full of activity, and always have a strong staff. But it is different with your religion. I

see one missionary with his wife here, and one hundred and fifty miles away is another, and one hundred miles in another direction is a third. How can the Christians of England expect to convert the people of India from their hoary faith with so little effort on their part?" (*Chronicle of London Missionary Society.*) *Consuming zeal*:—When Baxter came to Kidderminster there was about one family in a street which worshipped God at home. When he went away there were some streets in which there was not more than one family on a side that did not do it; and this was the case even with inns and public-houses. . . . While some Divines were wrangling about the Divine right of Episcopacy or Presbytery, or splitting hairs about reprobation and free-will, Baxter was always visiting from house to house, and beseeching men, for Christ's sake, to be reconciled to God and flee from the wrath to come. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Zealous, but not furious*:—It is in the matter of religion as with the tending of a still; if we put in too much fire it burns, if too little, it works not: a middle temper must be kept. A heat there must be, but a moderate one. We may not be like a drowsy judge upon a Grecian bench, who is fain to bite upon beans, to keep himself from sleeping; neither may we be like that Grecian player, who acted mad Ajax on the stage; but we must be soberly fervent and discreetly active. St. Paul's spirit was stirred within him at Athens because of its idolatry, and it breaks out of his mouth in a grave reproof: I do not see him put his hand furiously to demolish them. And if a Juventius and Maximinian, in the heat of zeal, shall rail on wicked Julian at a feast, he justly casts their death, not on their religion, but on their petulancy. It was a well-made decree in the council of Eliberis, that if any man did take upon him to break down idols, and were slain, he should not be reckoned amongst the martyrs. There must then be two moderators of zeal, discretion and charity, without either and both of which it is no other than a wild distemper; and with them, it is no less than the very life-blood of the Christian. (*Bp. Hall.*)

Vers. 18–22. **What sign showest Thou?**—*Christ and the rulers*:—I. THE DISPUTE WHICH FOLLOWED HIS PROCEEDING IN THE TEMPLE. 1. The remonstrance adddressed to Him by the Jews. The parties were the authorities of the Temple who, by their question, espoused the cause of the traffickers. "The Jews require a sign," and for the want of one to their liking, the Gospel was here as ever a stumbling block. There was nothing unreasonable in the request. The cleansing bore a Messianic stamp; but the request was made in anger at the disappointment that their gains had been interfered with, and not with desire to receive information. The very cleansing ought to have been a sufficient sign. 2. The reply of Jesus might be understood to mean the Temple itself, or what He intended: the temple of His body. They misconstrued it into speaking against the sacred fabric, which became one of the fatal accusations against Him afterwards. In the true sense Christ only is the temple of God, although in a secondary sense believers are also, and the universe. The death and resurrection of this temple was to be the sign both for them and for believers. "He was delivered for our offences and rose again for our justification," by which "He was declared to be the Son of God with power." II. THE PRESENT AND REMOTE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S REPLY ON THE MINDS OF THE DISCIPLES. 1. As to the effect at the time there seems to have been none. Of many things, including Christ's death and resurrection, they were ignorant, and remained so up to those events, and even then they were slow to believe. This was owing to their secular views of the Messiah. And how often is such obtuseness the case with believers now. Theirs was removed by experience, so must ours be. 2. The remote effect was on the fulfilment of His Word, most blessed (ver. 22). The spirit eventually quickened the seed sown in good ground (chap. xiv. 26). Exactly similar is the experience of the Church at all times. The truth may lay dormant for years, but when the Spirit comes it germinates. What an argument for teaching the young whether they understand or not. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ's sign*:—It would have been a great one in their sense of it. Zerubbabel and Herod had raised the Temple, and other great persons buildings as great. But the temple of the body, if ever that were down, all the temple builders that ever were would never get it up more. So great, indeed, was it that he in hell could not desire a greater (Luke xvi. 30). I. CHRIST'S BODY IS THIS TEMPLE. The Pharisees mistook the term. Christ could not have meant God's house, the zeal of which consumed Him, and which He had just purged. Only polluted temples are destroyed. Christ, who knew His own meaning best, has interpreted it, and perhaps then pointed to His body. 1. A body a temple? How? Because God dwelleth there. There are temples of flesh and

bone as well as of lime and stone. Our bodies are called houses because tenanted by souls, temples when tenanted by and used in the service of God. 2. Christ's body a temple seems only such by some gift or grace, but in Christ dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead (Cor. ii. 9), and always pure and employed in the Father's service. 3. Christ's body "this" temple. (1) The two temples began alike at Bethlehem (Psa. cxxxii. 6; Matt. ii. 1). (2) Both were destroyed and reared again. The Chaldees destroyed the one and Zerubbabel raised it. The Jews destroyed the other, and Christ Himself raised it. (3) Both were consecrated to like uses. There, the only true holocaust of His entire obedience, which burnt in Him bright and clear all His life long (Levit. vi. 9). There the only true trespass-offering of His death, satisfactory to the full for all the transgressions of the whole world (Levit. v. 6). There the meat and drink offering of His blessed body and blood (Levit. ii. 1). II. THE DISSOLUTION OF IT BY DEATH. 1. The saying. (1) Death is a dissolving, a loosing the cement with which body and soul are held together. (2) This temple drops not down from age or weakness, dissolves not of itself, but by force and violence. (3) Violent on their part, voluntary on His. He could have avoided it, and must have said it, or they could not have done it. 2. The saying no command, which would have been an order to commit sacrilege or murder; but—(1) A prediction to warn them of what they were now casting about. (2) A permission which is always in the imperative; permitted for a greater good the destroying of sin by destroying this temple; for a greater good still to raise it again. 3. The doing. He said dissolve; they said crucify. The roof of this temple, His head, was loosed with thorns; the foundation, His feet, with nails; the side aisles, his hands, both likewise; the sanctum sanctorum, His heart, with a spear. They did more, they violently loosed the temple. And remember it was one of flesh and bone, not of lime and stone. Yet the ruins of a temple of senseless stone will excite pity; how much more the sensible temple of His body which, even before its dissolution, was strangely dissolved in bloody sweat, nor was it alone dissolved. (1) The veil of the material temple split from top to bottom, as it were, for company, or in sympathy with Him. (2) The great temple of the universe in a manner dissolved: its face black, the earth quaking, the stones rending, the graves opening. III. THE REARING IT UP AGAIN BY HIS RESURRECTION. The saying was spoken by way of triumph over all they could do to Him. 1. The act. (1) ἐγερω is a raising from sleep, and sleep we know is not destruction. It is to show us that He would turn death into a rest in hope, both His and ours. (2) They should therefore miss their purpose. They reckoned to destroy Him, but would only prepare Him a short rest. (3) The ease with which He would do it—with no more difficulty than waking from sleep, or tying an unloosed knot. 2. The person rising. Not "destroy you and some other shall raise," but I will do it. An argument of His Divine nature. None could do it but God. 3. The thing raised. The same and no other. (1) In substance. (2) But not in quality; in a far better estate than before (Hagg. ii. 9). In the morning after sleep the body riseth more fresh and full of vigour. So His body and ours (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43) and henceforth this temple, dissolved in death, should be indissoluble by reason of resurrection. IV. THE TIME TO DO IT IN. Within three days; and He did it within the time. Our duty then is—1. To rejoice. At Easter we celebrate the feast of dedication, which was ever a feast of great joy. (1) His dissolution means the loosing us from our sins and their consequences. (2) His resurrection is a promise of what He will do for another temple: the temple of His body mystical, of which we are parts—living stones. 2. To templify our bodies, which in many are far from temples; houses of trade, pleasure, idolatary, which must be dissolved to be made God's houses. Then God must come in and sanctify them. (*Bp. Andrewes.*) *Christ's sign*:—I. LIFE THROUGH DEATH. II. CONSTRUCTION THROUGH DISSOLUTION. III. THE USE OF THE NEW THROUGH THE FALL OF THE OLD. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The temple of Christ's body*:—The metaphor was not dragged into conversation, but the temple He had just purged was shown to be a figure of something greater than itself. I. THE ENIGMA. Christ cast a shadow over truths, the full disclosure of which might have altered the conduct of the Jews and the character of His mission. His hearers were puzzled and their after thoughts excited. What good man could propose such a destruction? What sane man could promise such a restoration? Yet it made such an impression that it was misquoted against Christ in the high priest's palace, and as He hung upon the cross (Matt. xxvi. 60, 61; Mark xiv. 57, 58, xv. 29, 30). II. THE TYPE. The tabernacle and temple were significant preparations for the time when God would become flesh and tabernacle among men. Christ knew and proclaimed Himself to be the antitype;

this new temple, in which the fulness of the godhead dwelt bodily, was consecrated when Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost. III. THE LESSONS. 1. Christ foresaw clearly that the Jews would destroy this temple. To this He was reconciled and longed for it, inasmuch as His sphere of influence was now circumscribed; but the destroyed temple would be rebuilt on a scale more glorious, and all nations called to it. 2. The words, "I will raise it again," are significant—(1) Of the identity of the body in which Christ rose with that in which He suffered. No doubt the transformation was great. The conditions of an incorruptible body are not known to us. But those words prove the link of continuity, and if there was such a link in the case of Christ, so also there will be one in the case of the saints whose bodies are to be like unto His. (2) Of the power Christ had over His own future. His authority to cleanse the temple had been called in question. He affirmed that He had power not only to do this, but to raise up one which men could destroy but could not construct (chap. x. 18). 3. As He is risen Christ is a temple for all nations. In Him God dwells accessible to all: anywhere, irrespective of sacred times and places. (1) The place of reconciliation, the refuge for sinners. (2) The home of communion, the resort of saints; a temple that shall never be subverted. 4. The epistles carry this view of thought further. (1) Every Christian is a temple of the living God; a motive for holiness far higher than moralists have dreamed of in their theories of the dignity of man, and the elevating power of self-respect (1 Cor. vi. 15, 19). (2) More frequently Christians are living stones which collectively form a great temple or "habitation of God in the Spirit." 5. A local church, also, as representing the Church Catholic, is also a temple of God (1 Cor. iii. 16; Eph. ii. 21, 22; 1 Pet. ii. 5). 6. The life which animates the stones, and so pervades the temple, emanates from the living foundation stone—the risen Christ. But this cannot now be fully manifest, just as our Lord was not understood at Jerusalem. The inner life of Christians is not seen. The Lord's body is not discerned in the Church. But the temple is so being built that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 7. In such a world as this the holy temple encounters risk. (1) The traders desecrated the Temple, worldly Christians secularize and degrade the Church of God; but such, sooner or later, the Lord will drive out and disown. (2) Greater still is the fault of those who by strife and schism tend to destroy the temple; against this Paul lifts a stern warning (1 Cor. iii. 17). (*Donald Fraser, D.D.*) *The mysterious sign*:—A word—I. ENIGMATICAL, conveying one thing to unbelief and another to faith. Under the figure of a destroyed and rebuilded temple Christ announced that His death, brought about by them and His resurrection effected by Himself, would legitimize His recent action and demonstrate who He was. The same sign was subsequently given in Galilee (Matt. xii. 40). II. MISUNDERSTOOD. 1. By the Pharisees through—(1) Slavish adherence to the letter of Scripture (2 Cor. iii. 6). (2) Spiritual blindness occasioned by hypocrisy (Mark iii. 25; Rom. xi. 25). (3) Positive aversion, arising from inward moral corruption (chap. iii. 20; viii. 43, 44). 2. By the disciples. They had begun to see the light, but, like men with eyes only just opened, they were unable to discern accurately the objects the light revealed (Mark viii. 24). III. MEMORABLE. Hid away, this word was never afterwards lost. It recurred after the Resurrection illuminated by the fact to which it pointed, and thus helped to seal their faith (Acts iv. 10, xxvi. 23; Rom. i. 4, iv. 25; 1 Pet. i. 3). Lessons: 1. The complete ability of Christ to justify all His ways to God and man. Christ's readiness to furnish a "sign." 2. The irrefragable certainty of Christ's death and resurrection, attested by the knowledge and experience of His disciples. 3. The veiled secret of Holy Scripture; the testimony of Jesus. 4. The blessedness of faith, however immature. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The temple of His body*:—I. THE DIGNITY OF OUR LORD'S BODY. The bodies of believers are called temples because God dwells in them by a communication of grace, but the humanity of Christ is God's temple by a substantial inhabitation, immediately and personally—"In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead." God dwells in the Church as a King among His subjects, in Christ's humanity as a King in His royal palace. 1. In the Epistle to the Hebrews Christ is the mystery shadowed forth by the outward sanctuary. The similitude will appear if we consider—(1) They were alike in building; both under the immediate and special direction of God. (2) In the ornaments by which they were beautified. (3) In Him the import of the sacred vessels is fulfilled. (4) Christ's body was like the Temple, as it regards those religious services which were performed in it. (*a*) In the Temple was a standing oracle; in Christ's humanity dwelt the true and living oracle of heaven. (*b*) In the Temple was the altar of sacrifice and the atonement for sin.

Both derived their efficacy from Him who His own self bore our sins. (*c*) The Temple was the house of prayer: in the days of His flesh what prevailing supplications Christ offered, and He now even liveth to make intercession. 2. To this temple must every acceptable worshipper approach. (1) The Spirit of Christ must inspire their prayers. (2) His name must authorize them. (3) His merit must perfume them. (4) His advocacy must recommend them. II. THE VIOLENCE AND DISHONOUR WHICH THE TEMPLE WAS DOOMED TO SUFFER AT THE HANDS OF HIS ENEMIES. 1. The nature of His passion was a dissolution, a full and complete death. 2. The extent of this passion. Death severed soul and body, but this was all—the union of the Godhead with the manhood was indestructible. 3. The circumstances by which this event was accomplished and wherein their aggravation consists. (1) Violence and wickedness on man's part. (2) Voluntariness and love on His. III. THE GLORY TO WHICH IT WAS TO BE RAISED BY HIS ALMIGHTY POWER. 1. The agent, "I." Dead men were raised by others. Christ by Himself. He is a quickening spirit for Himself and for us. 2. The subject—the self-same temple. 3. The state. (1) Substantial—"A spirit hath not flesh and bones," &c. (2) Entire—nothing wanting to its perfection. (3) Glorious. (*J. Styles, D.D.*) *Christ's human body the temple of God*:—I. THE DWELLING-PLACE OF GOD. As soon as the first temple at Jerusalem was built. "The glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." This splendid manifestation passed away, but the Lord did not depart. To the very moment when the building was destroyed a shining cloud constantly abode over the mercy-seat as a symbol of Jehovah. The second temple was without this, but still God was there, dwelling unseen within it. And this fact was in our Lord's mind, for He calls the Temple "His Father's house." He dwells indeed in His Church and in every soul which He has redeemed, because He is continually acting by His Holy Spirit. But when He speaks of dwelling in the Man Christ Jesus, He means much more than this. There is an actual passing of the Godhead into that frame of dust, a union so close and entire, that wherever that human frame is, there is God. Is this mysterious to you? It was mysterious to Paul. "Great is the mystery of godliness"; to angels. We cannot explain it; but Scripture, which calls on you most plainly to believe it. "God was in Christ." "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," not by a figure; but really, substantially. God dwells in His Church as the light of day dwells in our houses; He dwells in Christ as the same light dwells in the sun. He dwells among His people as the ocean dwells in the rivers whither the swelling tide carries it; He dwells in the incarnate Jesus as that ocean dwells in its bed. II. A MANIFESTATION OF GOD. And herein also the resemblance between Him and both the Jewish temples holds good. When God entered that, He entered not spiritually only, but visibly; a bright cloud was the symbol of His presence. To understand the application of all this to Christ we must bear in mind—1. Though we ourselves are spiritual beings, we can form no conception of any being that is purely spiritual. This incapacity arises from the constitution of our nature. God is a spirit. It will follow, then, that unless something is done to help us, we can never have any right idea of God. We may form some conceptions of His attributes; but as for God Himself, He can have no place in our minds. But He meets this weakness of our nature. We cannot get into that spiritual world which He inhabits; He comes, therefore, within our range, into the world of matter, and embodies Himself in the human nature of Christ, and then says to an astonished universe, "Behold your God!" 2. We can form no adequate idea of the character of any being, unless we see him in action, or are made acquainted with his actions. Now, had God merely embodied Himself in a human frame, and then just shown Himself to the earth and disappeared, we should not have been advanced materially in our knowledge of Him. Hence He "dwelt among us," spoke and acted; and in so doing made a revelation of Himself. By the truths Christ taught, by the powers He exercised, by the dispositions He manifested, and above all, by His sufferings and death; He has unfolded to us the Divine character. Something was known of God before. The heavens had declared His glory. His law too had asserted His authority and holiness, and His providence had borne witness to His justice, His goodness and truth. But what was all this? Nothing, when compared with the person, and work, and cross of Christ. III. A MONUMENT TO GOD'S PRAISE. We wonder not that lofty structures were raised to the gods of the heathen, and that the heathen thought they honoured their gods by raising them. They did honour them. Their gods were men like themselves. But as for building a temple to the living Jehovah's glory, the thought of it seems at first confounding. We think of

Him who has heaven for His throne and the earth for His footstool. Yet God did allow a temple to be built to Him, and that temple did show forth His praise. It was a public acknowledgment of Him. Christ's human nature glorifies God while it reveals Him. He is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," "the brightness of the Father's glory." (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *The three temples of the one God*:—I. THEIR ONE PURPOSE (*cf.* Psa. lxviii. 29; 2 Cor. vi. 16). The essential idea of a temple is that of a place where God manifests Himself to man, and where man dedicates himself to God. The first of these is realized by the Shekinah; by the power and character of Christ; by the holiness of Christly souls in each of the three temples respectively. The second is attained in each: by the altar of the Jewish Temple, by the cross, by consecration. II. THEIR SIMILAR HISTORY. In their —1. Origin. There was silence and mystery in each. The temple noiselessly built, Christ obscurely born, the Christian spiritually quickened. 2. Materials: Glorious in each. In the Temple gold, precious stones, fragrant woods. In Christ a specially prepared sinless body. In Christians fearful and wonderful elements. 3. Sufferings. One besieged, the second crucified, the third hated by the world. 4. Divine desertion. The first was "left desolate," the second "forsaken," the third often loses God as in eclipse. 5. Destruction. The Temple was more than once destroyed; the Saviour gave up the Ghost; the Christian descends into the grave. 6. Restoration. The first was restored and may be again, Christ rose again the third day, Christians shall rise so that the temple shall be completed and the top stone laid with rejoicings. "Grace, grace unto it." Lessons: 1. For those who refuse to be identified with the Temple: What glory you lose; what a destiny you miss. 2. For those who are identified with the Temple: Be enduring; be pure; fulfil your high end. (*U. R. Thomas.*) *The crowning act*:—I. A CERTAIN DEMAND. It is shown—1. What they required—a sign, often requested in our Lord's day and afterwards. 2. Why they required it—because of the extraordinary cleansing of the temple. II. A SIGNIFICANT ANSWER. There is here—1. An exalted claim. The temple was the abode of God. 2. A striking prediction. 3. A wonderful declaration. III. A GROSS MISREPRESENTATION. 1. How it originated; in applying literally what was only meant figuratively. 2. The feeling it produced—ridicule or contempt. 3. The explanation which the Evangelist supplies. IV. AN IMPORTANT RESULT. "When therefore," &c. From this we see—1. That the words of Christ were not forgotten. 2. The effect such remembrance produced. (*Miracles of our Lord.*)

Vers. 23–25. **When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover.**—*The first Jerusalem believers*:—I. THE OBJECT OF THEIR FAITH: the name of Christ. The name of anything is that by which it is known; so the name of Christ is that revelation of the Saviour proposed for faith's acceptance. So faith may vary in different ages, persons, and even in the same person according as the object is fully or partially unveiled and apprehended. Faith can never travel beyond the bounds of testimony. What was offered to Abraham was a Saviour to come (chap. viii. 56); to his descendants, a Saviour come; to John's disciples, the Lamb of God; to Nathanael, the Son of God and the King of Israel; to the rulers and people of Jerusalem, the Messiah. As such He had been rejected by the former and was now accepted by the latter. The same name, now completely unveiled, is still faith's object (Acts iii. 16; iv. 12). II. THE GROUND OF THEIR FAITH—the miracles of Christ; signs, visible pictures of Christ's Messianic work as well as attestations of His Divine mission (chap. iii. 2; Acts x. 38). In the same sense they are still helps to faith; they are obstacles only when considered impossible. They are not continued because unnecessary, having been superseded by a complete historical revelation and by a conscious indwelling of the Spirit. III. THE CHARACTER OF THEIR FAITH. 1. Sincere, as far as it went. If afterwards those who believed in Him took up stones to kill Him (chap. viii. 31, 59) that constituted the damning character of their crime. But some who now believed afterwards became disciples (chap. iv. 45). 2. Incomplete. It did not go far enough. Resting satisfied with intellectual acknowledgment of Christ it did not pass on to spiritual surrender. It had taken the preliminary step of believing in Christ's name; it wanted that additional of trusting in His person. 3. Superficial: occasioned by the impression produced by miracles and liable consequently to disappear when that impression failed. IV. THE TREATMENT OF THEIR FAITH. 1. The nature of it: Reserve. He did not trust Himself to them, enter into close relations with them, unite them to Himself as disciples. When Christ puts Himself into the hands of a believer, the result is salvation and eternal life (chap. vi. 50-54). 2. The reason of it: Insight. He

knew what was in them, saw they had not fully surrendered themselves. When a soul does so faith is complete. Christ's knowledge of the human heart was the deepest ground of the different treatment accorded to the Baptist's disciples; and that knowledge was (1) instantaneous. He knew at a glance without investigation (chap. vi. 64, xiii. 1; Luke vi. 8; Acts i. 24; Heb. iv. 13). (2) Original (Col. ii. 13; Rev. ii. 18). (3) Universal (chap. xvi. 30, xviii. 4, xxi. 17). (4) Particular (chap. iv. 29, v. 42, xiii. 11, xx. 27). (5) Complete (chap. i. 48, vi. 64; Luke v. 22; Rev. ii. 23). Lessons: 1. Christ commonly obtains a readier welcome from the humble than from the great. 2. Faith may sometimes look to the right object and yet be exceedingly defective. 3. The soul that would fully enjoy Christ's fellowship must have perfect faith. 4. Christ knows the quality and quantity of every man's faith. 5. He who would have Christ trust Himself to him must first trust himself to Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Vers. 24, 25. **Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men.** *Superficial faith*:—I. THE DANGER OF A SUPERFICIAL FAITH. It was only such a faith that these people had who believed in Christ on the ground of His miracles. It did not satisfy Christ. It had no deep root and had not led to loyal acceptance of His doctrine. Compare it with that of Nicodemus. Both felt that Christ was a teacher sent from God; but in the one case the feeling stopped there; in the other it stimulated patient inquiry. Consequently, while Christ did not commit Himself to the one, He did to the other. There are believers *and* believers; there is a serious possibility of being a sincere believer, but with a faith so shallow as not to be owned by Christ. II. THE UNPROFITABLENESS OF A SUPERFICIAL FAITH. Christ had no faith in their faith. Shallow faith secures none of the privileges of discipleship; it does not appropriate Christ, and therefore does not enjoy His love and friendship. Christ reciprocates the faith of His true disciples only. III. THE PERFECT ACQUAINTANCE WHICH CHRIST HAS WITH THE STATE OF PROFESSED BELIEVERS. 1. This bears on the nature of Christ ascribing to Him an attribute of Deity. 2. This bears on ourselves, telling us how thoroughly we are known. We may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive Him. This should lead to carefulness and honesty. (*W. Steele, M.A.*) *The omniscience of Christ*:—Nature in all her realms lies open to His eye. Mankind in all its races are in His view. Every man's circumstances and thoughts are known to Him. This knowledge is—I. INTUITIVE. Ours is dependent on human testimony; His utterly independent of it. Who told Him Zaccheus' name, or of the domestic history of the woman of Samaria, or of the treachery of Judas? And so now from heaven He addressed Saul of Tarsus by name and told the Asian churches that He knew their works. Still "All things are naked and open unto His eyes." II. UNIVERSAL. With instant discrimination He knew friend from foe, the enthusiasts which fed on His miracles, and that which was love to Himself. Where is there a man? Christ knows Him, one of a thousand millions. What is He doing in crowded mart or solitary cell? Christ knows all about it. III. INTIMATE. He reads thoughts, feelings, affections, desires. Deception has no covering from Him; hypocrisy no mask He cannot pierce. Judas may deceive the twelve, he cannot deceive the Lord. There is no secrecy in sin. Conclusion: Take comfort from Christ's omniscience. 1. Are we in sorrows? Think of Hagar. 2. Do we give ourselves to prayer? Think of Nathanael. 3. Are we of doubtful mind? Think of Thomas. (*G. T. Coster.*) *Christ's distrust of man*:—I. WE MAY MEASURE IT IN PART BY THE TEMPTATION IT RESISTED. It was more wonderful than even His mighty works. Around Christ was a nation full of Messianic hopes. All He had to do was by falling in with the notional ideas to gather those hopes around Himself. Who could have resisted such a temptation but He who knew the falsity of the hearts which entertained those hopes. II. IT DEPENDED UPON THOROUGH AND ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE. With most people distrust is the offspring, as in turn it becomes the parent of ignorance. When men have never fairly tried their fellows or studied their behaviour under circumstances which reveal character, they naturally hesitate to commit great interests to their keeping. Christ knew *men* because He knew man. III. ITS BEARINGS ON THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST WERE MOST IMPORTANT. I. It safeguarded Him from surprise and precipitancy. 2. It rendered His death absolutely voluntary. (*A. F. Muir, M.A.*) *Christ's knowledge of man*:—Christ knows the very roots of the trees; we know the character of the trees only from the fruits. (*Calvin.*) *The miracles at the Passover*:—I. THE WORKS WHICH THE SAVIOUR PERFORMED. 1. Where they were performed. 2. When. On the feast day,

a most favourable time. II. THE HONOUR WHICH THE SAVIOUR RECEIVED. No greater honour can be given to a man than to trust him. 1. By what means the people's faith was produced. Miracles. 2. The number who were convinced of the truth of Christ's claims was considerable. III. THE CAUTION WHICH THE SAVIOUR EXERCISED. 1. How it was shown. 2. The reason asigned. 3. The truth announced—"Needed not," &c. (*Miracles of our Lord.*) *Christ's knowledge of man:*—I. HE KNOWS ALL ABOUT THE DISEASE WHICH AFFLICTS US. Our faith in a physician's knowledge has often much to do with our recovery. Christ knows thoroughly His own workmanship, and all about that sin which is marring it. II. CHRIST THROUGH HIS KNOWLEDGE IS ABLE TO WORK HIS CURE. To perform this cure requires a perfect knowledge of the disease and power over it. Christ has both these. III. CHRIST KNOWS THE CHRISTIAN IN A SPECIAL WAY. "I know My sheep." He calls us by name. As in the human so in the Divine family dispositions and temperaments are recognized. One can be lead by a thread, another will break an ox chain. Christ saw the faith of the Syro-phœnician. He knew what was in boasting Peter and in Judas. 1. He knows the temptation of each Christian, and will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able. 2. In the light of this we are able to understand better our trials. Christ as the Physician does not hesitate to use the lancet when necessary. He bleeds the plethoric that he may bring forth more fruit. (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) *Christ's knowledge of man:*—He knows what was in man—I. AS HE CAME AT FIRST FROM THE CREATOR'S HAND. God made man upright; and that uprightness is known to Him on whom our help has been laid. The Son partook of the Divine council in which the human constitution was planned. II. WHEN HE HAD FALLEN. Knowing the character of the perfect work, the Saviour knows also the amount of damage that it has sustained. He knows, also, the gravity of man's sin, as an event affecting all the plans of God, and the government of all intelligent beings. Some trees are of such a constitution that if the uppermost bud is once nipped off, the tree is finally ruined. It can never develop itself into its proper shape and dimensions. Such an uppermost bud was humanity on the whole material creation. Deprived of its head, the world could not shoot up into the beauty and completeness which its Maker intended it should attain. III. WHAT WOULD RESTORE HIM, AND WAS ABLE TO APPLY THE CURE. Knowing the worth of man as God had made him, our Physician would not abandon the wreck; but knowing how complete the wreck was, He bowed His heavens and came down to save. He united Himself to us, that if He should rise so must we. I rejoice in the omniscience of the Holy One, both on account of the good that He knew in man, and the evil. A counsellor who understood less fully what our nature was, and our constitution fitted us to become might have advised abandonment. It often becomes a question whether a stranded ship should be left to her fate or brought off and repaired. Sometimes an erroneous judgment is acted on. On one side, an effort is made to save the wreck, when it would have been better to abandon it, and construct another. Again, she is sometimes weakly abandoned, when it would have been profitable to have saved her. And so a helper who understood less of our original nature and capability might have proposed to cast us off as hopelessly damaged, supposing that, by allowing the wreck to be wholly washed away, a new and higher degree of intelligence might have been called into existence. Although Christ knew all the evil that was in man by sin, He did not disdain to undertake the rescue. By assuming the nature of the fallen, and meeting the law in their stead, He received the curse into Himself and exhausted it. IV. SOME LESSONS: 1. Speaking of the unconverted—He knows what is in them and yet He does not cast out the unclean. 2. Speaking of His own disciples—He knows what is in them, and with that knowledge, it is because He is God and not man, that He does not shake them off. 3. He knows what is in man, and therefore can make His word and providence suitable. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Inward knowledge of man necessary for good authorship:*—Dickens, writing about a clever story by a popular author, says, "It is extremely good indeed; but all the strongest things of which it is capable missed. It shows just how far that kind of power can go. It is more like a note of an idea than anything else. It seems to be as if it were written by somebody who lived next door to other people, rather than inside of them."

CHAPTER III.

VERS. 1–2. **There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus.**—*Nicodemus:*—I. NICODEMUS THE INQUIRER. He was a Pharisee, and therefore all manner of religious obstacles, formalism, &c., stood in his way. He was a ruler, and therefore all manner of social impediments beset him. But his conscience had been awakened. He came in the dark so as not to be noticed. He admits Christ's Divine teachership. Men now hold miracles in light esteem, but this narrative shows us that they should make a sober man think. Our Lord's reply shows that Nicodemus' admission was not enough. It is a great thing to reverence Christ, but this will not save without a spiritual change. About this Nicodemus was as ignorant as a babe; and as Jesus opened it and related matters he might well marvel. He had inquired, and now heard much more than he anticipated. He is a sample of most inquirers. Through chinks and crannies the heavenly light steals silently and gradually. As the light goes in, prejudices are overcome and notions surrendered, until it becomes day as it did with Nicodemus. II. NICODEMUS THE CONFESSOR (chap. vii.). The impression made on the public mind by Christ's teaching and miracles was great (chap. vii. 27). The rulers, filled with wrath, sent officers to arrest Him. These officers were so struck with what they heard that they returned without their prisoner. The Pharisees rebuked them, and heaped insults on all who acknowledged Him. Then Nicodemus arose in His defence, standing on Exod. xxiii. and Deut. i. 16. It requires some courage to defend one whom rulers have condemned. Nicodemus did this, and bore the reproach of discipleship. He who was once timid now dares to stand up for Christ alone. The explanation is that in the meantime he had been born again. III. NICODEMUS FAITHFUL IN HIS MASTER'S HUMILIATION (chap. xix.). Jesus has been tried, condemned, and executed. All His disciples had fled, but Nicodemus stands firm, and with Joseph of Arimathea secures for our Lord an honourable burial. Lessons—1. If God begins a work in the soul, He will carry on that work to completion. 2. Ministers must not be discouraged at unpromising beginnings. 3. A man may be at first, but he cannot continue, a secret disciple. (*C. D. Marston, M.A.*) *Nicodemus:*—Every effect is to be traced up to some adequate cause, and the effect is in exact proportion to the cause. This is true—1. In nature. 2. In providence. 3. In grace. Witness the case of Nicodemus here and in chaps. vii. and xix. I. GRACE IN ITS FIRST COMMENCEMENT MAY BE VERY FEEBLE. Nicodemus was a timid man, and ignorant, and somewhat hard; yet he welcomed and employed the light, although not to the fullest extent. In his and in all other cases the beginnings of grace are feeble. Young believers are likened in Isa. xl. 11 to lambs; in Isa. xlii. 3 to a bruised reed and smoking flax; in Matt. xiii. 31 to a mustard seed; in Mark iv. as a blade. Just as Christ in His natural body grew up from nothing as it were, so is Christ born in the heart. II. ALTHOUGH GRACE IS THUS FEEBLE IN ITS COMMENCEMENT IT IS A REALITY. Though Nicodemus came as a coward, yet he came; though he was ignorant, yet he asked; though he was a ruler, yet he renounced his knowledge and inquired with all the simplicity of a child. If we had rescued some poor creature from the waves, not a breath stirring, apparently dead, we should use every means and go on in hope. At last we hear a feeble sigh, and the conclusion we draw is that he lives. His life is as real as if he walked. Look at the sinner dead in trespasses and sins. Nothing moves him; not the terrors of the law, nor the invitations of the gospel. But God sends forth His Spirit, the heart is touched, the conscience enlightened, and the effect is that He feels his sin and cries, "God be merciful," &c. We now find him pleading the atonement and finding mercy. He receives a new principle. This is a reality, and is so described in the terms new creation, new birth, resurrection. That it is real is proved by three things. 1. It abideth (Gal. v. 17). 2. It overcometh (1 John iii. 9). 3. It still tendeth towards God (chap. iv. 14). It came from God, it ascends to God. It longs to love Christ and holiness more, and is not satisfied till it reaches the bosom of its Father (Psa. xvii. 15). III. WHEN GRACE IS REAL, HOWEVER WEAK, CHRIST DOES NOT DESPISE IT. He did not upbraid Nicodemus with coming by night, nor does He any one now. 1. His covenant engagements forbid it. 2. His love forbids it. 3. Beware, then, how you despise feeble grace (1) in others; (2) in yourself. Conclusion—1. James iv. 6. 2. Prov. xiii. 4. (*J. H. Evans, M.A.*) *Nicodemus:*—I. THE DESCRIPTION HERE GIVEN OF THE MAN. 1. His religious profession, "a man of the Pharisees." 2. His official position, "a ruler of the Jews." II. THE CIRCUMSTANCE RECORDED CONCERNING HIM. 1. Why

he came. (1) Negatively. (*a*) It was not to ensnare or oppose Jesus, as was the case with his co-religionists generally. (*b*) Not out of curiosity like Zacchæus. (2) Positively, to know the truth. 2. When he came, "by night." (1) It might have been from a feeling of shame or timidity; but what we know of him does not favour this supposition. Our Lord does not blame him, why should we? (2) From necessity, his duties forbidding during the day. (3) From choice as well as convenience. He wanted a private interview, such as Christ's busy life could not afford during the day. III. THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT MADE BY HIM. 1. To what it refers—to the character of Jesus as a teacher come from God. 2. The ground on which it rests. Nothing can be more reasonable than the inference. It will be seen—(1) That the miracles of Christ are here spoken of as things of general notoriety. They certainly were not done in a corner. (2) Their reality is represented as being above all suspicion. They are spoken of as "these miracles," and no doubt was, or could be, entertained concerning them. (3) Their wonderful nature was such as clearly indicated that they were wrought through a Divine interposition. The feeling of all who were not blinded by their prejudices, on witnessing each mighty act in succession, was, "This is the finger of God." (4) Their express design is recognized as confirmatory of our Lord's character and claims. What He says should therefore be attended to, and the important truths He uttered on this occasion are especially worthy of the most serious consideration. (*Miracles of Our Lord.*) *The character of Nicodemus*:—I. AN INQUIRER. Reports had reached the teachers and rulers concerning Christ which startled them. A man not educated in their schools, nor sent forth with their authority, an obscure man of peasant origin, was preaching doctrines not included in their systems, and doing works to which they were not equal. Nicodemus, one of them, came to inquire of Christ personally as to these things. II. A CAUTIOUS MAN. There are some who are carried about with every wind of doctrine. Nothing astonishes us more than the ease with which men take up a new religion except the ease with which they lay it down. Not so with Nicodemus. He knew that Judaism was of God, and that Judaism prophesied a Messiah with which Christ did not seem to correspond. Yet Christ's miracles appeared to authenticate His mission. But before accepting Him he would inquire further. III. AN INTELLIGENT MAN. Education does not always enlarge the mind. Religious education sometimes tends to bigotry. But this man was an independent thinker, and claimed the right of private judgment. His large mental capacity had been cultured to appreciate evidence and to weigh words. Consequently Christ reveals to him more advanced truths. IV. AN EARNEST MAN. He had been occupied with his official duties during the day, and now he treads the lone dark streets uncertain whether Christ would receive him. V. BEING FAITHFUL TO THE LIGHT HE HAD, THE LIGHT WAS TO DEEPEN AND BRIGHTEN. (*H. J. Bevis.*) *Brave Nicodemus*:—We see in him—I. THE COURAGE OF THE EARNEST INVESTIGATOR INTO THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST. He was earnest enough to come by night so that he might have a long, calm, and uninterrupted interview. Had he been afraid, Christ would probably have rebuked him. He boldly acknowledges Christ's Divine mission, and pursues his inquiries into the meaning of Christ's words. Christ rewards this courage by unreserved communications of spiritual truth. This courage must be imitated by every truth seeker. II. THE COURAGE OF WISE-WORDED SPEECH FOR CHRIST. The next time we see him (chap. vii. 50) his courage has grown, and in the midst of Christ's implacable enemies he speaks a wise word for Him. For such a man with his constitutional reserve to act as he did, and to incur what he did, required no ordinary courage. This courage is the power of Christian testimony now: in the presence of enemies, in the midst of temptations, at home. III. THE COURAGE OF LIBERAL-HANDED SACRIFICE FOR CHRIST. When our Lord's hour was darkest, Nicodemus' courage is at the brightest. He takes His stand by the Crucified, whose disciples were scattered, whose cause was discredited; and whose name was a mockery. He ran some risk, knew little of Him compared with what we know, took His body reverently from the cross, embalmed and buried Him. Christ is not in the grave now. To be on His side still requires courage and sacrifice. Count the cost; maintain the struggle; win the crown. (*G. T. Coster.*) *Nicodemus and Christ*:—I. THIS MAN'S APPROACH TO CHRIST. 1. Who was he? (1) A Pharisee; a member of the richest, proudest, most numerous, influential, and sanctimonious class in our Saviour's time. Not only so, but "a man of them"—a full-blown representative whom the community and the sect acknowledged as a leader and light of the party. (2) A ruler of the Jews, not a mere master of a synagogue, but (John vii. 50) a member of the Sanhedrim—the supreme ecclesias

tical and civil tribunal, the final court for the interpretation and enforcement of the law. No one could be a member of it without being well advanced in life, perfect in all his faculties, tall and impressive in appearance, wealthy, learned, and trained in judicial administration. Perhaps the sublimest visitor the Saviour ever had. 2. Why did he come? The Messiah's coming was generally expected. Christ had done some apparently Messianic deeds, and had been acknowledged. The Sanhedrim could not avoid dealing with Him. Nicodemus was therefore probably deputed to wait upon Him. This was not a worthy method of procedure. Instead of inviting Christ openly to hear what He had to say, or going as frank and faithful men to Him, they concluded to keep their impressions secret while one of their chiefs under cover of night stole away to catechise the Saviour. 3. How did he act? (1) Very inconsistently. If he knew that Jesus was a Divine teacher it was not his business to raise up objections. (2) He was crippled by his prejudices and pride of character. His very first word betrayed him. He must needs bring forward the official "we," as if the individual Nicodemus had nothing specially personal at stake. Then his difficulty about the new birth arose out of his prepossessions in favour of his own goodness and the non-necessity for him of a spiritual change. II. CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF THIS DISTINGUISHED VISITOR. 1. He met him with calmness and civility. He came to save great men as well as small. (John vi. 37.) 2. He spoke at once to the point, and undeceived him in regard to the basis on which he and his fraternity were building their hopes. Jesus, who knew what is in man, knew the unspoken thought of Nicodemus. He knows what is in our hearts, and is able to suit His favours to our wants before we express them. Nicodemus wanted some decisive manifestation that Christ was the King of Israel. Christ responds that no one would ever be able to discern or enter the kingdom without a new birth. Thus, at a single stroke, Christ laid prostrate this renowned councillor's greatness, and dashed out for ever the fondest hopes of his race. 3. The Saviour expounded the unalterable condition of admission. That condition was—(1) A birth: mysterious, but (2) real (James i. 18; 1 John v. 1; 1 Peter i. 23). (3) A re-birth (2 Cor. v. 17), a renovation in the springs of life, in the impulses and activities of the man, and in all the aims and endeavours of his being. (4) A birth from or out of the Spirit. (5) A birth conjoined with baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16). 4. In order to this renewal, Christ explained the true nature of the Messianic work. Not to fight the Romans, confront Cæsar with Cæsar's weapons, subdue the nations to Jewish vassalage—but to die for sinners that they might live. 5. As underlying all, Jesus taught the right doctrine concerning God. Nicodemus believed in God, but had a very limited and inadequate conception of the higher mysteries of the Godhead. He needed to be taught that God was Three-One, and that in this same young Galilean the expressed Godhead dwelt, being come from heaven for man's redemption. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Who was Nicodemus?*—Of this particular Nicodemus, we know with certainty nothing more than is told us in this Gospel (chaps. vii. 50; xix. 39). The Talmud mentions a Nakedimon, so called from a miracle performed by him, who was the son of Gorion, and whose real name was Bonai. It also gives the name Bonai as one of the disciples of Jesus. He was one of the three richest Jews when Titus besieged Jerusalem, but his family were reduced to the most abject poverty. So far the Talmud. The inference is that this change of fortune is connected with his becoming a Christian and with the persecution which followed, and he is himself identified with the Nicodemus of the gospel. We can only say this may be so. (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) *Two historic night scenes:*—One of the most memorable and important interviews which ever took place between two individuals in this world was held on a raft in the middle of the river Niemen, at the little town of Tilsit, in Prussia. At one o'clock precisely, on the 25th of June, 1807, boats put off from opposite sides of the stream and rowed rapidly toward the raft. Out of each boat stepped a single individual, and the two met in a small wooden apartment in the middle of the raft, while cannon thundered from either shore, and the shouts of great armies drawn up upon both banks drowned the roar of artillery. The two persons were the Emperors Napoleon and Alexander, and the history of the time tells us that they met "to arrange the destinies of mankind." And the hastily-constructed raft, on which the interview took place, will be remembered as long as the story of great conquests and mighty revolutions can interest the mind of man. The conference lasted but two hours; it was entirely private between the two emperors, and yet it was fraught with momentous consequences to millions. It was one of the great crises in human

history when the currents of power that govern the nations take new directions, and break over the bounds and barriers of ages. Go back eighteen hundred years beyond the treaty of Tilsit, and we can find a private conference between two individuals of far more momentous and lasting importance than that between Napoleon and Alexander. This more ancient interview was not watched with eager expectancy by great armies; it was not hailed by the thunder of cannon and the shout of applauding thousands; it was not arranged beforehand by keen and watchful agents guarding the interest and safety of the two who were to meet. It was in a private house, at a late hour of the night, and it was brought about by the mingled curiosity and anxiety of an old man to know something more of a young teacher who had recently appeared in his native city. And yet from that humble night-conference of Jesus with Nicodemus there have gone forth beams of light and words of power to the ends of the earth. The plans formed by Napoleon and Alexander at Tilsit were reversed and defeated long ago, and it is impossible to trace their influence in the condition of European nations to-day. The words spoken by Jesus to His wondering and solitary listener that night have already changed and glorified the destiny of immortal millions; they have more influence in the world now than in any previous age; and they are destined to go on increasing in power, until they shall be received as the message of life and love by every nation under heaven. (*D. March, D.D.*) *The influence of night on the student*:—There is a reason why students prefer the night to the day for their labours. Through the day their thoughts are diverted into a thousand streams; but at night they settle into pools, which, deep and undisturbed, reflect the stars. But night labour, in time, will destroy the student; for it is marrow from his own bones with which he fills his lamp. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ the greatest Teacher*:—In I. The extent of His knowledge. II. The perfection of His character. III. The excellence of His methods. IV. The kindness of His disposition. V. The greatness of His rewards. (*R. Brewin.*) *The relation of miracles to teaching*:—When God had some new tidings to tell to the world, He gave to the men whom He sent with the message the power of working miracles. The miracles were a sort of bell, which they rang in the ears of their generation, that people might listen to what they had to say, and believe that it came from Heaven. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *An interview with a night visitor*:—The hours were too few for the work each day brought to Jesus. His labours were often prolonged into the night. An exciting day was over, and one of Jerusalem's noblest sons sought the Saviour. The visit was not prearranged, but spontaneous. Nicodemus could not sleep till he had seen Christ. Others were within the same influences, yet slept. Here was the first-fruit of Christ's direct ministry. The visit did not surprise the Saviour. Let the incident suggest—I. USING THE DARKNESS FOR SEEKING THE SAVIOUR. Night is friendly to retirement and secrecy. The guilty abuse it; but the holiest have ever found its tranquilizing calm, helpful. Attention is needed to—1. The struggle which compelled Nicodemus to journey to Jesus. Naturally he must have felt reluctant to quit his home. Why not wait till morning? But thoughts had been arrested, anxiety stirred by the works of Jesus. Conviction had grown. He could not therefore be inactive. The visit involved risk. Caution would counsel hesitation, but eagerness made him resolute, and, determined to lose no opportunity, he came to Jesus by night. 2. The motive which led to the use of the night. Fear, prudence, unwillingness to court attention, are motives with many. Vanity, sense of shame, reluctance to compromise one's dignity, are motives with others. Were these Nicodemus' motives, or the fact of convenience, the night ensuring quiet and leisure? Or was it restless eagerness? The narrative marks that no earlier hour was available (chap. ii. 24). Yet the thrice reiterated "by night" seems to denote excessive prudence. 3. The spirit His visit betokened. He craved satisfaction. If He is the promised One, I must know Him. 4. The knock at the door of Jesus' home. II. YIELDING UP SLEEP FOR A SOUL'S ADVANTAGE. 1. No hour finds Jesus unwilling to attend to our need. 2. Christ's eagerness to meet a seeker. At once Nicodemus was led into themes of which his heart was full. III. SPENDING THE NIGHT TALKING OF WONDROUS THEMES. Jesus uses time well. The themes may be thus classified—1. Concerning the Divine Trinity. The Spirit (vers. 5, 6), "the only begotten Son" (vers. 13–18), God the Father, who sent the Spirit and gave the Son. 2. Concerning the action of the threefold Godhead in man's salvation. The Spirit regenerates; the Son atones; the Father's love provides the sacrifice and gathers in the world. 3. Concerning man's responsibility in reference to salvation. He has no part in saving

himself. Jesus accomplishes that (ver. 17). He must be enlightened (ver. 3) and renewed (ver. 7). On him is cast the solemn duty of personal belief in Christ. 4. Concerning the great issues set before the soul. Not to believe incurs condemnation. But the world through Christ may be saved (ver. 17). There remains for each the vast alternatives of everlasting life or the abiding wrath of God (ver. 36). IV. HEAVENLY LIGHT GAINED IN THE NIGHT INTERVIEW WITH JESUS. 1. Nicodemus became a humble listener at the feet of Jesus. It was his intention to interrogate the Teacher, but he soon became silenced. 2. He retired with new and sacred life within him. (*W. H. Jellie.*) *The anxious inquirer—coming, disputing, listening*:—I. NICODEMUS COMING TO CHRIST. Amongst those mentioned in the closing verses of the last chapter was the Rabbi Nicodemus. To him the young man Jesus was an object of profound interest. He retired from the crowd to the Sanhedrim. There his fellow princes were in indignation at the assumption of the youthful Nazarene, and amazed at the audacity of His holiness. He leaves the Sanhedrim, and retires to his own home. He becomes anxious about this Teacher sent from God. He takes down the ancient laws and prophecies. He sees the resemblance between that young Rabbi and some of those shadowy words which lighten over the ancient parchments. A new interest gathers over the pages. While he reads the sun has set, the crowds have dispersed, Jesus has gone home. Nicodemus resolves to go to Him. The night season is all the more favourable. Nicodemus approaches the retreat of Jesus, timidly and holding back. But the door is open, and there is Jesus waiting for him. 1. Nicodemus was an anxious but haughty inquirer. The proud, moral disposition of the Jew starts into light at the first word—We know. The things of eternity will not allow him to sleep; but the opening remark of this emissary of the Sanhedrim implied that he and they had little to learn. 2. Still he made a concession. He calls Jesus Rabbi. He could call his brethren in the great council chamber no more. 3. He maintains a reserve. Something clutched at the rope and plucked you back just as you were about to tell Christ all. Christ came to him at once, and replied not to what he said, but to what he thought. You cannot see till you are born. II. NICODEMUS DISPUTING WITH CHRIST. He came expecting to discuss with Christ the things of the Jewish Church; Christ pressed home all his thoughts to internal questions. Many came to Christ to dispute rather than to listen. The overcoming of the disputatious element in us is one of the most important preliminaries to the reception of the truth. In disputing we defend our own views rather than open our minds to the truth. Nicodemus disputing reveals to us—1. How the carnal mind is ignorant of the things of the Spirit of God. 2. Wherein lies our difficulty of belief. It is in the How and the Why we find the great obstacles to our faith. 3. How far we may be immersed in spiritual ignorance when we seem to be most advanced in knowledge. 4. How possible it is to belong to the outward and visible church, and yet to know nothing of the great and saving change of heart and life. III. NICODEMUS LISTENING TO CHRIST. He gives up disputation, and Christ unfolds the plan and science of salvation. 1. He asserts the inability of the man and the inutility of human knowledge. 2. The plan of Divine ability beginning with the work of the Holy Spirit and ending with that of the Divine Father. 3. The exhibition of the mediatorial sign. 4. The unfolding of the essential law of the Divine kingdom—do the truth and you will know the truth. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The Teacher and the taught*:—I. THE DISCIPLE. 1. His relation to the ruling powers and his position as a man of culture. 2. His want of moral courage. 3. His reverent acknowledgment of Christ's authority, in which he manifests elementary faith. 4. His willingness to be taught. II. THE TEACHER. 1. His willingness to teach. Christ ever meets the eager and reverent inquirer in this spirit. 2. His willingness to accept imperfect faith. 3. The truths he taught. (1) The need of regeneration. (2) The mystery of His own person. 3. The great purpose of His mission with the method of its accomplishment. (*Family Churchman.*) *The two Rabbis*:—I. THE TEACHER COME FROM GOD. 1. Accessible to men (vers. 1, 2; Matt. viii. 34, ix. 28, xi. 28, xv. 1; Mark iii. 8; John iv. 40). 2. Commissioned of God (ver. 2; Deut. xviii. 18; John viii. 28, xii. 49, xiv. 10, xvii. 8; Heb. i. 1, 2). 3. Confirmed by miracles (ver. 2; Luke xxiii. 47; John ii. 11, ix. 33, x. 38, xiv. 11; Acts ii. 22). II. A TEACHER ABLE TO TEACH. 1. Of the new birth (ver. 3, i. 13; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 23; 1 John iii. 9). 2. Of the Spirit's power (ver. 6, xiv. 26, xvi. 13; Rom. viii. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 10, i. 22; Titus iii. 5). 3. Of the Heavenly things (ver. 12, vi. 33, vi. 51, xiv. 3, xvi. 28; 1 Cor. xv. 47; 1 Thess. iv. 16). III. A TEACHER ABLE TO SAVE. 1. Lifted up to save (ver. 14; Num. xxi. 9; John viii. 28,

xii. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14; 1 John i. 7). 2. Given of God to save (ver. 17; Matt. i. 21; John iv. 42, v. 34; Acts iv. 12; Rom. v. 9; 1 John iv. 9). 3. Believed on to save (ver. 18; Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36, vi. 47; Acts xvi. 31; Rom. iii. 26; 1 John v. 1). (*Sunday School Times.*) *Christ as a teacher*:—I. THE EVIDENCES WHICH CHRIST GAVE OF BEING A TEACHER COME FROM GOD. 1. His qualifications to be this teacher. (1) In His nature: God and man. Hence He spake with authority and worked miracles. (2) In His commission. The Father sent Him. (3) In His endowments. He was filled with the Spirit (Isa. lxv. 1). 2. The peculiarity of His instructions—(1) What was their character? What sublime views He gave of God; what Divine revelations of grace; what Divine consolations; what holy precepts; what openings of the invisible world. (2) Observe their manner. "Never man spake as this man"—with such authority, power, simplicity, consistency. He taught by events, anecdotes, parables. (3) Mark their effects—conviction and conversion—Zaccbaeus, Mary, Martha, dying thief, &c. II. IN WHAT RESPECTS THIS GREAT TEACHER SHOULD BE IMITATED BY OTHER TEACHERS. 1. In His imitable qualifications—(1) His knowledge, particularly of God's Book. Every teacher should have a concordance, a commentary, and a companion to the Bible. (2) His various methods. (3) His possession of the Spirit. 2. In His Spirit—(1) The spirit of prayer; (2) of compassion; (3) of faithfulness. 3. In His conduct. (1) His self-denial. (2) His unwearied perseverance. 4. In His aim—to save souls. Conclusion. 1. Rejoice that you have such a teacher. Learn of Him if you would be successful teachers. 2. There is no cause for discouragement if you see not the success of your teaching. Christ's "own received Him not." 3. Let Scripture motives urge you to undertake and pursue this great work. Gratitude, the brevity of time, the present benefit, the future reward. 4. What a blessed day when teachers and taught will meet in heaven. (*James Sherman.*) *Christ as a teacher*:—Jesus was emphatically a teacher. Not one who was confined to a professor's chair, but one who taught everywhere. As a teacher He was eminently successful, and exceedingly popular. What was the secret of His success and popularity? I. HIS DOCTRINES were of such a character as to command the most profound respect, and make the deepest impressions. 1. There was in them a peculiar fitness to the people. His teachings awakened the conscience, enlightened the understanding, and stirred the heart. 2. They were free from sectarian bigotry and prejudice. His principles were broad and generous, having universal application to the physical, social, and spiritual wants of men. II. HIS STYLE. There was nothing stiff or stilted about it, no extravagance of speech, no affectation of manner. His very presence was a charm. Gentleness and simplicity marked all He said and did. III. HIS ILLUSTRATIVENESS. One of the elements in His great strength lay in the aptness of His figures and comparisons from common life. Wherever He turned His eye He found central truth, and brought out of it something that the people could apply home. He ignored bewildering terminology, and showed that religion had something to say in the home as well as in the temple. IV. HIS IMPARTIALITY. Teachers often make distinctions among their pupils. But Christ looked at man as man, and turned no one way either on account of rank or of poverty. V. HIS AUTHORITY. It was the consciousness of His Divine authority which made Him so independent as a teacher. He did not pander to the corrupt tastes of the people nor accommodate Himself to their errors and prejudices. VI. HIS NATURALNESS. There was nothing strained, artificial, or formal about His methods. It was in the most incidental and easy way that He taught some of His grandest lessons and did His greatest works. The smallest occasion was improved. There never was a teacher so little dependent on times and places. Why this spontaneity in all the teachings of Jesus? Because religion is natural, and religion is natural because it is real. VII. HIS ABILITY TO INSPIRE MEN, to kindle in their hearts a holy enthusiasm. Xenophon tells us that men were more inspired by the example and spirit of Socrates than by his words. So with Jesus. There was something in His manner, address, and personal presence that at once won the hearts of His hearers. When He wanted men to become His disciples He had but to say to them "Follow Me," and they at once "forsook all and followed Him." And He exerts that influence to-day. (*J. L. Harris.*) *Our Lord a model for Sunday-school teachers*:—I. THE CHARACTER OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS QUALIFICATIONS FOR A TEACHER. His qualifications are more apparent in their subjects than in their modes. What was Christ? is a better question than How did He teach? Many put too much faith in systems, method, &c., and too little in men of God. 1. Christ had a very high estimate of His work. He made men's minds, and was "the light that lighted," &c. He had a full perception

of the powers and value and destiny of the human spirit. You must have this same high estimate. No man will do heartily what he does not think worth doing. Nothing can be greater than to teach truth to an immortal mind. 2. Christ's mind was fully possessed with the truth He taught. He always spoke as though the truth were His own. You never perceive any effort or sense of novelty. He bore truth about Him as a daily dress. He spoke of God as if He were in His bosom. He left an impression that He "spoke that which He knew," &c. It was this that made the people astonished, and that made the officers say, "Never man spake like this man." Be like Christ in this respect. There is but one way of attaining it, and that is by being real. It is not attainable by art. You must be a Christian, living and walking in the Spirit of Christ. 3. Christ was entirely self-consecrated to His work. He was not forced or persuaded into it. He came to it because He loved it and those He taught. Kindness, the key to the human heart, therefore, was the temper in which He taught. Nothing is done without this. He who is set on keeping up His dignity may end in losing His charge. Children are eminently susceptible to kindness. 4. Christ lived His lessons. It was this that silenced His enemies and won His friends. If you would be effective you must teach by what you do as well as by what you say. Children have consciences, and no appeal will be so powerful as that of holiness of character. Besides, imitation is the law of their minds. II. THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST. 1. The free and familiar manner of it. There is no set system. His course was prompted by circumstances. He spoke to the time. Truth came out of Him on particular occasions, like virtue when He was touched. Don't fill the minds of the children with formal propositions. Speak always "the present truth." Be simple, but not coarse. Christ had not hard words or technicalities; He trusted to the inherent dignity of the truth. The sublimest thoughts can be put into words of one syllable, "God is light," "God is love." 2. If you would imitate Jesus Christ, don't teach more than one thing at a time. He uttered a great doctrine and then dwelt upon it. The minds of adults may be injured by trying to put too much into them. He who seeks to do too much ends by doing nothing. 3. Christ adapted Himself to those whom He addressed. He had many things to say, but waited till they could hear them. This has been His method from the beginning. Revelation was progressive. So you must lead the children's minds from one degree of knowledge to another. Begin with "first principles," and "go on to perfection." 4. Christ taught pictorially. Parables are pictures. The Bible is history, and what is history but a picture? What are baptism and the Lord's Supper but pictures. Dry didactic statements have few charms for children, but they may be won by anecdotes. Conclusion. 1. Jesus Christ as a teacher had very little success, but He did not faint. The husbandman has faith in the operation of nature; so must you in the growth of the good seed. 2. Christ believed that His seed would grow again. Many a doctrine the apostles remembered after He had risen. Future events must be allowed to quicken your teaching, perhaps your death. But no truth is ever lost. 3. Even Christ prayed while He was labouring. Without prayer you might as well not teach at all. (*A. J. Morris.*) *Open and secret Christians*:—There are always in a congregation some who accept Christ but do not confess Him openly. The Church has its hypocrites, but so has the world: for there are men who seem to lead a worldly life whose inner life is turned toward Christ; but they make three mistakes in their position. I. THEY OVERESTIMATE THE VALUE OF WORLDLY FRIENDSHIPS. How much will your friends among the men of the world sacrifice for you? They will desert you when your purse fails. II. THEY OVERESTIMATE THE EFFECT OF CONFESSION ON FRIENDSHIP. It will not drive away a true friend. What hurts us most is ridicule. Learn to live above it. Christ suffered the meanest insult. His followers have often sealed their faith with their blood. III. THEY UNDERESTIMATE THEIR OWN STRENGTH. They are afraid of falling after they have made a public confession, and of giving opportunity to scoffers to blaspheme. They put too low a value on the strength Christ gives for every crisis. At the moment of danger Nicodemus came forward. Is there a danger now that calls these silent Christians to come forth? There is, though this age is no worse than many others. Our literature is full of a lofty scorn, a condescending pity for Christianity. Many of our scientists are materialists. It is time to be brave and outspoken. Christ is polarizing the world; there are but two classes of men. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*). *An audience of one*:—Permenides upon reading a philosophical discourse before a public assembly at Athens, and observing that, except Plato, the whole company had left him, continued notwithstanding, saying that Plato alone was sufficient

audience for him. (*W. Baxendale.*) **No man can do these miracles except God be with him.**—*The miraculous in Christ's history* :—At the very threshold of the discussion there meets us the assertion that miracles are impossible. Now I hold that we cannot believe in a personal God and doubt the possibility of miracles. 1. We have a great deal of learned talk about the inviolability of the laws of nature, which really makes a strait-waistcoat for God of His own laws. But the question is set at rest by facts which science attests. What is the beginning of life but a miracle? Scientific men know that this world was once a molten mass, and that there could not then, by any possibility, be on it any germ of vegetable or animal life. But life by and by appeared and multiplied; and in its appearance we have a distinct and special act of God creating life; and that is a miracle. 2. But there are those who admit all this and yet deny any other miracles. They say that they are not reasonable, that they are a reflection on the wisdom of God. But while God's being makes miracles possible, God's mercy and man's needs make miracles reasonable. If there is a defect in the mechanism of the world, it is not due to God, but to us; the disorder in the universe is not His, but ours. And a special interposition by Him to right what we have put wrong is the reverse of a reflection on His wisdom. A revelation of mercy to a sinful world is a miraculous thing in itself; and if other miracles accompany it, it is just what might be anticipated. 3. But there are those who say that whether wrought or not, miracles cannot be proved. This is Hume's position, which is modified by Huxley, who insists that the proof, if proof can be adduced, must be very strong. Mill further modifies it by admitting that "if a supernatural event really occurs, it is impossible to maintain that the proof cannot be accessible to the human faculties." My contention is that miracles can be proved like other facts, and I proceed to prove that the account of Christ's miracles by the evangelists is true. I. THEIR NARRATIVE HAS THE AIR OF TRUTHFULNESS. When we are examining witnesses, we must assume that they are truthful until we have found them false; and there are various ways in which they may impress us. They may give their evidence in such an unsatisfactory manner as to arouse the suspicion that it is false; or it may be given with such artless simplicity as to convince us that it is true. On turning to the Gospels, we find the miracles of Christ recorded with as much calmness as if they had been only ordinary events. Their time and place, their nature, their witnesses, and sometimes their moral effects, are minutely recorded. The writers have all the appearance of men who are not making fiction but recording fact. II. THE DISCIPLES HAD AMPLE MEANS OF KNOWING WHETHER THE ALLEGED MIRACLES WERE REALLY WROUGHT. Witnesses may be truthful and yet give a testimony we cannot accept, because of their having been deceived. But there are considerations which show that it could not have been thus with the disciples. The assertion that Christ tried to impose upon them charges Him with conduct so much at variance with His character as they present it, that we cannot entertain it for a moment, and the miracles were of such a kind that they could not be deceived in regard to them. They were numerous, varied, and striking. III. THE DISCIPLES HAD NO CONCEIVABLE MOTIVE FOR CONSPIRING TO PALM ON THE WORLD A FALSE HISTORY OF JESUS. It could not exalt their Master to attribute to Him miracles He never wrought; it could not exalt themselves in their own estimation to sit down and carefully construct an elaborate fiction; and they could not expect to gain over the people to Christ by alleging that He had wrought many miracles among them both in Judea and Galilee when they knew that the people had not seen one of them. Just credit them with common sense, and then say if you can conceive of their trying to palm falsehoods on the world. If they had been knaves they would not have taken this course, for there was nothing to gain by it; and if they had been fools they would not have acted as they did. IV. THEY HAD NOT ONLY NO MOTIVE TO GIVE A FALSE ACCOUNT, BUT THEY HAD THE STRONGEST REASONS FOR NOT DOING SO. There was no worldly honour or wealth to be got by their testimony; it was certain to entail the loss of all things. Is it conceivable, then, with the knowledge of all this that they would publish false accounts. V. THEY COULD NOT HAVE GAINED ACCEPTANCE FOR THE GOSPELS IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN TRUE. It is Christ's miracles which were appealed to when the apostles urged men to believe in Him. Consider what believing involved. It meant not only accepting His history in the Gospels as true, but taking Him to be the Saviour from sin, and leading, in obedience to His command and after His example, a holy life; and this in the face of the scorn and contempt of the world, with the prospect of temporal ruin, and the risk of a violent death. Now, how could men be persuaded to face the sacrifices all this involved by appeals to miracles which had never been wrought? Corrobora-

tive proof I find in the Jews. They did not deny that He wrought miracles, but only tried to explain them away. In their Talmud, which dates back to the third century, it is acknowledged that "mighty works" were wrought by Him, but it is said that these were the results of magical arts which he had learned in Egypt. And the heathen bear similar testimony. Celsus admits Christ's miracles. "Ye think Jesus to be the son of God," he says, "because He healed the lame and the blind, and as ye say raised the dead." And when he tries to deprive His miracles of their value as evidence of a Divine authority, it is by ascribing them, like the Jews, to His having learned magical arts in Egypt. (*A. Oliver, B.A.*)

Vers. 3–5. **Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**—*The birth of the new man*:—Man is confronted with two facts. 1. The existence of evil. 2. The hope of deliverance. Christ here shows how this hope may be realized, viz., by a new birth, and by that alone. I. WHY MUST THIS BE? Simply because to live in heaven we must have the life of heaven. Man can enter no world but by a birth, and to enter heaven, therefore, he must be born into it. To the heavenly world man is dead (Eph. ii. 1). This is not his proper condition, nor was he created in or for it (Gen. i. 26, 27). But very soon his life went out. Adam fell, and begat sons and daughters in his own image; and we, the children of this fallen head, like the descendants of some king who has been dethroned, by generations of bondage have well-nigh forgotten the traditions of their father's glory, and become utterly unfit to fill his place. All do not feel this death. The fact is hidden by present cares, pleasures, or occupations. For this reason men love the world. It keeps them from coming to the painful fact. But God in mercy sometimes removes these things that the salutary pain may be felt, and the necessity of regeneration seen. II. HOW CAN THIS BE? Regeneration, the re-quickening of God's life in man, can only be effected by Him who has that life—the Son of God. 1. Regeneration has been wrought for us in Christ. In Him man again received God's life by the coming of the eternal life to dwell in the flesh. This was the beginning, but it could not be perfected until death, by which man in Christ re-entered heaven. 2. To come where Christ is the self-same thing must be wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. God's nature must be first re-quickened by our receiving the Word (2 Pet. i. 4; John i. 4), and then there must be a delivery from the fallen old man by the Cross, *i.e.*, through death, to our present nature. 3. Of this new man, Christ formed in us, Christ Himself is the prelude and figure in the progress of His humanity from the humiliation at Bethlehem to the glory of heaven. (*Andrew Jukes.*) *The new birth*:—I. WHAT WERE THESE WORDS MEANT TO EXPRESS TO THE HEBREW INQUIRER. 1. The Jews were expecting the revelation of the Messiah and of His kingdom. A few like the venerable Simeon looked forward to one who should save them from their sins. They believed as a few do now—when the tendency is to seek for the golden age in legislative enactments and reformed institutions—that what we want is, not something done for us in ameliorated outward conditions, but in individual education in grace and righteousness. The multitude, however, are always trusting in some political measure or social change to bring about the millenium of national well-being. So did the Jews, who, abiding in their sins, counted on a revolution of circumstances and a conquering Messiah who should exalt the land. The constant indulgence of this dream operated to make them more and more vulgar and coarse in soul, and in Christ's time they had sunk to be very mean and low. And now here at length stood the veritable Messiah in their midst, and of course they could not comprehend Him. Having by prolonged communion with their carnal idea deadened their spiritual susceptibility, they were blind to the royalty of Divine character and Divine truth. 2. When Nicodemus, therefore, came to Christ for information about the Messianic reign, it was in reference to the incapacity of his and his countrymen's worldliness that our Lord said, "In your present moral state you are unable to take in the idea of it, and you never will be unless you become inwardly another creature. You must begin to be and live afresh." The phraseology was not new to Nicodemus. The Gentile who gave up his heathen creed and embraced Judaism was said to undergo a new birth. The ruler's impression, therefore, would be that he must submit to a revolution in his Messianic ideas as a condition of instruction. How, he asked, could an old man like himself, whose opinions were too fixed for surrender, do that? Christ replies in terms which he could not fail to understand, that what was wanted was not a change of mental view, but of moral heart—an inward cleansing and an inward experience of Divine influence, without which it was impossible for him

to perceive the reality or touch the circle of the Messianic kingdom. III. WHAT TEACHING IS THERE HERE FOR US? 1. The kingdom of God is simply the reign of God; and to enter it is to become subject to Him. But since this reign is everlasting and universal, and since all must be subject to it, the kingdom of God established by Christ, and within which we may or may not be found, must have a deeper, inwarder significance—even the reign of the righteous and merciful God over the individual affections and will. They, then, are in this kingdom who have come to be thus governed. 2. To enter that kingdom there must be a new birth; not a mere modification of original ground, but a fresh foundation—not an alteration of form, but a change of spirit. Look at those who are manifestly not in this kingdom: is it not obvious that to become so would not only constitute a great change, but would necessitate an antecedent great change in order to bring it about? 3. Christ is the Divine organ for the production of this inward change. (*S. A. Tipple.*) *The new birth:*—I. IS THERE SUCH A THING AS AN ENTIRE TRANSFORMATION OF CHARACTER? Certainly. Take a child of five, when it has a nascent character. At the beginning he is selfish, sharp, and irritable; but after the judicious training of a kind mother, by the time he is ten he has learned to restrain his temper and is becoming generous, and living on a different plane from that in which he started. But take a child who has had no such training, but has been brought up gross and violent and selfish, is it possible that there shall come a time when, by a sweeping influence from above, all the past may be effaced and all the future changed? Is it true that a life of forty years can be revolutionized in a moment? No; but a change can be begun in a moment. Here is a train rushing on a track which a few miles beyond will lead to a collision; but the brakesman turns it on to another line, and the danger is averted. The pressure measured an inch, and the train passed instantaneously, but its travel on the new track will be longer or shorter according to circumstances. A man has lived an indolent life up to five-and-twenty. Then his father breaks, and he finds himself without bread or habits of industry. He knows, however, that he is ingenious, and goes to a cabinet-maker and agrees to stay for two years for board and clothes. The moment he is indentured he is changed. He was a do-nothing before; he is a do-something now. He was a man without purpose before, but now he is a man whose life is re-fashioned on the theory of industry. But did he know his trade? No. Still the change had taken place. A man is changed the moment his purpose is changed, if it be really radical and permanent. II. LET US INQUIRE WHAT CONVERSION IS. Any change that takes a man away from that which is bad and carries him forward to that which is good, and gives him a purpose of making this new course a continuous thing, is conversion. 1. Conversion is sometimes simply Christian culture. When a child is urged by a mother's teaching and affection to love goodness, purity, spiritual excellence, and takes to it with all its little heart, that is conversion; *i.e.*, it is character building on the right foundation. The world will never become Christian until the cradle is the sanctuary and the mother the minister, and day in and day out the child is brought up to manhood in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Is not the child as susceptible to training in spiritual as in social things? There is just as much reason in training for virtue and holiness as in training for any secular end. And it is far better that a child should never know where the point of transition is. This is the truest conversion and the best; but it does not follow that it is the only conversion. 2. A man is thrown out upon the world and gone into vice and crime, or into a lower form of selfish, proud, unsympathizing life. Oh, it is a blessed thing for him to know that he need not continue in the downward course for ever, and that there is provision made whereby when a man has gone wrong he may stop and grow right. Not that he can be transformed in the twinkling of an eye, but the change may begin when he resolves to turn from sin to God. III. IS A MAN CONVERTED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OR BY HIS OWN WILL? By both. The Divine Spirit is atmospheric, and becomes personal when any one appropriates it. The sunlight has in it all harvests, but we do not reap until that sunlight is appropriated by some root, leaf, blossom. Some say we must wait for the Spirit; as reasonable as to say we must wait for the sun when it is a cloudless afternoon; and what time any man accepts the influence of the Divine Spirit and co-operates with it, that moment the work is done by the stimulus of God acting with the practical energy and will of the human soul. IV. WHAT ARE THE EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION? 1. The consciousness of a new and heavenly life, whether we can trace the time of its origin or not, or whether it came to us through agonies of remorse or the sweet, quiet influences of Christian nurture.

2. The fruits of the regenerating Spirit—love, joy, peace, &c. 3. Advancement, growth, development in the things that please God. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Regeneration:*—I. ITS NATURE. 1. It is something that is not merely done for a man, but is done upon him. The former is justification, which is a change of state in the reckoning of law, whereas regeneration changes the man himself and gives him a new character. This being the case, regeneration is conscious, whereas justification is not. Is there then in each of us such a character of holiness as no natural temperament, civilization, learning, maxims of prudence or courtesy could have formed, and without such as is not dishonouring to God to ascribe to the agency of the Spirit? 2. Regeneration being something which is done on a man's person, it is his mind, not his body, which undergoes the change, although the regenerated mind may have a beneficent effect upon the body. 3. Regeneration being mental, it is effected, not on the faculties of the understanding, but on the passions and affections of the will. These faculties do often, as a matter of fact, undergo considerable improvement, but it is in consequence of the incitement with which regeneration has supplied them. It will not make a bad memory good, but it frequently stirs up a sluggish memory. 4. Regeneration is not an organic change, in respect of the extinction or addition of any passion or power; but entirely a functional change, in respect of the direction of the powers, so that their emotions are expended on different objects from those to which they were formerly directed. Take, for example, the change produced on the passions of love and anger. (1) When a man is regenerated, he will continue to love objects which he loved before, but with a change of reasons for loving them. Unregenerate he loved gold for its ministry to his luxury and pride; regenerate he loves it because it helps him to honour his Master. (2) A regenerated mind will in some cases entirely forsake former objects of affection, and expend itself on others about which he was careless. He may withdraw from former worldly companions, not because he despises them, for they may be decent and amiable, but because there is more attraction for him in the fellowship of the saints. (3) The regenerated mind will in many cases regard objects with feelings the opposite to those with which it regarded them in its state of nature, loving what it once hated, and hating what it once loved. II. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. It is a change of heart from a state of carelessness about God, or slavish fear of Him, or enmity against Him, into a state of filial reverence, confidence and obedience; of admiration of Him, gratitude towards Him, dependence on Him, loyalty towards Him. 2. It is a change of mind in which the name of Jesus was wearied of, or resented, or despised, or maligned, into a state in which, in union with that of the Eternal Father, it receives a place "above every name," as most honoured for its excellence, most endeared for its love, and most loyally reverenced for the legitimacy of its claims. 3. It is a change from a state of mind in which the Name of the Holy Spirit obtained no acknowledgment, into a state in which it is cherished, in union with the names of Father and Son, as the Comforter, Counsellor, and Advocate of the soul. 4. It is a change from a state in which the gratification of the flesh, or the avoidance of its pains, or the culture of the intellect, were matters of supreme importance, to a state in which holiness of heart is the principal concern. 5. It is a change from a state in which this world is the object of greatest interest, into one where eternity is a name of the greatest fear and the greatest hope. 6. It is a change from a state of enmity against to one of love for man. 7. It is a change of feeling with reference to the Church, the Bible, and the means of grace. (*W. Anderson, D.D.*) *Regeneration:*—I. THE SUBJECT WHEREOF CHRIST ENTREATETH. A second birth. 1. The contents of it. It contains the seeds and habits of all graces; as original sin, to which it is opposed, contains the seeds of all sin (James i. 17, 18): not only those natural graces we lost in Adam, but whatsoever belongs to our spiritual being in grace and glory. 2. The extent of it. The whole man, every part, answering to the infection of original sin. Hence described us leaven (Matt. xiii.). Sometimes in natural generation a part of the body may be wanting, but there is no such defect in regeneration. 3. The notes and signs of it. (1) Spiritual life. As generation produces natural life, so regeneration spiritual life; and every generator the life he bears—a man human life, an animal animal life, God divine life (Eph. iv. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 10; Gal. ii. 20). This life may be discerned by its properties. (*a*) Every life seeks its own preservation, so does this life that which is fit for itself (1 Pet. ii. 2; Col. iii. 1). Beasts seek after grass or prey: worldly men after worldly things; the regenerate after food for the soul and heavenly honours. (*b*) Life feels that which is an enemy to it, as sickness. A

dead man feels nothing. It is an evident sign of spiritual life to feel our corruptions. (*c*) Life resists her enemy. So in the regenerate the spirit lusts against the flesh (Gal. v. 17), and rises in opposition to temptation. (*d*) Life, if it be stronger than the enemy, is victorious. So the life of God being stronger than sin, the regenerate overcome the evil one. (*e*) Life is active and stirring. We know that a motionless image, although it has the features of the human body, has no life in it. So professors, without the powerful practice of godliness, have not the life of God in them. (*f*) Life, when grown to strength, is generative. So the regenerate labour to breathe their life into others. (2) Likeness to God. The begetter begets in his own likeness: so does God (ver. 6; 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; Luke vi. 36; Matt. v. 48). (3) Change. In every generation there is a great change; existence from non-existence, order from chaos. So with the Christian (Eph. v. 8; 2 Cor. v. 17). (4) Love of God and His children (1 John v. 1, vi. 7, iii. 17). 4. The reason and ends of the name of it, viz., second birth. (1) To show our passiveness in conversion. (2) That as in generation, so in regeneration there is proceeding from little beginnings to great perfection. (3) That as the first birth is not without pains, neither is the second. (4) To show us the hopelessness of our nature. Mending will not do, we must be new born. II. WHAT HE AFFIRMS OF IT, that it is necessary to salvation (Rev. xxi. 27; Heb. xii. 14). This necessity is set forth—1. The certainty. Verily (Amen) is doubled for greater certainty (Gen. xli. 32). 2. The universality. (*J. Dyke.*) *Regeneration*:—The expression "born again" was political. Gentiles were unclean, and to become Jewish citizens had to be baptized, and so cleansed became sons of Abraham by a new birth. "Naturalization" means the same thing. Finding the ceremony on foot, Christ takes advantage of it to represent the naturalization of a soul in the Kingdom of Heaven; taking water as the symbol, and the Spirit as the real cleansing power. I. CHRIST REQUIRES OF ALL SOME GREAT AND IMPORTANT CHANGE AS THE NECESSARY CONDITION OF THEIR SALVATION. 1. Not, of course, of those who are already subjects of it, and many are so from their earliest infancy, having grown up into Christ by the preventing grace of their nurture in the Lord. But this is no real exception. Intelligence is not more necessary to our humanity than is second birth to salvation. 2. Many cannot admit this. It savours of hardness, and does not correspond with what they see of natural character. How can moral and lovely persons need to be radically changed? That depends upon whether the one thing is lacking or not. If it be Christ's love will not modify His requirement. 3. Christianity is based upon the fact of this necessity. It is not any doctrine of development or self-culture, but a salvation. The very name Jesus is a false pretence, unless He has something to do for the race which the race cannot do for itself. 4. But how can we imagine that God will stand on any such rigid terms? He is very good and very great; may we not risk the consequences? (1) It is sufficient to answer that Christ understood what was necessary, and there is no harshness in Him. (2) Such arguments are a plea for looseness, which is not the manner of God. He is the exactest of beings. Is character a matter that God will treat more loosely than the facts and forces of nature? If He undertakes to construct a beatific state, will He gather in a jumble of good and bad and call it heaven? (3) We can ourselves see that a very large class of men are not in a condition to enter into the Kingdom of God. They have no purity or sympathy with it. Who can think of these as melting into a celestial society? And if not, there must be a line drawn somewhere, and those who are on one side will not be on the other: which is the same as saying that there must be exact terms of salvation. (4) We feel in our own consciousness, while living a mere life of nature, that we are not fit to enjoy the felicities of a perfectly spotless world. Our heart is not there. (5) When we give ourselves to some new purpose of amendment, we do it by constraint. What we want is inclination to duty, and this is the being born of God. II. THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE. 1. Let some things which confuse the mind be excluded. (1) There is a great deal of debate over its supposed instantaneousness. But a change from bad in kind to good in kind implies a beginning, and therefore instantaneous, but not necessarily conscious. (2) Some people regard it as gradual. But this is to make it a matter of degrees. (3) Much is said of previous states of conviction and distress, then of light and peace bursting suddenly on the soul. Something of this may be among the causes and consequences, but has nothing to do with the radical idea. 2. Observe how the Scriptures speak of it. Never as a change of degrees, an amendment of life, but a being born again, a spiritual reproduction, passing from death unto life, putting off the old man, transformation, all of which imply a change of kind. Had redemption been

a mere making of us better, it would have been easy to say so. The gospel says the contrary. Growth comes, but there can be no growth without birth. 3. Try and accurately conceive the interior nature of the change. (1) Every man is conscious that when he sins there is something besides the mere words or acts—viz., the reason for them. (2) Sometimes the difficulty back of the wrong action is conceived to be the man himself, constitutionally evil who needs to have the evil taken out of him and something new inserted. But this would destroy personal identity, and be the generation of another man. (3) Sometimes the change is regarded only as the change of the governing purpose. But it is not this that we find to be the seat of the disorder, but a false, weary, downward, selfish love. We have only to will to change our purpose, but to change our love is a different matter. (4) Every man's life is shaped by his love. If it be downward, all his life will be downward. Hence, so much is said about change of heart. (5) Still, this cannot be effected without another change of which it is only an incident. In his unregenerate state man is separated from God and centred in himself. He was not made for this, but to live in and be governed by God. When, then, he is restored to the living connection with God he is born again. His soul now enters into rest, rest in love, rest in God. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CHANGE IS EFFECTED. 1. Negatively: (1) To maintain that it can be manipulated by a priest in baptism is solemn trifling. (2) Equally plain is it that this is not to be effected by waiting for some new creative act. The change passes only by free concurrence with God. (3) Nor is it accomplished by mere willing apart from God. A man can as little drag himself up into a reigning love as drag a Judas into Paradise. 2. Positively: (1) You must give up every purpose, &c., which takes you away from God. (2) There must be reaching after God, an offering up of the soul to Him, which is faith. (3) Let Christ be your help in this acting of faith to receive God (see vers. 14–16). (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Regeneration*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. Negatively: (1) Not baptism, as witness Simon Magus. (2) Not reformation, as witness the case of many an unspiritual but truly moral man. Regeneration is the cause, reformation the effect. Nicodemus did not need reformation. 2. Positively: An entire change of nature. (1) a renovation of all the powers of the mind; (2) a new direction to the faculties of the soul; (3) a restoration to the image of God. II. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. It is instantaneous. There can be no medium between life and death. It differs from sanctification, which is progressive. 2. It is mysterious. We cannot tell how it takes place, or when or where it will take place. 3. It is universal. It affects the whole man, and governs all his character, powers, and conduct. III. ITS EVIDENCES. 1. The condition of the regenerate is altered—the dead are made alive (Eph. ii. 1); the blind see (Eph. v. 8); the servants of Satan become Christ's free men; His enemies His friends; the proud humble. 2. Their views are changed (1) concerning themselves; (2) Christ; (3) sin; (4) heaven. 3. Their pursuits are different. 4. Their enjoyments arise from a different source. 5. Their motives. IV. ITS NECESSITY. 1. Without a change of heart we shall not be identified with the Church militant; 2. With the Church triumphant hereafter. Reflections: 1. To the unregenerate, "Ye must be born again." 2. To those who are resting in good works, &c., "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision," &c. 3. To the regenerate. "Show forth the praises of Him who hath called you." (*R. Kemp.*) *Regeneration*:—I. WHEREIN DOES REGENERATION CONSIST? In a radical supernatural change, the seat of which is the heart. 1. A just perception of spiritual objects, of the character and perfections of God, the Person and work of Christ, the gospel plan of salvation, the excellency of holiness, and the evil of sin. On all these the conceptions of the human mind are defective and erroneous, even with the light of reason and the aid of philosophy. 2. A taste for, and delight in, spiritual objects. This is given, not acquired. It may and must be cultivated, but regeneration is its beginning. II. WHENCE DOES THE IMPORTANCE AND NECESSITY OF THIS CHANGE APPEAR? 1. From the uniform teaching of Scripture. (1) When the object of the ministry is described, it is "to turn them from darkness to light," &c. (2) When the power of the Word is spoken of, it is thus—"Being born again . . . . by the Word of God." (3) When the character of the saints is described, they are "created anew," &c. 2. From the nature and employments of the heavenly kingdom. 3. From the utter unsuitableness of the unregenerate for the society, employment and pleasures of the kingdom. 4. From the value and preciousness of the soul. (*W. Deering.*) *The needful change implied in regeneration*:—The expression "to be born again" implies—I. A VAST MORAL CHANGE, the impartation of a principle of spiritual life and godliness to a heart entirely destitute of it, through which new affections, views, and state of the will

are produced. The characteristics of the change are—1. The self-righteous man learns to trust in the Redeemer. 2. The enemy of God now loves Him. 3. The obdurate becomes penitent. 4. The disobedient becomes obedient. 5. The earthly-minded now seeks things above. II. THE AGENCY. 1. Not by baptism, thought, reading, the following of good examples, fear, the intrinsic efficacy of prayer, or the merit of any reforms and confessions. 2. But by the Holy Ghost. Various means may concur, but He is the solitary agent. III. THE NECESSITY OF THE CHANGE is seen in—1. The opposition which it meets with from the world. 2. The agent. If it be wrought by the Spirit it must be necessary; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ," &c. 3. Natural disqualification for the kingdom of God. Conclusion. 1. Make this a practical question. 2. Never forget that the new birth is accomplished only by God. 3. Think of the great blessings it brings. (*B. W. Noel, M.A.*) *Regeneration necessary to a capacity for heaven:*—Consider what heaven is. I. SOCIETY WITH CHRIST. Christ prayed that those whom the Father gave Him might be with Him. Paul tells us that we shall be for ever with the Lord, and John that the glorified see Christ's face. Should you like to be with Christ at this moment? With that Prophet to whom you will not listen! That High Priest whose atonement you despise! That King on whose laws you trample! II. THE ABODE OF THOSE WHO LOVE CHRIST. "Eye hath not seen," &c. Do you imagine that it will give you joy to be with those whose every pulse beats in admiration of Christ? Try it now. Would you choose their society as that which would give you pleasure? Do you not shun it, because your heart is alienated from Christ. III. WHERE THE PURE IN HEART ARE, and the spirits of just men made perfect; where there is no fault. Are you ready for that company? Why there is not one of the habits and sentiments of heaven that does not thwart and contradict and condemn your own. Conclusion. 1. Do you venture to think that death will effect a change? The Word of God forbids the expectation. 2. If by any means you could enter heaven as you are, it would be your hell. (*Ibid.*) *Regeneration necessary to admission into heaven:*—The reasons which illustrate the statement of our text are most plain. I. THE CHARACTER OF GOD WOULD BE DEGRADED by the admission of the unregenerate into heaven. God placed man here for His glory, endowed him with many faculties, lavished His love, revealed His will, and for this purpose, a purpose which man has frustrated wholesale by doing the abominable thing that He hates. II. IT WOULD PUT THE GREATEST DISHONOUR ON THE NAME OF CHRIST, who has come into the world to die for sinners, and offers them peace here and glory hereafter. Notwithstanding all this, He is actually or virtually rejected. To bring the unregenerate to heaven, therefore, would be on some other ground than that Christ has died. Can God the Father do it? Nay, it is His will that all should honour the Son as they honour Him. III. IT WOULD DISHONOUR THE HOLY SPIRIT, whose work is to convince of sin, sanctify, and prepare men for heaven. All this is set before the unregenerate; and instead of receiving His grace, they do despite unto it; and those who do this, the apostle tells us, will die without mercy. IV. IT WOULD INFLICT A WOUND ON THE HAPPINESS OF EVERY GLORIFIED SAINT. It would be like the introduction of a pestilence into that pure climate. The story of Eden would be renewed, and heaven ultimately become like earth. (*Ibid.*) *The regenerate endowed with a meetness for heaven and a title to it:*—As certainly as the unregenerate are excluded from heaven shall the regenerate find admission there. I. WHAT IS THE TITLE? The merit of Christ applied to the soul of the sinner. The first characteristic of a regenerate soul is that he believes. So he who is regenerate, being a believer in Christ, has the one title to everlasting life. II. WHAT IS THE PREPARATION. 1. Love to the Saviour, "Whom having not seen ye love." How can they do otherwise? And they prove their love by the application of every test that is available—zeal, delight in communion with Him, friendship with His people, obedience to His will. 2. As the glorified are also made perfect in holiness, the regenerate are being sanctified, and their hearts are being purified to see God. 3. As in heaven God's "servants serve Him," so the regenerate are prepared to join them by holy, ungrudging, joyful activity. 4. If it be a characteristic of heaven that its inhabitants are lifted above all that is low in the inferior world and are occupied with spiritual pleasures and employments, so the regenerate, led by the Spirit, set their affections on things above. III. THIS IS TRUE OF THE WHOLE MULTITUDE OF THOSE WHO ARE REGENERATE BY GRACE. The promise is not made to vigorous faith and experienced piety, and unusual attainments, but to faith in its least beginnings, to holiness in its simplest elements, to the very first and feeblest work of Divine grace. In conclusion. The danger of the

unregenerate serves to fasten on our minds the importance of this great change, and the blessedness attached to it should animate us to seek it. (*Ibid.*) *The means of becoming regenerate*:—I. THE AGENT is God alone, by His Spirit. If therefore any man denies this work of the Spirit, he has every reason to believe he will be lost. II. The INSTRUMENTALITY which the Spirit uses. 1. The Word of God, principally as a revelation of the grace of Christ. The Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and manifests them to the soul. "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth." 2. But while we are called to use this instrumentality, there are many habits of the ungodly man which incapacitate him from using the Scriptures well, and which must be removed. Levity, worldliness, pride; every habit of known sin must be broken off. 3. The Scripture next directs—(1) To a course of duty and the formation of such habits which becomes a man who hopes to become a child of God. (2) The abandonment of ensnaring society, and the use of the various ordinances of religion. III. THE ACTUAL PROCESS. In the use of the various means the Spirit meets the unconverted and—1. Humbles him with a revelation of Christ, and convicts him of the sin of unbelief, and leads him to a realization of his ruined condition. 2. Creates the desire for salvation, and helps him to wrestle with God for it. 3. Instructs and assists the penitent to embrace the offer of salvation. He believes in Christ, and commits himself to Christ. 4. Believing in the Son of God, he is admitted into the Divine family. And then—5. Leads the now renewed person to gratitude and delight in the commands of God; and never leaves him till that regeneration is completed in entire renovation, when he re-attains to the lost image of God, and is conducted through grace to glory. (*Ibid.*) *Repentance before theology*:—The way to begin a Christian life is not to study theology. Piety before theology. Right living will produce right thinking. Yet many men, when their consciences are aroused, run for catechisms, and commentaries, and systems. They do not mean to be shallow Christians. They intend to be thorough, if they enter upon the Christian life at all. Now, theologies are well in their place; but repentance and love must come before all other experiences. First a cure for your sin-sick soul, and then theologies. Suppose a man were taken with the cholera, and, instead of sending for a physician, he should send to a book-store, and buy all the books which have been written on the human system, and, while the disease was working in his vitals, he should say, "I'll not put myself in the hands of any of these doctors. I shall probe this thing to the bottom." Would it not be better for him first to be cured of the cholera? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The need of sinners is to be born again*:—Suppose they could be born again. Suppose they could be made to love the things which they now hate, and hate the things which they now love. New hearts and right spirits are the need of London outcasts. How can these be produced? In the hand of God the Holy Ghost, this is exactly what faith works in the heart. Here is a watch. "It wants cleaning." Yes, clean it. "It does not go now. It wants a new glass." Well, put in a new glass. "It does not go any the more. It wants new hands." Get new hands by all means. Still it does not go. What is the matter with it? The maker says that it needs a main-spring. There's the seat of the evil: nothing can be right till that is rectified. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The heart must be changed*:—A man may beat down the bitter fruit from an evil tree until he is weary; whilst the root abides in strength and vigour, the beating down of the present fruit will not hinder it from bringing forth more. This is the folly of some men; they set themselves with all earnestness and diligence against the appearing eruption of lust, but leaving the principle and root untouched, perhaps unsearched out, they make but little or no progress in this work of mortification. (*John Owen.*) *Regeneration preceded by conviction*:—If you had an old house, and any friend of yours were to say, "John, I will build you a new house. When shall I begin?" "Oh!" you might say, "begin next week to build the new house." At the end of the week he has pulled half your old house down. "Oh," say you, "this is what you call building me a new house, is it? You are causing me great loss: I wish I had never consented to your proposal." He replies, "You are most unreasonable: how am I to build you a new house on this spot without taking the old one down?" And so it often happens that the grace of God does seem in its first work to make a man even worse than he was before, because it discovers to him sins which he did not know to be there, evils which had been concealed, dangers never dreamed of. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Regeneration defined*:—It is that great change which God works in the soul, when He brings it into life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the Almighty Spirit of God, when it is

"created anew in Christ Jesus," when it is "renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness"; when the love of the world is changed into the love of God, pride into humility, passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the "mind which was in Christ Jesus." This is the nature of the new birth. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." (*J. Wesley.*) *The need of regeneration*:—If I enter a place where there is a musical performance, my ticket entitles me to cross the threshold; but if I have no musical ear, I can have no enjoyment. In the same manner, if you have a right in something done for you that will warrant and enable you to cross the threshold of heaven, yet if you have no heart prepared for the exercises and the joys of heaven it can be no happiness to you. (*Dr. Cumming.*) *The heart must be changed*:—A man may be reformed in his habits and yet not be transformed in his heart. When the icicles are hanging in winter from the eaves of a cottage, will it suffice that the inhabitant should take his axe and hew them down one by one till the fragments are scattered in powdery ruin upon the pavement beneath? Will the work so done be done effectually? Surely a few hours' warm shining of the sun would do it in a far better and much shorter way? (*Ryland.*) *Conversion a change of nature*:—How foolish and ignorant we should deem an artificer who, having taken a piece of iron, should melt and mould, file and polish it, and then imagine that it has become gold. It shines, it is true, but is its brilliancy a proof that it is no longer iron? And does not God require pure and refined gold, that is to say, a perfect righteousness and a perfect holiness! Say, ye sages of this world, shall any metal but that of the sanctuary find currency in heaven? Or shall God mistake what is false for what is genuine, and shall He confound the hypocritical outward show of human morality with that everlasting life which partakes of His own nature, and which the Holy Spirit alone implants within the soul which He has new created? *Regeneration more than reformation*:—It is not mere reformation; not the renovation of that which was dilapidated—the repairing of the old house, and making it as good as new; but it is a reconstruction of the house upon a new foundation—the house itself being built anew from that foundation to the copestone. The meaning of this, however, is not that the renewed man is then a different being as to his identity. The house in which the leprosy had become a fretting plague, when taken down every stone of it, and built again in due time, was not a different house from that which it had previously been. The materials were still the same—the design and form were the same even to the most minute details; and, in the case of the new birth, the "spirit, and soul, and body," are the same in personal identity, but they are "made new." (*J. Beith, D.D.*) *Regeneration a great change*:—Dr. Leifchild tells us that he once met a lad twelve years old at a toll-gate, who had a Testament in his hand. "Can you read it?" inquired the doctor. "To be sure I can. I can read to you this, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" "What does that mean, my boy?" The lad quickly replied. "It means a great change. To be born again means something here" (laying his hand upon his breast), "and the kingdom of God means something up yonder." That boy had got hold of the very core of Bible theology. But what was so clearly revealed to that lad in his Bible was yet a mystery and a puzzle to the Jewish ruler. *The physical effects of regeneration*:—In the case of the drunkard there are two diseases in him: one of the mind, the other of the body; the one a depravation of his affections, the other a vitiation of his nerves. Now when such a person comes to be regenerated, the process does not cure the disease; the craving continues for some time; and when at last the nerves may be restored to a healthful tone, and the regenerated man is no longer tormented with the woeful thirst, this is not the result of any healing power put forth by the regenerating Spirit on his bodily organization, but the natural physiological effect of his regenerated mind having resolutely adopted habits of sobriety. So it is with all other habits and appetites. It is the mind alone on which regeneration acts, and the mind when changed reduces the rebellious flesh to order. (*W. Anderson, D.D.*) *The terms of regeneration*:—It is called a renovation of the soul, or its being made new; a transformation of the soul on its being changed into another likeness; a translating of the soul, or its being brought from one position and placed in another; a quickening of the soul, or its receiving new life; a resurrection of the soul, or its being raised from the dead; a new creation of the soul, or its being created anew by Him who made it; the washing of the soul, or its purification from defilement; the healing of the soul, or its deliverance from disease; the liberation

of the soul, or its emancipation from bondage; the awakening of the soul, or its being aroused out of sleep; and it is compared to the change wrought in the blind when they receive their sight; on the deaf when their hearing is restored; on the lepers when they are cleansed; on the dead when they are raised to life. (*J. Buchanan, D.D.*) *The necessity of regeneration*:—If birth and religious advantages could do anything to put a man into the kingdom of God, Nicodemus could surely claim to be there. His descent went back without a break to Abraham, to whom it was pledged that in his seed should the whole earth be blessed; he belonged to a nation marked off as God's peculiar people by deliverances and promises such as belonged to no others. If ever a man could claim to belong to God by religious observance and association this man could. Upon him was the sign and seal of his belonging to God, the mark of that initial sacrament with all its significance; he was constant in prayer, in the study of the Scriptures, and in the observance of the law. If external ceremonies could set a man in the kingdom of God, none could stand more securely than Nicodemus, who through every day and every hour of his life was subject to all kind of religious exercises, and ceremonies carried out with a scrupulous jealousy. If religion is in notions, scriptural and orthodox notions, in reverent feelings, in devout prayers, in generous sentiments, here then is a man in need of nothing. Yet this is the man to whom it is spoken, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." What then, was all this a cumbersome folly? This Jewish arrangement of training and worship; circumcision, altars, priests, sacrifices, prophecies—was it all no good, even though God Himself had arranged and commanded it? Even so; it was all useless, unless there is something more, and greater than it all. No good, precisely as food and light and air, as education and commerce and civilization, are no good to a dead man. Put life into him—then all these things shall wait upon him and minister to him and bless him. But he must live first. Sacraments, services, sermons, Scriptures, creeds, may minister to life—but there must be life first of all. (*Mark Guy Pearse.*) *The great change*:—I. ITS NATURE: entirely spiritual. 1. In its subject—the soul. It is not an external reform merely, but an internal renovation—a change of mind and heart taking effect—(1) On the understanding, when it is enlightened. (2) On the conscience, when it is convinced. (3) On the will, when it is subdued. (4) On the affections, when they are refined and purified. (5) On the whole man, when he is transformed by the renewing of his mind and created anew. 2. In its Author—the Spirit of God. It belongs to Him—(1) To enlighten the darkened understanding by shining into it. (2) To awaken the slumbering conscience by convincing it of sin. (3) To subdue our rebellious wills, by making us willing in the day of His power. (4) To take away the stony heart and give us hearts of flesh. 3. In its means—the Word of God. II. ITS CONCOMITANTS. 1. Precedent instruction, conviction, repentance, faith. 2. Consequent progressive sanctification. III. ITS NECESSITY. 1. From the fallen nature of man. An unconverted man is out of the kingdom of God, and is incapable of entering it until born again. 2. From the character of God. No unregenerate man can enter the kingdom of God, because—(1) It is impossible for God to do what implies a manifest contradiction, such as is involved in the idea that a fleshly mind can, without a radical change, become the subject of a spiritual kingdom. (2) Because it is impossible for God to lie, and He has expressly said that we must be converted or condemned. God is said to repent, but only when man himself repents. (3) Because it is impossible for God to deny Himself or act in opposition to His infinite perfections. The supposition that a sinful man may enter His kingdom implies that He must—(*a*) Rescind the law of His moral government. (*b*) Depart from His declared design in the scheme of redemption. (*c*) Reverse the moral constitution of man. (*d*) Alter the whole character of His kingdom. (*J. Buchanan, D.D.*) *The lesson by night*:—I. The clear deliverance, by implication at least, on the doctrine of THE COMPLETE DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE. It is to this man with his morality and unblemished life, a teacher of the only true religion, and not to some sin-defiled creature, that the Saviour speaks. Christ knew what was in man, and this is in man. II. THE RADICAL CHARACTER OF THE RELIGION OF CHRIST. In order to meet this great need religion goes to the root of everything within us, transforming all and "creates us anew in Christ Jesus." III. THE INEXORABLE CHARACTER OF THIS REQUIREMENT. It is a law of the kingdom of Christ never to be annulled. 1. One man comes strong in life's integrities. 2. Another radiant in social charities. 3. Another religious according to his own ideas. They see the gates open, but the law shines

above it, "Except," &c. These virtues do not go far enough, and leave untouched life's centre and essence. At the root of all virtues is the claim which God has on the love of His creatures. A just man who "robs God"! A tender-hearted man who has no love for Jesus Christ! A religious man who expects to get into the kingdom by outward ordinances! What contradictions! IV. Although this law is radical and inexorable, THERE IS NOTHING UNIFORM AS TO TIMES AND MODES. There is endless variety. It may be by love or fear, with difficulty or ease, &c. It follows the lines of our individuality, and is suitable to our circumstances. V. THIS GREAT CHANGE IS VERY BLESSED. Why should it be regarded as a stern necessity? It is a glorious privilege. It is described as seeing or entering a kingdom of which God is King; as being born again into the family of which God is Father. Philosophy tells me to think again and be wiser, and I think till my brain is giddy. Morality tells me I must act again and be better, and I whip my conscience, but make little way. Philanthrophy tells me to feel again with quicker sympathy. But in that I fail. Priesthood and priestcraft tell me that I must pray, &c., again. Yes! but the burden of it. Jesus tells me I must be born again. That is gospel for me. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Regeneration, or the second birth*:—I. WHAT IS REGENERATION? 1. Not a ritual or ceremonial change. Outward washing cannot confer inward grace. The spirit birth is necessary for admission into the spiritual kingdom. 2. Not morality. Good citizenship, honesty, integrity, natural affection, may elevate and bless this human life; but more is necessary to qualify for saintly and Divine fellowship in the upper world. 3. Not self-culture. 4. Regeneration is coming into the Divine realm, into the spiritual kingdom, into right relations with God and heaven, through Jesus Christ. It is a new life, above the senses, above the earthly, above the material. It is the faith faculty. No more aliens, but children. II. HOW MAY I KNOW THAT I HAVE BEEN BORN AGAIN, THAT I AM A CHILD OF GOD? 1. The direct witness of the Holy Ghost. 2. The conjoint testimony of our own spirit. My consciousness affirms the fact. 3. The predominance of grace. The new government is supreme. The renewed soul stands ready for orders. 4. There will be difficulty in sinning. The new nature shrinks from sin as a tender and sensitive plant shrinks from the north wind's blast. 5. There will be affinity for God. Fellowship with Father and Son. 6. There will be Christian joy and comfort. The rapture of a soul rescued from sin and hell, and adopted into God's family. III. THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION. Spiritual life is an essential condition for the spiritual kingdom. Without it you can have no vital union with God, and no knowledge of the spiritual life. What would you do in heaven with an unregenerated nature? A stranger in a strange land; a beggar amid bounty; blind amid beauty; deaf amid waves of song; hungry, yet with no taste for heavenly joys—you would be out of place there. (*C. P. Masden, D.D.*)

Vers. 4–8. **How can a man be born when he is old?**—*The incredulous listener*:—I. THE AMAZED INTERROGATION (ver. 4). 1. Its origination: astonishment and perplexity. 2. Its intention: investigation and inquiry. 3. Its explanation: the new birth an impossibility. II. THE SUBLIME ELUCIDATION. 1. The exposition (ver. 5), in which are noticeable—(1) That the former truth is repeated with the old solemnity, authority, particularity, universality, certainty. Christ conceded nothing to the rank and character of His interlocutor. (2) That the hard truth is explained with much simplicity, fulness, kindness, and condescension, also furnishing a pattern for His followers in general and His official servants in particular. 2. The argumentation (ver. 6). The law of propagation is one throughout the realm of animated existence—every creature after its kind. (1) In the sphere of matter like produces like (Matt. vii. 16; Luke vi. 44). (2) In the loftier domain of man, nature can never rise higher than itself. III. THE SUBLIME ILLUSTRATION. 1. The natural phenomenon: the wind, selected as an emblem of the Spirit, probably because of—(1) Its etherial character; (2) Its free motion; (3) Its inscrutable mystery. 2. The spiritual interpretation (ver. 8). The Spirit's grace is like the wind in respect of—(1) Its origin, coming from heaven. (2) Its sovereignty, blowing where it listeth. (3) Its movement, going softly. (4) Its influence, penetrating and quickening. (5) Its results. *Lessons*—1. The natural blindness of the understanding in the region of the Spirit. 2. The hopefulness of those who bring their intellectual and moral difficulties to Christ. 3. The danger of reasoning that what is impossible in nature must be impossible in grace. 4. The moral impotence of human nature. 5. The necessity of regeneration. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

The reasoning with Nicodemus:—I. A RE-ASSERTION OF THE PREVIOUS DOCTRINE WITH SOME CHANGE IN THE FORM OF EXPRESSION. 1. We must be born of water. This describes a change of condition, from guilt and condemnation to righteousness and acceptance. "Water" emblematically represents Christ's obedience as the substitute of those who are saved by Him, and to be "born" represents the application of that obedience for salvation. Baptism is the symbol of this change of condition. 2. We must be born of the Spirit, which describes a change of character as distinguished from a change in condition. This change may be small in its beginnings. It is the origin which has progress unto perfection for its completion. With this new life and its growth will come the gradual decay of all unholy principles, until they are wholly destroyed. II. AN ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION. 1. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. (1) Flesh means our fallen nature—the source and seat of evil within the soul. The body is but the instrument through which the inherent corruption acts. (2) This nature can never be anything else than that which Scripture declares it to be. Treat it as you will, improve it by what cultivation you can, it is flesh still. 2. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (1) This is to have a new life and a new nature, not to have some faculties set against others, but the possession of all the faculties by the Holy Spirit, and their renewal in the image of God. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Nicodemus*:—I. Nicodemus did not deny the doctrine of the new birth; he merely started a difficulty. He was a literalist, and doubted the exactness of the term born: it was too specific in its common meaning to be literally applied to anything else. Christ's answer was consistent with His whole method of teaching. The strangeness of His language excited attention, provoked thought, and awakened controversy, and so through a process of inquiry and strife men entered into the mystery of His rest. It seems as if every one must at some time have doubts and anguish of heart respecting Christ and His kingdom. II. Nicodemus was one of those persons who always ground their course on facts. The facts which he had observed led to the conclusion that Christ was a teacher come from God, because of His miracles: an admission of the utmost importance. If the works are from God, what of the words? Yet important as the admission was, Christ returned an answer which apparently had no bearing on the subject of miracles; and yet He did not evade it. He showed incidentally the true position and value of His mighty works. They were symbolic of one great miracle, and unless a man is the subject of that miracle, his belief in other miracles will not admit him into the kingdom of heaven. Other miracles were to be looked at, were public, material, gave new views; the miracle of regeneration was to be felt, was personal, moral, and gave new life. III. This call from outward circumstances to the deepest experience of the soul naturally suggested the question "How can these things be?" Christ's answer does not clear the original mystery. His meaning is that we are not to deny results because we cannot understand processes. We may see a renewed life, but cannot see the renewing spirit. In His metaphor Christ found a common law in nature and in grace; the Spirit is the same whether He direct the course of the wind or renew the springs of the heart. Man occupies an outside position. There are limitations to his knowledge. He does not understand himself. The atom baffles him. The wise man only knows his own folly. IV. These considerations show the spirit in which the subject of the new birth should be approached—one of self-restraint, of conscious limitation of ability, of preparedness to receive not a confirmation of speculative opinion but a Divine revelation. The shock of this new life comes differently. 1. Sometimes on the intellectual side, as in the case of Nicodemus, throwing into confusion the theories of a lifetime. 2. Sometimes on the selfish instincts, as in the case of the rich young man who cannot give his possessions to the poor. 3. Sometimes on the natural sensibilities, as in the case of Bunyan. Hence the folly of setting up a common standard. A man only knows the agonies of the new birth by giving up what he prizes most. V. What Jesus Christ has left a mystery it would be presumption to attempt to explain. We hear the sound of the wind, we cannot follow it all the way. Can we explain how a child is born? when the child is displaced by the man? the origin and succession of ideas? Yet as the sound of the wind is heard, so there are results which prove the fact of our regeneration. These of course may be simulated, just as a watch may be altered by the hands and not by the regulator, or as the ruddiness of the cheek may be artificial and not natural. The regenerate man is known by the spirit which animates his life. 1. He lives by rule, but it is the unwritten and unchanging rule of love. 2. He advances in orderliness, but it is the orderliness not of mechanical

stipulation, but of vigorous and affluent life. 3. He is constantly strengthened and ennobled by an inextinguishable ambition to be filled with all the fulness of Christ. (*Joseph Parker, D.D.*) *Natural ignorance*:—Water riseth no higher than the spring whence it came; so the natural man can ascend no higher than nature. (*J. Trapp.*) *Amazing ignorance*:—It is said that Robert Hall once visited a poor man in his sickness; and, during his conversation with him, the man every now and then knocked with a stick the board at the head of the bed. Mr. Hall, rather annoyed by this interruption, asked his reason for such strange conduct. The man replied, that the Bible commanded him to knock, and it should be opened unto him. *Ignorance in learned men*:—"I used frequently," says Cecil, "to visit Dr. Bacon at his living near Oxford. He would frequently say to me, 'What are you doing? What are your studies?' 'I am reading so-and-so.' 'You are quite wrong. When I was young I could turn any piece of Hebrew into Greek verse with ease. But when I came into this parish, and had to teach ignorant people, I was wholly at a loss; I had no furniture. They thought me a great man, but that was their ignorance, for I knew as little as they did of what it was most important for them to know. Study chiefly what you can turn to good account in your future life." *Ignorance of religion*:—Samuel Wesley visited one of his parishioners as he was upon his dying bed—a man who had never missed going to church in forty years. "Thomas, where do you think your soul will go?" "Soul! soul!" said Thomas. "Yes, sir," said Mr. Wesley, "do you not know what your soul is?" "Ay, surely," said Thomas; "why it is a little bone in the back that lives longer than the body." "So much," says John Wesley, who related it on the authority of Dr. Lupton, who had it from his father, "had Thomas learned from hearing sermons, and exceedingly good sermons, for forty years." (*Anecdotes of the Wesleys.*) **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.**—*The Holy Spirit's work*:—The translation of the soul from "death to life," "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. I. ITS NECESSITY. 1. As natural birth is necessary to our present existence, so also is spiritual birth to our spiritual existence. 2. Unless we are born of the Spirit we "cannot see the kingdom of God." Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. 3. Without this birth no man "can enter the kingdom of God." Nominal membership in the Church will not save us. It is only as we are spiritually born that we may confidently hope to enter heaven. II. ITS NATURE. 1. It is divine or spiritual in its origin: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." 2. It is a supernatural change, "Except a man be born again," or, as in the margin, "from above." 3. It is the impartation of a new principle of a spiritual life, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." Before the change we "were dead in trespasses and sins"; but after it we are "made alive unto God." 4. It is a cleansing of the soul from all sin in the blood of Jesus Christ. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *No admission to heaven but by the new birth*:—I. WHAT WE ARE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE KINGDOM OF GOD. This expression seems to have been borrowed from the Book of Daniel (ch. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14), and hence it was in common use amongst the Jews (Luke xvii. 20; xix. 11), and they justly supposed it to mean, the kingdom of the Messiah; only imagining, in the pride and carnality of their hearts, and in direct opposition to many passages of their own Scriptures, that it would be of a temporal nature, established by human policy and power. The kingdom of the Messiah is termed the kingdom of God; because by Him the kingdom of Satan is overthrown, men are rescued from his power (Acts xxvi. 18), and made the subjects of God, the kingdom of God is set up on earth, and displayed in power and glory. This kingdom is to be considered in two parts; in a state of infancy, imperfection, and warfare, on earth, in which it is continually receiving fresh subjects, making fresh conquests, and is enlarged more and more; and in a state of triumph and full perfection in heaven. II. IN WHAT SENSE MUST WE BE BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT THAT WE MAY ENTER THIS KINGDOM. 1. Birth by water implies baptism (Mark xvi. 16). When administered by the apostles to adults, it was only to such as repented and believed (Acts ii. 38; viii. 36-37), and hence was considered an outward and visible sign of cleansing from past sin and pardon (Acts xxii. 16; xiii. 8). This is a relative change, a change of state. But—2. Birth of the Spirit is a real change; a change of nature (2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15; Eph. iv. 22-23). (1) It is not only an external but an internal change; not mere reformation of manners, but change of principles and dispositions (Psa. li. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 26). (2) It is not a partial but a universal change: "Old things have passed," &c. (3) It is a progressive change (Tit. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iv. 16; Col. ii. 19; Eph. iv. 15). 3. It is termed a birth because it may be

illustrated by the natural birth. III. THE GRAND NECESSITY, REASONABLENESS, AND HAPPY CONSEQUENCES OF THIS BIRTH. 1. Flesh means not so much our animal and mortal as our depraved nature (GEN. vi. 3, viii. 21; Rom. viii. 9; Gal. v. 16). Man has sunk under the dominion of his senses, appetites and passions. Men are therefore naturally unfit for the kingdom (Rom. viii. 5, 9; Eph. v. 5). Hence arises the necessity of being born again. 2. The Spirit having begotten us again, and inwardly changed us, we become spiritual. Endued with the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 9); with the life, light, power, purity, and comfort, which he imparts. Free from the dominion of the flesh, we become heavenly, overcoming the world (1 John v. 4, 5). Holy, not committing sin (1 John iii. 9), having power over it, and over "the law in the members" (Rom. vii. 23); walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 1), "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts," and "led by the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16–25); divine, resembling God in love and in all its fruits (1 John iv. 7, 8–16). We thus are made fit subjects for the kingdom of Christ on earth and in heaven. IV. HOW WE MAY EXPERIENCE THIS NEW BIRTH. The Author of it is the Spirit of God; the means by which it is effected are the Word of God (John xvii. 17). (*J. Benson.*) *Baptismal regeneration*:—I. IT IS CLEARLY OPPOSED TO THE SPIRIT AND DESIGN OF OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE TO NICODEMUS (cf. vers. 3, 6, 8; and Mark xvi., where "believeth not" is disassociated from baptism). II. IT IS OPPOSED TO THE DECLARATION AND PRACTICE OF ST. PAUL (1 Cor. i. 14–18). Had it regenerated, his wisest method would have been to baptize. III. It has AN AWFUL AND MOST UNSCRIPTURAL ASPECT ON THE DESTINY OF THE UNBAPTIZED. Think of the myriads infant and adult who on this hypothesis are lost, and contrast it with "Suffer little children," &c. IV. IT OFFERS GREAT DISHONOUR TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND IS AT VARIANCE WITH SCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF THE NATURE AND EFFICACY OF HIS REGENERATING AND SANCTIFYING GRACE. Look at thousands who have been baptized. Have they fallen from grace? When did they ever evidence the possession of it? V. IT IS CALCULATED TO PRODUCE THE MOST RUINOUS DELUSIONS, that a man is safe by a mere ceremonial without a moral change. VI. IT DIVERTS THE MIND FROM THE TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE OF DIVINE TRUTH AND FIXES ITS ATTENTION ON EXTERNAL OBSERVANCES. The truth is the agency which the Scripture set forth of regeneration. (*H. F. Burder, D.D.*) *The general teaching of our Lord*:—I. THAT THERE SHOULD BE A CHANGE IN THE CONDITION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE; that it was not sufficient for them to do the works of the law if they would be saved; and that with this change the old rites had passed away. II. THAT FROM HENCEFORTH THE RELATIONSHIP OF MEN TO GOD WAS TO BE A NEAR RELATIONSHIP, for a new birth implies a new filiation, and that whereas they had been in the state of servants, this should pass away and they become sons. III. THAT THE GATES OF HEAVEN, THE NEW JERUSALEM, WERE NOW THROUGH THE NEW BIRTH TO BE OPENED TO ALL MEN, both Jews and Gentiles, that none could see the kingdom of God without the new birth, but that the new born should see and enter that kingdom. IV. THAT ALL THESE BLESSINGS SHOULD BE THROUGH CHRIST. (*Beaux Amis.*) *The baptism of water and of the Spirit*:—The Spirit in regeneration worketh like water. I. Water hath the property of ABLUTION, to wash away the filth of our bodies. So the Spirit—1. Besprinkling us with the blood of Christ assureth us that the guilt of sin is taken away, and 2. Applying to us the virtue of Christ's death causes sin to die, and so washes away the filth of sin and sanctifies us. And this is the first degree of spiritual life, to have sin die and decay in us, as Paul (Gal. ii. 20) joins his being crucified with Christ, and living by faith in Christ, together. II. Water causes FRUITFULNESS, as drought does famine (Job. viii. 11). Hence was Egypt's fruitfulness, because of the Nile's inundations. And hence the regenerate man is compared to the trees planted by the rivers of water (Psa. i.), because the presence of the Holy Ghost is the same to them, that waters to the willows (Isa. xliv. 3–5). III. Water COOLS and allays heat (Psa. xlii. 1). So the Spirit cools the heat of our raging and accusing consciences pursued by the law. (*Jer. Dyke.*) *Regeneration*:—I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD. The expression was a Jewish one, and the Jew would understand by it society perfected. That domain on earth where God was visible and God ruled. The Jewish kingdom was a theocracy: a kingdom in which God's power was manifest by miracles, and in which His laws were promulgated. This was Nicodemus' conception. He saw that Christ fulfilled the two requisites of a Divine mission—asserting a living will ruling over the laws of nature. He had seen a society growing up in acknowledgment of the rule of a person. But Christ asserted the necessity that the subject should be prepared for the kingdom. He distinguished

between the visible and the invisible kingdom—the presence that man can see, and the presence that man can feel. Nicodemus saw Christ first when he gazed on the miracles. Christ told him he could not see or enter the other save by being born again. II. THE ENTRANCE TO THIS KINGDOM. As there is a twofold kingdom, so a twofold entrance. 1. By the baptism of water. We enter the kingdom by our senses and our spirit. God's witness to our senses is baptism. This is not the fact of our regeneration, but it substantiates the fact. The right of a man to his ancestor's property is the will or intention of the ancestor. But because that will is invisible it is necessary that it should be made manifest in a visible symbol, viz., a "Will." So baptism is the Will of God, *i.e.*, the instrument that declares His will. The will itself is invisible; verbally it runs, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"; the visible instrument equivalent to the parchment is baptism. And so baptism is regeneration only as the parchment is the will. 2. Entrance into the kingdom by a spiritual change. The ground on which our Lord states it is our twofold human nature—the nature of the animal and the nature of God. When these natures are exchanged is the moment of spiritual regeneration. Our Lord's phrase has been interpreted—(1) In a fanatical way. Men of enthusiastic temperament, whose lives have been irregular, and whose religion has come upon them suddenly, contend that if a man does not know the hour of his conversion he is no Christian. (2) Another class of persons, to whom enthusiasm is a crime, rationalize the change away, contending that it applies to Jews, and that to say that it is necessary to those brought up in the Church of England is to open the door to all fanaticism. (3) A third class confound it with baptism, which seems equally opposed to the text. (4) In our life there is a time when the Spirit has gained the mastery over the flesh. That time was the time of regeneration. There are those in whom this never takes place—grown men still having and indulging animal appetites. These may have been born of water but never of the Spirit. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Regeneration—its subjective aspect*:—Our Lord's sermon was delivered—1. Not to the multitude, as were His other discourses, but to an audience of *one*. But the smallness of the auditory did not affect the sublimity of what Christ said, or His earnestness. The elder Beecher was called upon to preach in a country chapel where, owing to the weather, he had but one hearer. Twenty years after Mr. Beecher met this person, then an eminently successful preacher, and the instrument of hundreds of conversions, as a result of this sermon. Preachers should never despair because of small audiences. 2. This solitary hearer lacked two very desirable qualities in an inquirer—boldness and quickness. Yet on the other hand he was teachable, and was convinced that Christ was qualified to teach. I. THE NATURE OF REGENERATION. The figure indicates the radical character of the formative process of Christianity over the moral nature of its subject. There are other figures equally forcible: "Creation," "renewing," "workmanship." Our Lord's term had peculiar significance for a Jew, inasmuch as all His privileges were secured to Him by birth. The others are St. Paul's terms, who wrote to Gentiles, who would be more familiar with artistic and mechanical operations. Both describe the same process, but represent two distinct truths respecting it. Creation has a wider meaning than birth. Every new existence is a creation, but that of Adam, *e.g.*, was immediate—but the production of a new man in Christ Jesus is mediate, viz., by birth. II. ITS SPHERE "from above." The source of the new principle is outside the earthly. Natural birth ushers into a conscious life only on an earthly plane; but spiritual birth ushers into a conscious life on a heavenly plane. Its starting point is from above, and it maintains its spiritual elevation along its whole course. III. ITS METHOD. 1. By the breathing of the Spirit. The same method is adopted to quicken the new man as was employed to quicken the old. "God breathed into his nostrils," &c., &c. 2. The breathing of the Spirit assumes the form of a voice. In Adam's case God breathed into his nostrils; in our case the Spirit breaths into the ear. "Of His own will begat He us," &c. 3. This exercise is—(1) Sovereign—not to justify arbitrary selection of subjects, but to show God's right and purpose to extend the exercise of His grace beyond the limits set down by the exclusive notions of self-righteous men (Rom. ix. 15). Our Lord was explaining the kingdom: one of its most glorious features is universality. (2) Mysterious. Life in its physical form has ever defied every attempt to solve the mystery of its origin. So with the life spiritual. IV. ITS ESSENTIALNESS. The new birth is essential to seeing and to entering the kingdom. "Seeing" is that power of deep spiritual insight into spiritual things, the absence of which our Lord deplored (Matt. xiii. 13–17), and which Paul declares to be neces-

sary to understand the deep things of God (1 Cor. ii. 14–16). To see the kingdom of God means to obtain a sympathetic apprehension of its nature and aim. To enter means actual participation in its blessedness. This entering, however, is conducive to the seeing. A building viewed externally is seen, but in a very incomplete sense. We must inhabit it to realize its use, comfort, and protection. (*A. J. Parry.*) *The nature and process of regeneration:*—Yonder is a cracked bell. How again to restore it? By one of two methods. The first is to repair the bell, to encompass it with hoops, to surround it with bands. Nevertheless you can easily discern the crack of the bell in the crack of the sound. The only effectual way is to remelt the bell, recast it, and make it all new; then it will ring clear, round, sonorous as ever. And human nature is a bell suspended high up in the steeple of the creation to ring forth the praises of the Almighty Creator. But in the Fall in Eden the bell cracked. How again to restore it? By one of two ways. One is to surround it with outward laws and regulations as with steel hoops. This is the method adopted by philosophy as embodied in practical statesmanship; and without doubt there is a marked improvement in the sound. Nevertheless the crack in the metal shows itself in the crack in the tone. The best way is to remelt it, recast it, remould it; and this is God's method in the gospel. He remelts our being, refashions us, creates us afresh from root to branch, makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, zealous unto good works; and by and by we will sound forth His praises in a nobler, sweeter strain than ever we did before. Heaven's high arches will be made to echo our anthems of praise. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The need of regeneration:*—A raw countryman having brought his gun to the gunsmith for repairs, the latter is reported to have examined it, and finding it to be almost too far gone for repairing, said, "Your gun is in a very worn-out, ruinous, good-for-nothing condition, what sort of repairing do you want for it?" "Well," said the countryman, "I don't see as I can do with anything short of a new stock, lock, and barrel; that ought to set it up again." "Why," said the smith, "you had better have a new gun altogether." "Ah!" was the reply, "I never thought of that; and it strikes me that's just what I do want. A new stock, lock, and barrel; why that's about equal to a new gun altogether, and that's what I'll have." Just the sort of repairing that man's nature requires. The old nature cast aside as a complete wreck and good for nothing, and a new one imparted. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The new birth:*—I. Man in a state of nature, or MAN BEFORE REGENERATION. Christ nowhere inculcates the doctrine of the fall, but everywhere assumes it. His doctrine of regeneration presupposes it, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." 1. This depravity is therefore innate—"born." In Psa. li. David says, "In sin did my mother conceive me." No wonder therefore that he should pray, "Wash me throughly." Two words are used for "wash." (1) The cleansing of the surface, just as a man washes his face. (2) A washing that cleanses the inside as well, as a woman washes clothes. This David's word. 2. The turpitude is hereditary. This is a verity of science as well as of theology. Once degeneration enters a species, the process goes on from bad to worse unless a remedial check be applied. Adam begat a son in his own likeness. Like begets like. My personal sin grows out of an undercurrent of evil in the race. 3. Universal. 4. Total. Not that every man is as bad as he can be, but that every faculty is more or less tainted, that the bias of the soul, the whole trend of our being is in the direction of evil. II. Man changed from a state of nature into a state of grace, or MAN BEING REGENERATED. 1. Godliness begins in life. It is not a thing of profession or acquisition, but of birth; not a trade, but a nature. 2. This life is new; not a continuation of the old, but a new creation. Human nature is too dilapidated to be repaired. 3. This life is heavenly: in origin, nature, and direction. Heavenly—(1) In opposition to the life of the carnal man. (2) In contradistinction from that which God bestowed on man at his first creation. 4. It is specifically a Divine life. Thus (1) superior to the angelic; (2) to Adamic life; (3) for it is the life of God Himself. Consequently regeneration is a supernatural process; not a miraculous, for Christianity ceased to be miraculous in the first century. The miraculous is only accidental to it, but the supernatural belongs to its essence. III. Man in a state of grace, or MAN AFTER REGENERATION. Once a man is born again—1. He is able to understand the gospel in its spiritual significance and relations. He "sees" the kingdom. The natural man may receive the thoughts of the Spirit of God, but not the realities represented by the thoughts 2. He "enters" the kingdom, becomes a denizen of it, a naturalized subject enjoying its privileges and sharing its responsibilities. His "citizenship is in

heaven." 3. Having entered the kingdom its duties and privileges afford keen enjoyment to the new man. He "sees," relishes the kingdom, tastes the heavenly gifts, and that the Lord is gracious. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The new birth*:—I. ITS NATURE. 1. What it is not. (1) Not the outward administration of baptism. Some we see piously disposed from their earliest years who might have had a holy bias imparted, but the great generality are void of gracious dispositions, and cannot have been born again. (2) Not reformation of life. Amendment is the effect, not the precedent of regeneration. The nature of the corrupt tree must be changed ere it can produce good fruits. (3) Not a profession of religion. This may exist when there is no participation in the spirit. Nicodemus was a professor and a distinguished teacher. 2. What it is. (1) A supernatural change above the power of nature. As man cannot create, he cannot recreate himself, cannot quicken himself any more than the buried dead. (2) An internal change. The doctrine of Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27 Christ perpetuates. As the heart is deceitful above all things so it must be changed ere the love of God reigns in it. (3) An universal change, co-extensive with our corruption, affecting all our powers, enlightening the understanding, subduing the will, biassing the disposition, purifying the heart, reforming the life. (4) A sensible change. Sometimes the change is unconscious, but generally sinners are aroused from their slumbers more or less violently (Acts ii. 37). In either case it is in its progress and effects always sensible. (5) A visible change. We see the effects of the wind, although not its origin and operation. So a man's new birth is evident—(1) To himself. He loves and seeks spiritual things, whereas formerly he disliked and avoided them. (2) To others. (*a*) To the regenerate who find a congeniality of taste and feeling with them. (*b*) To the unregenerate, who marvel at the change. II. ITS NECESSITY. 1. From the character of Him who declares it: Christ—(1) The Divine Saviour. (2) The Divine Teacher. 2. From its indispensableness to happiness. (1) Present. The world in itself is an unsatisfying, empty portion. The soul craves a higher joy than it can give. The new birth brings joy unspeakable and full of glory. (2) Eternal. Heaven would not be heaven to the unconverted. Its employments, &c., would be offensive. His nature and taste savour not of spiritual things. III. ITS SIGNS. He that is born of God—1. Overcometh the world. 2. Doth not commit sin. 3. Brings forth the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, &c. Application. If the new birth be—1. A supernatural change, do not fancy you can renew yourself, but cry, "Create in me a clean heart," &c. 2. An internal change; do not think that the amendment will suffice, but pray that the axe may be laid at the root of the corrupt tree. 3. An universal change; no idol must be retained. 4. A sensible change; see that your acquaintance with truth is experimental, not theoretical. 5. A visible change; let your light shine. (*W. Mudge, B.A.*) *The new birth*:—What a meeting was this between Christ and Nicodemus! 1. The season was most solemn. 2. The theme the most momentous. 3. The hearer a ruler in Israel. 4. The Speaker the great Teacher sent from God. I. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH. Altogether spiritual. Regeneration by water baptism is a dangerous fallacy. (1) Thousands who have been baptized are unchanged. (2) Christ who came to save the lost never baptized. (3) Paul said, "I was not sent to baptize," &c. By baptism we enter the visible kingdom, but by spiritual regeneration the invisible. 1. The agent in this work is a Spirit—the Spirit of God. Some secondary agency is usually employed, the Word of God, &c., but that is only His instrument. 2. The subject is spirit—the soul of man. Regeneration is in its very nature a complete reorganization of the moral man. (1) Correcting what is wrong. (2) Supplying what is deficient. (3) Removing what is superfluous. The works of the devil are destroyed, and the kingdom of righteousness established. 3. The immediate associations are spiritual. The signs may be evident, but the causes are unseen. Therefore the unregenerate cannot understand either spiritual mourning or spiritual joy, because there is nothing that they can see to occasion either. II. ITS RESULTS. 1. It introduces a man into a new world. It seems as though he saw with new eyes, heard with new ears, enjoyed with new senses. 2. It introduces him into a new society where he forms more dignified companionships. Some imagine that to become a Christian is to lose caste. On the contrary it is to be elevated in the rank of being and to have God and the purest and best for friends. 3. It produces a new class of feelings, motives, and desires. Joy where once was sorrow; love of God where once was love of self; aspirations after heaven where once was worldly ambition. 4. It opens new sources of pleasure. III. ITS NECESSITY. 1. From the moral condition of man which is depraved. 2. From the character of heaven,

into which the undefiled cannot enter. 3. From the mediatorship of Jesus Christ, who came to bring about the great change. (*J. S. Jones.*) *The new birth*:—If any doctrines are fundamental they are those of justification and regeneration. The former is what God does for us in forgiving our sins, the latter what He does in us in renewing our fallen nature. They are concurrent, but in the order of thought we first conceive His wrath to be turned away and then His Spirit to enter our heart. I. WHY MUST WE BE BORN AGAIN? 1. The foundation of this doctrine lies nearly as deep as the foundation of the world. God created man in His image. (1) Not barely in His natural image—immortal, spiritual, intelligent, free, &c. (2) Nor merely in His political image, as having dominion. (3) But chiefly in His moral image, in love, justice, mercy, truth, purity, and so very good. 2. But man was not made immutable, but placed in a state of trial, able to stand, liable to fall. God apprized him of the penalty of falling—death. Man fell and died—died to God. The body dies when separated from the soul; the soul when separated from God. 3. In Adam all died; so every one that is descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead. Hence the necessity of regeneration. II. HOW MUST A MAN BE BORN AGAIN? 1. We are not to expect any minute, philosophical account of the manner (ver. 8). 2. The phrase was well known to Nicodemus as signifying the transformation of a Gentile proselyte into a son of Abraham. 3. Before a child is born into the world he has eyes, but sees not; senses which are not exercised; has no knowledge. To that manner of existence we do not give the name of life. Only when a man is born do we say he lives. Then his organs of sense are exercised on proper objects. The parallel holds good. Man's spiritual senses by nature are locked up. He has no knowledge of or intercourse with God. Only when born by the Spirit of God does he spiritually live. Then his spiritual senses find exercise. He knows God and enjoys Him. 3. From hence appears the nature of the new birth. It is the great change which God works in the soul when He brings it to life; when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. III. TO WHAT END IS IT NECESSARY TO BE BORN AGAIN? 1. In order to holiness, which is—(1) Not an external religion, a round of outward duties. (2) But the image of God stamped on the heart, which can have no existence till we are renewed in the image of our mind. 2. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. 3. Without holiness no happiness. IV. INFERENCES. 1. That baptism is not the new birth, but only the sign of it. 2. That it does not always accompany baptism. 3. That it is not sanctification, which is progressive, whereas regeneration, like generation, is instantaneous. 4. That it is a greater charity to tell a man he needs to be born again than to suppress it. (*John Wesley.*) *The new birth of water and the Spirit*:—As out of the dry wheat one mass or one loaf cannot be made without moisture, so neither could we be made one in Christ Jesus without the water of the Spirit which is from heaven. And as dry earth, except it receive moisture, bears no fruit, so we also, being in the first place a dry tree, could never have become fruitful of life without being watered by the Spirit from above. (*T. H. Leary, D.C.L.*) *Spiritual births*:—Thorwaldsen, who is said to have been born in Copenhagen, when questioned as to his birthplace, replied, "I don't know; but I arrived in Rome, March 8, 1797;" dating his birth, as it were, from the commencement of his artistic career. Shortly after Summerfield arrived in America he met with a distinguished doctor of divinity who asked him where he was born. "In Dublin and in Liverpool." "Oh! how can that be?" The boy-preacher paused a moment, and answered, "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *Born a Christian*:—A person came in the inquiry-room, and I (D. L. Moody) said, "Are you a Christian?" "Why," says she, "of course I am." "Well," I said, "how long have you been one?" "Oh, sir, I was born one!" "Oh! indeed, then I am very glad to take you by the hand; I congratulate you; you are the first woman I ever met who was born a Christian; you are more fortunate than others; they are born children of Adam." She hesitated a little, and then tried to make out that, because she was born in England, she was a Christian. *Earthly minds love only earthly things*:—Alphonse Karr heard a gardener ask his master permission to sleep for the future in the stable; "for," said he, "there is no possibility of sleeping in the chamber behind the greenhouse, sir; there are nightingales there which do nothing but guggle, and keep up a noise all the night." The sweetest sounds are but an annoyance to those who have no musical ear; doubtless the music of heaven would have no charms to carnal minds, certainly the joyful sound of the gospel is unappreciated so long as men's ears remain uncircumcised. (*Feathers for Arrows.*)

Ver. 7. **Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**—*Every man's necessity*:—When men are perishing it would be cruel to interest their minds or amuse their fancies. We must give earnest heed to their necessities. Is it famine that slays them? We must give them food. Is it disease? Let us give the medicine. Now the spiritual needs of men are urgent, and the most pressing is their regeneration: they must be born again or lost. The change wrought in regeneration is—I. MOST THOROUGH. 1. It is more than reformation. 2. More than change of opinion even on the best topics. Notions may be altered again and again and yet a man be no nearer sonship with God. 3. More than priests can convey or ordinances effect. 4. It is a new creature created in us. At every birth a life comes into the world which was not there before. 5. A new experience. To the new-born child everything is new—pain and pleasure. 6. A new world. When a young girl found the Saviour, she said, "Either I am altogether changed or else the world is." In fact both are. 7. A new force. At every birth a new worker comes into the world. He is feeble at first, but those tiny hands and feet soon become dexterous. And so when a soul is born a power is put forth from it of which it was unconscious before. II. MOST WONDERFUL. 1. As to the manner of it. 2. As to the supernaturalness of its operation. No doubt moral suasion, influence of association, education, do much, and much may be developed in mankind that is admirable. But this is not what Christ meant. The Holy Spirit must come to work upon us as God came forth to work on this world at creation. 3. As to the grandeur of the relationship to which it introduces us. To God as children, to Christ as brethren. What privileges spring out of this relationship? Paupers have mounted from the dunghill to the throne, but a stride from nothingness to greatness is trifling compared with rising from being a slave of Satan to become a son of God. III. MOST MANIFEST. The house knows when a child is born. The birth may be mysterious, but the fact is apparent. So we know not how the Spirit works, but the change which comes over the subject shows that He has operated. Elstow knew when Bunyan had found the Saviour. Every soul that is born again—1. Repents of his sin. 2. Has faith. 3. Prays. 4. Develops the spiritual power that has been imparted. IV. MOST IMPERATIVE. You may be rich or poor, wise or ignorant—many things are desirable, one thing is needful "Ye *must* be born again." If you are not—1. You have no spiritual life, and without that you are dead in trespasses and sins. 2. No spiritual capacity, and so no power to receive the blessing. When the gracious rain comes they are not like Gideon's fleece, ready to drink it in, but like a hard stone, neither saturated nor softened. No spiritual inheritance. None can come in for the eternal portion but such as are born in the house. V. EMINENTLY PERSONAL. The idea of proxy is quite foreign. No other can be born for a man: so the great change must be individually experienced. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) (See Rev. xxii. 17 in connection with the text). *The necessity and possibility of the new birth*:—I. MUST be born again, and MAY be born again, are truths which should never be separated. II. MUST without MAY leads to despair. III. MAY without MUST leads to presumption. IV. We MUST, therefore we CAN be born again through the grace vouchsafed from heaven. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *No entrance to heaven without regeneration*:—Like the rocks which sometimes guard the entrance to a safe and spacious harbour, these words stand. A ship must enter here, or turn back to the wide ocean with no haven or home. "Ye must be born again." Of course this does not apply to a man unless he is going in. If any one is quite contented to stay without; if he is well pleased to sail up and down amid storm and calm, thinking that the end of his voyage is well enough attained without making for a port; rounding the world for ever, or at least until a grave shall open by land or sea, and end his travel in the waves or in the dust; if any man deliberately takes that view of his own life, then this law does not touch him. But if he desires to "see the kingdom of God," and enter in, he "must be born again." That law will not bend, it will not break, it will not stand out of the way. It is inexorable. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *Conversion is a great change*:—I passed by a piece of common which some lord of the manor or other had been enclosing, as those rascals always will if they can, to rob the poor of their rights, and filch every morsel of green grass upon which we may freely plant our feet; but I noticed that the enclosers had only railed it round, but had not dug it up, nor ploughed it, nor planted it; and though they had cut down the gorse, it was coming up again; of course it would, for it was common still, and a bit of fence or rail could not alter it; the furze would come peeping up, and ere long the enclosure would be as wild as the heath outside.

But this is not God's way of working. When God encloseth a heart that has laid common with sin, does He cut down the thorns and the briars and then plant fir trees? (Isa. lv. 13). No, no; but He so changeth the soil, that from the ground itself, from its own vitality, there spontaneously starts up the fir tree and the myrtle. This is a most wonderful result. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Morality is good, but insufficient:*—"Is not morality good as far as it goes?" say you. "Yes, certainly, as far as it goes." "Isn't my cable as good as yours, as far as it goes?" says the sailor who has a short cable to him who has one very long. "Yes," says the other, "as far as it goes; but what of that, when it won't go within fifty fathoms of bottom?" And of what use, oh moralist, is your cable, when it will not go within fifty fathoms of the place where it can take hold upon the soul's anchorage? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Conversion necessary:*—You may put what you please on a wild colt, a fractious horse from the desert, and it will make no difference with his nature. Put a gold harness on him—a silver harness—a velvet harness. Does one subdue his spirit more than another? I tell you, the horse is mightier than the harness that you put on him. Cover it with ornaments, make it brilliant with rosettes, put on what you please—but there is the horse with his unsubdued nature. And human nature is a wild ass's colt. Now, the mere harness of the Church, its external framework, and its outward procedure, are good enough if the men that are under them are good, and they are bad if the men that are under them are bad. It is not anything outside of men, it is the Spirit of God in them—that is the only hope for any Church, sect, or community. (*Ibid.*) *Conversion a necessity:*—I've seen luxuriant grasses growing on the tops of graves; I've seen flowers springing from the crevices of tombs; and like these are the fair and lovely moralities, and the social virtues which adorn the character of him who is not born of God's Spirit. The corpse, with its corruptions, its wasting flesh, and its decaying bones, is beneath the fragrant flowers. (*Ibid.*) *Conversion a necessity:*—As it would be impossible for the insect in its chrysalis state to observe the laws which are made for the transformed state—for the worm to know the laws which make the summer fly seek the sunshine and live upon the flower—as it must be "born again," and enter upon a new existence before it can keep the laws of that new existence; so only the new creature can keep a new commandment—love. (*C. Stanford.*) *Why conversion is necessary:*—As a dead man cannot inherit an estate, no more can a dead soul (and every soul is spiritually dead until quickened and born again of the Holy Ghost) inherit the kingdom of God. Yet sanctification and holiness of life do not constitute any part of our title to the heavenly inheritance, any more than mere animal life entitles a man of fortune to the estate he enjoys. He could not, indeed, enjoy his estate if he did not live; but his claim to his estate arises from some other quarter. In like manner, it is not our holiness that entitles us to heaven; though no man can enter into heaven without holiness. *The new birth a necessity:*—Suppose a Red Indian should come to this country and should endeavour to obtain the privileges of citizenship, well knowing that a man must be a born subject or he cannot enjoy them. Suppose he says, "I will change my name, I will take up the name of an Englishman—I have been called the Son of the Great West Wind—but I will take an English name, I will be called a Christian man, an English subject." Will that admit him? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **The wind bloweth where it listeth.**—*The Spirit of God:*—Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish Church, and had participated in its rites. He had probably been a listener to John and possibly had been baptized by him. He came to Christ in the spirit of a man who should say, "What lack I yet?" In reply Christ puts no stress on baptism, because this was the ground on which Nicodemus stood, viz., that he was initiated and had observed the required ordinances of religion. So He said in effect, "Except a man baptized with water be likewise baptized with the Spirit," &c. The truth of the Divine influence enforced by Christ—I. IS NOT UNSCIENTIFIC. Among modern discoveries nothing is more striking than the fact that there is a spiritual as well as a physical unity. Nothing is better attested than that upon the minds of men there are influences which spring from invisible sources. Nor is there anything which men more need, or aught so much to desire to be true and accept so willingly as this doctrine that there is a Divine power which wakes up the better part of man's nature. Then, again, we are conscious of its inspiring yearnings and longings which we know not how to locate or proportion. II. IS UNIVERSAL. The fact that the universal tendency of the human mind has been away from the physical and toward the spiritual has to be accounted for. It is not to suffer doubt because fantastic

notions have prevailed respecting it. Men sought chemistry through alchemy and astronomy through astrology. But the fact is that as far back as we have records there has been the conception of a free spirit. Where did it come from? III. DOES NOT SUPERSEDE THE NATURAL FACULTIES. It is not an attempt of the Divine mind to put its action in the place of our action; but lifts our mind into a sphere of activity it has not known before, so changing its feelings and experiences that it is called a new birth. Society ministers to our social wants—but only the Spirit can lift our spirits toward the great realm of truth in which it is to develop and live. The physical globe makes provision for the body, but to rise to the invisible and infinite, we need the Spirit who gives vitality and force to all those elements which go with the moral sentiment. IV. REQUIRES PREPARATION AND CO-OPERATION. Man may prepare himself for friendship and society according to the nature of the relations into which he is going. So may a man prepare his soul to be acted on by the Divine Spirit. There would be summer if there were no farmer; but the farmer knows how to make summer work to advantage for him as otherwise it would not have done. So there would be the universal influence of the Spirit of God if every human being were swept from the earth; but by meeting the Divine Spirit, by opening the soul to and co-operating with Him, men have made themselves the recipients of blessings they would not otherwise have known. V. MAY BE RESISTED as well as co-operated with. It is not irresistible; where men set their wills against it, put themselves under antagonistic feelings, resist the tendencies it would have developed, they certainly can set it aside. The strivings of God's Spirit have proved futile in thousands of instances. How many have yearnings for something better, and sweep them away by social jollity! VI. IS INSCRUTABLE. Every man is more or less the subject of it, but may not recognize it, and cannot analyse it. If you ask the flower, "How can you tell that which the sun does in you?" the flower cannot tell. The sun wakes it up, that is all. VII. IS THE GREATEST BOON, AND ITS LOSS THE GREATEST MISFORTUNE. VIII. WORKS CHIEFLY THROUGH GOD'S WORD. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The freedom of the Spirit:*—This wind blows where it lists, as it lists, when it lists, as much as it lists, in what manner it lists, and on whom it lists. This Spirit is a gift, and gifts are free (1 Cor. xii. 1–11). (*Wm. Austin.*) If the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, we are not certainly to exclude any place or nation from these blessed gales, or to the Church or congregation we are of; as if He could blow nowhere else. Learn charity. 1. If the Spirit bloweth how He listeth, we do but show our folly to prescribe to Him His way. He knows what best He has to do, how best to manage us to salvation. Learn discretion. 2. If it be as much too only as He lists, it is not sure our merit or desert, if we have more of Him than others, nor perhaps their demerit always, who have less. Whatever it is, it is more than we deserve, both they and we. Learn humility. 3. If it be only upon whom He pleases, it is certainly sometimes upon some we know not. So we have no reason to pass a censure upon any man's soul. Learn to think well of all. And so much the rather, in that— 4. He bloweth when He will. If He has not already, He may hereafter breathe upon him or her thou doubtest most. If thou, perhaps thyself, feelest Him not within thee now, thou mayest ere long. Learn hence to despair, neither of thyself nor any one else (Psa. cxxxix. 6–8; 1 Cor. xii. 5; Rom. xi. 33, ix. 18). (*Dr. Mark Frank.*) *The mysteriousness, reality, and variableness of the Spirit's working:*—While Christ spoke, I imagine the spring night breeze, it might be the first air of dawn, came sighing up the Kedron glen below the city. It sighed among the young fig leaves; it made the olive branches toss and moan; it shook the casement, and the lamp-light flickered. Whence comes it? In what far-off land of the East did it first awake to run before the sunrise? Where will it die away in the West, over the hills, beyond the sea? Whence, oh viewless winds, and whither? Christ lets the emblem speak: what does it say? Like an atmosphere the Spirit of Divine life is everywhere. He envelopes the globes. He touches every man. He penetrates us. Why should not that living Spirit beget us, creating a Divine life within these ribs of carnal death? The manner of His working may be as untraceable as the path of free winds that blow about the mountain tops, and chase each other over the plain; but what of that? His results may be as unmistakable as theirs. The movements of a spiritual power among men, again, vary as the airs of heaven do. Alone in her closet, *e.g.*, a girl is bending over her open Bible; and as she reads, her young face grows solemn, the full eyes gather, till the page is blurred with tears that are not wholly sad; and on her knees she weeps out her godly sorrow for little daily faults which the world would count trifles, till with

sweet thankfulness in her purified spirit and all the peace of heaven within her bosom, she rises to go forth to her lowly day of toil and uncomplaining service. This is not the way of the flesh. It was the breath of God that stole into her heart, just as outside the summer air was stirring among the leaves of the garden. But also I have seen a strong man, hardened through thirty years of open reckless sin, kneel in another inner room by night crushed by the agony of an awakened conscience, and gasping forth unwonted confessions in a voice hoarse with suppressed emotion. This, too, is not the way of the flesh. There I saw the same breath of God, but strong this time, and loud as when on wintry Appenines the great north blast makes the pine trees writhe and creak before it tears them from the rock-clefts. Such things are, and they show that there is a Holy Ghost. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *Diversity of the Spirit's operation*:—God hath divers ways into divers men. Into some He comes at noon, in the sunshine of prosperity; to some in the dark and heavy clouds of adversity. Some He affects with the music of the Church; some, with some particular collect or prayer; some, with some passage in a sermon, which takes no hold of him that stands next to him. Watch the way of the Spirit of God into thee; that way, which He makes His path, in which He comes oftenest to thee, and by which thou findest thyself most affected and best disposed towards Him; and pervert not that path, foul not that way. "Make straight His paths;" that is, keep them straight; and when thou observest which is His path in thee (by what means especially He works upon thee), meet Him in that path; embrace Him in those means, and always bring a facile, a fusile, a ductile, a tractable soul to the offers of His grace in His way (Heb. i. 1; Psa. lxxv. 8). (*Dr. Donne.*) *Spiritual movement an effect of the Spirit's working*:—Just as when we see the leaves of a wood moved to and fro, we know the wind is there; so when we see a man moved out of the careless routine of a natural life and leading a new life, we may say the Spirit of God, the Spirit of life, is there. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Spiritual life a Divine inspiration*:—Here we have that aspect of regeneration which is so incomprehensible to the world. Men can understand reformation through fear of perdition and hope of immortality; but the great revolution of a new life inspired by God appears mystical and impossible. We speak of the age of inspiration being over. That of inspired writing is, but that of inspired living is not. I. SPIRITUAL LIFE IS A DIRECT INSPIRATION FROM GOD. 1. That life is impossible without this inspiration. Spiritual life is an elevation above the natural will, inclination, tendency. Men have tried to reach this without the Spirit, by asceticism, but after all they have been still in the sphere of self. All they have done has been merely a self-culture which does not rise above the natural life. Try to change a man's character. Take a man worldly and selfish, and try to convince him by reasoning that his course is a wrong one. Perhaps he admits it: your logic has carried the outworks of intellect, but left the deeper nature untouched. Point out his degradation. He may admit that too, and hate you. Appeal to his interest with warnings of hell and promises of heaven. Suppose you have convinced him you have not elevated him—he is selfish still. Try another illustration. Men feel that they can do no great and noble deeds until raised above the natural level of life by a possessing Spirit. This is the great feature of all genius, poetic, artistic, political. So is Christian life. God's Spirit must enter us, or our endeavours will never raise us. We have instances of this in all ages, *e.g.*, Jacob, Paul. 2. This inspiration enters man in mystery. (1) We cannot tell whence it cometh. We may trace the early signs of the Spirit's power, but cannot penetrate the mystery of its origin. Just as the spring is a revelation of the secret energies which have been working in darkness through the cold winter gloom, until under the influences of sun and air the hidden power bursts into leaf and flower; so is spiritual life. (2) Whither it goeth we cannot tell; its impulse ever advances amidst all impediments through the long, cold, dark watchings of life, waiting for the adoption. II. THE RESULTS OF REALIZING THIS TRUST. It would work a mighty change. 1. In our faith. 2. In our prayers. 3. In the ease and joy it gives to the discharge of duty. 4. In the strength it imparts to manhood. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Nature, evidences, and necessity of regeneration*:—I. INQUIRE WHAT IT IS TO BE BORN AGAIN. 1. It is a Divine and supernatural change, effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit. 2. It is an instantaneous change; and herein it differs from sanctification, which is a progressive work. 3. It is an internal and invisible change, yet may be known by its effects. 4. The change is universal, extending to the heart and life. Universal beauty spread over the whole man. 5. It is an abiding change. II. NOTICE SOME OF THE EVIDENCES OF THE NEW BIRTH. These

we shall chiefly select from the First Epistle of John. 1. Those who are born of God "do not commit sin; yea, they cannot sin, because they are born of God" (chap. iii. 9, v. 18). The principle of grace will be always rising up against sin, and at length will triumph over it (Rom. vii. 14–25). 2. They have "overcome the world"—its frowns and smiles, hopes and fears (1 John v. 4). 3. They have a sincere love to all the saints; for "every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John iv. 7). 4. All their hope of salvation is founded on the meditation of Christ (1 John v. 1). 5. Their walk and conversation is holy and exemplary. "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God" (1 John ii. 29). III. CONSIDER THE REASONABLENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS CHANGE: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." 1. Do not marvel at it as if the doctrine were new and strange. 2. Marvel not as if the doctrine were unintelligible. 3. Do not consider this new birth to be impossible. With men, and with angels it may be so; but not with God. 4. Marvel not at this change as if it were unnecessary. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The new birth*:—Christ taught Nicodemus that this new birth is not "a developing of some latent power;" it is not "bringing out the constitutional tendency," and guiding it. It is a new nature, a new level, a new plane, a new sphere, into which human nature is to be exalted by the power of God. It is a birth, with all which that implies. Just consider for a moment, in the light of this principle which Christ laid down, the much debated question of morality. A man says, "Are we to understand that a man is to substitute this," if I may so say, "second nature," which is born in him, or rather out of which he is born by the operation of the Holy Ghost, for morality? I answer that the point is here: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; a man is amiable from good digestion; a kind and generous friend from an active circulation and because he is successful in life. He is a temperate man because wine is distasteful to him; he is a chaste man because he has a phlegmatic, a cold nature. These things are matters of temperament, good, excellent, much to be desired. But often they are granted to people like their complexions and the shape of their hands and feet, while to others they are vouchsafed by the grace of God after the labour of the new birth. These moralities in either case bear the same relation to the after life which the lower leaves of a plant bear to its blossoming. "What is my morality worth, then?" you ask. The Indian in his wigwam knows a great many things, but he is not a civilized man. Suppose he should put this question, "What is all I do know worth, if this is not civilization? If I am brought out of this state, am I to leave all these things and count them as nothing?" Certainly he is not. Relatively to his condition, they are unspeakably important, but as compared with a higher development, they are of very litttle value. That is to say, if he should become noble and refined in civilized life, he would look back with pity upon the condition that he was in when wigwam and wampum were home and means. Not because they were in, and of themselves, bad, but because he was so far from having attained by growth and development that which was possible to him. When we began to learn to write, our letters were crooked enough, our sentences all went up-hill—the writing was a hideous scrawl. But would we say to our children, "It is good for nothing, your cramped and crude beginnings?" Not at all. They are good to commence with—and good to end with so soon as you can go on to perfection, making the lines of beauty and a fair page. Moralities are the embryo children—the ground leaves—the cramped writing—the wigwam and the wampum; but they must not be confounded with the higher developments of the new manhood which has its birth out of the water and the Spirit. When, therefore, our Lord says, that morality is not sufficient—and that is what He says, substantially, to Nicodemus—He is the truest friend of man; and among men, he is the most generous and kind who maintains that ideal and shows his fellow-men, not that the things which belong to the body are worthless, but that true manhood is far higher than the body can reach, and far higher than ordinary reason can attain—so high that it can only be groped after, like the newly-born infant stretches out its untried hands toward the first glimmering of the shaded light—only reached by the power of God developing the nascent nature of the new-born soul—a mystery no more profound than that which surrounds the entrance into the natural life which every one must concede. It is not that we have developed very much. It is not that we have a point of development established in us that determines our safety. It is that the Spirit of God has gained a lodgment in the soul; that the leaven is there; that the root is thrown down, and the germ is pointed up, that gives us ground for hope. That being secured, there is an infinite space, called "Eternity" for

men to develop in. God has promised to give His Holy Spirit to them that simply ask for it. He has chosen, and that is enough for us; He has chosen to couple the gift with the baptism of water in the Triune name. The seed is sown then. How? I do not know, for God is silent there. (*F. L. Norton, D.D.*) *Spiritual influence* :—The difficulties connected with the regenerating operation of the Spirit of God are—I. ITS SUPERNATURALNESS. There is a certain shrinking from the supernatural, which renders such doctrines as this peculiarly distasteful. 1. If, for the ignorant and superstitious, the invisible world possess a strange attraction, there is an opposite class of minds in which the tendency is equally strong to explain everything by natural causes. It is the tendency of the religion of an unenlightened age to translate every unexplained fact or phenomenon into the immediate interposition of the Deity. But as society advances in knowledge, and as many of those events, formerly attributed to supernatural agency, are discovered to be the result of natural causes, it too often happens that, with the superstitious recognition, all practical acknowledgment of the Divine presence and agency is lost. The voice of God is no longer heard in the thunder when the laws of electricity begin to be known. The old gods of heathenism have long vanished from the woods and meadows and fountains; but it is not that the one living and true God, but only gravitation, light, heat, magnetism, may be recognized as reigning in their forsaken haunts. 2. And we carry the same tendency into the moral world. To the power of motives, the influence of education, &c., we are apt to trace changes of character. A child grows up gentle, amiable, pious; and when we say that he had the benefit of a careful and religious education, we seem to ourselves to have given the whole account of the matter. An irreligious man becomes devout, and the severe affliction, or the influence of a Christian friend, has made him a wiser and a better man. Seldom does the mind naturally turn to the thought —"the finger of God is here." The idea of a mysterious Holy Spirit working in the man's mind is too often regarded as a strange mystical notion, having nothing in common with the plain realities of every-day life. 3. It is to this habit of mind that the text suggests a most striking corrective. For it brings before us the consideration that the supernatural is not confined to religion; it bids us see in the most familiar processes of nature the proofs of a Divine agency as inexplicable as any to which religion appeals. Science, with all its triumphs, is compelled to admit the immediate presence of a supernatural power in the most ordinary movements of nature. Gravitation, light, heat, chemical affinity, are only abstractions; they are nothing without a living agent, whose mode of working they express. Dead matter, however arranged, can never act of itself. A human machinist may leave his machine to work alone, because when he leaves it God's laws take it up, and by their aid the materials retain their characteristics, the vapour keeps its expansive power. But when God has constructed His machine of the universe, He cannot so leave it; for, if He retire, there is no second God to take care of it. The signs of an all pervading supernatural energy meets us wherever we turn. If every echoing wind bespeak a present Deity, shall it seem strange to appeal to His power in the regeneration of a soul? Each time the sail of the vessel expands the breeze, we call in the aid of a mysterious agency, without which human efforts were vain. Can it be a matter of surprise that the same mysterious agency must be invoked to communicate to the dull and moveless spirit an impulse towards a nobler than earthly destiny? II. ITS SOVEREIGNTY. 1. How very much, to the human eye, have the relations of God with man, as a religious being, been characterized by an aspect of strange uncertainty! Religion has not been communicated indiscriminately. While a few favoured regions have felt its reviving presence, others, unvisited by its quickening power, remain from age to age moral wastes. Nor can human research discover any law by which this inequality is ordered. And as little in the case of individuals as of nations can we explain on what principle it is that the gracious influences of the Spirit are vouchsafed. In equal possession of the outward means of improvement some are benefited whilst others continue unaffected. A word, a mere look, will fly straight to the core of some human spirit; whilst, on others, all the strength of reason and the power of eloquence may be spent, only to recoil ineffective as arrows from proof-mail. From the furnace of affliction one heart will come forth softened, whilst others cool down into hardness and insensibility. Is the hand of Jehovah ever shortened that it cannot save? Or can we ascribe to Infinite Love the wayward fitfulness of earthly beneficence—to Infinite Wisdom the unreasoning favouritism of erring men? If grace be necessary to conversion, why—are we not tempted to ask—is not the Spirit of God poured

forth without measure wherever unconverted souls are to be found? To all such questions we must reply in the words of the text. 2. The force of this illustration it will need little reflection to perceive. (1) For what so fitful, wayward, incalculable, as the operations of the wind? Who can for a single hour foresee what its course will be? And the argument is—If even this simple agent so baffle man's highest wisdom, shall it be thought strange that the ways of the unsearchable Spirit of God are governed by no rules which finite minds can discern? (2) But the illustration may suggest that the arbitrariness which characterizes the Spirit's work is, after all, only apparent, and that, beneath seeming irregularity, there is real and unvarying law. It is so with the material agent. The wind never does really act at random. Its unaccountable changes are the result of material laws as fixed and stable as that by which the planets revolve. Science has made but slight progress in the attempt to trace out the laws of winds; but it is only because of the limits of our faculties. So, too, it is with that of which the wind is set forth as the type. In His most mysterious dealings with the souls of men God never acts without a reason. Where, to us, there seems inconstancy, to Him all is order. A time was when the firmament presented only the aspect of a maze of luminous points, scattered hap-hazard; but at length the great thought was struck out which evolved from all this seeming confusion the most perfect order and harmony. And so, perhaps, a time may come when light shall be thrown on many things that seem mysterious in the dispensation of grace. But meanwhile, in presence of the inscrutable order of God's government, it is the befitting attitude of a creature so weak and ignorant as man not to criticize, but to submit and to adore. III. ITS SECRECY. 1. Momentous though the change be in regeneration, it is one of which we have no immediate evidence. We are accustomed to associate great events in man's history with outward stir and show, and we can scarcely divest ourselves of the notion that external significance is inseparable from real importance. When the heir to earthly wealth or grandeur is born, the earliest cry is the signal for loud and universal gratulation. How strange to be told that an event, infinitely more momentous than these in man's history, that a Child of the living God—the heir of an inheritance, before which earthly splendours pale—has been born, and yet the event been unnoticed and unknown! 2. But let us turn to the simple argument of the text; for here we are taught that the association on which all such incredulity is based is an altogether fallacious one. For the proof that visibility and greatness are far from inseparable we are pointed to one out of many similar phenomena which daily meet our observation. In nature greatest powers are invisible. When the magnet draws the iron, who sees the strange influence by which the attraction is effected? What keenest optics can see gravitation? So, too, the wind, visible in its manifold influences, it is in its essence and operation imperceptible. So it is with every one that is born of the Spirit. You cannot see this mysterious agent any more than those natural agents. But, as in the one case, so in the other, though the agent is invisible, the effects of his operation are manifest. You do not see the gale from heaven, wafted over any sinner's soul, but ever and anon, if you watch carefully the moral history of your fellow-men, you may perceive the visible witness of a hidden and invisible work. Conclusion: This is a doctrine fraught with many obvious practical lessons. 1. If the agency of the Spirit be supernatural, how urgent the necessity for securing the Spirit's intervention! What an arrest would be laid upon many of the works of man if that natural agent were suspended! If the wind of heaven ceased to blow, conceive how abortive, in many cases, would be all human industry and skill. But equally fatal, in the spiritual world, to the success of all human endeavours, would be the withholding of the supernatural grace of the Spirit of God. Pray, then, for the Spirit. Despair of success apart from it; rest not till you have obtained it. The wind comes not at the sailor's or the husbandman's call; but the believer is possessed of a spell that can summon the gracious aid of the Spirit in every time of need. And if the doctrine of the text furnishes us with a motive to prayer, not less suggestive is it of encouragement to effort. For whilst our natural powers soon reach their limit, to the supernatural aid on which we are encouraged to depend there is none. Self-reformation soon proves a vain attempt; but the effort to repent and turn to God cannot fail, when the very Power that fashioned our mysterious being prompts and aids in the work of restoration. 2. If the agency of the Spirit is sovereign, too, the subject is replete with practical significance. For does not the very uncertainty of nature's influences act as a stimulus to the exertions of man? The fair wind that has long been waited for, and may speedily die away. And so if there is any similar variableness in the

times and seasons of religious influence, how urgent the motive thus presented to Christian vigilance in waiting for every favourable opportunity, and to diligence in improving it! 3. If the Spirit's work be secret in itself, yet manifest by its effects, it suggests the important inquiry, Can I discern in my character and life the signs of the Spirit's presence? (*J. Caird, D.D.*) *The heavenly wind*:—I. Take the text in reference to THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF. The wind is an emblem of the Holy Ghost. 1. In its freeness. The wind is the very image of freedom. No one can fetter it. Cæsar may decree what he pleases, but the wind will blow in his face if he looks that way. So the Spirit is most free and absolute. He visits one nation and not another. Of two men one receives His blessing and not another. One man wins souls, another seems to miss them. And the same minister will one day speak like the voice of God, and another be but a reed shaken by the wind. Yet while absolutely free He is not arbitrary. (1) The wind has a law of its own, and the Spirit is a law to Himself. He does as He wills, but He wills that which is best. (2) There are certain places where you will always find a breeze, on the mountains, in the morning or evening on the seashore. So in communion with God you will ever find the Spirit in motion. (3) The wind in some lands has its seasons. There are trade winds, &c., which may be counted on. So there are certain times in, and certain conditions under which He visits the Churches—times of mighty prayer and exceptional faithfulness in preaching, (4) The wind may blow, but the sailor may be asleep. Never suffer the Spirit to be with us and find us regardless of His presence. When the windmill was more in use than now, some parishes would be half starved when week after week there was no wind. The miller would look anxiously by day, and if the breezes stirred at dead of night, somebody would run and knock him up. Be on the look out. Hoist sail when the wind favours. 2. In its manifestations—"Thou hearest," &c. Our Lord spoke of the gentle zephyr which is heard. The hearing ear is intended to be the discerner of the Spirit. Faith cometh by hearing. (1) Many get no further than hearing. (2) Others hear the sound in their consciences and are disturbed. (3) The man who is saved hears—(*a*) The threatening wind. (*b*) The destroying wind. (*c*) The invigorating wind. (*d*) The sound of a going in the mulberry trees which summons us to victory. 3. In its mystery—"Thou canst not tell." We may tell that the wind comes from a certain quarter, but we cannot tell at what point it begins or where it ends. So with the Spirit we cannot tell—(1) "Whence He cometh." His first movements are hidden in mystery. Why is it that you obtained a blessing under one sermon and not under another, and yet when you spoke to your sister she had been blessed under the other? (2) "Nor whither it goeth." (*a*) When we let loose the truth in the power of the Spirit we never know where it may fly. A child takes a downy seed, but who knows where it will settle? Whole continents have been covered with strange flowers simply by the wind's wafting foreign seeds thither. Fling the truth, then, to the winds. (*b*) Nor can we tell whither it will carry us. When Carey gave his young heart to Christ, he never thought the Spirit would carry him to Serampore. II. The text relates to THOSE WHO ARE BORN OF THE SPIRIT. The birth partakes of the nature of the parent. 1. As to freedom: where the Spirit is there is liberty from the bondage of the law, custom, sin, fear of death and dread of hell. 2. As to manifestation. The regenerate are known by their sound. The secret life will speak by voice, action, influence. 3. As to mystery—(1) Thou knowest not whence He cometh from the throne of grace. (2) Thou knowest not whither He goeth—to the secret place of the Most High. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The operations of the wind*:—I. The wind SOUNDS. 1. Sometimes it wails, and so the Spirit sets men mourning for sin. 2. Sometimes its sound is triumphant, and so the Spirit inspires in us the shout of victory over sin and death. II. The wind is a great LEVELLER. It aims at things high. If you are down low in the street you escape its fury, but climb the height and you will scarcely stand. Even so the Spirit. He makes every high thought bow before the majesty of His might. III. The wind PURIFIES the atmosphere. In the Swiss valleys there is a heaviness which makes the inhabitants unhealthy. They take quinine and have big swellings in their necks. The air does not circulate; but if there is a great storm it is a great blessing to the people. So the Spirit cleanses out our evil and brings health to the soul. IV. The wind is a GREAT TRIER OF THE NATURE OF THINGS. It sweeps over heaps of rubbish and scatters the dust, &c., but iron and stone remain unmoved. The Holy Ghost is similarly a testing power, both of men and doctrines. V. The wind is HELPFUL. In Lincolnshire, where the country is flat and below the sea level, they are obliged to dry the land by means of windmills. In many parts all the corn is ground by means of the wind. The

Spirit is also a mighty helper. You are inundated by a flood of iniquity which you can never bale out; or you need some power to prepare your spiritual food, and you will never find better help than that which the Spirit can give. VI. MAN MUST CO-OPERATE WITH THE WIND, and so Christians with the Spirit. 1. In all spiritual work: as the sailor has to raise his sails. 2. In growth in grace. We are to work out what He works in. VII. MEN ARE COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON THE WIND. They are entirely at its mercy as to time, direction, and strength. So we are compelled to wait the pleasure of the Spirit. But just as the sailor anxiously looks up at the mast-head to see how the breeze is shifting, so should we look up to heaven and observe the movement of the Spirit of God. (*Ibid.*) *The work of the Holy Spirit is a hidden work*:—As oftentimes, when walking in a wood near sunset, though the sun himself be hid by the height and bushiness of the trees around, yet we know that he is still above the horizon, from seeing his beams in the open glades before us, illuming a thousand leaves, the several brightnesses of which are so many evidences of his presence. Thus it is with the Holy Spirit. He works in secret; but His work is manifest in the lives of all true Christians. Lamps so heavenly must have been lit from on high. (*J. C. Hare.*) *Methods of conversion vary*:—Men's convictions of sin differ with their characters. One man says, "In such a sermon, a lion-like conviction sprang out upon me, and seized my soul in its grasp, and had nearly torn it asunder." And another says, "The twilight of God's love fell upon me; but when the eclipse was over, the sun shone out again, and I was happy." Terror, or only sadness, anguish, grief, and love, are all alike really conviction. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The preciousness of Divine influence*:—Watch, therefore, the gales of grace: we cannot purchase this wind for any money. This bird when flown will not easily be brought back again. (*J. Trapp.*) *The wind an emblem of the Spirit*:—The work of the Spirit is compared—I. To the BLOWING of the wind. 1. The wind blows vitally and refreshingly, causing the earth to fructify. So it is the Spirit of God who imparts vital grace and makes us bring forth fruit (Cant. iv. 16). When a man is drowsy a blast of wind freshens him: so doth the Spirit awaken us from our spiritual slumberings. As God used the wind to bring quails, and still does to bring in great tides of water; so by His Spirit doth He bring all blessings to us, and the tides of repenting tears. The wind from the bellows revives the fire—so does the Spirit the sparks of heavenly fire in us. How soon would the smoking flax be quenched but for this! 2. Winds dissolve the clouds and cause an irrigation of the earth; this spiritual wind causes rain also, even the tears of penitence. 3. Winds cause clearness and sereneness of the air: likewise the Spirit having dissolved our iniquities causes the beauty and sunshine of God's favour to cheer the believer. 4. Winds refrigerate. In the heat of summer how acceptable their comfort! So the Spirit allays the heat of our temptations and afflictions, that we may with patience endure and overcome them. How could the martyrs have so triumphed in the flames but for this? 5. Winds penetrate. So the Word of the Spirit (Heb. iv. 12). 6. Winds terrify by their destructive power. So under the power of the Spirit sinners tremble. 7. Winds carry all before them: with what ease doth the spirit perform its duties when under the power of the Spirit. II. To the LIBERTY of the wind. No creature has any power to raise or check either. 1. In regard of the outward means of the ministry, for it is in that blessed trumpet that the Spirit commonly blows. Once this wind blew in the East, and how famous were those Churches! But it is now turned into the West. 2. In regard to the efficacy of the means. 3. In regard to the measure of the efficacy, piercing deeper, purging cleaner, acts more vitally in some than in others (1 Cor. xii. 11). 4. In regard to the manner of His working. Sometimes using means, sometimes not. 5. In regard of the time of working. III. To the SENSIBLENESS of the wind. This voice is—1. Secret, within the heart of the regenerate. (1) Arousing, as in conviction of sin. (2) Mild and sweet, alluring to holiness (Isa. xxx. 31; Hos. ii. 14). (3) Comforting (Matt. ix. 2; Rom. viii. 16). (4) Fervent, as in prayer. 2. Open. (*J. Dyke.*) *The wind a symbol of the Spirit's working*:—I. LET US FORM SOME PRECISE IDEA OF THE WIND; which is just the atmosphere in motion. The atmosphere is an envelopment of air that enwraps our globe and rises to the height of from forty to fifty miles. It gets lighter and thinner as we ascend, till it gradually disappears. The air consists chiefly of two gases in the proportion of about one-fourth of the one to three-fourths of the other. It is the element in which alone it is possible for us to live. It is just this air in motion that constitutes wind. As still water stagnates, so would still air. A benevolent Creator, therefore, has seen to it that it shall never be long still. And this motion

is produced mainly by changes of temperature. II. Let us now pass to THE REALITY ILLUSTRATED—the influences of the Divine Spirit in regeneration. These influences, like the wind, are—1. Vital—absolutely essential to spiritual life (Gen. i. 2, ii. 7; Psa. civ. 29, 30; Ezek. xxxviii. 8–10). But will the Spirit come to me? Do you ever ask, Will the vital air come? 2. Sovereign. For aught that we can do it bloweth where it listeth. Come on us where it may, when, whence, and with what result. It is absolutely beyond our control. We may indeed turn it to account, and ought; and this very sovereignty of it is the strongest reason why we should. Equally sovereign is the Spirit: "He divideth to every man severally as He will." Nevertheless, He is benignly here for us all. Though absolutely sovereign He is Love; and it sovereignly pleases Him to be here, striving at every heart. When sovereign love has done its best, vain will be our cries and tears. 3. Mysterious (Eccles. xi. 4–6). "Wind," "Spirit," "Birth," all are here. These strongly set forth that so far from discouraging action, they are strongest incentives to it. For the wind is not "mysterious" in any such sense as to mean causeless or capricious. It is not independent of law. Mathematicians can go far in describing the properties of curves; but fire a rifle, twirl a half-crown, or toss a ball into the air, which are the simplest and most familiar of acts, and though every convolution exactly obeys mathematical and physical laws, yet where is the Newton or the Leibnitz that could trace these in detail, and sum up for us so complex and intervolved a computation? So the Spirit's influences are inscrutable, in great part, from the nature of the case. They deal with the most involved and interwarped of all problems. They have to do with free agency, duty, destiny, and diversities of individual temperament and circumstances. How stumbling oftentimes to see some highly privileged one resisting to the last the influences of the Spirit; while another, much less privileged, or a third, even openly profligate, is seen to surrender himself to the overpowering influence of gospel truth and love. But this is the time for such mysteries now that the mystery of iniquity doth work. Only the antagonistic mystery of godliness can counterwork it. 4. Discernible. With all its mystery there is no mystery about its presence. A regenerated man will not be able to veil off his character. Sound is itself a sort of wind, in its vibration on the auditory nerve: therefore genuine Christians will tell personally on others with the self-same influence in varying degrees that told on themselves. 5. Benignant (Psa. cxxxv. 7). The breeze is—(1) Healthful and reviving. (2) Purifying. 6. Universal—"where it listeth;" yes, but then it listeth to blow everywhere; not in short detached breaths, but in broad, boundless, interblending currents that benignly embrace, belt, and begirdle the globe. So is it with the Holy Spirit (Heb. iii. 7; Acts ii. 17, vii. 51; Rev. xxii. 17). (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*)

Ver. 9. **How can these things be?**—*Religious revivals*:—This question is often asked concerning revivals of religion, and in dealing with it I would show—I. THAT THERE ARE SOLID GROUNDS ON WHICH TO BUILD A HOPE OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT TO PRODUCE REVIVALS OF RELIGION IN OUR CHURCHES. 1. We should endeavour to obtain a correct estimate of the real condition of the primitive churches of whom we read that they received the Holy Ghost. On this subject there are two opinions. (1) Some regard them as bordering on perfection. (2) Others as discovering the weaknesses of an infantile state emerging from barbarism. The truth lies between the two extremes. They were distinguished by peculiar privileges and exalted attainments, but many of them were possessed of weakness, imperfections, and sins. Yet nothing is more indisputable than that they were in constant receipt of the influences of the Spirit of God. 2. The Holy Spirit chooses oftentimes to display His Divine prerogative of sovereignty as to the time, place, and modes of His operations; and He displays it in such a manner that not unfrequently He gives no account of it to us. How is it that of two men brought up under the same influences one is converted and the other not? There is an analogy between the operations of God in nature and in grace, as different countries will yield different productions, each excellent in their kind; as oaks are of slow, and parasites of rapid growth, so is the work of conversion. Read the explication of the subject in 1 Cor. xii. So one country is visited with a dispensation of the Spirit which issues in marked and numerous conversions, while another is visited with one which issues in works in defence of the gospel, and yet another with the missionary spirit. 3. There are circumstantials often connected with revivals which are by no means essential to their general character. (1) It is no indication of a genuine revival that there is great excitement. There may be real spiritual excitement, but often it is of an empty

character; and there may be a true revival when all is calm and noiseless. (2) Nor is it a certain evidence that great numbers profess to be converted. 4. There are facts frequently occurring amongst ourselves which prove that the Spirit has not forsaken us. (1) Individual sermons are known to produce great results. (2) Churches often receive members into fellowship without special efforts. (3) Individual cases of conversion show the Spirit's operation. 5. Inference that if the means be employed we may expect yet greater things in the way of the Spirit's manifestations. II. THERE ARE PREPARATORY MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED IN ORDER TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THESE HIGH AND GRACIOUS DISTINCTIONS. 1. Cultivate a solemn, deep, and abiding conviction of the necessity and importance of the Spirit's influences to advance the cause of religion. (1) In your own hearts. (2) In your congregations and churches. 2. Labour to put out of the way all those impediments which tend to obstruct the descent of the Spirit. Trifling with prayer, speculating on gospel verities, hypocrisy in worship, conformity with the world, uncharitableness and all those things which "grieve the Holy Spirit of God." 3. Acknowledge thankfully what God has already done by His Spirit. (1) Not to do so displays ignorance and ingratitude. (2) To do so will open the eye to God's wonderful working in many particulars, church building, Bible circulation, Sunday schools, missions, &c. 4. Consecrate more time to fervent and importunate prayer—private, family, social, &c. 5. Expect great things from God. (*J. Clayton.*) *Genteel ignorance*:—John Wesley always preferred the middling and lower classes to the wealthy. He said, "If I might choose, I should still, as I have done hitherto, preach the gospel to the poor." Preaching in Monkton Church, a large old, ruinous building, he says, "I suppose it has scarce had such a congregation during this century. Many of them were gay, genteel people, so I spoke on the first elements of the gospel, but I was still out of their depth. Oh, how hard it is to be shallow enough for a polite audience!" (*Anecdotes of the Wesleys.*) *Man naturally ignorant*:—To unconverted persons a great part of the Bible resembles a letter written in cipher. The blessed Spirit's office is to act as God's decipherer, by letting His people into the secret of celestial experience, as the key and clue to those sweet mysteries of grace, which were before as a garden shut up, or as a fountain sealed, or as a book written in an unknown character. (*Toplady.*) *Christ and the enquiry room*:—I. THE INQUIRER. Nicodemus was—1. A sincere inquirer; his sincerity was based on a conviction of Christ's Divine mission. He knew there could be no trickery or magic in His wonderful works. Hence his unequivocal confession. 2. An anxious inquirer. 3. A perplexed inquirer. (1) Perplexity results from thought and imperfect knowledge. In the multitude of his thoughts Nicodemus is bewildered. He is learned in the law, but ignorant of Christ's true character as witnessed by the prophets. (2) Prejudice begets perplexity; and to receive Jesus as the Messiah was to do violence to all orthodox views. But blessed is the perplexity that prompts to inquiry. 4. A reverential inquirer. II. THE SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN THE INQUIRY ROOM. 1. The kingdom of God. This kingdom is—(1) Real, though not of this world. (2) Spiritual; hence it cometh without observation. (3) Victorious, its weapons being mighty through God. 2. This kingdom has conditions. Entrance to it could not be—(1) by natural birth; (2) by nationality; (3) circumcision; (4) pharisaical righteousness; (5) but by Divine birth. III. THE METHOD ADOPTED WAS CONVERSATIONAL. IV. THE RESULTS. 1. For a time doubtful. 2. Afterwards most satisfactory. (*Joseph Heaton.*) *Nicodemus's perplexity*:—1. We live in a world of wonders: vegetable growth, insect evolution, human birth; about each of which we might well say, "How can these things be?" 2. There are greater wonders in the world towards which we are hastening—resurrection, &c. 3. Not less wonderful is the work of grace within a man's soul. I. WHAT THESE THINGS WERE WHICH PERPLEXED NICODEMUS. The new birth. 1. This doctrine is one of which the Bible is full. See John i. 13; 2 Cor. v. 17; Eph. i. 20; 1 Pet. i. 23, which teach that only by the almighty power of God can a dead sinner be born again, and that this power is exercised through the Word of Truth. 2. This doctrine presupposes the corruption of human nature—not that it has simply gone wrong through bad example and vicious training. It does not want mending, but renewing. 3. David found this out—"I was shapen in iniquity." So did St. Paul—"In my flesh dwelleth no good thing," "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." 4. This doctrine is very humbling to pride of birth and intellect. 5. This doctrine conveys a blessed truth. Man may become a child of God, holy and meet for heaven. 6. Heaven being a character as well as a place no man can enter without being born again. II. THESE ARE THE THINGS WE MUST KNOW IF WE ARE TO BE SAVED. 1. The

very worst may be saved. 2. To be saved we must go to the author of the new birth. 3. Whatsoever may be our wants with regard to the present life nothing can stand in the place of His. Philanthropic schemes are good in their place, but are as the small dust of the balance compared with this. 4. The new birth is a personal experience, and each sinner must come individually, prayerfully, believingly and now. (*Canon Miller.*)

Ver. 10. **Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?**—The truths which Christ came to declare, He did but recall in great measure to minds which had lost the memory of what was from the first. I. THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL CIRCUMCISION, CLEANSING OR RENEWAL OF THE HEART, WAS NO NEW DOCTRINE OF CHRIST (see Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6; 1 Sam. x. 9; Psa. li. 10; Jer. xxxi. 33; Ezek. xi. 19). II. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS PRESENCE IN MAN'S HEART HAD BEEN FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27). III. HENCE THE IGNORANCE OF THIS DISTINGUISHED TEACHER WAS INEXCUSABLE. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) The doctrine of the new birth was according to Jesus exhibited in the Old Testament. I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE FALL IMPLIES IT, especially when viewed in connection with the Divine purity and holiness as the only moral standard for humanity (Gen. xvii. 1; Exod. xxii. 31; Lev. xi. 44; Psa. xxiv. 3, 4; Isa. xxxv. 8). II. CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART WAS AN INDISPENSABLE QUALIFICATION for serving God (Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6), which was symbolized by circumcision (Rom. ii. 29) as it is now by baptism (1 Pet. iii. 21). III. IT WAS PREFIGURED IN THE CHANGE OF HEART CONFERRED on Saul and David (1 Sam. x. 9, xvi. 13). IV. IT WAS RECOGNIZED IN DAVID'S PRAYER FOR PURITY (Psa. li. 10). V. IT WAS EXPRESSLY PROMISED AS A MESSIANIC BLESSING (Ezek. xi. 19, xviii. 31, xxxvi. 26; Jer. iv. 4, xxxi. 33). VI. EVEN THE TERM "REGENERATION" WAS NOT UNKNOWN (Job xi. 12; Psa. lxxxvii. 25). *The reasonableness of regeneration:*—What phraseology was more familiar with the infidel revolutionists of France than the regeneration of their country? And is the idea of a regenerated individual an extravagant one, to be sneered at, when that of a regenerated nation is one to be treated with respect? Yea, infidel speculators will discourse of a regenerated world, and yet make sport to themselves of our faith, as if it were fantastic and visionary, when we speak of the regeneration of a single man! How is it that, being such masters in philosophy and politics, they know not these things? (*W. Anderson, D.D.*)

Ver. 11. **We speak that we do know.**—*Divine certainties:*—I. Consider THE PLACE THE BIBLE HOLDS as an evidence of Christianity. 1. The Bible is the history of the Jewish people, and their existence to-day is a guarantee that the basis of the book is firm and undeniable. 2. Every contemporaneous and collateral witness adds to this assurance. The remains of Egypt and Assyria, the traditions of the Jews, allusions in Greek and Roman monuments and classic authors are grounds upon which we are assured of the historic character of the Scriptures. 3. The Bible is a whole literature. 4. It is the history of a religion. The fundamental ideas of the various books are the same—but there is a manifest progress. The earlier writers look forward to a greater revelation. The ideas become clearer and clearer. The advancing faith never contradicts the past, and at length the culmination appears in Jesus. II. THE ADAPTATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF MAN. Christ makes great assertions, but never attempts to prove them. Here He makes His hearer's hesitation the consequence, not of defect in the evidence, but of defect in the man. For such a truth as the new birth admitted of no other evidence than its own light. Salvation must be based on a voluntary self-surrender. No more proof must be given therefore than will leave room for doubt, if men desire to doubt. Mathematical truth admits of perfect demonstration, but if religious truth leaves no room for doubt, then faith ceases to be religious. Its evidence is a probation for man. The force of this evidence varies according to spiritual condition. If a man is debased by sin, he will not readily open his heart, but if he is convicted of sinfulness, he will respond to the gospel and perceive how exactly Divine revelation is adapted to his need. Then its certainty will be felt in proportion to what he has found of peace and gladness. Just as the correspondence between the eye and light makes it absolutely certain that the one was made for the other, so it is with Christianity. Water cannot rise above the level of its source, and that men should of their own accord produce the Bible, and infuse into it such a marvellous power of raising men near its standard, is incredible. We shall feel the force of this far more if we can bring our own experience forward as a testimony. In this way each Christian becomes a living

proof. (*P. W. Darnton, B.A.*) *Christian faith a reality*:—It seems a moderate claim that the alleged truths of our religion should be respected as realities. But this demand covers the whole ground. Admit—1. That God is a real Father and Sovereign. 2. That each soul is His child and subject. 3. That separation from Him is the most terrible of disasters, to be healed at any cost. 4. That Jesus is the Christ who achieves that reconciliation. 5. That a righteous life is the fulfilment of human destiny. Admit this, and you have granted the whole conclusion. The terms imply something more than intellectual assent. There is such a thing as an ineffectual creed. To realize a doctrine is to have it wrought into the roots of our life. This realization only takes place when the truth emerges from the nebulous haze of conjecture into clear, sharp light—when it takes hold of feeling and is taken hold of by faith. This is needed now for the true efficiency of religion. For our religion is not dogma, or theory, or dream, but a spiritual power. Let us examine a few facts in the Christian faith which authenticate its claim as a religion of realities. I. THE IDEA OF GOD. Christianity did not create this. It simply places itself on the basis of a natural reality affirmed by the consenting feelings and philosophies of the nations; and then proceeds to nourish and satisfy it. 1. It is a real authority that speaks (ver. 11). 2. There is reality in the very attitudes and occasions of its revelations. 3. Reality in its substance. "God is a Spirit," and with that simple announcement old idolatries that materialized the gods, and mythologies that multiplied them, vanished. 4. Reality in its disclosures of God's nearness and condescension. He is the God of houses, streets, schools—not distant or etherealized. II. This opens the true doctrine of INTERCOURSE WITH GOD, or prayer. What is natural if not that a child should speak to his parents, that man should ask for what God only can give? Prayer is a reality—something yearned for, something satisfying. So speaks the world's best experience. To pretend to ask things we do not really desire, or things we have heard others ask for, is not prayer, but speculation or traditional mummery. Christ brings prayer back to reality. "Ask, and ye shall receive." III. Co-ordinate with this is LOVE FOR MAN. Here again Christianity does not create the faculty, but out of it weaves the bond of spiritual brotherhood. In training this social instinct Christianity gives it the brightest tokens of reality. 1. It stimulates fellowship, and by the healthiest motive—disinterested mercy, of which its central and crucified Form is the incarnate example. 2. It regulates it by the wisest law—broad, far-seeing, equity, saving it from wronging one class by righting another, from destroying without constructing. 3. It directs it to the purest object—the personal relief, the universal liberation, the spiritual rectitude of each soul. IV. Turning from the social to the private offices of Christianity, we encounter the only satisfactory interpretation of the natural YEARNING TOWARDS AN IDEAL MORAL PERFECTION. It is only in very inferior natures that this sensibility to exalted goodness is utterly depraved. Baseness secretly confesses the beauty of magnanimity. The story of incorruptible conscience is the perpetual charm of literature. With all select souls there is a tantalizing disparity between the aspiring aim and the lagging performance. How does the gospel justify this real passion for the best? 1. By blessing these native aspirations as the Divine seal set on humanity. 2. By encouraging them. 3. By furnishing them nutriment and discipline to ripen their vigour. 4. By holding up one in whom all their promises are realized. 5. By giving them a hereafter where they shall mature into open vision and into calm and balanced power. V. Not less does the gospel fit the varieties of human consciousness in its great doctrine of A RULING CHOICE DETERMINING CHARACTER. It divides the world into two classes by the inexorable line of that voluntary consecration. There is one differencing point, the point of motive, where the world's people and God's divide. VI. But there is one reality darker and more fearful. THE LAW AND GUIDE OF LIFE HAS BEEN BROKEN. I know I am frail, offending, and guilty. Who shall deliver me? Christ. He has come for that. VII. Infer, then, THE REALITY OF CHRISTIANITY. 1. In its ministry to the cravings of simple, honest hearts. 2. In its marvellous adaptation to the pain and gladness, fear and hope of our humanity. 3. In its unpretending address to our common habits, speaking the language of life. 4. In its boundless relief for a boundless difficulty. 5. In its expanding and exhaustless fulness for all glowing souls. VIII. THE EARLY CHRISTIANS PREACHED, LIVED, DIED, FOR THIS REALITY, AND CONQUERED THE WORLD. (*Bp. Huntington.*) *The positiveness of Christianity as a truth and a practice*:—Whatever exists, exists positively, has existence and also energy. Positiveness is the very soul of growth. I. CHRISTIANITY IS POSITIVE. 1. God is a positive Being. 2. Man is a

positive being. 3. Sin is a positive condition. 4. Holiness is a positive state. II. CHRISTIANITY MUST BE POSITIVELY APPLIED. 1. It is to honour God. 2. It is to be serviceable to man. 3. It is to prove victorious over sin. 4. It is to be potential unto holiness. III. THE POSITIVENESS OF CHRISTIANITY IS NEUTRALIZED—1. When it is interpreted as a system of polite moral and æsthetic education. There is a class of writers and preachers who blot out of the Scriptures everything that is positive, who drop every word that bristles with damnatory energy, theorize the birth of Jesus, reduce the atonement to heroism, treat human depravity as a misfortune, speak patronizingly of hell as an exploded idea, and allude pleasantly to heaven as a benevolent myth. Many people are frightened by this "modern thought." They need not be, for this is a positive age, and a negative religion can make no headway. 2. When it is over-organized. Christ did not organize it because He saw that truth was over-organized, and therefore cramped. Christianity is a power only when it is organized in human hearts. (*W. H. H. Murray.*) *The positiveness of Christianity*:—You may judge of this—I. BY ITS WORDS. Its "shalls" and "shall nots" are like so many bugle notes put into print. They sound with the energy of the Apocalyptic trumpets. Its commandments fall upon the conscience as a hammer of steel falls upon the anvil. Its warnings sound like the solemn protest of an indignant universe. Its threatenings roll over the guilty soul like the dreadful reverberations of ponderous thunder. Even its invitations suggest the tension of anxiety, and its entreaties come to our ears impelled by the urgency of anxious and infinite affection. Its very words are charged with significance almost to the limit of explosion. Heaven and hell, sin and holiness, faith and unbelief, life and death, salvation and damnation—these are glorious or dreadful words, mighty affirmations, expressions which challenge the attention of the most sceptical, and fill the thoughtful mind with solemn awe. No other religion has ever weighted the pages of its sacred books with such dreadful emphasis; no other religion has ever brought its believers face to face with such stupendous positiveness of assertion and conception. But if the verbal expression of Christianity is thus positive, what language is adequate to describe the positiveness of—II. ITS SPIRIT? If its body is so tense and vibrant with energies, who may pourtray the vigour of its animating spirit? If the unlighted orb, as it hangs rayless overhead, can draw every eye to its dark circle, and compel human attention, what would be its power if its inherent fires should break through the shell of sombre surface, and the mighty sphere should suddenly be ablaze with beams? Tell me, you who know the words of Scripture, and have also felt the movings of its matchless and irresistible spirit, which is the stronger? Tell me, you who once heard in the word heaven the sound of sweet but far-off music, but who now have the resonance of the Divine harmonies sounding in you, did you know aught of that melodious word until the chime of it made music in your soul? No. Not till the spirit of Christianity is received into his heart can man know or dream how positive are its operations. Nor can man know what hell is until he lies enfolded within the coils of some serpentine remorse, and the dreadful stricture tightens on his conscience until he screams and moans in the agony of a tormented spirit. Do not say "exaggeration," for you know that what I say is true, when I declare that men and women there have been who have committed crimes so dark, dreadful, and damning, so obnoxious even to their blurred moral vision, that the memory of their deed has haunted them—yea, haunted them so that they could not eat, nor sleep, nor forget: the fires of remorse were within their bosom, and they could not quench them; the "damned spot" was on their hands, and all the seas could not wash the awful stain away, and at last they died: died screaming in agony, as if the torment of hell had already got hold of them; and it had. (*Ibid.*) *God's message is but carelessly listened to*:—Massilon, in the first sermon he ever preached, found the whole audience, upon his getting into the pulpit, in a disposition no way favourable to his intentions. Their nods, whispers, or drowsy behaviour showed him that there was no great profit to be expected from his sowing in a soil so improper. However, he soon changed the disposition of his audience by his manner of beginning. "If," says he, "a cause, the most important that could be conceived, were to be tried at the bar before qualified judges; if this cause interested ourselves in particular; if the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed upon the events; if the most eminent counsel were employed on both sides; and if we had heard from our infancy of this yet undetermined trial—would you not all sit with due attention and warm expectation to the pleadings on each side? Would not all your hopes and fears be hinged on the final

decision? And yet, let me tell you, you have this moment a cause where not one nation, but all the world, are spectators; tried not before a fallible tribunal, but the awful throne of heaven, where not your temporal and transitory interests are the subject of debate, but your eternal happiness or misery; where the cause is still undetermined, but, perhaps, the very moment I am speaking may fix the irrevocable decree that shall last for ever; and yet, notwithstanding all this, you can hardly sit with patience to hear the tidings of your own salvation. I plead the cause of heaven, and yet I am scarcely attended to."

Ver. 12. **If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things** ?—The question in its bare form is easily grappled with, but in its application to the subjects before us we encounter a great obstacle. Earthly things are the deep things of the new birth; heavenly things are the lifting up of the Son of man, the gift of the Only-Begotten, that the world through Him might be saved. Regeneration and santification are by comparison earthly things; redemption, atonement, justification are by contrast and pre-eminence heavenly. He who believes not the former, how can he believe the latter? We notice—I. AN INVERSION OF OUR COMMON ESTIMATE OF THE MYSTERIES OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM. 1. It is usual to speak of the work of Christ as far easier of apprehension than the work of the Spirit. The idea of atonement is treated as self-evident, and theory after theory has been constructed to explain it. But Christ says difficult as it is to understand a Divine influence, it is more difficult to apprehend a Divine sacrifice; that He only who is from heaven can reveal the latter, while a master of Israel is culpably ignorant if he knows not of the former. 2. The same persons exaggerate the mystery of the doctrine of grace, whereas Christ treats it as a plain earthly thing. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews treats it in the same way, bidding us leave the elements, baptism, &c., to go on to perfection—the strong meat, the profounder study of the fulfilment of type and shadow in the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ. II. CAN WE EXPLAIN THIS INVERSION? 1. With regard to the new birth. (1) It is not that it is discoverable by man in its nature, or recognizable in its process, or practicable in its realization, and so an earthly thing. It is as much above reason, as secret, as independent of man's interference as the deepest mystery of redemption. But—(2) The idea of a spiritual influence has obvious illustrations from earthly experience. Life itself is a putting forth and taking in of the authority of mind over mind. Therefore there can be no antecedent improbability of a Divine influence affecting the soul. (3) When we think of our indebtedness to God as Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, there can be nothing difficult in the thought that the Author of our spirit can quicken and bless it. (4) Although the work is secret in its processes, it is cognizable in its effects. When you see a proud man humble, the worldly man religious, you have proof which carries the matter into the region of sight. (5) The doctrine was earthly to Nicodemus because it was in his Old Testament. 2. How different with the topics that follow! At first sight less mysterious, for was not Christ really man, and was not His sacrifice a human death? Yet when we turn to that which the human enshrined, the mystery of Christ's Person, we see the appositeness of the term heavenly. (1) Divine incarnation and Divine suffering are absolutely incomprehensible revelations. The more men argue over them the more danger there is of darkening counsel by words without knowledge. (2) If the Divine passion is a mystery, how much more the connection between that suffering and man's release! (3) The individual appropriation of Christ's sacrifice is incomprehensible. (4) The work of grace shows itself by infallible signs, but the absolution is the secret act of God alone. III. Let us press upon ourselves the thought of THE HEAVENLINESS OF THE ONE ALL-SUFFICIENT SACRIFICE. We have in our Lord's question the key to much of modern unbelief. Christ tells us of our need of Divine grace to change us into new men, and we believe not that. Men confess that they must be moral, but contend that they can secure that for themselves, and that it is weakness to look out of themselves for help. Nature refuses grace. Who, then, can wonder if the same unbelief shall spread into the region of the heavenly, and the scoffer at grace scoff at atonement? (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The moral and the revealed truths*:—We may distinguish between these. Christ's teaching in its practical applications is its earthly side; His revelation of God, His nature and will its heavenly side. I. THE MORAL TEACHING OF CHRIST MUST BE ACCEPTED BY EVERY UPRIGHT CONSCIENCE. 1. Where else do you find the idea of the sovereign and eternal value of right more clearly and firmly expressed? 2. The same applies to holiness. He opposes the

systems which make it consist in outward performances, and places stress on the intention. 3. None more than Christ have preached the necessity of sacrificing one's self for the sake of truth. 4. Whoever taught as Christ the relations of men with one another and the bonds of justice and mercy which should unite them? Christ alone has made love the supreme law of mankind. 5. Not only has He taught all this; He has acted all He has taught. 6. This is why He has a right to the authority He claims over our consciences, and why when He tells us of earthly things He has a right to be believed. II. CHRIST CLAIMS THE SAME FAITH AS THE REVEALER OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH. He is not merely a teacher of morals; He speaks of the things which are far beyond our human vision: of God. His government, providence, saving purposes, judgment. In the presence of these affirmations our situation changes. So long as His moral teaching was in question we could judge of it by our consciences, but here are declarations we cannot control. 1. Are we justified in putting faith in Christ? If we set aside this faith, no other means of access to religious truth remains. Science can teach us nothing. Are we then to remain in the dark? Men have tried to do so, but always unsuccessfully. 2. Is Christ to be believed? (1) The very accent of His affirmations leads us to reflection. No man ever spoke with such authority. We believe the assertions of Christ when He tells us of heavenly things, because He has always spoken truth when He has told us of earthly things. (2) If we believe the religious truths revealed by Christ it is because they are the necessary complement of the moral truths our conscience compels us to believe; so that accepting the latter, we are led by an invincible logic to believe the former. There is no moral truth in the gospel that does not expand into a religious truth. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *Earthly and heavenly things*:—Heavenly things, being represented unto us in an earthly form (ver. 8), come clothed to us with our own notions. We can see the sun better when reflected in the water of a vase than in the firmament; and we can interpret heaven's language best when it speaks to us in the language of earth. (*T. Manton.*)

Ver. 13. **No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven.**—*Christ comforting Nicodemus*:—Christ having reproved Nicodemus for his ignorance, now shows the remedy thereof in Himself. 1. Christ's sharp word is not His last. Having inflicted a wound He offers Himself, the only remedy, to cure it. 2. It is alike impossible for men, by their own parts and natural endowments, to comprehend spiritual mysteries and enter into God's counsels, here called an ascending up to heaven. 3. In so far as sinners come to a true and saving knowledge of heavenly mysteries, they are in a sort transported up to heaven. If Capernaum were exalted to heaven by the offer of these things, what are they who embrace them? 4. It is proper in Christ only, in some sense, to ascend to heaven, both for the measure and degree of knowledge which, as God, is infinite, and, as man, is large as human nature is capable of, and for the kind of knowledge which, as God, is of Himself, and can only be man's by communication from Him who came down from heaven. 5. The Son of God in the boson of the Father manifested Himself in our nature, that He might in our nature understand and communicate the heavenly mysteries; therefore it is marked as the ground of His ascending or comprehending these things that He came down, hereby showing that His abasing of Himself did exalt Him as Mediator to that dignity, to be the storehouse of wisdom to His people. 6. Christ, by His Incarnation, did not cease to be God, for He is still in heaven. 7. The Son of God has assumed the human nature into so strict a personal union that what is proper to either nature is ascribed unto the Person under whatsoever name. And hereby Christ shows His love to our nature that under that name, "Son of Man," He ascribes what is proper to His Godhead to Himself. (*G. Hutchcson.*) *The text in relation to error*:—Three distinct heresies are overthrown by these words. I. That of the NESTORIANS, who affirm a duality of persons as well as of natures in Christ; for unless our Blessed Lord were one Person, it could not in truth be affirmed that the Son of Man, even whilst on earth, was in heaven. II. That of the CERINTHIANS and all others who deny the pre-existence and Divinity of Christ; for unless He had been God, it could not have been said that He came down from heaven even whilst still in heaven. III. That of the MANICHÆANS, who deny the proper humanity of our Blessed Lord; for unless He had been really man, of the substance of His mother, it could not be said that He was the Son of Man. (*Toletus.*) *The Son of Man*:—The name is used—I. Not only because of His Incarnation, but also because of the manner of

that Incarnation. When He came into this world and manifested Himself, so that we were able to see Him who by nature is invisible, He might have taken new flesh and a body created especially for Him, other than that of man. He, however, took man's flesh, and calls Himself here the Son of Man, and so assures us that He was really born of woman; otherwise He would not be really the Son of Man. These words also declare, not only that He took our flesh, for this alone would not have made Him the Son of Man, but that He took it by being born. II. These words remind us for our comfort that He is truly our Brother, and that we are all brethren of Christ by virtue of His birth as the Son of Man. III. He uses these words to certify us of the fulfilment of those promises which declared that He should take our flesh and be the seed of man, the Son of David and of Abraham. IV. Again, He uses these words in confirmation of our being made the sons of God; for if Christ for our sake became the Son of Man, we through His humiliation and Incarnation were therefore made the sons of God. V. By using the name, Son of Man, the mark of His humiliation, He would teach us humility. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 14, 15. **As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.**—*The brazen serpent*:—Nicodemus's confession of faith was substantially that of many amongst us, only he went a bit further. Because he was honest he deserved, and because he was half blind he needed, Christ's instruction for the expanding of his creed. Complete Christianity, according to Christ, involves—(1) A radical change comparable to birth. When Nicodemus staggers at this, our Lord (2) unveils what makes it possible—the Incarnation of the Son of Man who came down from heaven. But a Christianity that stops at the Incarnation is incomplete, so our Lord (3) speaks of the end of incarnation and ground of the possibility of being born again. I. THE PROFOUND PARADOXICAL PARALLEL BETWEEN THE IMAGE OF THE POISONER AND THE LIVING HEALER. The correspondence between the lifting up of the serpent and the lifting up of Christ, the look of the half-dead Israelite and the look of faith, the healing in both cases, are clear; and with these it would be strange were there no correspondence between the two subjects. We admit that Jesus Christ has come in the likeness of the victims of the poison, "made in the likeness of sinful flesh," without sin; but in a very profound sense He stood also as representative of the cause of the evil. "God hath made Him *to be sin* for us," &c. And the brazen image in the likeness of the poisonous creature, and yet with no poison in it, reminds us that on Christ were heaped the evils that tempt humanity. And Paul, speaking of the consequences of Christ's death, says that "He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly"—hanging them up there—"triumphing over them in it." Just as that brazen image was hung up as a proof that the venomous power of living serpents was overcome, so in the death of Christ sin is crucified and death done to death. II. THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS. 1. The serpent was lifted for conspicuousness; and Nicodemus must have understood, although vaguely, that this Son of Man was to be presented not to a handful of people in an obscure corner, but to the whole world, as the Healer. 2. But Christ's prescient eye and foreboding heart travelled onwards to the cross. This is proved from the two other occasions, when He used the same expression. 3. So from the beginning Christ's programme was death. He did not begin as most teachers, full of enthusiastic dreams, and then, as the illusions disappeared, face the facts of rejection and death. 4. Notice, too, the place in Christ's work which the cross assumed to Him. There have been many answering to Nicodemus's conception—teachers, examples, righteous men, reformers; but all these have worked by their lives: this Man comes to work by His death. He came to heal, and you will not get the poison out of men by exhortations, philosophies, moralities, social reforms. Poison cannot be treated by surface applications, but by the cross. 5. The Divine necessity which Christ accepts—"must." This was often on His lips. Why? (1) Because His whole life was one long act of obedience to the Divine Will. (2) Because His whole life was one long act of compassion for His brethren. III. THE LOOK OF FAITH. The dying Israelite had to look. Suppose he had looked unbelieving, carelessly, scoffingly, there would have been no healing. The look was required as the expression of (1) the consciousness of burning death; (2) the confidence that it could be taken away because God had said so. (3) The conviction of the hopelessness of cure in any other way. IV. THE PROMISE OF HEALING. 1. In the one case of the body, in the other case of the soul. 2. The gift of life—something bestowed, not evolved. 3. This eternal life is present, and by its power arrests the process of poisoning, and heals the whole nature. 4. It is available for the most

desperate cases. Christianity knows nothing of hopeless men. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The brazen serpent*:—The difference between the Gospels and the Epistles is that between seed and flower. Christ gave men the seeds of truth, and left inspired apostles to dovelop them. Paul has been charged with inventing the doctrine of the atonement, but it is in this verse in germ. Notice here three analogies—I. IN THE DISEASE. The poison of the fiery serpents was fermenting in the Israelites; that of sin is fermenting in us. 1. Men are sinners: a trite observation, but Paul devoted three chapters in Romans to prove it. Our very righteousness is as filthy rags, and you may endeavour by moral improvements to wash them, but you can no more wash them clean than an Ethiop can his left hand by rubbing it with his right. 2. We are all sinners. There is no difference. Irrational animals *come short* of the glory of God; but men "*fall short*." The idea of a fall underlies all human history: hence culpability. Some men have fallen more deeply, but there is no difference in the fact. 3. All are under sentence of death. "Guilty before God," subject to penalty—death. The wages never fall below that. 4. Not only so, but we are polluted, morally sick. What brought death upon us wrought it in us. The venom of the serpents would assuredly terminate in death, in spite of all self or other help. We all sinned in Adam, but Adam continues to sin in us. Sickness is contagious, health never. The Jew transmitted his depravity, not his circumcision: you impart your sin to your posterity, not your holiness. Each has to be regenerated anew. II. IN THE REMEDY. 1. Our salvation comes through man. The Israelites were bitten by serpents, and by a serpent they were to be healed. By man came sin; by man comes salvation. 2. Not only by man, but the Son of Man, one who in the core of His being is closely united to every other man. According to the ancient law, the Goel or nearest relative alone had the right to redeem. Christ is the nearest relative any man can have. 3. The Son of Man lifted up. The tendency is to make the Incarnation the centre of Christianity: the Bible makes the Cross that. A glorious display of condescending grace was made at Bethlehem; but on Calvary God and man were reconciled. Christ suffered (1) with man in virtue of His keen sympathies; (2) for man, in that He suffered martyrdom rather than forsake the path of duty; (3) instead of man, for He bore the wrath of God. 4. The necessity for our atonement. Not shall, but must. The "must" of ver. 10 indicates the necessity for a radical change in order to salvation; that of our text the necessity of an atonement on the part of God. Sin *must* be punished. God's righteousness must be upheld, and all its demands met. 5. Jesus Christ uplifted is now both physician and remedy to His people. The brazen serpent could only heal our disease: Christ saves to the uttermost (1) degree of perfection, (2) degree of continuation. III. IN THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY FOR THE DISEASE. The Israelites were not bidden to apply poultices, but to look. You are not enjoined to improve yourselves, but to believe. 1. Through faith in Christ the sinner has permission to live. Two words are used in this connection; forgive—give for; remit—set free; corresponding to χαρίζομαι, to show grace, and ἀφίημι, to discharge. These must not be confused. As Broad Church theologians contend every one has been forgiven, but in the first sense. God has "given for" man all that Almighty Love could offer. But men are only forgiven in the second sense when they accept God's pardoning grace. 2. By faith we acquire the right to live—this is justification and more than pardon, permission to live. 3. The power to live—regeneration. Conclusion: 1. In Christ's days faith in everlasting life had become practically extinct. 2. Christ revived it, not simply teaching it, but imparting it. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The brazen serpent*:—I. IT WAS TO BE MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF THAT WHICH WAS DESTROYING THEM. Around are serpents victorious: here the serpent conquered and exhibited as a trophy, and the people who see it live. Around us the powers of darkness and death are victorious, and sinning souls are dead in trespasses and sins. Behold on the cross sin, but sin judged, condemned, executed, held up as a spectacle. "He was made sin," &c. II. When the wounded Israelite looked on the brazen serpent, he found a PROOF OF GOD'S ABILITY AND A PLEDGE OF GOD'S WILLINGNESS TO SAVE HIM. As we turn to the cross, the old man is crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed. III. THE NEW LIFE WAS MIRACULOUS IN ITS CHARACTER: it was not by any natural process of improvement or gradual restoration. IV. How may we APPROPRIATE THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTION? Let us take a walk round the camp. 1. In one tent is a man who declines to look because he has tried every remedy that science can provide, and who says, "How can I be saved by looking at a mere bit of brass?" and dies because he is too proud to be saved in God's way. And so people plead that

they cannot understand the doctrine of the atonement, and seem to regard themselves as under no obligation to trust Him who has made that atonement. Will not a general trust in the mercy of God suffice? But the Israelites were not told to discover the mode of the Divine operation. 2. There is another very far gone who says, "Not for me—too late," and dies. So many now regard their case as hopeless, but Christ came to save the chief of sinners. 3. We meet with another who says, "I am all right, but I had a narrow escape. The serpent didn't bite; it was only a scratch." "But a scratch is fatal; go at once and look." "Oh, no! there's no danger; but if anything should come of it I will act on your suggestion. At present I am in a hurry; I have some business." By and by the poison works. Oh for a look at the serpent now! So many perish now by making light of their danger. 4. Here is a man suffering acute agony, who listens with eagerness but obstinate incredulity. "If God wished to save, He would speak. Besides, the middle of the camp is a long way, and how can healing influence extend so far? Well, to oblige you, I will look; but I don't expect anything will come of it. There; I have looked, and am no better." So, too, many amongst us try a series of experiments. "I'm trying to believe, but I feel no better." 5. We turn aside into a home of sorrow. A broken-hearted mother is bending over her little girl. But lamentation will not arrest the malady. "Mother, your child may live." The mother listens with the incredulity of joy, but the little one cries, "Mother, I want to look at Moses' serpent." Instantly the mother's arms are around her, and the child is borne to the door. She lifts her deep blue eyes, while the mother, in an agony of hope and fear, stands waiting. "Mother! I am healed." There is life for a look at the crucified One. Look and live. (*W. H. M. H. Aitken, M.A.*)

The brazen serpent:—I. AN HISTORICAL FACT DIVINELY ACKNOWLEDGED (Numb. xxi. 4–9). Christ's entire belief in the Old Testament Scriptures. II. AN INTIMATE CONNECTION CLEARLY REVEALED. 1. Each divinely appointed. 2. Each met a terrible necessity. 3. Benefit in each case secured by faith. III. A GREAT NECESSITY INSISTED UPON. "Must." Without Christ's death none can have life. IV. A BLESSED PURPOSE CROWNING ALL. 1. A calamity from which we may be delivered. 2. A blessedness to which we may attain. 3. The means of deliverance. 4. The universality of the statement. The only way of mercy and salvation. (*J. James.*)

The brazen serpent:—I. THE BANE. Sin under the aspect of the serpent's bite. This symbol has a twofold significance. 1. It glances back to the Old Serpent in Eden; as do also, more or less, that singular phenomenon among so many heathen nations, serpent-worship. 2. The main significance is the light which it throws on sin itself. Its character is spiritual venom; its effects are anguish and death. Those who say, I feel none of those poisonous effects, only prove themselves by that to be the more fatally steeped in sin's sweltering venom; for they bewray the awful state described in Scripture as "past feeling," or having the "conscience seared as with a hot iron." II. THE ANTIDOTE. Christ uplifted on the Cross and upheld in the gospel as the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The atonement is the only healing balm. Penances, moralities, and all other substitutes are vain. 1. There is a marked significance in the serpent itself and the very pole. The atonement is as eloquent of sin as it is of salvation. The most awful exhibition of sin ever given was that given on the Cross. Hence our guilt is represented as superscribed thereon—as a handwriting against us legible to the entire universe. In the cross, and on the Crucified, God emphatically "condemned sin." 2. The human race have been so infected with the serpent's venom as to be called after the name of their father, "serpents," "scorpions," a "generation of vipers." Now Christ came not in sinful flesh, but in its "likeness." The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all as the representative of humanity. Even as the serpent of brass on the pole was in the likeness of the fiery serpents, but, unlike them, had no venom in it. In this vicarious way was human guilt declared, exposed, condemned. 3. The sin, by being condemned, was "put away." As in the ancient sacrifices the fire symbolically burned up the imputed sin along with the victim, so, on the Cross, the world's sin was put away in Christ's sufferings, considered as a barrier to salvation. This blow to sin was a death-blow to Satan. It was the bruising of the serpent's head (Heb. ii. 14, 15). III. The MEANS by which the antidote becomes available for the removal of the bane; viz., faith. The wounded Israelites were healed by seeing; the perishing sinner by believing. Notice here in its proper place the significance of the pole. It was the chief military standard—not the minor or portable ones that were borne about, but the main standard that stood conspicuous in the most prominent part of the camp, fixed in the ground,

and from which floated a flag (Jer. li. 27; Isa. xlix. 22. See also, Isa. xiii. 2; xviii. 3; lxii. 10, 11). These texts amply illustrate the use and meaning of the large banner-poles, with their floating insignia, as the symbol of universality of promulgation, and thence of Divine interposition of world-wide scope. The texts cited, or referred to, though beginning with the ordinary uses of the symbol, soon run it into Gospel moulds; and most fitly, for very ancient predictions had declared that "unto him," the Shiloh, "shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xi. 10; John xii. 32). (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The brazen serpent*:—I. THERE IS A STRIKING SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE CONDITION OF THE WOUNDED ISRAELITES AND THE STATE OF MAN BY NATURE. 1. Theirs was a degraded condition. Their pain was the result of their transgression. 2. Miserable. 3. Guilty. 4. Helpless. II. THERE IS A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE MEANS EMPLOYED FOR THE RELIEF OF THE WOUNDED ISRAELITES AND THE METHOD OF OUR RECOVERY FROM SIN AND DEATH BY JESUS CHRIST. 1. The brazen serpent in shape exactly resembled the fiery serpent. So Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. 2. The serpent was lifted up, which is emblematical of—(1) Christ's crucifixion. (2) Christ's ascension. (3) The public exhibition of the Redeemer's Cross in the ministry of reconciliation. III. THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE FEELINGS OF THE WOUNDED ISRAELITES AND THOSE OF THE AWAKENED PENITENT IN THE ACTS OF LOOKING AND BELIEVING RESPECTIVELY. They were—1. Sensible of their calamity. 2. Filled with humility. IV. THE RESEMBLANCE AS TO THE EFFICACY OF THE REMEDY IN BOTH CASES. In their—1. Instantaneousness. 2. Efficacy to work in the first or last stages of the disease. 3. Completeness of cure. Learn: 1. That salvation can only be ascribed to the free grace of God. 2. The freedom with which this salvation is bestowed. 3. That gratitude becomes those who have received mercy. (*T. Gibson, M.A.*) *The brazen serpent*:—I. THE INCIDENT REFERRED TO. This typical event occurred towards the close of the wanderings. The people's discouragements had been many, and now the king of Edom suffered them not to pass through his border. The Church must lay its account with difficulty and checks and foes. The Christian who turns out of the straight path at the first menace of the Edomite will find more formidable difficulties before he gets to the heavenly Canaan. Now see the form their murmurings took. Aaron and Miriam are dead, and as Moses is not enough to receive all their taunts they "spoke against God." "There is no bread, neither is there any water," and this when they had the best of both; so easily does a fretful spirit turn into bitterness the best gifts of God. There was something of peculiar aggravation in this sin, and the retribution was awful. "Would God we had died in the wilderness!" and the prayer was answered. Now they humble themselves. What powerful teachers are sharp afflictions! Moses prayed for them, and God heard his prayer. To have destroyed the serpents would have been as easy as to command the setting up of the brazen one; but God would give His people a part in their own salvation. 1. Of this event there could be no doubt. (1) The witnesses were many. (2) The serpent was preserved as a memorial of it. 2. The serpent had a sacramental character. 3. When this sacramental character encouraged superstition, the serpent was destroyed. II. THE LESSONS FORESHADOWED. 1. The significant intimation that Christ should die. It was placed on a level with the sacrifices and other symbols which typified the atonement. 2. Salvation does not come to us through Christ's being lifted up merely, but through our looking at Him. In the other miracles everything was done by Moses alone. In this case the symbol had no power but that which the faith of the people gave it. The Cross is not a mechanical charm. We must believe. Conclusion: 1. As the Old Testament and the New are one book, so the Old Testament way of saving is the same as that of the New. 2. Salvation is the free gift of God received by faith. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *The brazen serpent*:—The type and the antitype correspond—I. IN THE OCCASION OF THEIR INSTITUTION. The Israelites were wounded by the serpents; we are wounded by sin. II. IN THEIR QUALITIES. 1. The serpent was made of an inferior metal; Christ was a root out of a dry ground. 2. There was only one brazen serpent for the whole Jewish camp; there is only one Mediator between God and man. 3. The serpent was appointed of God; Christ was appointed by the Father. 4. The serpent was publicly lifted up; Christ is uplifted by His ministers. III. IN THE MANNER IN WHICH THE BENEFIT IS DERIVED. 1. By looking personally. 2. Instantly. 3. Steadily and constantly. 4. Exclusively. IV. IN THE EFFECTS THEY PRODUCE. 1. The completeness of the cure. 2. Its universality. (1) Every one may be healed. (2) The whole of the surviving camp was healed. So all the world will one day be saved by Christ. Conclusion: 1. How simple is the

way of salvation. 2. How injurious is unbelief. If we despise this ordinance of God we shall perish. (*S. Sutton.*) *The mysteries of the brazen serpent:*—All languages are based on figures. When we teach children we employ figures. And so Christ employed figures to teach this spiritual child the things of the kingdom: a better way than by the use of abstract terms. I. THE PEOPLE IN THE WILDERNESS, the representatives of sinful men. 1. They had stood valiantly in fight, but the serpents were things that trembled not at the sword. They had endured weariness and thirst and hunger, but these were novelties, and new terrors are terrible from their very novelty. If we could see our condition we should feel as Israel when they saw the serpents. 2. Behold the people after they were bitten—the fire coursing through their veins. We cannot say that sin produces instantly such an effect, but it will ultimately. Fiery serpents are nothing to fiery lusts. 3. How awful must have been the death of the serpent! bitten, and how awful the death of the man without Christ. II. THE BRAZEN SERPENT. The type of Christ crucified; both remedies. 1. A number, perhaps, declared it absurd that a brazen serpent should do what physicians could not. So many despise Christ crucified. 2. Some say the cross will only increase the evil, just as old physicians averred that the sight of anything bright would intensify the effect of the poison. So many make out that salvation by the Cross destroys morality. 3. Much as those who heard of the brazen serpent might have despised it there was no other means of cure. So "there is none other name," &c. III. WHAT WAS TO BE DONE TO THE BRAZEN SERPENT? It was to be lifted up—so was Christ. 1. By wicked men. 2. By God the Father. 3. By ministers. Let them so preach Him that He may be seen. IV. WHAT WERE ISRAEL TO DO? To look; the convinced sinner is to believe. 1. There were, perhaps, some who would not look, and some will not come to Christ for life: perhaps—(1) Through unbelief. (2) Through insufficient conviction. (3) Through procrastination. (4) Through belief in other means. (5) Through looking too much at their sores, and seeming incurability. 2. Those who would be saved must look. (1) Whosoever. (2) Look now. V. ENCOURAGEMENT. 1. Christ was lifted up on purpose for you to look at. 2. He invites you to believe. 3. He promises to save. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The lifting up of the brazen serpent:*—I. THE PERSON IN MORTAL PERIL for whom the brazen serpent was made. 1. The fiery serpents came among the people because they had despised God's way and God's bread (Numb. xxi.). The natural consequence of turning against God like serpents is to find serpents waylaying our path. 2. Those for whom the brazen serpent was uplifted had been actually bitten by the serpents. The common notion is that salvation is for good people, but God's medicine is for the guilty. 3. The bite of the serpent was painful. So many by sin are restless, discontented, and fearful. Jesus died for such as are at their wits' end. 4. The bite was mortal. There could be no question about that—nor about the effects of sin. 5. There is no limit set to the stage of poisoning: however far gone, the remedy still had power. So the gospel promise has no qualifying clause. II. THE REMEDY PROVIDED FOR HIM. 1. It was purely of Divine origin: and God will not devise a failure. 2. Exceedingly instructive. Wonder of wonders that our Lord Jesus should condescend to be symbolized by a dead snake. 3. There was but one remedy for the serpent bite: there was only one brazen serpent, not two. If a second had been made it would have had no effect. 4. It was bright and lustrous, made of shining metal. So if we do but exhibit Jesus in His own true metal He is lustrous in the eyes of men. 5. The remedy was enduring. So Jesus saves to the uttermost. III. THE APPLICATION OF THE REMEDY. 1. The simplest imaginable. It might, had God so ordered, have been carried into the house, rubbed on the man, and applied with prayers and priestly ceremonies. But he had only to look; and it was well, for the danger was so frequent. 2. Very personal. A man could not be cured by what others could do for him—physicians, sisters, mothers, ministers. 3. Very instructive—self-help must be abandoned and God be trusted. IV. THE CURE EFFECTED. 1. He was healed at once. He had not to wait five minutes, nor five seconds. Pardon is not a work of time, although sanctification is. 2. The remedy healed again and again. The healed Israelites were in danger. The safest thing is not to take our eye off the brazen serpent at all. 3. It was of universal efficacy, and no man who looks to Christ remains under condemnation. V. A LESSON FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THEIR LORD. Imitate Moses. He did not "incense" the brazen serpent, or hide it behind vestments or ceremonies, but raised it on a bare pole that all might see. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Three similitudes:*—I. THE STUNG ISRAELITE AND THE GUILTY SINNER. 1. As the Israelite had

death in his bosom, so the sinner (Heb. ii. 14); although the latter sting may not be felt as was the former. 2. The Israelite wanted all means of cure, and had not God appointed the serpent he had perished. As helpless is the sinner till God shows us His Christ. II. THE BRAZEN SERPENT AND CHRIST. 1. The serpent was accursed of God. Christ was made a curse for us (Gal. iii. 13). 2. The brazen serpent had the likeness of the serpent, but not the poison. Christ came in the similitude of sinful flesh without sin. 3. The brazen serpent was uplifted on a pole; Christ on the Cross. 4. As the poison of a serpent was healed by a serpent, so the sin of man by man (Rom. v.; 1 Cor. vx. 21). But Christ had power in Himself to heal us which the other had not. 5. The brazen serpent was not the device of an Israelite, but of God; so no man could have found out such a means of salvation as that established by Christ. III. THE ISRAELITES LOOKING ON THE SERPENT, AND THE SINNERS BELIEVING IN CHRIST. 1. The Israelite was healed only by looking; so the sinner is justified only by believing. 2. As looking, as well as the rest of the senses, is a passion rather than an action; so in justification thou art a patient rather than an agent: thou holdest thy beggar's hands to receive, that is all. 3. The Israelites before they looked up to the brazen serpent for help—(1) Felt themselves stung; (2) Believed that God would heal them by that serpent. So the sinner must—(1) Feel himself a sinner, be burdened and heavy laden (Matt. ii. 28), before he will or can come to Christ. A man that feels not himself sick, seeks not the physician; (2) He must believe that in Christ there is all-sufficient help. 4. The stung Israelite looked on the serpent with a pitiful, humble, craving, wishly eye, weeping also for the very pain of the sting: with such an eye doth the believing sinner look on Christ crucified (Zech. xii. 10). 5. The Israelite by looking on the brazen serpent received ease presently, and was rid of the poison of the living serpent, and so therein was made, like the brazen serpent, void of all poison. So the believer, by looking on Christ, is eased of his guilty accusing conscience (Rom. v. 1), and is transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. iii. 18). 6. Even the squint-eyed or purblind Israelite was healed; so the weak believer, being a true believer, is healed by Christ. 7. Though the Israelite were stung never so often, yet if he looked up to the serpent he was healed. As we are daily stung by sin, so we must daily look up to Christ crucified. Every new sin must have a fresh act of faith and repentance. Yet there are two differences betwixt their looking on the serpent and our looking by faith on Christ. 1. By looking they lived, but yet so that after they died; but here, by believing in Christ, we gain an eternal life. 2. They looked on the serpent, but the serpent could not look on them; but here, as thou lookest on Christ, so He on thee, as once on Peter, and on Mary and John from the Cross, and thy comfort must rather be in Christ's looking on thee, than in thy looking on Him. (*J. Dyke.*) *Sin and salvation through Christ*:—I. SIN. This was the occasion, with its consequent misery, of the setting up of the brazen serpent; so the occasion of Christ's coming was man's being bitten by the old serpent (Rev. xii. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 3). Among the Israelites few were stung, here all; there their bodies, here the soul; there temporal death followed, here eternal. 1. The sting is painful, although not always. It is a great part of our misery not to know our misery. Yet Satan's darts are often painful (Eph. vi. 16). Sin in life will make hell in conscience (Prov. xviii. 14; Job vi. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 56). 2. The sting is deadly (Rom. v. 12, vi. 23; Gen. ii. 17). Not only death temporal, but spiritual and eternal (Mark ix. 44; Prov. viii. 36). II. CHRIST SET FORTH BY THE BRAZEN SERPENT. 1. The resemblance between the two. (1) Both were remedies devised by God's mercy and love (ver. 16). We neither plotted nor asked it. The Israelites did ask through Moses; but in our case God, the offended party, makes the first motion (1 John iv. 19). (2) Christ's humiliation set forth. (*a*) A serpent was chosen to show that He came in a mean estate (Psa. xxii. 6; Isa. liii. 3; Mark ix. 12); (*b*) because the serpent was cursed of God (Gen. iii. 14). (*c*) The serpent was made of brass, not of gold. (3) The serpent had the form, but not the poison. So Christ (Heb. iv. 15). (*a*) God would cure a serpent's bite by a serpent (Rom. viii. 3). (*b*) The parties to be cured were men; therefore the Son of Man must be lifted up. (4) The place where the brazen serpent was uplifted was Punon (Numb. xxxiii. 42, 43), for from Punon they came to Oboth (Numb. xxi. 10). This was in Idumæa, famous for mines of brass or copper—known among the ancients as "the metal of Punon." Eusebius ("Eccl. Hist.," bk. viii.) tells us that Sylvanus and thirty-nine more were beheaded for the faith's sake near the mines of brass in Punon; and Eutychius, Epiphanius, and Theodoret speak of Christians condemned to work in these mines. So that the brass out of which

the serpent was made was found in the place where they were bitten. That body which Christ assumed was not brought from elsewhere. Where the mischief was the remedy was at hand. (5) The brazen serpent was lifted up on a pole. So Christ on the Cross (1 Pet. ii. 24). The serpent first stung us by the fruit of a tree, and Christ saved us by suffering on one. 2. The super-excellency of Christ to the type. The brazen serpent—(1) Was but a sign of salvation (Wisd. xvi. 6), but Christ is the author of it (Heb. v. 9). (2) Benefited the Israelites only, but Christ all nations (Isa. xi. 10). (3) Freed them from present death only, Christ from eternal death (John xi. 26). (4) Became a means of idolatry (2 Kings xviii. 4), whereas Christ is to be equally honoured with the Father (John v. 23; Heb. i. 6; Phil. ii. 9, 10). (5) Was broken in pieces; but they shall be broken in pieces who deny Christ (Psa. ii. 9; Dan. ii. 44; Luke xix. 27). III. FAITH THE MEANS OF BENEFITING BY CHRIST. 1. The necessity of faith. None had benefit but such as looked (Numb. xxi. 8). 2. The encouragement of faith—(1) To broken-hearted sinners. If you are stung by sin, look to Christ. A felt sense of sin is warrant enough. The Israelites cried out, "Oh! what shall we do?" So Acts ii. 37, xvi. 29, 30. (2) To lapsed believers. God did not take away the serpents, only He gave a remedy. Sin is not abolished, but 1 John ii. 1. 3. The nature of faith, which is a looking unto Christ. The act of faith is expressed by seeing or looking (Zech. xii. 10; Isa. xvii. 7; John vi. 40; Heb. xi. 1, 27, xii. 2). Faith itself is said to be the eye of the soul (Eph. i. 18; Gal. iii. 1), and its hindrance blindness (2 Cor. iv. 4). (1) The objects proper to faith are things that lie out of the view of sense (John xx. 29). (2) What kind of sight faith is. (*a*) Serious; not a glance, but a fixed eye. (*b*) Applicative (Job v. 27; John xx. 28). (*c*) Affectionate, with desire and trust (2 Chron. xx. 12; Psa. cxxi. 1; 1 Pet. i. 7; Isa. xvii. 7; Psa. cxxiii. 2, xxxiv. 5). (*d*) Engaging (Phil. iii. 8; Eph. i. 17). *The saving sight*:—Two great historical facts—the uplifted serpent and the uplifted Saviour. Infinite is the difference between them in point of dignity and momentousness. The one had a narrow circle of a few thousands for its witnesses, and the desert for its theatre; the other a universe. From the one came body-healing, soon to be interrupted by death; from the other flows soul-healing unto life everlasting. But the one sheds much light on the other. Compare them—I. IN THE DESPERATE NATURE OF THE MALADY. 1. What could be more fatal or terrible than this judgment? 2. Like the camp of Israel, this is a world of dying men. II. IN THE SURPRISING CHARACTER OF THE DIVINELY-PROVIDED REMEDY. 1. God alone could stay the judgment. All the virtue of the serpent of brass lay in the fact that it was appointed by God expressly for a sign of His merciful interposition. 2. Both were lifted up. III. IN THE APPLICATION OF THE DIVINELY-APPOINTED REMEDY AND THE CERTAINTY AND INSTANTANEOUSNESS OF THE CURE. (*A. Wilson, B.A.*) *Regeneration: its objective cause*:—In speaking about the subjective work of Christianity Christ mentions only the initiatory acts in the new birth. In speaking of its objective work He introduces us to the central act. Around this very fact objective Christianity clusters. I. THE LIFTING UP OF THE SON OF MAN. Our Lord dealt much in illustrations. In this chapter He borrows one from human life—birth; one from nature—wind; and now one from the Scriptures, showing how rich the historical events of the Old Testament were in types and symbols. This illustration is intended to set forth—1. The great fact that Christ was to be a healing medium. 2. The symbol of the devil is made the symbol of his Destroyer in the very act of bruising his head. 3. The virtue by which He should become the healing medium (chap. xii. 32, 33). 4. Christ's moral as well as physical exaltation (see chap. xiii. 31, 32) glorifying both Himself and His Father. 5. Christ's transcendent greatness of mind, enabling Him to take cognizance only of the glory, and not of the degradation, of His suffering. 6. His "lifting up" by many tongues made eloquent by a love kindled from Calvary. II. THIS GREAT TRANSACTION HAD FOR ITS OBJECT THE SALVATION OF MEN. 1. This salvation is negative and positive—meeting the twofold nature of sin, which is—(1) Positive—entailing misery; (2) punitive—depriving of positive blessedness. Christ delivers from the first—"shall not perish"; and restores the second—"eternal life." 2. This perishing is not annihilation, but a deprivation of vital relation to God; eternal life is a restoration of this relation. 3. These effects are the results of Christ's "lifting up," and connect the objective transaction with the subjective effects, and goes back to the matter of the new birth, which is organically connected with eternal life. III. THE DIVINE LOVE, AS AN IMPELLING MOTIVE, WAS EQUAL TO THIS (ver. 6). Here, then, are five links in the wondrous chain. (1) Men are delivered from the perdition of sin, and restored to the Divine life. (2) This is

secured by the lifting up of the Son of Man. (3) But this Son of Man is the only-begotten Son of God. (4) This only-begotten Son was made incarnate, that He might be lifted up. (5) This required some mighty motive. It is implied—1. That the objects were so unworthy, that the method of redeeming them required so much humiliation and sacrifice, that the motive could only be found in the infinite love of God. 2. That this love is not to be described by word, but by action. "God so loved." Here are two loves contending—God's complacent love for His Son and His love of commiseration for the world. IV. THAT GOD'S OBJECT IN ALL THIS IS BENEVOLENT (ver. 17). The declaration that Christ's object was to save men, given in vers. 15 and 16, is here emphasized. It was His sole object. 1. This is an important reminder to all engaged in promulgating the kingdom, of the spirit which should actuate them (Luke ix. 55, 56). 2. An invitation of men's confidence in the gracious intentions of God (Isa. lv. 8, 9). (*A. J. Parry.*) *The scene referred to:*—Not long ago I saw a picture of this by Guido. In the foreground strong men were writhing in the death agony; some are pallid in death; some hopelessly lifting eyes, bloodshot and ghastly, to the sacred emblem at the right hand of the picture, and already a new life throbs within them; joy flushes the countenance with unexpected hues of health. But in the centre is a mother, despair in her eye, lifting her babe with both hands, that it may gaze on the saving sight. Why does not the child look up? Ah! it is too far gone; the deadly bite has penetrated to the central springs; it hangs its head; it droops; it will not look; it gives one throe of anguish, and dies in the mother's uplifted hands. Oh! the unutterable pathos of that mother's look! Often, alas! do parents, teachers, pastors, hold up their dear charge, with agonizing solicitude, before the Saving Sight, without saving results. But the fault lies not with God, but with you. (*A. Wilson, B.A.*) *The agony of sin:*—What a moment of agony and terror it must have been as all around unfortunate victims were being attacked with these messengers of death. Young and old, rich and poor; for with them there was no respect of persons. On all sides you might see the Israelites writhing in mortal pains. You might hear the mother's agonized screams as the poisonous reptile fastened its fangs in her darling's breast. See that strong man tottering along; he has just been bitten. A moment ago he was in full health and strength, but now the deadly venom is flowing through his veins, and he is a dead man already. In this terrible emergency the people cried unto God, and Moses was instructed to make a serpent of brass and set it on a pole, and whosoever looked on this should live. (*W. M. H. Aitken.*) *The serpents:*—To this day a mottled snake, with fiery red spots upon its head, abounds at certain seasons in the Arabah. It is the dread of the fishermen, and is peculiarly dangerous to the bare-legged, sandalled Bedouin. So inflammable is its bite, that it is likened to fire coming through the veins; so intense its venom, and so rapid its action, that the bite is fatal in a few hours. The body swells with a fiery eruption; the tongue is consumed with thirst; and the poor wretch writhes in agony till death brings relief. This horrible pest suddenly appeared in the camp of Israel in prodigious numbers. From crevices in the rocks, from holes in the sand, from beneath the scanty herbage, these fiery-headed snake-demons swarmed into every tent. There was no running away from them, and killing seemed hardly to diminish their numbers. On every side there was a cry of anguish; men, women, children, racked with the fiery torture; none able to save or even to help another. "And much of the children of Israel died" (Numb. xxi. 6). *The serpent's bite:*—Some of you recollect the case of Gurling, one of the keepers of the reptiles in the Zoological Gardens, in October, 1852. This unhappy man was about to part with a friend who was going to Australia, and he must needs drink with him. He went back to his post in an excited state. He had some months before seen an exhibition of snake-charming, and this was on his poor muddled brain. He must emulate the Egyptians, and play with serpents. First he took out of its cage a Morocco venom-snake, put it round his neck, twisted it about, and whirled it round about him. Happily for him it did not arouse itself so as to bite. The assistant-keeper cried out, "For God's sake put back the snake!" but the foolish man replied, "I am inspired." Putting back the venom-snake, he exclaimed, "Now for the cobra." This deadly serpent was somewhat torpid with the cold of the previous night, and therefore the rash man placed it in his bosom till it revived, and glided downward till its head appeared below the back of his waistcoat. He took it by the body, about a foot from the head, and then seized it lower down by the other hand, intending to hold it by the tail and swing it round his head. He held it for an instant opposite to his face, and like a flash of lightning the ser-

pent struck him between the eyes. The blood streamed down his face, and he called for help, but his companion fled in horror. When assistance arrived Gurling was sitting on a chair, having restored the cobra to its place. He said, "I am a dead man." They took him to the hospital. First his speech went, then his vision failed him, and lastly his hearing. His pulse gradually sank, and in one hour from the time at which he had been struck he was a corpse. There was only a little mark upon the bridge of his nose, but the poison spread over the body, and he was a dead man. I tell you that story that you may use it as a parable and learn never to play with sin, and also to bring vividly before you what it is to be bitten by a serpent. Suppose that Gurling could have been cured by looking at a piece of brass, would it not have been good news for him? There was no remedy for that poor infatuated creature, but there is a remedy for you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A beautiful legend* is related respecting a scene in the camp of the Israelites at the time of the setting up of the brazen serpent. A woman had been bitten, and was lying in her tent, while the poison was doing its deadly work on her system. It was the day and the hour when the serpent of brass was to be set up in the camp; but such headway had the poison made that it seemed likely that in that case it would prove too late. But the image was at length raised; and the two daughters of the dying woman brought her to the door of the tent, with her face turned towards the image, when apparently swooning in death; the image of the brazen serpent fell upon her eyes, and she was healed. (*D. Curry, D.D.*) "*The serpent. . . . eternal life*":—It is a noteworthy fact that in many of the ethnic religions the serpent was adored as a symbol of life. Horapollon, explaining (wrongly) a particular Egyptian hieroglyph, remarks that among the ancient Egyptians a serpent with its tail in its mouth was a symbol of eternity. The ordinary word for eternity in Egyptian begins with a figure of a serpent. This ancient symbolism, which leaves its traces also in the classics, may have owed something of its origin to the fact of the apparent renewal of the serpent's life when it awakens from its dormant condition, and when it casts its old skin. The adoration of Æsculapius, the Greek god of healing, was always connected with serpent worship. In the chief temple at Epidaurus tame serpents had a place of honour; and the god was said frequently to take the form of a serpent when he appeared to men. In the third century before Christ the help of Æsculapius was invoked by the Romans to avert a pestilence. In response, Æsculapius is said to have appeared in the form of a serpent, to have gone on board the Roman ship, and when the ship arrived in the Tiber to have glided over the side and to have taken possession of an island, where a temple was erected to him. It will be remembered also that Cadmus was changed into a serpent at his own request, when he discovered that serpents were dear to the gods. Among the Arabs the serpent is still *the* living thing of living things. This is seen in their ordinary speech. The Arabic word for "life" is *hayâ;* a common word for a serpent is *hayyât*, a plural form from *hayyâ*, a living thing. When Moses, therefore, lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, it would be recognized by the Jews as a symbol of that life which God had promised to give to those who would look to it in faith. To them it was a most natural symbol; when it ceased to be a mere symbol, and became an object of idolatrous worship, it was destroyed. (*Sunday School Times.*) *Jesus lifted up*:—During the American Civil War there was a man on one of the boat-loads of wounded from the field who was very low and in a kind of stupor. He was entirely unknown. Mr. Moody called him by different names, but could get no response. At last, at the name "William," the man unclosed his eyes and looked up, and revived. He was asked if he was a Christian. He said, "No," but manifested great anxiety upon the subject. "I am so great a sinner that I can't be a Christian." Mr. Moody told him he would read what Christ said about that, so turning to St. John's third chapter he read, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," &c. "Stop!" said the dying man; "read that over again, will you?" It was read again. "Is that there?" "Yes," said Mr. Moody; "that's there just as I read it to you." "And did Christ say that?" "Yes." The man began repeating the words, settling back upon his pillow as he did so, with a strange, solemn look of peace on his face. He took no further notice of what was going on about him, but continued murmuring the blessed words till Mr. Moody left him. The next morning when the soldier's place was visited it was found empty. Mr. Moody asked if any one knew aught about him during the night. A nurse who had spent the hours with him till

he died, replied, "All the time I was with him he was repeating something about Moses lifting up a serpent in the wilderness. I asked him if there was anything I could do for him, but he only answered, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent.' Just before he died, about midnight, I saw his lips moving, though there was no sound escaping. I thought he might have some dying message for home, so I asked him for one. But the only answer was the whispered words, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him—' and so on until his voice died away, and his lips moved no longer." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Looking at Christ:*—Mr. Barnes, of the Jewish Mission, Mildmay, London, said: "I was visiting in a Jewish neighbourhood in the East End of London, and called upon a Jewess, whom I had known for a long time as a very hard-hearted unbeliever in Jesus Christ. I did not know what to say to her; in fact, I had given her up as almost hopeless. When, however, I called on this occasion she said, 'I love Jesus, I have got Jesus now as my Saviour.' I said, 'You have! How came you to love Jesus?' 'Well,' she said, 'I will tell you. You know my little girl attends your school, and she comes home and sings the hymns you teach her. She has been singing a good deal lately, "There is life for a look at the Crucified One." She kept on singing and singing, and at last it broke my heart, and I wondered, is it true there is life for a look. I have been induced to search the Bible, and I believe Jesus is now my Saviour." *Christ exalted:*—Describing the artistic glories of the Church of St. Mark at Venice, Mr. Ruskin says: "Here are all the successions of crowded imagery showing the passions and the pleasures of human life symbolized together and the mystery of its redemption; for the maze of interwoven lines and changeful pictures lead always at last to the cross, lifted and carved in every place and upon every stone; sometimes with the serpent of eternity wrapped round it, sometimes with doves beneath its arms and sweet herbage growing forth from its feet; but conspicuous most of all on the great rood that crosses the church before the altar, raised in bright blazonry against the shadow of the apse. It is the Cross that is first seen and always burning in the centre of the temple; and every dome and hollow of its roof has the figure of Christ in the utmost height of it, raised in power, or returning in judgment." *Saved by a sight of Christ:*—"I have seen Jesus." This was the saying of a half-witted man, who had turned away from living a very wicked life, when he was asked what had led to this great change. The late Dr. Bushnell, of Hartford, Connecticut, tells this story. He was well acquainted with the person to whom it refers. In addition to his being naturally weak-minded, he had fallen into very wicked ways. He swore dreadfully; he was a confirmed drunkard; he would tell lies, and steal, and do almost anything that was sinful. At one time there was a revival of religion in connection with Dr. Bushnell's church. Among others who came to see the doctor then with the earnest inquiry, What must we do to be saved? was this weak-minded, wicked man. Thoughtless people, when they saw him going to church, supposed he was only going in mockery, and to make sport of it. And even serious Christians looked on him with pity, and rather wished he would not come. But when Dr. Bushnell came to converse with him he found him so earnest, and apparently so sincere, that he did not hesitate to receive him into the communion of the church. And the whole course of the poor man's life after this showed that the doctor was right in doing so. From that time onward everything about the man showed that "old things had passed away" with him, "and all things had become new." He became an humble and consistent follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. All his bad habits were given up. He never drank intoxicating liquor again. A profane word was never heard from his lips. He was truthful and honest; regular in attending church; diligent in reading the Bible, and faithful in practising what it taught. To those who had known him in former years this change seemed wonderful. And when he was asked by some one to tell what it was which had led to it, his answer was, in the words already quoted, "I have seen Jesus." This explained it all. (*D. Newton.*) *We are saved by looking to Christ:*—As a general rule, self-contemplation is a power towards mischief. The only way to grow is to look out of one's self. There is too much introversion among Christians. A shipmaster might as well look down into the hold of his ship for the north star as a Christian look down into his own heart for the Sun of Righteousness. Out and beyond is the shining. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *We must look away from ourselves for peace:*—Did you ever hear of a captain of a vessel driven about by rough winds who wanted anchorage and tried to find it on board his vessel? He desires to place his anchor somewhere on board the ship where

it will prove a hold-fast. He hangs it at the prow, but still the ship drives; he exhibits the anchor upon deck, but that does not hold the vessel; at last he puts it down into the hold; but with no better success. Why, man alive, anchors do not hold as long as they are on board a ship. They must be thrown into the deep, and then they will get a grip of the sea-bottom, and hold the vessel against wind and tide. As long as ever you have confidence in yourselves you are like a man who keeps his anchor on board his boat, and you will never come to a resting-place. Over with your faith into the great deeps of eternal love and power, and trust in the infinitely faithful One. Then shall you be glad because your heart is quiet. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Whosoever*:—Dr. Bonar, of Scotland, tells a story of a lady getting into conversation with a workman, and, finding he was a happy Christian, "How long have you been thus rejoicing?" she asked. "Six months ago," he said, "I heard an address from the words, 'Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' I could not take it to myself, then," he said, "but when I went home that night I dreamt that 'whosoever' meant me. I got out of bed, and got the Bible to see the word, and there it was, 'whosoever.'" "But you knew it was in the Bible, didn't you?" "Yes, but I wanted to see it with my own eyes, and I've been resting on it ever since." *Whosoever*:—"Years ago a young woman married, contrary to the advice of her friends, an ungodly man. She was not long in finding out that she was unequally yoked, and much misery followed. Her husband's mother had given him a Bible, which was put away in a napkin and never looked at. Ten years later sickness overtook him, and the end was evidently fast approaching. One day when his wife had gone into the harvest field, and he was sitting alone in the house, the thought came to him, 'What a fool I've been! Here my life is nearly gone, and I've lived it without God and without hope.' Shortly afterwards his little boy came home from school, and the father sent the lad to look for the Bible. The boy brought it down and read part of John iii. to his father, and managed to read the little words, but when he came to the longer word 'whosoever,' in verse 16., he stumbled at it, and said, 'I can't read that; I don't know what it spells.' 'Why, boy,' said the father, 'you should know that word, because all may turn upon its meaning.' So the boy ran out to ask a traveller who happened to be passing what it meant, while the father sat at the open window. The traveller answered to the boy's inquiry, 'The word who-so-ever means anybody and everybody.' The words fell on the ear of the listening father, and he said to himself, 'Anybody, everybody. Why that includes me.' It was the very message he needed. He left his burden of sin with the great sin-bearer, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus." *Heaven is everlasting*:—"What is wanting here?" said a courtier to his sovereign, with whom he was riding, amid the acclamations and splendour of a triumphal procession. "Continuance," replied the monarch. "So say I," adds Mr. James. "Tell me, if you will, of your youth, your health, the buoyancy of your spirits, your happy connections, your gay parties, your elegant pleasures, your fair prospects, and then ask me what is wanting. I reply, 'Continuance.' A single day may spoil everything; before to-morrow's sun shall rise you may be attacked by disease and death." (*Biblical Museum.*) *Looking and finding rest*:—"At last one snowy day, it snowed so much that I could not go to the place I had determined upon, and I was obliged to stop on the road; I found rather an obscure street, and turned down a court, and there was a little chapel. It was the Primitive Methodist Chapel. I had heard of these people from many, and how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they made my head ache ever so much I did not care. So, sitting down, the service went on, but no minister came (the snowstorm made him late). At last a very thin-looking man came into the pulpit, opened his Bible, and read these words, 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' Just setting his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, 'Young man, you are in trouble.' Well I was, sure enough. Says he, 'You will never get out of it till you look to Christ.' And then lifting up his hands he cried out, 'Look! look! look! It is only look,' said he. I saw at once the way of salvation. Oh, how I did leap for joy at that moment! I know not what else he said, I did not take much notice of it. I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, they only looked and were healed. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard this word, 'Look!' what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh, I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away; and in heaven

I will look on still in my joy unutterable." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Looking and trusting:*—I once told my little Willie to jump off a high table, and I would catch him. But he looked down and said, "Papa, I'se afraid." I again told him I would catch him; but he looked down and said, "Papa, I'se afraid." You smile, but that is just the way with the unbeliever. He looks down, and dares not trust the Lord. You would say that would be blind faith, but I say it would not be. I told Willie to look at me and then jump, and he did it, and was delighted. He wanted to jump again, and finally his faith became so great that he would jump when I was eight or ten feet away, and cry out, "Papa, I'se a comin'." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Joy comes by looking unto Jesus:*—"Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He has given me rest by sorrow, and life by His death.' Then he stood awhile to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the Cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the water down his cheeks. Now as he stood looking and weeping, behold three shining ones came to him, and saluted him with 'Peace be to thee;' so the first said to him, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee;' the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third also set a mark on his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal on it, which he bid him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the celestial gate; so they went their way." (*Pilgrim's Progress.*) *Looking brings life:*—If we look upon Christ with the eye though of a weak faith, we shall be saved. Dr. Cneciger when he lay a-dying cried out, "Credo languida fide, sed tamen fide." I believe with a weak faith, but with a faith such as it is. (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 16. **God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.**—*The gospel in brief:*—Pliny declares that Cicero once saw the Iliad of Homer written in so small a character that it could be contained in a nutshell. Peter Bales, a celebrated caligrapher, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, wrote the whole Bible so that it was shut up in a common walnut as its casket. In these days of advanced mechanism even greater marvels in miniature have been achieved, but never has so much meaning been compressed into so small a space as in that famous little word "So," in the text. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The gospel:*—The text gives a deeper insight into the Divine character than the heavens which declare God's glory and than those tender mercies of His providence which are over all His works. I. THE DIVINE LOVE. 1. Its marvellousness. The world is (1) not the wondrously perfect material universe; (2) not the world of unfallen angels; (3) not a world of creatures such as Adam was when pronounced "very good." Then had there been no wonder. But (4) the world the whole of which lieth in wickedness. 2. Its universality. (1) Salvation is as common as sunshine, yet if a man will close his eyes the sun is of no use to him. So while salvation is for all many put it away from them. (2) It was originally meant to be so. The Jews denied it because "they erred, not knowing the Scripture." The promise to Abraham and renewed to Isaac and repeated by Isaiah was a universal one. (3) Salvation extends to the most ignorant and the very worst. II. THE DIVINE GIFT. He could give nothing dearer or greater. Some may excel others in kindness; but God's love is such that in its manifestation it cannot possibly be exceeded. Christ is His unspeakable gift. He gave His Son. 1. To a humbling incarnation. 2. To a laborious servitude. 3. To an ignominious and sacrificial death. III. THE DIVINE DESIGN. 1. What God wants to do. (1) To save all men from perishing—(2) To give all everlasting life. 2. The condition upon which He will do it. Faith in His Son. (*Mortlock Daniell.*) *A triple ray of Gospel light:*—Here are three great testimonies like the three primary colours which make one white beam. I. LIGHT UPON THE CHARACTER OF GOD. 1. God loves. The Indian or Chinese will not let you say God loves. It is an impeachment of His dignity and argues need. In a profound sense, however, of yearning for protection, of appreciating the souls of men, of finding a necessity for seeing them blessed, in the sense of pity, mercy, self-effacement, God loves. Had we said this it would have been a marvellous testimony; much more so had Paul or John said it. But love on the lips of Christ has a thousandfold more meaning. 2. God loves the world, the unregenerate world, as a mother loves her wayward no less than her worthy child, though the love be broken-hearted grief. So God loves the rebellious. 3. God loves the world with a distributive affection reaching the "whosoevers." 4. God loves it with an affection so deep, self-effacing, self-sacrificing, as to give His only begotten Son. Love is ever giving, and the love of God says

not of aught it possesses that it is its own. He keeps not His child. See, then, here in the first line of the Gospel that—(1) It reveals the heart of God. (2) His habit of sacrifice. (3) His compassion for every soul. (4) His desire to save all. II. LIGHT UPON CHRIST. What a problem has Christ been! The generations have never been able to forget Him. Men have never given Him a small name. The estimates of foes have betrayed their sense of His greatness, and the adoration of friends has lost itself in the endeavour to express it. Who is He? The ages have been a wrestling Jacob whose question has been, What is Thy name? Ask Himself. 1. The only begotten Son of God. The Son is of the nature of the Father—Divine in a sense no other being is. All the Divine fulness of the Godhead is in Him. And His life matches His name. 2. The gift of God: the property of each soul of man. There is no tie which has knit Him to our hearts that He has not knit. He takes our nature, conditions, duties, temptations, sorrows, curse, death. Ours—(1) By evident gift. (2) By obvious sympathies. (3) Ours so that all He has and is, the merits of His life, the atonement of His death, is ours. 3. The Saviour. Only Christ has borne this great name. Mohammed is prophet; Buddha is teacher only; Jesus is Saviour. A name (1) written on the consciousness of every redeemed soul, and (2) writ large in history. III. LIGHT ON MAN. Low views of God go together with low views of man. You cannot lose your faith in God without losing your faith in man. Here we see—1. God loves each man, therefore each man is lovable; no heart without a beauty in it that charms the eye of God; no life without some possibility of glory in it which attracts His love. 2. We are capable of faith. There is a Divine dignity in man which lets him lift himself up to God and entrust himself into His arms, and put himself wholly under His guidance and in His power. 3. We are capable of everlasting life. Philosophy as we know it today is a theory of the graveyard only. If we cast away the Lord of life we have to believe in a destiny that is only a tomb. Christ has come that we might have everlasting life. (*R. Glover.*) *The love of God:*—I. THE FOUNTAIN OF GRACE IN GOD'S UNSPEAKABLE LOVE. 1. The object. The world: man in his corrupt and miserable state (John v. 19). 2. The act. The love of God is—(1) The love of benevolence (Titus iii. 4). (2) Of complacency (Psa. xi. 7; John xvi. 27). 3. The degree—"So." We are not told how much. It is to be conceived rather than spoken of; admired rather than conceived. Observe from all this—1. That love is at the bottom of all. We may give a reason for other things, but not for this love (Deut. vii. 7, 8; Matt. xi. 26). 2. Love is visible in the progress and perfection of our salvation in Christ (Rom. v. 8). Light is not more conspicuous in the sun. 3. If there were any other cause it must be either (1) in the merit of Christ; but this was the manifestation not the cause of God's love (1 John iii. 16), or (2) in our worthiness; but this cannot be (1 John iv. 10; Col. i. 24). The uses of all this. 1. To confute all misapprehensions of God. Satan tempts us to view God as unlovely or to entertain unworthy thoughts of His mercy. But this shows us that He is fuller of love than the sea is of water. 2. To quicken our admiration of the love of God in Christ. Three things commend any favour done us. (1) The good will of the giver. (2) The greatness of the gift. (3) The unworthiness of the recipient. All concur here. 3. To exhort us—(1) To improve this love. It is an invitation to seek after God. (2) To answer it with a corresponding love. (3) As love was at the bottom of all grace, so let it be of all duty. II. THE WAY GOD TOOK TO EXPRESS HIS LOVE. There is a twofold giving of Christ. 1. For us (Rom. viii. 32). This mightily bespeaks God's love and care for our salvation. In creation God made us after His own image; in redemption Christ was made after ours. This was the most convenient way to bring about His purposes of grace—(1) That our faith might be more certain. (*a*) By His humanity He taught men by doctrine and example. (*b*) By His dying He satisfied the justice of God, and so made a way for the course of His mercy to us (Rom. iii. 25, 26). (*c*) By His resurrection, which was a visible satisfaction to the world that His sacrifice was accepted (Rom. iv. 25). (*d*) By His ascension the truth of eternal life was more confirmed. (2) That our hope might be confirmed, being built upon Christ's example and promises (1 Pet. i. 3; 1 John ii. 25, xii. 26). (3) That our love to God may be more fervent. (4) That our obedience may be more ready (Heb. v. 8, 9). 2. To us. (1) Without Christ there is no recovery of what we lost, viz., (*a*) The image of God. This is restored by Christ, who is the pattern (2 Cor. iii. 18) and author (Titus iii. 5, 6). Till we are in Him we have not this great benefit (2 Cor. v. 17). (*b*) The favour of God which Christ died to recover (2 Cor. v. 17). (*c*) Fellowship with God (Gen. iii. 24; *cf.* Eph. iii. 12; Heb. iv. 16). (2) Without Christ there is no removal of our misery—the death and curse

involved in sin. Christ finds us where Adam left us (John iii. 18). (3) Without Christ there is no obtaining our proper happiness. Man was made for God, and cannot be happy without Him (John xiv. 6; 1 John v. 11). The use of all this is—1. To confute the world's opinion who measure God's love by outward things. 2. To excite us to bless God for Jesus Christ (Rom. vii. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 57). III. THE END OF THIS LOVE. Notice—1. The connection of our duty and privilege. We believe: God gives. 2. The universality of the proposal. 3. The condition. 4. The benefits negatively and positively considered. (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *The love of God:*—What subject can be so interesting as this? The gospel in general is a record of the love of God, but here the only begotten Son from the bosom of the Father gives us an epitome of the whole. I. ITS OBJECT. If God so loved the world, then—1. He loved those who deserved no such love. 2. He loved those who could do nothing to purchase or to procure it. 3. He loved those by whom it was unsolicited and undesired. 4. He must manifest it in a way worthy of Himself. (1) Was such a love verbal? There is a great deal of such which says, "Be ye warmed," &c. Was it sentimental? There are a good many so exquisite in their sensibilities as not to be able to endure a case of woe. Had God's love been such we had never been redeemed. (2) God's love was practical, bountiful, efficient. II. ITS MANNER. He loved in a way worthy of Himself, and bestowed a gift which proved its greatness. 1. The supreme dignity and worth of the gift—"His Son" in a sense in which no other being is. Angels are sons because God has created them; Christians because God has adopted them. But Christ is God's Son by eternal generation; Son in such a sense that He can say of the Father, "I and My Father are one," and that the Father can say of Him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." 2. The relation in which the gift stood to the Giver. He was one in whom the Father delighted, not as in a creature with a limited affection, but with a boundless complacency. 3. Does not this teach us that a less valuable gift could not expiate human crime, and that no other price could have been accepted. Had Christ's teaching, example, &c., been sufficient His blood would not have been shed. But "without shedding of blood is no remission." 4. The only begotten Son so loved the world that He gave Himself. The allegation that if Christ suffered under compulsion it were unjust is true. But Christ was Divine, and therefore independent, and consequently cannot be compelled to suffer. Hence He says, "I delight to do Thy will." "No man taketh My life from Me." III. ITS END. It was glorious and justified the means—the salvation of the world. But this great benefit is not dispensed indiscriminately. There must be a cordial acceptance of God's plan. Two ideas: 1. That of credence. Jesus must be believed to be what the record declares Him to be. 2. But such credence of this testimony that it is accepted by us, and that there is a personal reliance on Christ for salvation. It is with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. 3. Nor is this one act merely; it is an act repeated till a habit is formed, a habit which gives a distinctive denomination to the person—"believer." 4. This salvation through faith is negative and positive. In conclusion: 1. "God *so* loved the world." Then (1) He has so loved mankind as He has not loved other orders of creatures. (2) He has carried this attribute in this manifestation to its utmost intensity. This cannot be said of His wisdom or His power. (3) It was so vast, amazing, rich as to pay down a price that defies all the powers of human or angelic calculation. 2. Has God so loved the world as to *give*, &c.? Then—(1) Let us cherish views of the Divine character worthy of Him whose we are and whom we serve. (2) How vital to salvation is faith! (3) Have we the love of God? (4) We ought to love one another. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *God's love and its gift:*—I. THE LOVE OF GOD. 1. If God so loved this guilty world, then what an unplumbed depth of grace must have been in His heart! For the object of His love is not the world in its first condition when He pronounced it "very good," but the world ruined by sin and condemned for apostasy. There would have been no wonder had the world been drowned. Yet without any change in our claims or character He loved us. And this love is not a mere relenting which might lead to a respite, or simple regret which might end in a sigh. There is no merit in loving what is lovely. There is nothing about man but his misery to attract the Divine attachment. Man's sin is not his misfortune, but his fault. And the marvel is there is nothing God hates so much as sin, and yet no one He loved so much as the sinner. 2. If God so loved this little world, then surely His love is disinterested. This orb is truly a "little one," yet it has called out emotions which mightier spheres had failed to elicit. 3. If God loved this fallen world and

not the world of fallen angels His love must be sovereign. "Be not high minded, but fear." God spared not the angels that sinned, and if thou art spared thou hast no reason to boast. 4. The fervour and mightiness of this love arrest our attention—"so." II. THE GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE. We estimate the value of a gift by various criteria. 1. The resources of the giver. Our Lord declared that the poor widow gave truly more than the wealthy worshippers. 2. The motives of the giver. One may heap favours on a fallen foe to wound his pride. 3. The manner. If it be withheld until wrung out, or if it be offered in a surly spirit, it sinks at once in importance below the lesser boon offered in frank and spontaneous sympathy. 4. The condition of the recipient—whether rich or needy, and in what degree of need, and the extent to which the gift is adapted to him. Now let the love of God be tested by these criteria. 1. The resources of the Giver are infinite; but in the donation of Christ you see the limits of possibility. If Christ be God what gift superior can be presented? or if He be the Son of God what richer love could be exhibited? 2. God's motives were perfectly unselfish. 3. His gift is the only one that could have profited us. 4. What adaptation there is in it to man's dire need! III. THE DESIGN OF GOD'S LOVE. 1. To rescue man from perishing. 2. To confer upon man the boon of everlasting life. 3. To do this for all who believe: (1) of every character; (2) country; (3) rank; (4) age. (*J. Eadie, D.D.*) *The love of God:*—I. THE OBJECT OF THIS LOVE. The world—not a part of it. The same reasons upon which His love of individuals is justified will justify His love to all. II. ITS NATURE. 1. Negatively. (1) Not a delight in the character of men. For an infinite being to sympathize with wicked natures He must be infinitely wicked. (2) Not a mere emotion, for emotions do not influence the life without the will. (3) Not fondness for particular persons. There was nothing in any man to warrant this fondness. (4) Not an involuntary love as is manifest in what it did. (5) Not an unreasonable state of mind which so often gives rise to a false affection. 2. Positively. (1) It was the only kind of love that could have been important to man. (2) It was a reasonable affection. (3) It was good-will or benevolence. (4) It was an unselfish kind of love. (5) God did the good for the sake of the intrinsic and infinite value of the soul. Men had no claim upon Him, but there were infinite reasons why He should not destroy them. (6) It was disinterested. (7) It was a love of amazing strength. Here was a world of enemies at war with Him, yet He spared not His own Son. (8) It was not for a single Christian as such, but for a world of sinners. (9) It was forbearing. (10) It was universal. (11) It was holy. III. THE REASON FOR THIS WONDERFUL MEASURE OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT. Mankind had resisted this government. If God had seemed to connive at this, all other beings might have denied the justice of the law and disobeyed it also. What must be done? God's relation to the universe demanded of Him either to execute the law or to make demonstration of His estimation of the law. It is easy to see that the honour of the law might be fully sustained by God Himself if He should show before the whole universe His approbation of the law. If God would take upon Himself human nature, and in this nature would stand right out before the universe, and obey the law and suffer its penalty, the law would be perfectly honoured. This was what was done in Christ. (*Prof. Finney.*) *The love of God:*—I. HOW WAS JESUS GIVEN BY THE FATHER? 1. By His designation and appointment unto death (Acts ii. 23; Isa. xlii. 1). 2. In parting with Him and setting Him at some distance from Himself for a time (John xvi. 28; Psa. xxii. 1, 2). 3. In delivering Him into the hands of justice to be punished (Rom. viii. 32). 4. In the application of Him with all the purchases of His blood, and settling all this upon us as an inheritance (John vi. 32, 33; John iv. 10). II. HOW THIS GIFT WAS THE HIGHEST, FULLEST MANIFESTATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD THAT EVER THE WORLD SAW. This will be evidenced if you consider—1. How near and dear Christ was to the Father (Col. i. 13). 2. To what He gave Him (Luke xxii. 22). 3. That in giving Christ He gave the richest jewel in His cabinet. 4. On whom the gift was bestowed. (1) Not on angels; not on human friends, but (3) upon enemies (Rom. v. 8–10). 5. The freeness of the gift (1 John iv. 19). Corollaries. 1. The exceeding preciousness of souls (1 Pet. i. 18; Matt. xvi. 26). 2. Those for whom God gave His own Son may warrantably expect any other mercy from Him (Rom. viii. 32; 1 Cor. iii. 20, 21). (1) No other mercy can be so dear to God as Jesus is. (2) As Jesus was nearer the heart of God than all, so Jesus is in Himself much more excellent than all of them (Rom. ix. 5). (3) There is no other mercy you want but you are entitled to it by the gift of Christ (2 Cor. i. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 17). (4) If God has given you Christ when enemies it is not imaginable He should deny you an

inferior mercy now you are reconciled (Rom. v. 8–10). 3. If the greatest love hath been manifested in the gift of Christ, then the greatest evil and wickedness is manifested in rejecting Him (Heb. ii. 2–4). (*J. Flavel.*) *The love of God*:—I. GOD IS LOVE. 1. It is singular. He first loved. 2. It is personal. 3. It is compassionate. He pities the souls that sin has ruined. 4. It is comprehensive. It extends to all mankind. II. ITS EXPRESSION. 1. In the gift. This includes (1) the birth of Christ; (2) His matchless life and example; and (3) His sacrifice. III. ITS RESULTS. It is implied—1. That all are lost. 2. That none need perish; and 3. That whosoever believeth in Him hath everlasting life. IV. WE LIVE IN THE GLORIOUS DAY OF SALVATION! This should be the tidings of great joy to all people. The return of Christmas should revive our hope and rekindle our zeal to spend and be spent in the Master's service. (*L. O. Thompson.*) *The love of God*:—I. LOVE IN ITS GRANDEST SOURCE. 1. God can love and does love. We must beware of making God only an infinite man; yet love in Him must be the same in kind as love in us. 2. Love is more than a Divine attribute. It is as light of which all the attributes are colours. 3. How near this brings Him to our hearts. We admire other qualities; we only love the loving. 4. The Scripture represents everywhere this love as the fountain of redemption. II. LOVE IN ITS PUREST FORM. It had nothing to attract it and everything to repel it. 1. The world was perishing; it was therefore not complacent, but compassionating love. It is one thing to help the happy and prosperous and another to succour the needy and miserable. 2. The world was guilty. It is harder to love those who add unworthiness to distress. Moral excellence may attract compassion to the wretched, but moral vileness disgusts. But "God commendeth His love," &c. 3. The world was at enmity with God. That love is purest which withstands provocations and does good to the injurious. "When we were enemies we were reconciled," &c. 4. The world's misery and peril were caused by itself. It is always a sore strain on mercy when solicited for the wilful. How natural the reply: "It serves you right"! God says, "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." III. LOVE IN ITS GREATEST STRENGTH. That is a poor philanthropy which can pity without helping: but "the philanthropy of God appeared" in action. Love is as deeds, not words, desires, or feelings. 1. The love of God was practical in the most costly way. The test of love is sacrifice; the criterion of its strength is the measure of the sacrifice. The Cross was the self-denial of God. 2. Of all sacrifices the chief are those of persons. The highest sphere of value is in persons, not things, although the latter may be very precious. 3. God sacrificed the highest of all persons. IV. LOVE IN ITS LOFTIEST PURPOSE. No purpose could be greater. We know the worth of life. "All that a man hath will he give for his life." It is the condition of all else that is prized. Salvation is life, not in figure, but in fact. There is a life of the flesh, of the soul, and of the spirit. This life in all its perfection is the end of God. Beginning in the finest portion of our nature it will spread and strengthen until it possesses the whole of it. Man redeemed and renewed is to live to the utmost of his capacity of life. This life is "everlasting." Sin brought death and separated from the tree of life: Christ restored access to it. V. LOVE IN ITS WIDEST SPHERE. The "world" is not here used in a restrictive sense. It would be difficult to believe, did not facts prove it, that any could be so blinded as to make "the world" signify the Church. For the fact is, whenever the "world" is applied to a portion of mankind it always means the wicked. Wherever there is a man in the way to perish, there is the world God loved. There is nothing in the love or sacrifice of the Father and the Son to prevent the whole world being saved. God loved without limit of nation or condition. Conclusion: 1. You have here a pattern and spring of love. "Be imitators of God as dear children." "If God loved us," &c. 2. What a gospel—good news—is here! God loves you now in spite of all your sins and follies. The only title to love is to be "perishing"; the only condition of its blessings is to "believe." 3. The subject casts a shadow by its very brightness on your unbelief, state, prospects. (*A. J. Morris.*) *The love of God*:—This affectionate compassion is set forth—I. BY COMPARISON OF THE PARTIES LOVING AND LOVED. God most high and holy loved the base and wicked world. II. BY THE MEASURE OF IT. He so loved, that is, so infinitely, so transcendently, so incomprehensibly (Heb. xii. 3). Such as cannot be sufficiently expressed or conceived (1 John iii. 1). III. BY THE FRUIT OF HIS LOVE. It was no lip love, but a giving love. Yea, but some things are not worth the giving, therefore—IV. BY THE WORTHINESS OF THE GIFT—His only begotten Son. And that to stand in our stead, and to die on the cross for us (ver. 14). Yea, but though never

so excellent a gift be given, yet if it be not of use and profit to whom it is given, it doth not so testify love. Therefore—V. It is set forth by THE BENEFIT THAT COMES TO US BY IT. 1. Not perishing. 2. Having eternal life. But perhaps though this gift brings so great profit, yet they to whom it is given must take some great and extraordinary pains to get it, and then God's love is not so great. Therefore—VI. It is set forth BY THE EASINESS OF THE MEANS whereby we are possessed of the profit of this gift, "That whosoever believeth." Yet if this so worthy a gift, of such invaluable worth to the enjoyer, had been restrained to some few sorts of men, the matter had not been so much. Therefore—VII. It is set forth BY THE UNIVERSALITY, that whosoever, be he what he will, so he will but reach forth his hand to take this gift, he shall have it, and all the comfort of it. (*J. Dyke.*) *The Divine love*:—I. IN ITS SOURCE. God loved the world. 1. In its guilt, therefore His love was a love of benevolence. He could not take delight in it, but He did wish it well. 2. In its depravity. Therefore His love is self-moved—the world not as made by God, but as ruined by the devil; consequently there was nothing in it to attract the Divine love. 3. The world, not hell, consequently His love was sovereign-free as opposed to necessary. He could have loved fallen angels had such been His pleasure. But "He took not hold on angels, but the seed of Abraham." Why? "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." II. IN ITS MANIFESTATION, in—1. The birth or incarnation of Jesus Christ (1 John iv. 9). This did not engender or excite His love, it only manifested it. 2. In His death or atonement (1 John iv. 10). The Divine love is not the effect, but the cause. The gods of heathenism received but never gave sacrifices. 3. In the Person of the only begotten Son of God. III. IN ITS DESIGN. 1. It has in view the salvation of every individual. 2. It offers to every individual the supremest, most precious blessing God Himself can bestow. (1) Endless life. (2) The very life of God Himself. 3. It offers the supremest blessings on the easiest, cheapest terms. God the Father had a great deal to do, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; but man has nothing to do but to believe. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Immeasurable love*:—I. IN THE GIFT. Men who love much will give much. Little love forgets to bring water for the feet, but great love breaks its box of alabaster. Consider—1. What this gift was. The Father's other self. What more could He give? Could you fathers give your sons to die for your enemy? 2. How God gave it: not as you, to some honourable pursuit in which you would not be deprived altogether of your son's company, but as an exile to be born in a manger, to toil as a carpenter, and to die as a felon. 3. When He gave: for there is love in the time. (1) Jesus was always the gift of God. The promise was made as soon as Adam fell. Throughout the ages the Father stood to His gift. Every sacrifice was a renewal of the gift of grace. The whole system of types betokened that in the fulness of time God would give His Son. Admire the pertinacity of this love. Many a man in a moment of generous excitement can perform a supreme act of benevolence and yet could not bear to look at it calmly from year to year. (2) It includes all the ages afterwards. God still gives. II. IN THE PLAN OF SALVATION. What is it to believe in Jesus? 1. To give your firm and cordial assent to the truth of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. 2. To accept this for yourself. In Adam's sin you did not sin personally, but by committing personal transgression you laid your hand upon it and made it your own. In like manner you must accept and appropriate the atonement of Jesus. 3. Personal trust. III. IN THE PERSONS FOR WHOM THIS PLAN IS AVAILABLE. God did not so love the world that any man that does not believe in Jesus shall be saved. "Whosoever believeth." 1. From the moralist to the utterly vile; from the grey-headed sinner to the boy or maiden. 2. It encircles all degrees of faith. IV. IN THE DELIVERANCE. Whosoever believes shall not perish, though he is ready to perish. To perish is to lose all hope in Christ, all trust in God, all light in life, all peace in death, all joy. V. IN THE POSSESSION. God gives to every man that believes in Christ everlasting life. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *God's love for the world*:—I. THE DIVINE LOVE—WHAT IT IS. 1. The essence of His nature. 2. All His attributes are modifications and manifestations of His love. 3. His law, the order of creation, the arrangement of His providence are expressions of His love. 4. Love is the ground of His perfect happiness. II. THE SPECIAL FRUIT OF THE DIVINE LOVE IN THE GIFT OF CHRIST. 1. The origin of Christ's mission was the love of God. 2. God gave His Son. (1) In the councils of eternity. (2) In His birth in time. (3) In His death. 3. The relationship between the Father and the Son is the measure of the Divine love. (1) Not an exalted creature. (2) Not merely a Son. (3) Not His Son only by incarnation. (4) But His only begotten, well beloved, and everlasting Son.

III. THE RECIPIENTS OF THIS GIFT. 1. Not the "elect" world, which God loves with the love of complacency. 2. But the sinful world, which He loves with the love of compassion. IV. THE OBJECT CONTEMPLATED IN THE BESTOWAL OF THIS GIFT. 1. To prevent dreadful evil. 2. To bestow unspeakable good. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *God's love to the world*:—This verse is one of the gems of the Bible, a star of the first magnitude. Observe three things. I. HOW GOD IS AFFECTED TOWARDS THE COSMOS: He loved it. 1. Who is God? The God of the Bible. 2. What is the cosmos? The world of human life. 3. How they stood affected. (1) Originally, in harmony. (2) Latterly, in enmity. (3) Now, through Christ, in harmony once more: without Christ, still at enmity. 3. New and Divine revelation: God is love. II. HOW GOD MANIFESTED THIS AFFECTION. 1. What He gave—His Son. (1) Only begotten. (2) Well beloved. 2. How He gave. (1) Lovingly. (2) Freely. (3) Wholly. III. FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS THIS AFFECTION MANIFESTED. 1. Negatively: that man might not loose himself utterly from God, duty, happiness. Thus was the pity of God manifested. 2. Positively: that man may have life, age during life. (*Bible Notes and Queries.*) *The love of God in the gift of a Saviour*:—These words express the substance of the gospel. No speaker ever had the power of condensing great principles into so narrow a compass as the Lord Jesus. I. THE PLAN OF SALVATION ORIGINATED IN THE LOVE OF GOD. 1. The idea that God is loving has been doubted or denied. (1) By those who contend that the world ought to have been made happy and pure. To them the fact that He provides remedies is no proof of His goodness. (2) By those who suppose that the Bible represents God as originally a stern and inexorable Being placated by Christ, and that now He is only mild and benignant to a few. 2. The text teaches that God was originally disposed to show mercy. (1) No change has been wrought in His character by the plan of salvation. He was just as worthy of love and confidence before as after the atonement. (2) God was originally so full of mercy that He was willing to stoop to any sacrifice except that of truth and justice in order to save man. (3) The plan of salvation was not merely to save man, but to save the name, character, and government of God. This could only be done by allowing His Son to be treated as if He was a sinner, in order to treat the really guilty as if they were righteous, and so to identify the one with the other. II. THE EXPRESSION OF HIS LOVE WAS THE HIGHEST THAT IT COULD POSSIBLY BE. 1. Such a gift as that of His only begotten Son is the highest conceivable gift, and this Christ intends to convey. The Bible represents God as having the attributes of a kind and tender Father. He loves when He says He loves, and is no cold creation of the imagination. When a man bids his son go into the tented field with every prospect of his dying for the welfare of his country, it is the highest expression of his attachment for that country. 2. But no man has ever manifested such a love as God's. In a few instances a man has sacrificed his life for his friend, and not a few fathers and mothers endangered their lives for their children. But who has ever given the life of his child for an enemy? But "God commendeth," &c. (*A. Barnes, D.D.*) *Christ's mission a revelation of God's love*:—I. LOVE IN ITS HIGHEST FORM. Love is a generic term and includes a large number of specific affections. There is a love of friendship, brotherly love, parental love, conjugal love, a love of country or patriotism, and a love of God, or religion. Love is a redeeming quality among the many miseries of our fallen state. It is like the silver ray of sun-light which gleams through the dark cloud when the storm is brewing in the sky. It is like an oasis in the desert, which is a scene of beauty and a home of life amid arid plains doomed to perpetual barrenness. It is like the wood which Moses took and placed in the bitter waters of Mara. It sweetens the cup of human experience. It is the only lasting bond of human society—the only guarantee of the perpetual bliss of heaven, and the only attribute in fallen man which is made an emblem of God, "God is love." If love in human form and in a fallen world be so Divine, what must it be in God Himself? Love in man is but a ray from the sun; a drop from the ocean. II. LOVE IN ITS SUBLIMEST MANIFESTATION. The object of my text is not general, but special. It is to assure us that while the love of God may be traced in every object in nature, and read on every page of Providence, as the colours of the rainbow may be found in every ray of silvery sun-light, yet the brightest and the fullest manifestation of it is in the mission of Jesus into the world to save sinners. In considering this subject, we must carefully bear in mind that Jesus Christ was not a mere man, but God who assumed a human form and nature. Few men in the time of the Saviour's advent had any idea of the love of God. Man's true happiness must ever be found in God, and in other beings only as they are Godlike. But

to find happiness in such a god as that of which the highest conception is realized in the mythology of Greece, the idolatry of Moab, or the dogmas of the Pharisees is out of the question. Jesus, however, came to overturn these errors and fearful misrepresentations of the Deity, and save the world by proving that God was kind and loving, just and faithful, and therefore deserving of men's love and trust. It is most interesting to study the character of God according to the teaching of Jesus. He represented the Divine Being as a Father who yearned for the return of his prodigal child, welcomed him home, receiving him with open arms and open heart, bidding all his household help him to tell the world his joy, "Rejoice with me, for this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." He represented God as the Good Shepherd, who goes after the lost one until it is found, and bears it to His home upon His shoulders with rejoicing. He represented God as the Good Samaritan who saw men lying in their wounds, robbed by sin of hope and heaven, upon the point of death, and came to save them at his own expense. III. LOVE IN ITS WIDEST FIELD OF OPERATION. This widest field is the world, for "God so loved the world." It is evident that the text cannot mean merely to assert that God loved and admired the material world or the things of the world, as these need no salvation, and are not capable of being saved, and the love of God to the world, in the text, is said to have special reference to its salvation. As the pious Jew of old rambled among the ruins of his glorious temple, turning over with affection its broken columns, cherishing the very dust and stone thereof; so God in Christ, with His loving heart overflowing with sympathy and affection, seeks to gather the broken fragments of humanity together, and rebuild upon a surer basis the temple of man. As mother, sister, or wife walks in the field of blood after the day of dreadful slaughter, with tears of affection flowing from her eyes, the sigh of sorrow rising from her wounded heart and floating upwards to tell its grief to God, and with tenderness of touch turns over the forms of the dead, that she may press once more to her heart, now broken, the object of her warm affection; so God is represented as amid the carnage which sin has made of us, inspired by the love of which my text is speaking, toiling and labouring and suffering, having come to seek and to save those who were lost. "God so loved the world!" This is the source from which all our blessings flow. IV. LOVE IN ITS NOBLEST INTENTION. 1. The sad condition of those whom it proposes to affect—"should not perish." The objects of His love are perishing—perishing, not in body but in soul. 2. The glorious state to which the love of God proposes to raise all He found in this sad condition, "but have everlasting life." Life, even of a temporal character, is of so much value that men toil and labour and manifest the deepest concern, in order, not to perpetuate it, but merely to prolong it for a few years. 3. The simple way in which we may become eternally benefited by this saving work of God, "whosoever believeth in Him." What an awful curse is unbelief! 4. The impartial manner in which these blessings are offered, "whosoever." Were man to make a feast, his invitations would not be to every one, for his ability to provide would have a limit. The richest man could not make a feast for all. But God is not man that He should be deficient. (*E. Lewis, B.A.*) *God's love for a sinning world:*— I. SIN IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE THING IN THE UNIVERSE. 1. It is the violation of an infinitely important law—a law designed and adapted to secure the highest good of the universe. 2. As sin is this it cannot be treated lightly. The entire welfare of a government and its subjects turns upon obedience. 3. The law of God must not be dishonoured by anything He shall do. He must stand by it to retrieve its honour. 4. Hence the expense. Either the law must be executed at the expense of the race, or God must suffer the worse results of disrespect to His law, or a substitute be provided who shall both save the sinner and honour the law. II. HOW SHALL THE EXPENSE BE MET? Who shall head the subscription? The Father made the first donation. 1. He gave His Son to make the atonement due to law. 2. He gave His Spirit to take charge of this work. III. FOR WHOM WAS THE GREAT DONATION MADE? By the "world" cannot be meant any particular part. The Bible and the nature of the case shows that the atonement must have been made for the whole. Otherwise no man could be sure that it was made for himself. IV. WHAT PROMPTED GOD TO MAKE IT? Love. This love is—1. Not complacency, or it would have been infinitely disgraceful to Himself. 2. Not mere feeling, as in those who are carried away by strong emotion. But—3. Disinterested: for He had nothing to hope or fear; no profit to make out of the saved. 4. Zealous. 5. Most self-denying. 6. Universal because particular. God loved each, therefore all. 7. Most patient. V. THE GIFT OF GOD MUST BE RECEIVED BY FAITH. This is the only possible way.

God's government is moral because the Saviour is a moral agent. Therefore God cannot influence us unless we give Him our confidence. Lessons: 1. Sinners may place themselves beyond the reach of mercy. 2. This involves them in the greatest responsibility. 3. This responsibility can only be discharged and the sinner saved by accepting the donation of Christ. 4. Accepting that donation let us give it to others. (*C. G. Finney, D.D.*) *God's wonderful love:*—I. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Eternal: "loved." Who can tell when it began? 2. Compassionate: "the world." 3. Unspeakable: "so." II. ITS MANIFESTATION. 1. Condescending. 2. Sacrificial. 3. Exhaustive. III. ITS PURPOSE. 1. Broad: "whosoever." 2. Limited: "believeth." 3. Blessed. (1) Negative: "should not perish." (2) Positive: "have everlasting life." (*R. S. MacArthur, D.D.*) *The love of God self-originated:*—The ocean is always moving, but it is not self-moving. The cause of its movements is outside itself, in the moon, and in the wind. Did the wind and the moon let it alone, the Atlantic would for ever be a pacific ocean, quiet, restful, pellucid as an inland lake; it has no power to heave itself. But as for the shoreless sea of the Divine Love, it has the power to move itself; and it did move itself. It rolled in a grand irresistible current towards the shores of our world. Like the Divine Essence, the Divine Love possesses the power of self-determination. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *God's love for sinners:*—I remember the case of a young man who was afflicted with a frightfully loathsome disease. He had to be kept out of sight. But was he neglected? No. I need not tell you who looked after him. There was not a morning but his loving mother bathed his wounds and swathed his limbs, and not an evening that she wearied in her toil. Do you think she had not natural sensitiveness? I knew her to be as sensitive as any lady; but by so much more as she felt the loathsomeness of her work do you see the love that constantly upheld her in doing it. But oh! what is the loathsomeness of cankered wounds compared with the loathsomeness of sin to God? There is but one thing that God hates, and that is sin. Yet with all His hatred of sin how He hangs over the sinner! (*S. Coley.*) *The power of God's love:*—We often hear of counter currents, but was there ever such a counter current as is implied here! One of the most important and wonderful ocean currents is the Gulf Stream. It takes its rise in the Gulf of Mexico and sweeps across through the heart of the mighty Atlantic to the Arctic Seas; and by its strong currents, more rapid than that of the Mississippi, it engulfs every other ocean stream that comes athwart its course, making it tributary to its own grand mission of washing the shores and ameliorating the climate of the sea-bound countries of Europe. "So God loved the world." His love is a mighty stream of warm, generous commiseration sweeping with mighty force towards that moral Arctic Sea sin has made of our world. And such was the strength of the current that it swept into its own bosom the mighty stream of God's love of complacency towards His only begotten Son, so that He was borne on its bosom into this world, where, by suffering and death, He became "the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him." (*A. J. Parry.*) *The love of God:*—In human governments, justice is central, and love incidental. In the Divine government, love is the central element, and justice only incidental. God wishes to exhaust all means of kindness before His hand takes hold on justice. When the waves of penalty begin to come in in fearful tides, then He banks up against them. His goodness is the levee between justice and the sinful soul. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God is love:*—God is love, and there is a something about love which always wins love. When love puts on her own golden armour, and bears her sword bright with her own unselfishness, she goeth on conquering and to conquer. Let a man once apprehend that God is love, that this is God's very essence, and he must at once love God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A royal gift:*—Plutarch, the Greek historian, tells a story to this effect: "An ancient king once gave a present of a large sum of money to a personal friend, and was gently taken to task for his generosity. 'What!' was his astonished exclamation, 'would you not have me be liberal? Let the world know that when the king gives he gives generously, like a king.'" Upon this, he made a second present of equal value. *Faith in Christ is certain salvation:*—We lately read in the papers an illustration of the way of salvation. A man had been condemned in a Spanish court to be shot, but being an American citizen and also of English birth, the consuls of the two countries interposed, and declared that the Spanish authorities had no power to put him to death. What did they do to secure his life when their protest was not sufficient? They wrapped him up in their flags, they covered him with the Stars and Stripes and the

Union Jack, and defied the executioners. "Now fire a shot if you dare, for if you do so, you defy the nations represented by those flags, and you will bring the powers of those two great empires upon you." There stood the man, and before him the soldiery, and though a single shot might have ended his life, yet he was as invulnerable as though encased in triple steel. Even so Jesus Christ has taken my poor guilty soul ever since I believed in Him, and has wrapped around me the blood-red flag of His atoning sacrifice, and before God can destroy me or any other soul that is wrapped in the atonement, He must insult His Son and dishonour His sacrifice, and that He will never do, blessed be His name. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Believe only*:—It is said that some years ago a vessel sailing on the northern coast of the South American continent, was observed to make signals of distress. When hailed by another vessel, they reported themselves as "Dying for water!" "Dip it up then," was the response, "you are in the mouth of the Amazon river." There was fresh water all around them, they had nothing to do but to dip it up, and yet they were dying of thirst, because they thought themselves to be surrounded by the salt sea. How often are men ignorant of their mercies? How sad that they should perish for lack of knowledge! Jesus is near the seeker even when he is tossed upon oceans of doubt. The sinner has but to stoop down and drink and live. (*Ibid.*) *We must believe or perish*:—When a shipwrecked sailor, left to the mercy of the waves, has no help within reach or view but a spar or mast, how will he cling to it, how firmly he will clasp it—he will hold it as life itself. If a passing billow sweep him from it, with all his might he will make for it again, and grasp it faster than ever. To part is to perish; and so he clings—and how anxiously! So the awakened sinner feels. The ocean of wrath surrounds him; its billows and its waves go over him. Hell yawns beneath to engulf him. The vessel is an utter wreck. All its floating timbers are very rottenness. Oh, how he strains his eye searching for a mast, a plank, a spar! His eye rests on the only hope, the only rock in the wide ocean of wrath, the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus. He makes for the Saviour—he clasps Him—he cleaves to Him. Every terror of sin and of unworthiness that strives to loosen his hold only makes him grasp with more terrible and death-like tenacity, for he knows that to part company is to perish. (*R. B. Nichol.*) *The love of God is a necessity of His own nature*:—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," &c. The life and death of Christ was but the working out of the love of God. The affection and the yearning of heart towards His erring creatures was just the same in God before Christ came, that Christ showed it to be while He was on earth. It is just the same still. There is no change in God, or in His love. Man nor woman need fear disappointment there. It has been the custom of some, a custom too much prevailing, to represent God as being under no manner of obligation to do anything for His creatures after they had broken His law. The trouble with this statement is that there is a great deal of truth in it; and yet it has been made in such a manner as to give a very wrong impression. In God's own nature there is a necessity for His efforts for man's redemption. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The word "so"*:—Come, ye surveyors, bring your chains, and try to make a survey of this word "so." Nay, that is not enough. Come hither, ye that make our national surveys, and lay down charts for all nations. Come ye, who map the sea and land, and make a chart of this word "so." Nay, I must go further. Come hither, ye astronomers, that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which imagination staggers, come hither and encounter calculations worthy of all your powers! When you have measured between the horns of space, here is a task that will defy you—"God so loved the world." If you enter into that, you will know that all this love is to you—that while Jehovah loves the world, yet He loves you as much as if there were nobody else in all the world to love. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The glory of the Gospel*:—It is not like a banquet, accommodated to the tastes and wants of so many and no more. Like a masterpiece of music, its virtues are independent of numbers. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *God's mercy is free*:—Let me tell thee that the mercy of God flows freely. It wants no money and no price from thee, no fitness of frames and feelings, no preparation of good works or penitence. Free as the brook which leaps from the mountain side, at which every weary traveller may drink, so free is the mercy of God. Free as the sun that shineth, and gilds the mountain's brow, and makes glad the valleys without fee or reward, so free is the mercy of God to every needy sinner. Free as the air which belts the earth and penetrates the peasant's cottage as well as the royal palace without purchase or premium, so free is the mercy of God in Christ. It tarrieth not for thee: it cometh to thee as thou art. It way-

layeth thee in love; it meeteth thee in tenderness. Ask not how thou shalt get it. Thou needst not climb to heaven, nor descend to hell for it; the word is nigh thee; on thy lip, and in thy heart if thou believest on the Lord Jesus with thy heart, and with thy mouth makest confession of Him, thou shalt be saved. *What is it to perish:*—What is it to perish? It is to die in our sins, without bright angels to smile upon us as they wait to carry us away from earth; to die without the Saviour's glorious presence to cheer us in the valley of the shadow of death. It is to be turned away from the shut door of our Father's mercy, because, like the foolish virgins, we are not ready when the bridegroom comes. To perish is to lose the smile of God, the company of the redeemed, the society of angels, the glories of the heavenly world, and, with no ray of comfort or gleam of hope, to be driven away into outer darkness, into misery and woe, without deliverance and without end. The thought of this awful perdition made Jesus weep over Jerusalem and say, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem: thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not." (*Rev. R. Brewin.*) *Whosoever:*—"Whosoever" has a finger for babes, and an arm for old men; it has an eye for the quick, and a smile for the dull. Young men and maidens, whosoever offers its embrace to you! Good and bad, honourable or disreputable, this "whosoever" speaks to you all with equal truth! Kings and queens may find room in it; and so may thieves and beggars. Peers and paupers sit on one seat in this word. "Whosoever" has a special voice for you, my hearer! Do you answer, "But I am an oddity"? "Whosoever" includes all the oddities. I always have a warm side towards odd, eccentric, out-of-the-way people, because I am one myself, at least so I am often said to be. I am deeply thankful for this blessed text; for if I am a lot unmentioned in any other catalogue, I know that this includes me: I am beyond all question under the shade of "whosoever." No end of odd people come to the Tabernacle, or read my sermons; but they are all within the range of "whosoever." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Whosoever:*—When the great mutiny in India had been brought to a close, and peace was being made between the government and the rebels, the Queen caused a proclamation to be made throughout the rebel provinces that all who should lay down their arms, and come to certain appointed places by a fixed day, should receive forgiveness, with some exceptions. Ah! these exceptions. The poor fellows who knew they could not be forgiven, but must be put to death, never came. The love of God knows no exceptions; whosoever will may come. (*Ibid.*) *Whosoever:*—Somebody said he would rather read "Whosoever" than see his own name, because he should be afraid it might refer to some other man who might have the same name. This was well brought out in a prison the other day, when the chaplain said to me, "I want to describe a scene that occurred here some time ago. Our Commissioners went to the Governor of the State and got him to give his consent to grant pardons to five men on account of their good behaviour. The Governor said the record was to be kept secret; the men were to know nothing about it; and at the end of six months the criminals were brought out, the roll was called, and the President of the Commission came up and spoke to them; then putting his hand in his pocket he drew out the papers and said to those 1,100 convicts, 'I hold in my hand pardons for five men.' I never witnessed anything like it. Every man held his breath, and was as silent as death. Then the Commissioner went on to tell how they obtained these pardons; that it was the Governor who granted them," and the chaplain said the suspense was so great that he spoke to the Commissioner and asked him to first read out the names of those who were pardoned before he spoke further, and the first name was given out thus, "Reuben Johnson will come out and get his pardon." He held out the papers but no one came. He looked all around, expecting to see a man spring forward at once; still no one arose, and he turned to the officer of the prison and said, "Are all the convicts here?" "Yes," was the reply. "Then, Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon." The real Reuben Johnson was all this time looking around to see where Reuben was; and the chaplain beckoned to him, and he turned and looked around and behind him, thinking some other man must be meant. A second time he beckoned to Reuben, and called to him, and the second time the man looked around to see where Reuben was, until at last the chaplain said to him, "You are the man, Reuben;" and he rose up out of his seat and sank back again, thinking it could not be true. He had been there for nineteen years, having been placed there for life; and when he came up and took his pardon he could hardly believe his eyes, and he went back to his seat

and wept like a child: and then, when the convicts were marched back to their cells, Reuben had been so long in the habit of falling into line and taking the lock step with the rest that he fell into his place, and the chaplain had to say, "Reuben, come out; you are a free man." (*D. L. Moody.*) *The naturalness of God's love*:—When William Knibb had been preaching from this text in Jamaica, returning home he came up with an old black woman, and he said to her, "What do you think of the great love of God?" Simplicity is often allied to sublimity. "Think, massa!" she replied; "Me think it be just like Him." So it is. St. Peter says, "According to His abundant mercy He hath begotten us again." It is just like Him. It is as a father pitieth his children. (*S. Coley.*) *Christ not the cause but the manifestation of God's love*:—The law of gravitation existed from the foundation of the world, it daily exerted its influence, keeping the stars in their orbits, and swinging them around their respective centres. The mysterious force, however, was unknown until discovered by Sir Isaac Newton, and published in his writings. It existed from the first; only a century or two ago was it made manifest. In like manner the love of God existed from eternity, from days of old. It burnt as hot in the days of Noah and of Abraham, as on the Incarnation morn or the Atonement eve. All through the ages it governed the world with a view to its final redemption. But in the Incarnation and Propitiation was it revealed, only then did it force itself upon the obtuse vision of the world. "Ye have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from—out of—the Father, and am come into the world." Not only He came from God, but He came out of God. John the Baptist came from God. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The love of God as seen in the gift of Christ*:—A story has been often told of the fondness of parents for their children; how in a famine in the East a father and mother were reduced to absolute starvation, and the only possibility of preserving the life of the family was to sell one of the children into slavery. So they considered it. The pinch of hunger became unbearable, and their children pleading for bread tugged so painfully at their heart-strings, that they must entertain the idea of selling one to save the lives of the rest. They had four sons. Who of these should be sold? It must not be the first: how could they spare their first-born? The second was so strangely like his father that he seemed a reproduction of him, and the mother said that she would never part with him. The third was so singularly like the mother that the father said he would sooner die than that this dear boy should go into bondage; and as for the fourth, he was their Benjamin, their last, their darling, and they could not part with him. They concluded that it were better for them all to die together than willingly to part with any one of their children. Do you not sympathize with them? I see you do. Yet God so loved us that, to put it very strongly, He seemed to love us better than His only Son, and did not spare Him that He might spare us. He permitted His Son to perish from among men "that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The love of God in the gift of Christ*:—When Jesus looked at the poor widow He found a new rule of arithmetic. When she dropped in her two mites He said that she had given more than they all. What new rule was this? Many had given much, but the Lord looked at what they had left. This woman had given all. Try God by His own rule. He had but one Son—His only begotten. If He had taken every star from the sky, and manipulated those stars, and moulded them all into a gigantic body of which every star was an atom; and then if He had taken every seraph from His throne and made a mighty amalgam of all souls into one, and had put that giant mind into that gigantic body, and given that body and soul for man, it would have been as nothing to this. A word of His could have restored the dismantled heavens; but God Himself cannot make an only-begotten Son. (*S. Coley.*) *God's provision of the sacrifice*:—Transport yourselves in imagination to Athens or Rome; observe closely the images of the gods, in motley crowds on either hand of you; see the rivers of red blood flowing towards them. No marvel that "Paul's spirit was stirred within him as he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." Come with me again to Jerusalem. Behold the image of the invisible God lifted up on Calvary. Does blood flow towards it? No: blood flows from it. Here, then, we have hit upon the radical difference between paganism and Christianity. Blood to the image: that is the essence of paganism. Blood from the image: that is the essence of Christianity. The heathen gods demand a sacrifice, but never provide it; the gospel God both demands it and provides it. "He gave His only-begotten Son." (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *God's love and justice in sacrifice*:—King Zeleucus decreed that whosoever committed a particular offence should lose his eyes; and the first person found guilty was his

own son. What a company would be gathered, and what an anxious inquiry there would be! What will the king do? Will he set aside the law because the offender is royal? Amid the hush of that gathered company the officer sternly commanded to do his duty dashed out one of the prince's eyes. "Stop," said the king, "take the other from me." This was done. This will show that the love of the king was seen all the more from the justice of his administration. (*S. Coley.*) *Salvation:*—I. ITS ORIGIN IN THE LOVE OF GOD, which will appear after we consider that—1. Man by nature is in a state of degradation and spiritual death by reason of sin. 2. The essential means of salvation is the free gift of God. II. THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS LOVE. Observe—1. The gift. 2. The faithfulness of the Father in this transaction. 3. The part which the Son took in this stupendous work. 4. The necessity of this gift. III. THE MEANS BY WHICH WE BECOME PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN THIS GIFT. 1. There must be repentance. 2. There must be faith. (*J. Gaskin, M.A.*) *The cost and cheapness of salvation:*—A preacher had gone down into a coal mine during the noon-hour to tell the miners of the glad tidings of salvation. Meeting the foreman on his way back to the shaft he asked him what he thought of God's manner of saving men. "Oh, it is too cheap, I cannot believe in such a religion as that." Without an immediate reply to his remark the preacher asked, "How do you get out of this place?" "Simply by getting into the cage," was the reply. "And does it take long to get to the top?" "Oh, no; only a few seconds." "Well, that certainly is very easy and simple. But do you not need help to raise yourself?" said the preacher. "Of course not," replied the miner, "As I have said, you have nothing to do but to get into the cage." "But what about the people who sunk the shaft, and perfected all this arrangement? Was there much labour or expense about it?" "Yes, indeed; that was a laborious and expensive work. The shaft is a thousand feet deep, and it was sunk at great cost to the proprietors; but it is our way out, and without it we should never be able to get to the surface." "Just so," and when God's Word tells you that whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life, you say, "Too cheap," forgetting that God's work to bring you and others out of the pit of destruction was accomplished at a vast cost, the price being the death of His only-begotten Son. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Redemption through Christ:*—I. MEN NEED DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH. II. GOD'S LOVE IS SO GREAT AS TO PROMPT TO DELIVERANCE. III. THIS DELIVERANCE HAS BEEN WROUGHT OUT BY SELF-SACRIFICE ON THE PART OF GOD. IV. THIS DELIVERANCE IS MADE OURS BY A PERSONAL FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. (*C. D. Barrows.*) *Redemption:*—I. THE DOCTRINE. "God so loved," &c. 1. The first cause of redemption—the love of God to man. Christ died not that God might, but because He did love us. (1) This is a doctrine distinctive of the Bible. You find it nowhere else. Men talk about the mercy of God, but if we give up the ideas of God obtained from the Scriptures how do we know that He is a God of love? What is there in nature to suggest it? There we see the reign of law: sin and suffer. (2) The presence of such a truth in the Bible forms one of the most powerful vindications of its authority. If it contained nothing different from other books we might reasonably question its Divine origin. (3) But familiarity has deadened the force and beauty of this great Bible truth in those who have heard it so often. (4) Here, however, is the marvel of marvels—standing alone in the universe—that God loves a race that has defied and insulted Him. 2. The mode of human redemption. God's love could not be a powerless thing dealing in fine sentiment and words of pity. It had a great end in view which could only be secured by an unparalleled sacrifice. "He gave His only begotten Son." (1) The designation of the Redeemer is peculiar and significant. Unlike other sons, He has a position of His own, and His name is an incidental but most powerful proof of His Divinity. (2) The Redeemer was "given," not to be a mere teacher or example, but to be the propitiation for sin. 3. The extent of human redemption. It would not be easy to find language more free and comprehensive than "the world, . . . whosoever." All are not saved, but none need be unpardoned. An universal need is here universally provided for. II. THE DUTY. God has lavished the love of His heart on us and requires the trust and love of ours. Nothing can be simpler or more common than trust, the child's first lesson and act. This is illustrated in the miracles of Christ. Only believe that Jesus has the will and the power to save and your confidence will not be disappointed. 1. Faith is different from knowledge. Yet there must be some knowledge. But there may be little knowledge and strong faith, and much knowledge and no faith. There are many well-instructed people who shrink from the thought of infidelity. Yet infidelity is the want of trust in God and Christ.

Faith is the soul's own rest in Jesus as its own Redeemer. 2. The text makes no distinction in the kind or degree of faith. It is doubtless better to have a firm than a weak faith. Still, if a man have faith at all he will be saved. III. THE PROMISE. "Eternal life." 1. A present realization. 2. "More abundantly" hereafter. Of this the unbeliever is deprived in time and eternity. He that believeth not is dead already. (*J. Guiness Rogers, B.A.*) *The Christian's creed*:—I. Its first article is—GOD LOVES THE WORLD. Easy to say, impossible to realize in all its augustness. The great question is, What does God feel? Agnostics do not know whether He is force or Father. But when they cannot tell what you yearn to know Jesus comes, and there is light over all the darkness and despair of life. On any lips this would be a wonderful word, but in the lips of Christ "love" meant all that was in His own heart. Himself the embodiment of love, He lifts our eyes to heaven and says, God loves, not made, rules, judges, but loves; and not the Church, but the world, and every individual in it. Mankind is not a larger family for God to love than is yours for you. II. Its second article is—GOD HAS GIVEN US HIS SON. Love is ever giving. It gives its best. Our best earthly gifts are our friends, and God gives us the best friend. And He is ours absolutely, individually, and for ever—all He is and all He has. Value the gift which cost God so much. III. The third article is—WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN CHRIST, &c. The condition upon which we are to receive salvation is universally practicable. If there were any other it would shut some one out. All our training in this world is a training for faith. All the joys of life are joys of trust. It is not a question whether faith shall be the condition of salvation. It is a necessity in the nature of things. If you suspect any you shrink from them. Doubt is the great gulf fixed between you and God, but faith is the link which binds us to Him. All that is needed, therefore, is the entrustment of the heart to God. Conclusion: That is our creed. 1. Repent of treating it so negligently. 2. Be not ashamed of it. 3. Fear not its future. Man will want no new one until all that wakes up our need of Christ is destroyed. (*R. Glover.*) *The everlastings*:—I. The everlasting FATHER. II. The everlasting Son. III. The everlasting LOVE. IV. The everlasting LIFE. (*J. C. Jones.*) *The morality of the Evangelical faith*:—I. In these words I find my religion, theology, ethics, and politics, politics being one of the chief branches of ethics. 1. The Divine love for mankind. 2. The mission of the love of God for salvation. 3. Faith in the Son of God the condition of salvation. 4. Eternal life the gift of Divine love to all who believe in Christ. II. Evangelical Christians have claimed one of these truths as pre-eminently their own. Faith in Christ as the condition of salvation is the very heart of the Gospel. Whitefield the Calvinist and Wesley the Arminian differed on many points, but when a man asked, "What must I do to be saved?" each gave the same answer. III. Luther maintained that justification by faith was the test of a standing or a falling Church. We go further. It is as necessary to preach that men are sanctified by faith. Faith is the root of morality as well as the condition of pardon. Heb. xi., which illustrates the triumphs of faith, is an unfinished fragment. You must add to it the story of the saintliness, heroism, righteousness, and charity of sixty generations; even then it remains a fragment still. IV. To believe in Christ—what is it? Not the mere acceptance, however cordial, of the Christian creed. It is to have confidence in Christ, unreserved, unqualified, unmeasured. Whatever dignity Christ claims, faith reverently acknowledges. Whatever relations He assumes to God and to man, it concedes. Whatever authority He asserts, it submits to. When He teaches, faith admits His teaching as absolute truth. When He commands, faith accepts His precepts as the perfect law of life. When He promises, faith relies on Him to fulfil. To admit some of Christ's claims and to reject the rest; to listen to His declarations that His blood is shed for the remission of sins; to refuse to listen, or to listen incredulously, when He speaks as the moral ruler of the race, this is inconsistent with faith in Him. (*R. W. Dale, D.D.*) *The power of this gospel of love on its first proclamation:*—If we could but hear the words for the first time, and without prepossessions either of Pharisaic error or logical orthodoxy, hear them with nothing but consciousness of sin and thirst for life, before the love of God had been hardened into doctrine, and the only begotten Son has become a quarrel for the schools. "Do your gods love you?" asked a missionary of some Indians. "The gods never think of loving," was the cheerless answer. The text before us was read. "Read it again," asked the arrested pagan. "That is large light, read it again." A third time the blessed words were repeated; and with this emphatic response, "That is true, I feel it." On one occasion a missionary was dictating to a native amanuensis the transla-

tion of the First Epistle, and when he reached the passage, "Now are we the sons of God," the poor child of heathenism burst into tears, and exclaimed, "It is too much, it is too much; let me put it, Now are we permitted to kiss His feet." (*A. J. Morris.*) *God's love for man:*—The missionary Nott was once reading and explaining this passage to some awakened Tahitians. One of his auditors asked: "Is it then really true that God has so loved you and us that He gave His only begotten Son for us?" Nott stedfastly affirmed that the gospel which he was preaching was really true; upon which the Tahitian cried out: "Oh, and thou canst speak of such love without tears!"—himself weeping from shame and joy. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The love of God:*—When Bonplau the botanist climbed one of the loftiest peaks of the Andes, he found it a volcano. The rim of the crater was covered with scoriæ, and everything that looked like blasting and desolation, but just in one little crevice there was a tiny bright flower. There it grew in beauty. Like enough the seed had dropped from a bird. The shower had fallen, the sun had shone, and the flower had grown there waving in the wind amidst surrounding desolation. The flower growing there on the rim of that fire funnel is something like the grand and beautiful love of God. He has planted flowers on the rim of perdition, on the very edge of that rim. (*S. Coley.*) *Whosoever:*—When John Williams sailed in his missionary ship, he said as he touched a shore where he had never been before, where no foot of white man had ever trod, wherever he preached for the first time he had this for his text. No text could bear him beyond this. He could stand anywhere, on any shore, and cry, "God so loved the world." (*Ibid.*) *Whosoever:*—"I thank God for this word 'whosoever,'" remarked Richard Baxter, "did it read, there is mercy for Richard Baxter, I am so vile, so sinful, that I would have thought it must have meant some other Richard Baxter; but this word 'whosoever' includes the worst of all the Baxters that ever lived." *The universality of the atonement:*—Suppose a will is made by a rich man bequeathing certain property to certain unknown persons, described only by the name of "the elect." They are not described otherwise than by this term, and all agree that although the maker of the will had the individuals definitely in his mind, yet that he left no description of them, which either the persons themselves, the courts, nor any living mortal can understand. Now such a will is of necessity altogether null and void. No living man can claim under such a will, and none the better though these elect were described as residents of Oberlin. Since it does not embrace all the residents of Oberlin, and does not define which of them, all is lost. All having an equal claim and none any definite claim, none can inherit. If the atonement were made in this way, no living man would have any valid reason for believing himself one of the elect, prior to his reception of the Gospel. Hence he would have no authority to believe and receive its blessings by faith. In fact, the atonement must be wholly void—on this supposition—unless a special revelation is made to the persons for whom it is intended. (*C. G. Finney, D.D.*) *The personal appropriation of the atonement:*—During a revival season, a young man came to me in the inquiry room, and showed me a card like the following:

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT

.....

BELIEVING ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

In the blank space, the young man had written his own name in full. Said he: "My superintendent gave me this card on condition that I would write my name in the blank space. If I had known what it was, I never would have promised; for I have had no peace since that day." That night, on his knees, he found peace. Let the teacher prepare such cards, and try the plan. I have tried it with powerful effect. It makes this seem personal, and puts "me" in the place of "whosoever." (*A. F. Schauffler.*) *A mother's lesson:*—A young soldier was shot on the battle-field, and dragged by a comrade aside to die. He shut his eyes, and all his past life flashed before him. It seemed but an instant of time. He looked forward and saw eternity, like a great gulf, ready to swallow him up, with his sins as so many weights sinking him deeper and deeper. Suddenly a lesson, which his pious

mother taught him when a little boy at her knee, stood before him in shining letters. It was a lesson he heard repeated again and again and again; she was never tired of imprinting it on his memory before she died; it was her only legacy. In the gaiety of life he had forgotten it. He had lost his hold on it, but it had never quite lost its hold on him; and now, in the hour of peril, it threw out to him a rope of mercy. What was it? "God so loved the world," &c. He caught the rope; it seemed let down from heaven. "Lord, I believe," he cried; "save me, or I perish!" Till he died, a few hours after, he said little but this one prayer: "Lord, I believe; save me, or I perish!" a prayer never uttered by the penitent soul in vain. (*Clerical Anecdotes.*)

Vers. 17–19. **For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world.**—*Salvation*:—I. WHAT IT IS THAT GOD HAS ACTUALLY DONE FOR US AS FALLEN SINNERS. 1. What is done? He hath redeemed us. Fallen by sin we are all by nature children of wrath, and according to the rules of justice under condemnation. Instead of allowing righteous wrath to take its course, God has interposed in arrest of judgment; not to do an unrighteous thing, not to exercise His mercy at the expense of His justice, but to open a door for lovingkindness. The everlasting Son took into union with Himself the nature that deserved the wrath and placed Himself beneath the falling thunderbolt which would have crushed the world. This was done 1800 years ago, and nothing can be added to it or diminished from it. 2. For whom is this work done? (1) For God, in order that His love might flow out in acts of beneficence while at the same time His justice and purity might remain untainted. (2) For the world. Every sinner therefore may put in his claim. 3. Has God actually saved any one? Is redemption the same as salvation? What is salvation? (1) To have all my sins pardoned. (2) To have my soul renewed unto holiness. (3) To have my body transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorious body. (4) To reign with Christ. In this full sense none are saved. God has made provision and is acting on it, and men are being saved, but are not fully saved this side of heaven. II. WHAT IS IT THAT GOD IS NOW DOING FOR US AS FALLEN SINNERS? 1. He is giving to one sinner after another repentance and forgiveness of sins and a character unto holiness commenced and progressive. During the whole of the dispensation this is the revealed work of the Holy Spirit. 2. To separate the elect from the mass of mankind as His purchased and sanctified ones. 3. He is giving the faith which secures all this, even freedom from condemnation and acceptance in the beloved. 4. Without this faith the old condemnation remains, and a fresh condemnation is added, that following on the rejection of salvation by the only begotten Son of God. (*H. McNeile, D.D.*) *No condemnation to the believer*:—I. THE PURPOSE OF GOD in sending His Son into the world. Consider—1. What that purpose was not. To condemn the world. He might have done so. The world's iniquities had grown to a fearful height, and though for 1800 years the world has continued in rebellion, we dare not say that God sent His Son to condemn the world. 2. What that purpose was: that there should be wrought out in, and tendered to the world in, through, and by Christ, a salvation equal to the wretchedness and peril to which the whole race was exposed. Hence, then, it follows that no sinner need perish for want of a provision of God's mercy and love. II. HOW IS THAT INTENTION TO BE FULFILLED? By an act of faith. 1. What are we to believe? (1) The lost and ruined state which we are in by nature. So long as we deceive ourselves on that point, or excuse it, we hold back from the remedy. (2) Our own utter helplessness and destitution. (3) The reality of the provision of God's mercy in Christ. (4) That the provision of the Gospel is actually tendered to every one. 2. How are we to believe? (1) Not in that speculative way which regards the truth of God as an abstract matter. (2) But in that practical and personal way which accepts this salvation for one's self. (3) It is to lay our hand on the head of the Great Sacrifice which bears away the sin of the world. Conclusion: 1. It was through believing a lie that man fell; it is by believing the truth that he is saved. 2. Deem not sin a light matter. 3. Accept God's provision of grace—(1) thankfully; (2) now. (*G. Fisk, LL.B.*) *Salvation and condemnation*:—I. SALVATION IS BY THE GIFT OF CHRIST. 1. Christ came not to condemn the world. (1) Condemnation might have been expected—(*a*) From the condition of the world, without desire or effort for deliverance and rebellious against God. (*b*) From the errands of other messengers sent in vengeance. (*c*) From God's foreknowledge of the way in which Christ would be received. (2) But God's ways are not ours. Had God's design been no more than

not to condemn, but merely to neutralize or stay approaching ruin, Christ's mission would have been unspeakably precious. (3) There are those who limit the effect of Christ's mission to a period of undeserved forbearance, and are blindly satisfied with a temporary, unenduring good. 2. Christ came that the world through Him might be saved. The nature of this salvation is—(1) Atonement for sin. (2) The bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. (3) Exaltation to glory. II. THE WAY IN WHICH MEN BECOME PARTAKERS OF THIS SALVATION. 1. Some men regard the world as saved, contrary to Scripture and universal experience. 2. Others regard God as disappointed in His great design. Not so. God has provided the salvation; man must voluntarily partake of it. How? 1. The glory must be given to God because—(1) The remote and originating cause is the Father's love. (2) The meritorious cause, Christ's redeeming work. (3) The energetic agency, the Holy Spirit. Thus salvation is through the concurrence and co-operation of the Trinity. 2. But what is the instrumental cause? Faith. (1) Had God proposed that for righteous deeds He would save us, our case had been hopeless. (2) So it would had He arranged to place us again under the covenant of works, promising that by the deeds of the law performed in our own strength we should inherit heaven. (3) Equally so had our salvation been conditioned by a combination of Christ's righteousness and our own. (4) Or by our originating holy emotions of repentance and love. (5) Knowing all this, God requires only that we should believe on His Son. This faith is His gift, the medium of Divine life and its active principle when communicated, involving self-renunciation, rational dependence on God, and trust in His grace in Christ. III. THE REASON WHY MEN PERISH THOUGH SALVATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED. 1. Not because God passes them by or excludes them from life. 2. Not because there is no merit for them in Christ's mediation. 3. Not because the Holy Spirit might have breathed upon them, but has not. But—4. Because the sinner will not believe. In this duty he fails. (1) Under the sound of the gospel; (2) Under the strivings of the Spirit; (3) And though Christ stretches forth His hand all the day long. 5. Consequently he is condemned already by a double condemnation—(1) Through his relations and adherence to the first man. (2) Because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The fundamental facts of Evangelism*:—Christianity is built on facts; those facts are connected with the history of a Person; that Person is the Son of God. Three such facts are here. I. GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD. 1. This fact implies—(1) Separateness of existence. (2) Subordination of existence. These no philosophy has yet reconciled to the doctrine of Divine Unity. 2. This is the greatest fact in the history of the world, perhaps of the universe. It constitutes the great epoch in the annals of the race. II. God sent His Son into the world NOT TO CONDEMN IT. This is not what might have been expected. 1. Because of the wickedness of the world: full of ingratitude, idolatry, corruption, and rebellion. 2. Because of all the treatment His other messengers had received. The world had rejected, persecuted, murdered His prophets. Might it not then be expected that God's Son would come on a mission of judgment. III. God sent His Son into the world TO SAVE IT. What is salvation? Not physical, intellectual, or local change, but a restoration in the soul of what has been lost through sin. 1. Supreme love to God—the life of the soul. 2. Constant fellowship with the great Father—the happiness of the soul. 3. Useful service in the universe—the mission of the soul. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ the Saviour of even the worst of sinners*:—He does not exclude the greatest sinners when they come to Him, but on the contrary He gives them His first attention, as a surgeon who has been called to a field of battle to dress the wounded always first goes to the most desperate cases. (*Nauden.*) *Christ the Saviour of the world*:—In September, 1878, a dreadful accident happened on the Thames, when an excursion steamer, named the *Princess Alice* was cut down by the *Bywell Castle*, an outward bound merchant steamship. More than seven hundred persons that day found a watery grave. Among the brave efforts that were made on that occasion to save the drowning people, one of the noblest was made by a man who was in charge of a small boat at some distance from the scene of the collision. Rowing with all his might into the midst of the struggling passengers, he pulled several of them one after another into his little boat, which was now full and in danger of sinking, and prepared to row away. But when he saw the white, upturned faces of many others, and heard their piteous cries, "Oh, save me, sir!" "Don't leave me, sir!" it is said that in agony he threw up his arms and cried, "O God, that I had a bigger boat! O God, that I had a bigger boat!" His heart was large enough to save all who were perishing, but his boat was too small; his

power was limited. It is not so with Christ. He is the Life-boat of perishing humanity, and in Him there is room for the whole race, for "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (*R. Brewin.*) *The mission of Christ is plain*:—You can understand when the Prince of Wales went to America, all the country was excited, and it was said he had come for this purpose and that purpose. But when Christ comes He can tell us what He comes for. When the Prince of Heaven comes into this world He can tell us the nature of His mission. For "the Son of Man comes to seek and to save that which was lost." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Salvation is for all who need it*:—I remember when 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. (*T. De W. Talmage, D.D.*) *The gospel the most glorious tidings*:—When the Romans, by conquest, might have given law to the Grecians at Corinth, in the solemn time of the Isthmian games, their general, by a herald, unexpectedly proclaimed freedom to all the cities of Greece; the proclamation at first did so amaze the Grecians, that they did not believe it to be true. But when it was proclaimed the second time, they gave such a shout that the very birds flying in the air were astonished therewith, and fell dead to the ground. But if you will have a better story, take that of the Jews, who, when at first they heard of Cyrus' proclamation, and that the Lord thereby had turned the captivity of Sion, they confess that, at the first hearing of it, they were like men that dreamed; but afterwards their mouths were filled with laughter and their tongues with singing. Now, the peace that the Grecians and the Jews had was but the peace of a people or a nation, and a great blessing of God, too. But how much more reason is there that our affections should be strained to the highest pitch of joy and thanks, when we hear of the proclamation of the peace of conscience? that peace which is not of our bodies but of our souls—not of our earthly but of our heavenly estate? a peace that shall be begun here—that shall endure for ever hereafter; such a peace as will make God at peace with us, reconcile us to ourselves, and make us at concord with all the world. (*J. Spencer.*) **He that believeth on Him is not condemned.**—*Preliminary judgments*:—I. THE STARTLING PHENOMENON. The judicial separation of mankind into two classes, the believing and the unbelieving, the workers of evil and doers of good (vers. 20–21). 1. When it occurred. At the appearing of Christ (ver. 19). 2. How it was effected. By the appearing of Christ, the light, the effects of which were—(1) Illumination, setting in bold relief what was previously obscure, viz., that there are only two varieties of character, the good and the bad (Matt. iv. 1, 2). (2) Separation. Not by the direct action of Christ, but through the indirect action of the truth (Job xxiv. 13). (3) Arbitration. The man who comes to the light judges himself and separates himself from the darkness, declaring himself to be antagonistic to it. So with the man who turns from the light (Acts xiii. 46). Thus by coming into the world Christ initiates a judicial process which will culminate in the great day (Mal. iii. 18; Matt. xxv. 26). II. THE SOLEMN EXPLANATION. 1. Of the behaviour of those who come not to the light. (1) They love darkness not more than light, as though there lingered some appreciation, but rather than the light which they do not love at all (ver. 20), because it is congenial to the works in which they delight (Eph. v. 11; Prov. ii. 13; Psa. lxxxii. 5); to themselves as children of darkness. (2) They hate the light as well as love the darkness; for prophesying evil (2 Chron. xviii. 7); for suggesting good (chap. xiii. 26, 27). Hence they shun the light (Job xxiv. 14–16) like Lady Macbeth (act. i. scene 5). 2. Of the conduct of those who came to the light. (1) They have a natural affinity for it (chap. xviii. 37). (2) They are not afraid of the light (Eph. v. 8–13). Lessons—1. If a sinner is condemned, himself only, and neither God nor Christ, is to blame. 2. If a sinner refuses to believe the gospel, he must share in the judgment which will ultimately fall upon the world. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The essence of the gospel*:—When our Lord shall come a second time, before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the

goats. That will not be the first time that He has acted as a separator. It is always so whenever He comes. Now He finds out His chosen and calls them apart, and on the other hand unbelievers are discovered. Between the two is a deep gulf. Other distinctions, riches and poverty, &c., sink into insignificance. I. CONSIDER TO WHICH OF THE CLASSES WE BELONG. 1. What is meant by believing in Christ, for such is the preposition here. (1) Some believe concerning Him that He is the Messiah, the Saviour of men. But orthodoxy is not synonymous with justification. (2) It is a step further when we believe Him. Believing Him to be God's Christ, it follows as a matter of course that we accept His word as true; but this is not a state of salvation. (3) Another form of faith is believing on Him, to lean upon Him, and take Him as the foundation of our hope. A form of saving faith. (4) But believing in is something more. If I thoroughly believe in an advocate, I trust my case to him, and thus believe on him; but I also follow his rules to the letter, being fully convinced that they will lead to a right issue. 2. The connection of the text will help us to form a judgment as to whether we are believers in Jesus. (1) Have you realized by a true exercise of faith verses 13 and 15? (2) Do you, as having trusted in Jesus, come to the light (ver 21)? Is it your desire to know God's truth, God's will, God's law? 3. Are we unbelievers? (1) Instead of looking to the brazen serpent, are you seeking another remedy? (2) Do you shut your eyes to the one only light? II. CONSIDER THE CONDITION OF THE BELIEVER. He is not condemned, because he does not offer himself for judgment. He says, "I plead guilty." Having done this, the believer sees the sentence laid upon the surety in whom he believes. This brings him peace. Then no more condemned, he seeks the light, and desires more and more to work in it. III. CONSIDER THE CONDITION OF THE UNBELIEVER. 1. He offers himself for judgment. He has not believed in the Saviour, and confesses, "I do not require Him. I am willing to stand my trial." If you ask for judgment you shall have it. God declares you to be condemned already. 2. He gives personal evidence to his own condemnation. He rejects the testimony of God concerning Christ. Is not that enough to condemn him? 3. He rejects a most exalted person. When men rejected Moses they perished without mercy; but when a man despises the Only begotten, we need call no witnesses against him. 4. He gives evidence against himself, for every man who rejects the true light always goes on to reject other forms of light, God's Word and Spirit and his own conscience. 5. Consider the condemnation already pronounced. (1) It is no matter of form. (2) God has power at any moment to carry it into effect. (3) There is no promise that He will not execute it this very day. 6. Consider the only way of escape—immediate faith. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith:* I. THE OBJECT OF FAITH. To what faith looks. 1. How many make a mistake about this and think they are to believe in God the Father! But we come to this as a result of believing in God the Son. 2. Others look to the work of the Holy Ghost; but this is the effect of faith in Christ. 3. Christ is the sole object of the sinner's faith. (1) As God. (2) In His perfect righteousness. (3) As dying and dead. (4) As risen. (5) As your substitute. II. THE REASON OF FAITH. Why and whence. 1. To his own experience faith comes as a sense of the need of a Saviour. 2. Really and originally it is the gift of God. The Spirit comes and shuts men up under the law to a conviction that unless they come to Christ they must perish. III. THE GROUND OF FAITH. What it means when it comes. Not that a man is a sensible sinner, or an awakened sinner, or a penitent sinner, but simply because he is a sinner. IV. THE WARRANT OF FAITH. Why a man dares to trust in Christ. Just because Christ has bidden him. Faith is a duty as well as a privilege. IV. THE RESULT OF FAITH. How it speeds when it comes to Christ. "He that believeth is not condemned." (*Ibid.*) *No condemnation:*—I. THE SATISFACTORY DECLARATION. A verdict of "not guilty" amounts to an acquittal, so the sentence of "not condemned" implies the justification of the sinner. This is—1. A. present justification. Faith does not produce this fruit by and by, but now. 2. A continual justification. 3. A complete justification, not half condemned and half accepted. 4. An effectual justification. II. CORRECT SOME MISAPPREHENSIONS BY WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE CAST DOWN. 1. Some think they shall never sin again. 2. Others that they will have no more conflicts. 3. Others that they will be free from trials. 4. Others that the Father's countenance will always be clear. None of these are guaranteed. III. WHAT THE TEXT INCLUDES—the believer. IV. WHAT THE TEXT EXCLUDES—the unbeliever. (*Ibid.*) *Regeneration—faith the instrumental cause:*—I. THE ESSENTIALNESS OF FAITH. 1. Affirmatively. Our Lord mentions only the relation of faith to the

legal aspect of salvation. This was enough, for he who apprehends believingly the work of Christ as the ground of his justification will not fail to experience it as a regenerative power. Many stumble through the simplicity of faith. They suppose that something difficult is required. But faith is identical with that implicit unquestioning confidence a person ordinarily exercises almost unconsciously in relation to almost everything he appropriates to his use: the food he eats, the garment he wears, the medicine he takes, the bridge he crosses, the train by which he travels. 2. Negatively. Without faith salvation is impossible. It is not that the unbeliever shall be condemned, he is actually so. It is a solemn truth that, notwithstanding all that Christ has done for us, it will avail us nothing without personal faith, for God cannot save men without their will. II. ITS NEGLECT BY SOME. The light here referred to is Christ (chap. i. 9, viii. 12). 1. Men are voluntarily in the state indicated by darkness. Men are not unbelievers by compulsion. They love darkness. What a perversion of natural taste and judgment would such a physical predilection imply! "Truly the light is sweet," &c. Yet a course of conduct that would be deemed the grossest folly physically is followed by thousands spiritually. 2. This is not an absolute preference. A degree of love for the light is implied. Many who remain in darkness cannot help feeling a measure of admiration for the light in which they refuse to walk: they attend the ministry of it, grant their passive assent to it, and yet remain in the darkness of unbelief. III. THE CAUSE OF THE NEGLECT: Love of sin. 1. How explicitly our Lord brings the responsibility of men's perdition home to themselves. 2. How sad that condemnation should be the portion of those who occupy a position so near salvation. Bunyan says there is a way to hell from the very gate of heaven. (*A. J. Parry.*)

Ver. 18. **He that believeth on Him is not condemned.**—*A real acquittal*:—In the reign of George III. the son of a member of this Church lay under sentence of death for forgery. Dr. Rippon, after incredible exertions, obtained a promise that this sentence should be remitted. By a singular occurrence the present senior deacon learned that the reprieve had not been received, and the unhappy prisoner would have been executed had not Dr. Rippon gone post-haste to Windsor, obtained an interview with the king in his bed-chamber, and received from that monarch's own hand a copy of that reprieve, which had been negligently put aside by a thoughtless officer. "I charge you, doctor," said His Highness, "to make good speed." "Trust me, sire, for that," said he; and he returned to London only just in time, for the prisoner was being marched, with many others, to the scaffold. That pardon might have been given, and yet the man might have been executed. But, blessed be God, our non-condemnation is an effectual thing. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith must rest on Christ*:—Not long ago a man said to me, "I cannot believe." "Whom?" I asked. He stammered, and again said, "I cannot believe." I said, "Whom?" "Well," he said, "I can't believe." "Whom?" I asked again. At last he said, "I cannot believe myself." "Well, you don't need to. You do not need to put any confidence in yourself. The less you believe in yourself the better." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Believing the one step into the kingdom of God*:—I am told that at Rome, if you go up a few steps on your hands and knees, that is nine years out of purgatory. If you take one step now you are out of purgatory for time and eternity. You used to have two steps into glory—out of self into Christ, out of Christ into glory. But there is a shorter way now with only one step—out of self into glory, and you are saved. May God help you to take the step now! Flee, my friends, to-night to Calvary, and get under the shadow of the cross! (*Ibid.*) *The doom of unbelievers*:—I recollect how those words "condemned already" rang in my ears, as I should think the bells of St. Sepulchre's used to sound in the ears of the condemned in Newgate, warning them that the time was come to go out upon the scaffold. When the shadow of eternal wrath falls upon the heart, nothing worse can be imagined; for the conscience bears sure witness that God is just when He judges, condemns, and punishes. When a man feels the shadow of death upon him, infidel arguments are silenced, self-conceited defences are banished, and the heart consents to the justice of the law which declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Neglect is ruinous*:—Neglect is enough to ruin a man. A man who is in business need not commit forgery or robbery to ruin himself; he has only to neglect his business, and his ruin is certain. A man who is lying on a bed of sickness need not cut his throat to destroy himself; he has only to neglect the means of restoration, and he will be ruined. A man floating in a skiff above Niagara need not move

an oar, or make an effort to destroy himself; he has only to neglect using the oar at the proper time, and he will certainly be carried over the cataract. Most of the calamities of life are caused by simple neglect. Let no one infer, therefore, that because he is not a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a murderer, that therefore he will be saved. Such an inference would be as irrational as it would be for a man to infer that, because he is not a murderer, his farm will produce a harvest; or that, because he is not an adulterer, therefore his merchandise will take care of itself. (*A. Barnes.*) *Believing is laying hold on Christ*:—"Mark you," said a pious sailor, when explaining to a shipmate at the wheel, "mark you, it isn't breaking off swearing and the like; it isn't reading the Bible, nor praying, nor being good; it is none of these; for even if they would answer for the time to come, there's still the old score; and how are you to get over that? It isn't anything that you have done or can do; its taking hold of what Jesus did for you; its forsaking your sins, and expecting the pardon and salvation of your soul, because Christ let the waves and billows go over Him on Calvary. This is believing, and believing is nothing else." (*New Cyclopædia of Anecdote.*) *Not condemned, and condemned already*:—I. THE BELIEVER NOT CONDEMNED. 1. Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 2. Faith in Christ identifies us with His sacrifice. 3. Identification with the sacrifice of Christ removes all personal guilt. 4. So the believer is not regarded or dealt with by God as a sinner. He is not condemned—(1) by God; (2) by the law; (3) by Himself: remorse subsides, fear vanishes. II. THE UNBELIEVERS ALREADY CONDEMNED. 1. What does unbelief seem to do? (1) It despises God's unspeakable gift as superfluous, or insufficient, or comparatively unimportant. (2) It dishonours the Son of God Himself. (3) It refuses to listen even to God's testimony concerning His Son. 2. The cause of unbelief must be evil, and what is evil is foolish. 3. The nature of unbelief. (1) It is sin both in the spirit and in the letter (1 John iii. 23). (2) It is the greatest folly (Acts iv. 12). 4. The doom of unbelief (Mark xvi. 16; Prov. i. 34–36; Matt. xi. 23; Luke xii. 47; Hebrew x. 29). This doom is confirmed by the conscience of the unbeliever. (*S. Martin.*) *Condemned already*:—The condemnation here spoken of is not of the judge but of the architect. It is a customary thing to appoint a committee to examine a bridge or a building, but if either is condemned as unfit for use, the architect merely proclaims that repair is needed: he refers to the past, not to the future. He says, not that they are to be destroyed, but that he will not guarantee them for a single moment, that the hall or building is not safe for a meeting-place, and that the bridge is not fit to be a vehicle of commerce between man and man. The whole word lies in the word already. Some here may have read that wonderful story of George Eliot's, "Daniel Deronda," and remember the marvellous character in it, Mordecai, who, by the mysticism of his mind, is represented as having gone back. He became possessed with the idea that he was a bridge over which the whole world was passing; he felt the feet trampling over his life, and they weighed him down with agony. Never was Mordecai so little of the madman as when he possessed that thought. Whether we realize it or not, the idea is true. Every one is a bridge for the whole world. The world would not have been the same if you had not lived, and what is that but saying you are a means of transport for the generations? Therefore it is of the more value that some are labelled, "Condemned already"; to hear a voice warning us back from the gilded parapet, from the painted structure, from the gaudy edifice; for the frail planks are ready to fall into the mighty cauldron, seething below. Stand back till the rotten materials are renewed and welded together. (*G. Matheson, D.D.*) *Faith*:—A person who had noticed a flower of a very rare kind growing on a narrow ledge on the face of a precipitous rock, was very desirous to gain possession of it. There was no possibility of reaching it except by a person being let down from the top suspended by a rope. The person interested engaged a boy of the neighbourhood, and brought him to the spot for this purpose. But the boy, when he saw the situation of the flower, hesitated. His employer tried to tempt him by the offer of a larger reward, but still he hesitated. At last, when a very considerable sum was named, he turned to the gentleman, and said, "Yes, I will get it, if I may fetch my brother to hold the rope." Here is an example of implicit trust consciously exercised under extraordinary circumstances. (*A. J. Parry.*) *Salvation through union with Christ*:—In primitive times there was a law or custom that if a man or woman would consent to marry, under the gallows, a person condemned to death, the criminal would thereby be saved from execution. There are instances on record of this custom having been carried out. We have here a faint picture of the grand truths of the text. The sinner "is con-

demned already," is under sentence of death, but Christ consents to take him into union with Himself, and so thereby deliver him from his terrible doom, but faith working through love must be the bond of this mystical union. And this faith regenerates the man. By it the greatest sinner is transformed into a saint. (*Ibid.*)

The great alternative:—Let us consider, then, this sin of unbelief, and the two reasons, furnished by my text, for its being made the ground of condemnation. I. First of all, in regard to the sin itself, you will notice how entirely everything is made to hinge on the fact of a man's believing or his not believing. The difference between these two is all the difference between condemnation and acquittal. Doubtless it was well for Nicodemus, during whose interview with our Lord the statement of my text was uttered, that the issue should be narrowed to so definite a point. It was well he should know that however far he might be inclined to go in his acknowledgment of Jesus, nothing short of personal trust in Him as his Messias would suffice. Nor is it enough, to make a man a Christian, that he accepts, in a general way, the teaching of Scripture, and seeks to bring his life into accord with the Divine commands. There must be something much more precise and radical than this. There needs an uprooting of the life out of its old soil, a transplanting of it into new conditions, the committal of your whole nature into the hands of a Divine Person, out of whose deep inexhaustible being it shall henceforward draw its succour and support. And if this be wanting, then all is wanting. Whatever your connection with Christianity may have done for you, if it has failed to connect you with Him it has failed of the one thing it seeks to accomplish. It may have begotten within you anxious thoughts and surmises about its mysteries. If your convictions of guilt have not persuaded you to have recourse to the great Pardoner and Purifier of sinners, then they have failed of their mark. He that believeth not, whether he be serious or careless, whether he be the profane scoffer or the regular church-goer, is condemned already. Notice particularly, I pray you, the force of that word *already*. Sentence is not suspended till it be seen whether you succeed in attaining a certain pitch of moral excellence or fall below it. It is not unfixed and unsettled till the end of your life, and then for the first time shaped into a verdict. Then it will only be revealed and made manifest. Then it will only be pronounced and read aloud from the page of that book on which it now stands recorded. Already you are condemned if you do not believe in the only-begotten Son. II. I pass on now to consider WHY UNBELIEF SHOULD BE MADE THE GROUND OF CONDEMNATION. Two reasons are given. 1. The first is, because it involves rejection of the only-begotten Son of God. He came, as we have seen, not to condemn men, but to save men who were condemned already. And His coming was not one of a number of similar expedients, that had been tried before. To reject Him, then, is to reject the only possible means of escape from a doomed state. It is to remain separate and apart from God, that is, in a condition of death and condemnation. If you can find any sin, or ingrained force of habit, which He cannot conquer and break, then you may hesitate to appeal to Him for help. But the fact of His Divine Sonship precludes all this. It is important to notice here the turn that takes place at this point in our Lord's reasoning. He wishes to bring out the personal responsibility of each individual. The unbeliever is condemned, not because he is involved in the sinfulness that is common to humanity, but because of his unbelief; that is to say, not because of his sharing a guilt which was brought upon him by the offence of another, but in virtue of his own deliberate deed—because he hath not believed. It has been a matter of conscious choice with him. He has had the alternative placed before him, and he has preferred to be without Christ and perish, rather than take refuge in His grace. Now, this is true of every unbeliever. And if you are not receiving and trusting Him you are choosing to reject Him. 2. The second reason specified for the condemnation attached to unbelief is, that it involves the greatest immorality. It is a very common impression that unbelief leaves a man no worse than it found him. Other sins may render him an object of suspicion. Untruthfulness may strip his statements of credibility. Fraud may exclude him from the dealings of honourable men. Excess in eating or drinking may brutalize him, and make him an unsteady customer in business. But he may be as good for all practical purposes whether he believes or not. That is a matter confined to the sphere of opinion, and need not affect his actions, to any appreciable extent. A creed does not make a Christian, unless it be wedded to a life. And a true believer in Christ is different from other men by a vast difference, a difference that works through his whole nature, turning it in a new direction, and shaping it to a new end. Do not suppose that to believe in Him is a mere act of the intellect, and

nothing more. If that were all you might do so or not do so, and the effects would never extend beyond your intellect, just as one may not be a whit the worse because he rejects some purely scientific or formal truth. Faith is not a mere assent to certain propositions. It is an act of the whole moral nature, closing with Christ for moral and spiritual ends. In coming to Him, then, you come that He may achieve within you that for which He came to you. You come that you may be pardoned and purified, that He may impart peace to your conscience, and touch you with the living power of His quickening Spirit. And when you refuse to come it is because you object to this process of renewal. And in refusing to be like Him you refuse to be like God, you show your deliberate preference for the evil which He hates. So that unbelief is the most terrible of all sins, the sin in which the innermost, deepest aversion of the heart to God comes to a head and acts. Having looked upon the light, and having looked also upon the darkness, and having wished that you might live in the sunshine, but wished also still more that you might abide in the shadow of some pet sin, or of some habit of self-righteousness, have you turned away, away from Christ, away from God, away from hope? Then do not disguise the reason from your eyes. Do not set it down to a mere exercise of intellect. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (*C. Mornet, M.A.*) *Unbelief arraigned and condemned:*—I. THE NATURE OF UNBELIEF. 1. A denying of the truth of the gospel. 2. A doubting or wavering uncertainty of mind about the truths of the gospel. 3. When, though a person may be convinced in his mind, by rational arguments, that the Bible is the Word of God, he does not fall in with the great design of the Scriptures by receiving Christ, and resting upon Him alone for salvation as He is there presented and discovered. II. THE CAUSES OF UNBELIEF. 1. The devil has a great hand in it. 2. Ignorance. 3. Pride. 4. A pretended humility and self-denial is another great bar in the way of believing, to many; they thrust away Christ and the mercy of God from them, under a pretence that they are not fit for it. 5. A secret jealousy, as if God were not in good earnest with us, when He offers Christ and His salvation to us in the gospel. III. THE SENTENCE. 1. Prove that the sentence is passed against the unbeliever. "He that believes not in the Son shall not see life" (John iii. 36). 2. The unbeliever is condemned already. (1) In the court of the law, as a covenant by which he is seeking to be justified and saved: "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses" (Rom. iii. 19). (2) The unbeliever is already condemned in the gospel court. The sentence passed against him in the court of the law is aggravated and heightened by his contempt of gospel grace (Heb. ii. 3; x. 28, 29). (3) The unbeliever is condemned already in the court of his own conscience. (4) The unbeliever is already condemned in the court of the Church; or, may I call it, in the ministerial court. (5) The unbeliever is condemned in the court of the great God. "Consider this, ye that forget God" (Psa. i. 22). 3. A few qualities of this sentence of condemnation passed against the unbelieving sinner. (1) A most mature and deliberate sentence. (2) A most righteous sentence. (3) A most awful and terrible sentence. (4) An irrevocable sentence. Application: 1. See hence a very sufficient reason why ministers of the gospel do so much urge the necessity of faith. 2. See hence the miserable and mournful condition of the generality of gospel hearers; they are a company of condemned men, under sentence of death. 3. How ill-grounded the joy and triumph of a Christless, unbelieving sinner! 4. See hence how fitly the gospel is called a joyful sound (Psa. lxxxix. 15). 5. It is every man's duty and interest to examine and try whether he be under this heavy sentence or not. (*Pulpit Assistant.*) **This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.**—*God's condemnation of men:*—The first entrance of light produces two effects—it makes manifest and it separates. By this well-known result of the dawn we understand that when the Light that saves entered the world His appearance at the same time became the complete condemnation of men. But these words do not refer simply to the immediate effects of Christ's advent. They contain a truth for all time. I. THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE CONDEMNATION. On what ground does God condemn humanity? It has been said that God dooms men for evils which it was beyond their power to avoid; as saving some few, and sending the rest to perdition because he chooses to do so. Christ here affirms that God finally condemns men, not for being sinful, but for content to be sinful. 1. Contemplate sin as a power slumbering in human nature. It is there, even in the child. The most virtuously educated, when thrown suddenly into some unusual companionship, will show it. God cannot doom a man for sinful impulses which any temptation may draw forth. 2. Pass on to the rise

of sin into conscious deeds. Has man power in himself to free himself from its slavery? (1) Every act of sin darkens the light of conscience. God has given man a conscience whose eye is quick to detect evil; but the misery of sin is that the very first action begins to darken the light which was given to guard against sin's blinding power. (2) Every step decreases the power of resistance; for the longer a man lives in sin, the more deeply he becomes conscious of self-degradation. Destroy a man's self-respect, make him feel that his character is gone, and see how carelessly and recklessly he will act. If, then, sin has such a power, do you think that God finally condemns a man for being sinful? Is it not rather for being content to remain in sin, for loving darkness rather than light? II. THE MANIFESTATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE IN THE COMING OF CHRIST. When the light came, every man who rejected Him proved his contentment in sin. Two things are requisite to prove this. 1. Man must be brought into a state in which he shall be able to choose deliberately between God and sin: and into this state the coming of Christ brings him. Through Christ the strongest and holiest powers —love, pity, sorrow act in man's nature and appeal to him to enter the light and liberty of the sons of God. 2. Man must show his contentment in sin, and thus doom himself. The rejection of Christ is utter self-condemnation. (1) Within man is an evil power, and from that power Christ comes to deliver, but man chooses subjection to that power rather than deliverance. (2) Behind man is a blackened past—man says I accept it; before man is an awful future springing out of his evil —man says I dare its doom: although Christ came to forgive the one and avert the other. (*E. L. Hull.*) *The cause of present and future condemnation*:—I. A FACT STATED. "Light is come in the world." 1. The light of conscience which—(1) Condemns or approves now. (2) Is prophetic of future acceptance or condemnation. 2. The light of nature. (1) Astronomy teaches us the existence of an Almighty Creator. (2) Microscopy reveals one infinite in resources. (3) The wonderful order of nature shows one manifold in wisdom. (4) The beneficence of providential arrangements exhibits one conspicuously good. 3. The light of Divine revelation. (1) Confirming the lessons of natural theology. (2) Making known to us the provisions of redemption. 4. The light of the Holy Spirit. (1) Enlightening the mind. (2) Teaching the way of salvation. (3) Guiding into all truth. (4) Witnessing to our adoption. 5. The light of reason. (1) To this faculty God directs His revelation. (2) This faculty vindicates the claims of Christianity as consistent with the principles of human nature and the attributes of God. II. MAN'S PERVERSENESS ILLUSTRATED. "Men loved darkness rather than light." Darkness signifies ignorance and sin; light, knowledge, and purity. How strange the sinners infatuation. 1. Instead of paying attention to the inward monitor, he seeks its destruction. 2. Men walk about the temple of nature and admire its workmanship, but see no Supreme Being. 3. Men have the Word of God and treat it as a fable. 4. They resist to grieve the Holy Spirit. 5. They reject the great salvation. III. THE REASON ASSIGNED FOR THIS MORAL OBLIQUITY. "Because their deeds were evil." 1. Sin is not an accident of our lives. 2. Sin is the choice and love of our hearts. IV. MAN'S CONSEQUENT CONDEMNATION. 1. Sinners are condemned in this life. 2. Sinners will be condemned in the life to come. (*R. Sergeant.*) *Love of darkness rather than light*:—When the Bastille was about to be destroyed a prisoner was brought out, who had long been lying in one of its gloomy cells. Instead of joyfully welcoming his liberty, he entreated that he might be taken back to his dungeon. It was so long since he had seen the light that his eye could not endure the light of the sun. Besides this, his friends were all dead, he had no home, and his limbs refused to move. His chief desire now was that he might die in the dark prison where so long he had been a captive. (*W. Denton.*) *Light come into the world*:—This is one of the most important announcements ever made in a sinful world, and to lost mankind. I. LET US EXAMINE THE ASSERTION, that—"Light is come into the world." It is a strong and beautiful metaphor, signifying knowledge—salvation—happiness. 1. It is revelation. It dawned on Adam, rose upon the patriarchs and prophets—but has arrived at a noonday by Christ and His apostles. 2. What it reveals. II. THE WORLD IS REPRESENTED AS IN A STATE OF DARKNESS. It may have natural light and intellectual light—but it is in moral darkness. 1. What this darkness is. Ignorance of God as the true God—ignorance of sin and guilt of sin. 2. This darkness is preferred. Sinners avoid the means of conviction—are afraid of the light—neglect the word, the house, and the service of God. III. THE REASON WHY DARKNESS IS PREFERRED. 1. The innate love of sin. It is their element—their

delight. 2. They find ease in sin. No alarms—conscience lulled. 3. The few rays of light that do occasionally break in are unwelcome and painful. They excite suspicion and fear. 4. If the light were admitted it would require an abandonment of evil practices which are pleasant; hence darkness is preferred because it is more congenial with sin. IV. THIS PREFERENCE OF DARKNESS IS THE OCCASION OF AN AWFUL CONDEMNATION. 1. God condemns all that refuse the light He has condescended to impart. He will send on such strong delusions, that they should believe a lie. 2. Christ condemns all that refuse His light. 3. Unbelievers will condemn themselves in retirement, on a sick bed, and in a dying hour. 4. All will condemn them at the judgment because they loved darkness, not for want of light, but because they hated it: preferred sin and darkness, not from force or necessity, but from the love of it. Application: 1. Consider the awful state of sinners under the light of the gospel. Their greater light exposes to a greater condemnation. Not like heathens. 2. Their condemnation will be final—eternal. 3. The condemnation is now come, but not the execution of the sentence, therefore there is yet time for repentance. 4. The Redeemer waits to translate us out of darkness into His marvellous light (Heb. x. 29). (*The Evangelist.*) *The test of condemnation—loving darkness rather than light:*—What is a test of this condemnation? Our Lord's words are so very liberal that I would not have used them if He had not; I would have been afraid of the presbyteries. He does not place the test upon inadequate belief or doctrine, or even on deficient morality, but on deadness of aspiration. This is the condemnation, that men have loved darkness rather than the light. But that alone does not prove unfitness; our Lord's liberality is not yet exhausted. There is another condition—the light must have come into the world. If you get up at midnight and enter your dark sitting-room the mirror that was wont to flash in the daytime will show no light. Why don't you smash the mirror? It seems to love the darkness, and why? Because its light had not yet come. And there are hundreds in this city in precisely the same position. They are dark because no light has come to them. Suppose I ask you if you have the spirit of a poet, and you say, "Oh no, I haven't; I never wrote a line of poetry in my life. I once tried and failed miserably. I have no idea of metre or scansion." But I take you to the top of a mountain when the light is coming, when the morning is dawning and nature is about to drench the dark world in a liquid bath of gold; and I watch the gleam of enthusiasm brighten over your countenance as from your heart rise the words, "Oh, it is beautiful!" Then, my brother, I know you are a poet, though Tennyson be ignorant of you and Wordsworth acknowledge you not. So if you want to know if you are within the pale of Christianity stand on the mountain when Jesus passes by, and should you feel one fond desire, one panting aspiration which makes you cry, O to be like Thee, to be near Thee! then, though your Thirty-Nine Articles be reduced to ten, though your morality lags faintly behind, by that thrill of aspiration in your heart you will know you have seen the Bright and Morning Star and that your light has come. How could it be possible for any man or woman to love darkness rather than light? The answer to that, too, is here, "Because their deeds are evil;" and this condition comes at the end of a long process. No man ever stretched his hands to Satan and prayed, "O Prince of the Power of the Air, I want to be bad, to break hearts, to bring tears to loving eyes, to cultivate malice and envy and all uncharitableness." No, he began by evil deeds, and his beautiful aspirations continued to survive long after. I have heard the birds singing in October, and they seemed to say, It was once summer, it is summer no longer. It is a survival of old culture and the golden summer-time. Young man, listen to them, and go back. I knew a youth, brimming over with music, poetry, and æsthetic culture, but he returned, all his high aspirations gone through a life of intemperance and debauchery. Sin had taken away the æsthetic glow and his power of admiration. Is there any hope, then, for those who have got to this stage, who have put out their eyes? Yes, by retracing their steps over past deeds, never seeking to go into the past but keeping their hands from past sins in the future; and the beauty will come back in the way by which it went. In the words of the Israelitish Psalmist, the first joy comes back after a life of abstinence. The beauty of old days returns when in God's law "he doth meditate day and night." The 33rd of Isaiah is grander still, telling us we must begin by the life of self-denial if we would see the glory of the Lord. By traversing the narrow defiles of duty, the morning at last shines. A few more strokes of the oar, a little more straining of the muscles, a few more struggles against the angry foe, and, courage! you will see the land at last. (*G. Matheson, D.D.*)

Ignorance may be wilful :—There is a sort of ignorance, which is not an ignorance of an empty understanding, but of a depraved heart; such an ignorance as does not only consist in a bare privation, but in a corrupt disposition; where the understanding is like that sort of blind serpents, whose blindness is attended with much venom and malignity. This was such a blindness as struck the Sodomites: there was darkness in their eyes, and withal villany in their hearts. (*Dr. South.*) *Refusing the physician* :—Two gentlemen were fellow-passengers in a vessel bound for a distant port. One was in vigorous health, and the other emaciated with disease, and manifesting premonitory symptoms of a speedy dissolution. He was young and intelligent, but had not made what he knew to be the necessary preparation for the event which was rapidly approaching. His fellow-passenger, as they were drawing near the port whither they were bound, advised him to consult an eminent physician who resided there. "No," he replied, "I shall not consult him." He was asked, "Why?" To which he answered, "It is not because I do not entertain the highest opinion of his skill, but he will honestly tell me that my disease is incurable, that I must die; and I do not wish to receive the announcement from such a source." It is just so with the multitudes who know that they must die, and that they are totally unprepared for the event. They are afraid to consult the great Physician, lest they should be told the worst of their own case. In opposition to their better judgment, they endeavour to hide from their eyes the doom which awaits them. Their deception is voluntary; it is of their own choosing. They wish it to be so, and therefore do they avoid the means of detecting and exposing it. *It is madness to refuse Christ* :—Suppose I was going over London Bridge, and saw a poor miserable beggar, bare-footed, coatless, hatless, with no rags hardly to cover his nakedness, and right behind him, only a few yards, there was the Prince of Wales with a bag of gold, and the poor beggar was running away from him as if he was running away from a demon, and the Prince of Wales was hallooing after him, "Oh, beggar, here is a bag of gold!" Why, we should say the beggar had gone mad, to be running away from the Prince of Wales with the bag of gold. Sinner, that is your condition. The Prince of Heaven wants to give you eternal life, and you are running away from Him. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Light and liberty* :—Going to Helena I saw piles of boxes and goods and all manner of things on the landing, and I said to the superintendent, "Do the slaves buy as much as used to be bought for them by their masters?" "A great deal more." "Well, what things do they buy?" "Buy? Looking-glasses and candles." "Looking-glasses, of course: candles, however?" said I. "What do they want with candles?" In the old slave-times a slave was never allowed to have a lighted candle in his cabin after it was dark; nothing, unless it was a fire, was allowed, and the candles became in their eyes the signal of liberty; and the moment that they were free they said, "Give us light." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Two great wonders* :—There are two wonders, one from above, the other from the depths of Satan: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son"—and the world so loved darkness that it rejected the only-begotten Son of God who was given for it. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The action of light* :—The world of darkness is a world of false terrors and confused appearances. In the night, old and familiar objects take new forms; common things seem to stand out like strange dangers in our way; well-known things are changed; and we cannot distinguish shadows from realities, or the dangerous from the secure. But the first morning beam that pierces the dark world restores the confusion to order; the shadowy perils fly, and the strange night-world disappears. That first beam manifests things in their reality, and by making manifest it separates the false from the true. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *The blessedness of light* :—Imagine a traveller passing through a wild and unfrequented country. He misses his road. Night overtakes him. The storm rages; winds howl around him; the rain descends in torrents; thunders break in loud and terrific peals; whilst lightning fires occasionally discover dangerous precipices, rendering his condition imminently perilous. At length a faint but steady light comes gleaming from a distance; he follows the light, he treads the bright pathway, it leads to a human habitation—to shelter, warmth, and security. Sinner, you are that traveller. Human life is a wilderness. You are in the night of sin; wandering on the dark mountains of transgression; in imminent danger. The next step you may be irrevocably lost. But light has come into the world. Oh follow it! It will lead you to peace, security, and heaven. (*R. Sergeant.*) *The wilful folly of rejecting the light* :—None of us can prevent the sun from shining, but all of us can prevent the

sun from shining on us. The great orb of day still floods the earth with undimmed lustre; but we can shut ourselves away from his beams, in caves and holes of the earth. So we may shut ourselves away from that Sun of the soul who lighteth every man that cometh into the world. We cannot make God less loving, less merciful, less gracious than He is; but we can stand apart from that love, that mercy, that grace. "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated—are separating—between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that he will not hear." Would you have the Sun shine on you? Tear down the wall and roof of separation which you have built between you and him. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*)

Vers. 20, 21. **For every one that doeth evil hateth the light . . . but he that doeth truth cometh to the light.**—*The repelling and attractive influence of light:*—These words may have taken their form from the fact that Nicodemus came by night, and may have been a gentle rebuke, and a test for self examination. One of the saddest things in a spiritual sense is that man shrinks from the light. With a nature and position before God such as his this ought not to be. One of the most blessed things is when men welcome the light, and have nothing about them that they wish to hide (Psa. cxxxix. 23). I. DOING EVIL AND THE HATRED OF LIGHT CONSEQUENT. 1. The word doeth, in relation to evil, πρασσω, indicates—(1) The easy and natural way in which a thing is done. So we need no self-constraint or unusual exertion to do evil. We are too readily inclined to it. It required not much temptation to lead our first parents astray; and their children have followed them with easy steps. (2) Habit. There is a tendency in what is easy and natural to become habitual. A thing once done is not difficult to repeat, and each repeated action makes us more accustomed to it. From the little men go on to the great, and so silence the inward monitor. Evil is fine as a gossamer web at first, but at last a man is "bound with the cords of his sin." (3) The transient and worthless result is in the word. So sin's gratifications leave a sting behind, and are only "for a season." How little satisfaction had Samson or Achan in their sin. 2. The evildoer hates the light. And no wonder if that which reveals his guilt and folly humiliates and disgraces him, and threatens punishment, is feared and hated. No wonder that Ahab hated Elijah and Michaiah, that Jehoiachin destroyed the prophets' roll, that Herodias hated John, and the Pharisees Christ. Here is the explanation of every unhumbled man's distaste for the truth. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." This shows the need and blessedness of the Gospel. II. DOING THE TRUTH AND THE BLESSED RESULT. 1. The word doeth, here, ποιεω suggests—(1) The exercise of resistance. The man who will do truth opposes the evil impulses of his nature. He will fight against wrong feelings. With noble superiority he contends against subtlety and deceit. See instances in Joseph, Daniel, the Three Children, and Cornelius. (2) Decision of character. The man who does the truth has no vacillation or hesitation. He is steady, unmoved by caprice. He applies himself steadily to the course he adopts, like Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea. (3) The permanent and satisfactory result. Good is not temporary or unstable in its results. What peace and joy it imparts! 2. Doers of truth love the light. They are neither ashamed nor fearful. Let the light shine, and it will justify them, and reveal the glory of God in their truth doing. Conclusion: 1. The sentiment of a man towards the truth is an index to his character. 2. The doing of truth in every man is of God. (*G. McMichael, B.A.*) *The ground of infidelity:*—Many men seem to proceed on the supposition that, though placed under the Gospel, they may accept or reject it, just as their inclinations dictate. But it is not left to every man's choice in a Christian land whether or not he will be subject to the Gospel. It is not a matter of option with a man who resides in a kingdom, whether he will be governed by the laws of the land. If he violate them it will avail him nothing to plead that he never intended to take them as his guide. No doubt a man may make something else than the Gospel the rule of his life: but the solemn fact remains that the Gospel, after all, continues to be the rule by which he will be tried. When he appears before the Judgment Seat the processes will have reference to the dispensation beneath which it pleased God to place him, and not that under which he has chosen to place himself. It will avail him as little to say, "I acted up to the light of nature; I never professed to be led by any other light," as it would for an Englishman to plead in the courts, "I acted up to the laws of Japan, which I professed to follow." The Gospel, then,

will be the system by which we shall be judged, though it may not have been that under which we have lived. Here comes the question, Why is the Gospel rejected? If men are to be condemned for its rejection, it must follow that the rejection cannot be pleaded as unavoidable. Is there a man necessarily blameworthy for being an infidel? May he not have sat down with a calm and decided wish to investigate truth and to believe Christianity, and yet arise confirmed in his scepticism? The answer is this: that we dare not take the blame off men and throw it upon God. This may sound illiberal and uncharitable, but we cannot admit that God is the author of sin through placing any of His creatures under the invincible necessity of continuing in sin. In the text Christ charges men's unbelief in their immorality. The Scriptures conclude that where actions are evil faith cannot be genuine. The text states the converse of this, that practice influences faith. Men prefer darkness; therefore they hate light. I. THIS WAS SO WITH THE JEWS. When Christ came, Judæa was over-run with profligacy. Christ rebuked it, and was consequently hated and crucified. Wherever the religion of our Lord is promulgated, it allows no truce to sin, but Christ came to save men from sin. Had He come to condemn men His contemporaries would have shrunk from Him equally. Their sensuality and pride had led them to expect a triumphing Messiah, who would give full scope for their licentiousness and arrogance; and when He preached His pure and spiritual kingdom, their habits of evil rose up in protest against Him and it. It was not that He was not armed with credentials; the exhibition of His greatest credential, the resurrection of Lazarus, sealed His doom. II. IT IS THE SAME NOW. What produces infidelity is not weakness of evidence; it is the wish to prove the Bible a fable, and this goes more than half-way towards the result. If the Bible be true, evil deeds must be reproved, and hence some men have an interest in disproving its pretentions. In this desire lies the secret of open, also of practical infidelity. Selfish, lustful men would view conversion as a positive calamity. They know that they cannot have religion without renouncing much that they loved, and doing what they dislike. In conclusion—1. God has erected no barrier against the salvation of a single soul. 2. If any man is finally condemned, it will be by his own choice. (*H. Melvell, B.D.*) *The truth*:—I. God is to be honoured by the truth. II. Men are to be benifited by the truth. III. Opposition must be expected on account of the truth. IV. For the truth we should wish to live. V. For the truth we should be willing to die. (*Prof. J. H. Godwin.*) *The hatred of the wicked to the light of the Gospel*:—I. IT IS AN ACTUAL HATRED (Prov. i. 22). II. IT IS A PASSION OF THE HEART. III. IT IS A PASSION WHEREBY THE HEART RISETH UP AGAINST A UNION WITH THE WORD. A wicked man hates not the Word so long as it keeps within itself; but if it begin to pluck sin from him and his pleasures from him, then he hates it. I put this union of the Word in opposition to four things. 1. Against general preaching. A wicked man may hear a thousand sermons and like them all, but let one of them come in particular to him and tell him this is thy sin, and thou must go to hell for it if thou repentest not, then he hates it. John the Baptist was heard by Herod gladly so long as he kept off his personal sin. 2. Against merciful preaching, which can never stick a sermon on to a profane heart. Ahab loved his 400 prophets well enough, but when Micaiah came, "Oh, I hate him, for he never prophesieth good unto me!" 3. Against preaching when the minister is dead. A wicked man can endure that, because there is none to urge a union of the Word with his conscience. He can read St. Paul, St. Peter, St. John, &c., and the books of dead ministers, but if they were alive to tell him if this be the Word of God then thou art a damned man, they would not be loved. 4. Against now and then preaching. The wicked can endure the word so long as it doth not stand digging in their conscience and galling their hearts day by day. Occasional rebukes they can stand, but to be convicted every Sunday for condemned men, this they hate. IV. As it is an actual affection whereby the heart riseth up against a union, SO IT IS AGAINST THAT WHICH IS DISSONANT AND REPUGNANT TO HIS LUST. Therefore wicked men may love three kinds of preaching. 1. Quaint preaching that savours more of humanity than of divinity. Dainty phrases, acute stories, eloquent allusions are heard well enough. 2. Impertinent preaching, when, though it be never so pertinent to some in the church, yet if it be not pertinent to him, he loves it. The drunkard does not cavil at a sermon against hypocrisy, nor the profligate at one against covetousness; but if the Word strikes his own particular corruption, he hates it. 3. So much preaching. A wicked man's conscience tells him that he must have some religion, and therefore so long as the minister calls only for some hearing, he responds. The

vilest drunkard will be content to hear of calling on the Lord Jesus at his death; otherwise their consciences would not be quiet. V. THUS YOU SEE THAT WICKED MEN HATE THE WORD OF GOD. They hate it because—1. They hate the truth, and being of the Word, a man hates the being of that which he hates, and he would destroy it. Now, though a wicked man cannot destroy the Bible from being in itself, yet he would destroy the Bible from being in his life. 2. They hate the nature of the Word (Rom. viii. 7). 3. This being the case, he hates the being of the Word in his understanding (Job xxi. 14). VI. USE IS TO REPROVE THE WICKED AND INVITE THEM TO REPENTANCE. (*W. Fenner.*) *The ground of bad men's enmity to the truth*:—I. THE ENMITY OF THE WICKED TO THE TRUTH. This enmity appears —1. In their opposition and resistance to it. 2. Their persecution of it (chap. viii. 40). II. THE CAUSES AND REASONS OF THIS ENMITY. 1. They are afraid the evil of their actions should be discovered to themselves, because that creates guilt and trouble. (1) It robs them of that good opinion which they had of themselves before. Truth flatters no man; no wonder, therefore, that so many are offended at it. (2) Truth carries great evidence along with it, and is very convincing, and gives a good deal of disturbance. 2. Bad men are enemies to the truth because it discovers the evil of their actions to others, which causeth shame. III. INFERENCES. 1. We learn the true reason why men are so apt to reject the principles of natural and revealed religion; they are loath to be under the restraint of them. 2. This is a great vindication of our religion that it can bear the light, and is ready to submit to any impartial examination. 3. This is the reason why some are so careful to suppress the truth and to lock it up from the people in an unknown tongue, because their doctrines, dogmas, and deeds are evil. (*Abp. Tillotson.*) *Sinners hate the light*:—I. THE TRUTHS OF GOD WHICH RESPECT THE SINNER ARE, AS FAR AS THE NATURE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEM ARE CONCERNED, AS EASILY FELT AND SEEN AS ANY OTHER. II. THE MIND CANNOT TURN FROM DIVINE TRUTH WITHOUT CHOOSING TO DO IT. III. MEN RESORT TO ARTIFICES TO HIDE THE TRUTH, TO TURN ITS FORCE AND RESIST ITS PRESSURE. 1. One is infidelity. 2. Another is found in the excuses offered for disobedience. 3. The indulgence of false hopes. 4. Reproaching religion and ministers. IV. REMARKS: 1. The common complaint that sinners must wait for the Spirit of God before they can feel the importance of religion is unfounded and impious. 2. Ministers must not be afraid of alarming and distressing sinners. (*N. W. Taylor, D.D.*) *Light welcomed*:—At the first Methodist Conference it was asked, Should they be afraid of thoroughly debating every question that might arise? What are we afraid of? Of overturning our first principles? If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest examination. Let us pray for a willingness to receive light, to know every doctrine whether it be of God. (*R. Stevens.*) *Light detested*:—A sluttish housemaid, when scolded for the untidiness of the chambers, exclaimed, "I'm sure the rooms would be clean enough if it were not for the nasty sun, which is always showing the dirty corners." Thus do men revile the gospel because it reveals their own sin. Thus all agitations for reforms in Church and State are opposed, and all manner of mischief attributed to them as if they created the evils which they bring to light. The lover of the right courts anything which may manifest the wrong, but those who love evil have never a good word for those disturbing beams of truth which show up the filthy corners of their hearts and lives. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Revelations of the light*:—What a difference it makes to have a street well lighted at night! The cheery beams of the street lamp and the dazzling brilliancy of the electric light are more of a protection to the traveller at night through city streets than the weapon of the policeman. The evil beings who haunt our streets at night shun the well-lighted thoroughfares, and skulk off into dark alleys and unlighted lanes, where their evil deeds are not likely to be discovered. And yet it is not the light alone that makes the difference. There are palaces of sin where riot and revelry go on unabashed beneath the glare of gilded lamps and crystal chandeliers; for the light of the physical lamp is of little moral avail unless it is made effective by that other light of which Christ spoke when he said, "Ye are the light of the world." The powers of darkness fear the natural light only when it is accompanied by that better light; and the guilty creatures who showed their guilt, unashamed, in the brilliantly-lighted palaces of sin, would cower and shrink beneath the Christ-lighted eyes of true and pure men, if suddenly exposed to their searching gaze. There are anxious souls who seem to themselves never to have done anything for the Master, who might be comforted a little if they could only realize how important is this work of mere light-bearing. Many a

neighbourhood, now forced to be outwardly respectable by the presence of a few God-fearing men and women in its midst, would break out into open and flagrant wickedness if that restraining and enlightening presence were to cease. But wherever God's children are, the light shines, and the workers of iniquity are forced to hide their evil deeds. It is a deed worth doing to flood the streets at night with the electric light; but it is a deed far better worth doing to let one's Christian light so shine that evil men will fear to bring their evil deeds to the brightness of its shining; for the light of a little band of Christian men and women is worth more, to keep a community pure, than all the light of all the lamps ever invented (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *What the light reveals*:—Some time ago the use of the electric light in those theatres where it had been introduced was discontinued because its great brilliancy revealed the sham character of the furniture of the stage; it showed the paint on the faces of the actors, and the gewgaw and tinsel nature of their dresses and ornaments; so the dimmer light of the gas was substituted. Thus it is morally with men; they refuse to come into the bright light of the gospel lest it make manifest the shams of their lives. We have instances of this in those persons who frankly tell us that they cannot become religious because of the dishonest ways and methods of business to which, they plead, they are compelled to conform. (*A. J. Parry.*) *The different effect of the light on the good and the bad*:—That which scares the wicked from, draws the godly unto the Word. The owl flies from the morning light, which other birds welcome. (*J. Dyke.*) *Blindness*:—I. There is the blindness which is the result of passion, covering us, whilst we are under the dominion of passion, with the darkness of sin, and hiding from us the light of truth. II. There is the deeper blindness which is caused by sinful habits, and by indulgence in continuous sin, until truth becomes odious to us. III. There is the still blacker form of sin, which not only drives us away from the light, but which hurries us on until we trample upon and persecute the doers of righteousness. (*Quesnel.*) *Man's proper attitude towards the truth*:—There is all the difference in the world between battling for the truth because of one's love for the truth, and battling on the side of truth because of hostility to the opponents of truth. A man may be as intense and as violent in the one case as in the other; but if a man lacks a profound conviction of truth, and a devoted love for truth, he can never be inspired to a high courage, and held to an unwavering endurance, by any hatred of those who are over against him in his struggles. All real progress in any line of reform is made through the dead earnestness of men who love the right; not through the impulsive violence of men who are aroused, for a time, against the upholders of evil. He who loves his fellow-man, and therefore strives for his disenthralling, is worth more as a friend of liberty than he who hates oppressors, and therefore seeks their overthrow. So it is in every sphere of well-doing; love for the good is a more potent factor than hatred of evil—more potent even in the battle with evil. (*H. C. Trumbull.*) *Why men hate the truth*:—A gentleman once visiting an acquaintance of his, whose conduct was as irregular as his principles were erroneous, was astonished to see a large Bible in the hall chained fast to the floor. He ventured to inquire the reason. "Sir," replied his infidel friend, "I am obliged to chain down that book to prevent its flying in my face." Such persons hate the Bible, as Ahab did Micaiah, because it never speaks good concerning them, but evil. (*Biblical Museum.*) *Light reproves sin*:—The margin will show that our translators felt a difficulty about this word "reproved." See Matt. xviii. 15, where it is rendered "tell him his fault," and compare the other instances in this Gospel, chap. viii. 9, 45 ("convince" in both), and especially chap. xvi. 8 ("reprove," and margin "convince"). The moral idea is exactly illustrated by the action of light, which makes manifest the wrong, and leads the conscience to see it and repent of it. It is through this chastening that the man passes from darkness to light. It is because men shrink from this chastening that they hate the light (comp. the remarkable parallel in Eph. v. 11 *et seq.*). (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) *Light reveals sin and alarms sinners*:—Some persons accuse us poor preachers of disturbing the minds of our hearers, when persons are alarmed under the ministry of the gospel. The very purpose for which it was sent was to alarm men's minds; and it fails altogether when it does not alarm. When the ministry of the gospel alarms the sinner, he sees its workings going on in his bosom; it comes out before his friends and companions; they ask him why he should sacrifice himself to that sort of teaching which disturbs and agitates him? Why, my friends, we do not bring the things there that are discovered—it is the light that reveals them; they were all there before—it is the light that

falls upon things—and then they appear in a very different manner; and the ministry of the gospel is designed and constituted to make the darkness light, to convince the sinner and to awaken the impenitent. *Light and crime*:—In 1807 Pall Mall was lighted with gas. The original Gas Company was first derided and then treated in Parliament as rapacious monopolists, intent upon the ruin of established industry. The adventurers in gaslight did more for the prevention of crime than the government had done since the days of Alfred. (*Knight's "England."*) *Christians love light*:—"Light breaks in! light breaks in! Hallelujah!" exclaimed one when dying. Sargeant, the biographer of Martyn, spoke of "glory, glory," and of that "bright light"; and when asked, "What light?" answered, his face kindling into a holy fervour, "The light of the Sun of Righteousness." A blind Hindoo boy, when dying, said joyfully, "I see! now I have light. I see Him in His beauty. Tell the missionary that the blind see. I glory in Christ." Thomas Jewett, referring to the dying expression of the English infidel, "I am going to take a leap in the dark," said to those at his bedside, "I am going to take a leap in the light." While still another dying saint said, "I am not afraid to plunge into eternity." A wounded soldier, when asked if he were prepared to depart, said, "Oh yes; my Saviour, in whom I have long trusted, is with me now, and His smile lights up the dark valley for me." A dying minister said, "It is just as I said it would be, 'There is no valley,'" emphatically repeating, "Oh, no valley. It is all clear and bright—a king's highway." The light of an everlasting life seemed to dawn upon his heart; and touched with its glory, he went, already crowned, into the New Jerusalem. A Christian woman lay dying. Visions of heaven came to her. She was asked if she really saw heaven. Her answer was, "I know I saw heaven; but one thing I did not see, the valley of the shadow of death. I saw the suburbs." A young man who had but lately found Jesus was laid upon his dying bed. A friend who stood over him asked, "Is it dark?" "I shall never," said he, "forget his reply. 'No, no,' he exclaimed, 'it is all light! light! light!' and thus triumphantly passed away." (*American Messenger.*) **But he that doeth truth.**—*He that doeth truth cometh to the light*:—What is it, then, to do the truth? For that would seem to be the condition which brings us within the rays of the light of Him Who is the Spirit of Truth, the right disposition in which to keep Whitsuntide. I. "He that doeth truth." This would seem to mean, first of all, HE THAT BELIEVETH THE TRUTH. We can no more shut up the Book of Revelation than we can shut up the book of experience, and say it does not matter. Can we say, for instance, to any young man entering on the study of medicine, "It does not matter the least what system you follow—homœopathy, allopathy, or even herbalism; all are equally true or equally false, as long as you mean well." Or shall we tell him, if he wishes to become a soldier, that drill and tactics and the modern science of warfare may be taken up or let alone, provided that he is brave? or that engineering depends on mechanical skill, or botany on his love for flowers, or chemistry on a taste for analysis, or mathematics on skill in computation? No; we know that all these things have their Bibles, compendiums of exact truth; so that he who enters on the study of them, enters on it enriched with a heritage of precise fact wrested by the patient interrogation of phenomena. And so it is with religion. The truth as set forth in the Creed is that which is exactly adapted to the needs of mankind. What we should do if we were constructing a new religion is one thing, and what we ought to do when God has told us what will make us truly religious is another. And to do the truth, is faithfully to believe what God has spoken, as a duty which we owe to Him and to our fellow-men also. II. "He that doeth truth." This, perhaps, means, secondly, HE THAT LIVES THE TRUTH. A true life is no butterfly existence wasted in so-called pleasure and idleness, never serious, never earnest; where all experience is but as pictures on the wall, all talents merely ornamental for self-display; where grace is received in vain, as the water in the fabled penance of the Danaides, which flows away as fast as it enters in; where sin and want of seriousness have riven the soul so that it cannot contain grace. But the true life will be one which is faithful to all God's influences and modes of approach, which says in its joy, "My soul truly waiteth still upon God;" towards Whom there is the aspiration of prayer; from Whom comes the message to the soul; at Whose coming the door is opened in Holy Communion, and all the approaches cleared by which God may enter into the soul. To live the truth is to trust more to prayer and sacraments and holy things than to mere human culture, self-reliance, strength, or cleverness. Think of that description in the Book of Revelation (x. 1) of the servant of God. And as the

angel is mighty, so the servant of God will be strong in firmness and fidelity, and in the knowledge of the truth. He is "clothed with a cloud;" there will be a seriousness about him, as of one who is still under the influence of the luminous cloud of Sinai, where he has been communing with God, or the half-sadness of one who is compassed about with the earth-drawn sorrow with which sympathy has enveloped him. "A rainbow is upon his head;" he has a brightness within him which lights up the rain-cloud of life, because God is shining upon it. "His face is as it were the sun," because at each prayer-time, and frequently throughout the day, he drinks in light from that Sun to which he turns. "His feet are as pillars of fire," for he is not easily shaken in his steadfastness; he is active, vigorous—yes, graceful as the image of God who created him. III. And then, thirdly, "He that doeth truth" means, obviously, HE THAT SPEAKETH THE TRUTH. Is it absolutely unknown, for instance, for people to screen themselves when they have done wrong by the easy lie? Dishonour, ruin, disgrace, stare the man in the face. "Say you have not done it," says Satan; and the evil is put off, only to return with a tenfold aggravation of malignity as the net of deceit winds itself tighter and tighter round its hopelessly implicated victim. The old German legend is full of instruction. "A huntsman to forward his own purposes seeks the devil, and together they cast seven bullets. Six of these are to strike wherever the caster wills, but the seventh is to be the devil's, and is to recoil and strike the caster, who is never certain which of all of them he is putting into his rifle, and at last is struck down by his own shot." The fraudulent lie succeeds for a time, but at last comes the fatal one, which recoils upon him who uses it with shame and disaster. Do we scrupulously adhere to the disagreeable appointment, or the unpleasant duty, or the invitation which we have pledged ourselves to accept? Or are we always careful to avoid that exaggeration which piles up rumours and reports, which mixes truth with fiction, which stays not to inquire whether a thing is correct or not, which aims, rather, at "saying a new thing that is not true, rather than a true thing which is not new"? (*W. C. E. Newbolt, M.A.*) *He that doeth truth*:—It is observable, in the first place, that there are several places in the New Testament in which the truth is spoken of in ways not very much unlike to this; places, that is, in which it is spoken of, variously indeed, but in each of them as something real and solid,—not a mere object of apprehension by the intellectual powers of a man—not something external, merely viewed, seen, recognized, but something internal, something to be, and something to do—something full of blessing, a precious possession, a gift, an inward treasure (see John viii. 31–36, xiv. 5, 6, xvii. 17, xviii. 37; 1 John iii. 19, v. 6). Now it is plain that these statements of Holy Scripture—and there are a great many more like them, particularly in the inspired writings of St. John—make the truth (the Divine truth) to be something very sacred and very deep. Whatever it be in itself—and this is too hard and difficult a question for us to enter upon—it is plain that when possessed by a man, it is full of precious blessing to him. Possessed by a man, and possessing him, he is not what he was before. The truth has made him free who was a slave. The truth has made him who had no ears able to hear the words of Christ; the truth has sanctified him; the truth has made him God's son. What relation then (it may be asked), does doctrine bear to the truth? for it is plain that it is not the same thing. If the truth be thus something mysterious and real, which, coming forth of God, and being Divine, taketh, possesseth, occupieth a man, what relation does it bear to doctrine, Divine doctrine, the true revealed declarations of God, His nature and His will, which He has been pleased to give us? for these are often called truths, or the truth, though plainly not in the high and mysterious sense of the truth which we have been considering. I suppose that it is quite beyond our power to answer exactly. It is only clear that they are very nearly and closely connected. It is certain that the truth cannot possess a man and bless him with all the great blessings which belong to it, unless doctrine be duly known, and received, and believed. Doctrine is, as it were, truth projected on some medium which the mind can see; a shadow of the invisible and blessed truth cast, as it were, upon a cloud; and this the mind must see, and know, and own, and believe, or else, such is the order of God's will, a man cannot have the freedom indeed, the sonship, the sanctification, the open ears, the various great and precious blessings of the indwelling truth. Learn then from hence the sacred value of doctrine; its sacred, deep, unfathomable preciousness. If then we undervalue doctrine, who shall insure us against losing the truth? If we tamper with it, or lose our hold of it, who shall insure us of our freedom and sanctification, which we should derive from the indwelling truth? If we should allow others to

seduce us from our simple, earnest, obedient subjection to it, who shall assure us that they have not robbed us of our precious estate of being in the truth? Thus far then we have regarded the truth as it is a real and precious thing, possessing which we are in an estate or condition of high blessing—the estate of being Christians; our text rather leads us to regard it in a further view, as being something practical, something to be done. Being in the truth (that is, our estate, or condition), we must do truth (that is, our duty). "If we keep not His commandments, the truth is not in us." "If we say that we have no sin, the truth is not in us." "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we do not the truth." The truth then, in which we are, is to be done; and keeping of the commandments of God, and walking in the light, and acknowledging our own sins, are doing the truth. Truth, then, means holiness. Being in the truth, we must do the truth; and we must do it, as the truth is in Jesus. And so our law of holiness is a law of holy truth. It is a straight and direct law: "O that my ways were made so direct that I might keep Thy statutes." It admits not of deflection, or voluntary imperfection. As doctrine is the intellectual phase, if I may so speak, of essential Divine truth, so is obedience its practical one. To deviate into heresy, or to deviate into sin, are alike to depart from the influence of that sacred, central truth, in which we are sons, in which we are free, and in which we are holy. It is plain (as soon as we regard the law of God in this light, in which the Holy Scriptures so often present it to us) that the law of truth must needs be a very holy and righteous law. It is also plain that it is far higher, and holier, and more searching than it is often thought. How it cuts like a sword through all the easy living, the self-indulgence, and lazy half-service which characterize these later ages of the Church! If there be a truth of holy thoughts, surely there is much unlicensed and random thinking—much letting loose of the imagination on things trifling, and enervating, and unprofitable, which must partake in a great and serious degree of the nature of falsehood. If there be a sacred truth of holy words, there must be much idle and frivolous, and satirical, and bold talking, which must be very far below that high standard of truth, and so be really false. Above all, if there be a real sacred truth of duty and holy living, there must be a vast deal of practical and dangerous falsehood, in the waste of time, the imperfectness of service, the very easy and self-complacent way of life of very many baptized Christians. Indeed, we may readily see, that the ordinary rule of living, as we may judge of it from seeing how men live, is quite of another kind from the rule of truth. As long as they refrain from clear and notorious sins, and discharge certain clear and undoubted duties, men think themselves more or less at liberty to live in the rest of their behaviour as they like best. There are, as it were, certain buoys marking out particular shoals of sin, and these they must take care to steer clear of; but meanwhile, they have a free choice of navigating in a wide and easy channel, following their own fancy, and doing as much or as little therein as they please. And meanwhile, while practical truth is thus widely neglected among us, there is nothing which is more earnestly insisted upon as a virtue of the first necessity to the existence and well-being of society than veracity, or worded truth. Truth in words is held to be a virtue of such magnitude and necessity, that a clear breach of it ruins the character of a man amongst men more than almost any sin, however gross, which ordinary society knows. Worded truth, or veracity, precious as it is, is but as the outside, as the husk, of a more precious reality inside. Worded truth is the outside, and acted truth is the inner kernel. Oh, believe me, the essence of falsehood is deeper, deeper far than words! Believe me, it is a hollow philosophy which magnifies veracity, and lets the daily habits loose in self-indulgence and neglect: a miserable worldly code which exacts truth of words under the severest penalties, and makes it innocent and even honourable to depart, ever so far, from truth in deeds! No; the essence of truth is in duty, in heart-whole devotion of duty to the sacred law of God's truth. (*Bishop Moberly.*)

Vers. 22–36. After these things came Jesus and His disciples unto the land of Judæa (see also on ver. 30 for the whole paragraph).—*Jesus and John and their disciples:*—I. A HUMBLING EXAMPLE OF THE PETTY JEALOUSIES AND PARTY SPIRIT WHICH MAY EXIST AMONG PROFESSORS OF RELIGION (ver. 26). 1. This spirit is but too common in the churches. Men care more for the increase of their party than for the increase of Christianity, and cannot rejoice when it spreads outside of their own denomination or congregation. 2. True Christians must watch and pray against this spirit. It is contagious, injurious, and brings contempt on religion. Where-

ever good is done we should acknowledge it and be thankful (Phil. i. 18). II. A SPLENDID PATTERN OF TRUE AND GODLY HUMILITY. 1. John's conduct is contrasted with that of his disciples. (1) His principle is that acceptance with men is the gift of God (ver. 27). (2) He reminds his followers of his repeated declaration (ver. 28). (3) He informs them that his office and joy is only that of a bridegroom's friend (ver. 29). (4) He testifies to the coming greatness of Christ and his own eclipse. 2. This frame of mind is the highest degree of grace to which a man can attain. (1) God declares this to be the case (Peter v. 5). (2) This is seen in the cases of Abraham, Moses, Job, David, Daniel, Paul, and the Baptist. (3) The way to true honour is humility. No man was ever so praised by Christ as John. III. AN INSTRUCTIVE DECLARATION OF CHRIST'S HONOUR AND DIGNITY. 1. For the last time John testifies to Christ's dignity. Christ is—(1) The Bridegroom of the Church. (2) "Him that cometh from above." (3) One to whom the Spirit is given without measure. (4) One whom the Father loves. (5) One into whose hands all things are given. (6) One to believe in whom is life everlasting, and whom to reject is eternal ruin. 2. Let us hold the same views. (1) We can never make too much of Christ. We can easily think too much of church, sacraments, &c. (2) Christ only is worthy of all honour. IV. A BROAD ASSERTION OF THE NEARNESS OF THE SALVATION OF TRUE CHRISTIANS. 1. Salvation is not a future and distant privilege. The believer "hath" everlasting life. 2. Unbelief is a tremendous peril. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The Masters and the disciples*:—I. HOW MUCH OF HUMAN NATURE THERE EVER HAS BEEN AND IS EVERYWHERE AND THROUGH ALL TIME. Even with the Lord present and overseeing jealousies arose. II. HOW SMALL OFTENTIMES WERE AND ARE THE SUBJECTS OF QUESTIONING BETWEEN FOLLOWERS OF JESUS. On this occasion it was an unknown something about purifying which neither the Baptist nor the evangelist thought it worth while to name. Is it not humiliating that ecclesiastical history is largely a story of strife on the merest "mint and anise" as compared with those fundamentals wherein all true disciples are practically at one. A politician once sought to allay alarm about the invasion of India by sending a large map showing the vast distances and obstacles that would have to be overcome. So if men would only scan the height and depth and length and breadth of the work given to all who love the Lord they could never wrangle over petty things. III. HOW LITTLE JOHN'S DISCIPLES KNEW HIM OR HAD BEEN INFLUENCED BY HIS MINISTRY. Had they known him could they have imagined rivalry between him and Christ? Had they received his testimony about Christ, they must have known that appeal from what Christ elected to do was impossible. It must have saddened John to have to repeat his testimony again. Let the preacher and teacher be humbly patient in recognizing the transciency of the impression left by the most momentous truths and the necessity of their frequent repetition. IV. TRIVIAL AND UNWORTHY AS WAS THE OCCASION OF THIS QUESTIONING WE MUST REJOICE THAT IT CAME TO PASS. From this low level the Forerunner re-argues the whole position, and speaks out with a new volume and momentum all that lay in his mind and heart. Trivial circumstances may give rise to the most important disclosures. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) **John also was baptizing.**—*The ministry of John* was exercised—I. In the WILDERNESS OF JUDÆA, where he preached and also baptized (Matt. iii. 1; Mark i. 1–5; Luke iii. 3). II. IN PERÆA, east of Jordan at BETHANY (chap. i. 28). III. At ÆNON near to Salim. In these places he proclaimed Christ. 1. In the first by pre-announcing Him as the great Baptizer and Judge of all (Matt. iii. 11, 12). 2. In the second, by pointing Him out as the Lamb of God (chap. i. 19–28; iii. 26). 3. In the third by declaring Him to be the Bridegroom of the Church and by delivering the illustrious testimony here recorded. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Ænon near to Salim*:—Three miles east of Shechem, at the head of the great Wady Fârah, which has in all ages been the highway from the Damiet ford of the Jordan to Shechem, there are great springs marking this spot. They rise in open ground amidst bare and unattractive hills, and flow down the slope, through a skirting of oleanders, in a strong brook which grows deeper on its way from the addition of numerous small streams. The village of Salim is a wretched collection of small huts, square and flat-roofed, with a tree, large for Palestine, near them, enclosed within a stone wall for preservation, and with a few olives dotting the bare slopes. Looking westward, the eye crosses the great plain and travels up the valley of Shechem, but around Salim itself there is nothing at all attractive. To make the identification complete there is a village called Ainun four miles north of the principal stream. With abundant water flowing all the year round, a central position, free space for the crowds, and a situation on the edge of the descent to the Jordan, of

which the waters of the neighbourhood are, south of the plain of Esdrælon, the main tributary on the west, no position more favourable in every way could have been chosen by the Baptist for his work. That he once raised his earnest voice in regions now so silent and forlorn casts an interest over the landscape more powerful than it could otherwise have had, even had it possessed great natural attractions. (*C. Geikie, D.D.*) **Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.**—*The controversy about purifying*—I. AFFORDS AN EXAMPLE OF THE TENDENCY TO SINFUL DISPUTES UNDER THE MOST FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES. 1. The Lord and His messenger are the cause of this dispute. 2. The minds of the disputants were carnal. 3. Times of reformation specially breed such disputes. The gospel is then a new truth. Prejudices are excited and inflamed. 4. We must not be scandalized when such things occur. II. SHOWS THE INJURY WHICH ARISES FROM MISTAKEN VIEWS OF THE OBJECT INTENDED TO BE SERVED BY OUTWARD ORDINANCES. 1. The question seems to have been the comparative efficacy of John's baptism, the various Jewish washings, and probably Christ's. 2. Ecclesiastical rites may be substituted for Christ and His gospel. 3. Salvation may come without ritualism of any kind. III. TEACHES THE BANEFUL INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT OF SELF AND PARTY, SO COMMON IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH. 1. Certain Jews, grieved at the progress of the gospel, approach certain disciples of John and artfully endeavour to excite their minds to jealousy against Christ. 2. These come to John and try to inflame his envy by representing the universal popularity of Christ. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ attracts sinners:*—Among the several wonders of the loadstone this is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but, despising these, it draws the iron to it, one of the most inferior metals: thus Christ leaves the angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl, and He comes to poor sinful man, and draws him into His embraces. (*T. Watson.*) *The attractive power of Christ:*—A Christian mother was once showing her little girl, about five years old, a picture representing Jesus holding an infant in His arms, while the mothers were pushing their children towards Him. "There, Carrie," said her mother, "this is what I would have done with you if I had been there." "I wouldn't be pushed to Jesus," said little Carrie, with beautiful and touching earnestness; "I'd go to Him without pushing." (*Biblical Treasury.*) *Christ sufficient for all:*—"I come very often," said the pitcher one day to the spring, which it again approached to be filled with its pure water. "I hope I do not come too frequently, but I soon get emptied, and as often need to be replenished." "You are but one of a great many that come with the same errand," answered the flowing spring. "It is very generous of you to give unto all that come," said the pitcher, "and that, like myself, apply so frequently." "I never refuse any, and send none empty away," replied the spring, "and however large the number that I take, I am not at all impoverished. I draw in order to supply the wants of the thirsting, and whosoever will let him come." (*Bowden.*) *All men may come to Christ:*—There is enough in Jesus Christ for to serve us all. If two, or six, or twenty men be athirst, and they go to drink out of a bottle, while one is drinking the other envies, because he thinks there will not be enough for him too; but if a hundred be athirst, and go to the river, while one is drinking the other envies not, because there is enough for all. (*W. Bridge.*) **John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven.**—*John's joy fulfilled:*—I. JOHN ASCRIBES HIS POSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS TO THE DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY (ver. 27). What he says is true of temporal things, much more of spiritual things and the happy use of both. 1. John wished his disciples to entertain truthful views of his position. It was of God that he had been qualified for his work, and had been successful in it. God therefore could only say when it was done and give him his discharge. He was content to patiently await the issue. 2. From this it follows that envy of others reflects upon God. Those who rate against Moses rebelled against God. Backbiting, calumny, secret or open opposition to those whom God has made superior to us, comes under this category (*cf.* the cases of Miriam and of Aaron and of Korah). 3. To be dead to such a passion on John's principle, how precious! This grace distinguished Jonathan and Paul. II. JOHN'S DECLARATION THAT HIS PAST DOCTRINE WAS CONSISTENT WITH HIS PRESENT STATEMENT (ver. 28). 1. We may reasonably conclude that John was disappointed in his disciples. That all his teaching had been lost upon them was a humbling trial. If he had ever been tempted to exult over results this must have been a severe correction. Yet he must have felt unspeakable comfort that he could boldly appeal to their consciences for the character of his testimony. 2. Two things were ever prominent. (1) That he was not the Christ. Good cause

for this in the notions and expectations of his followers. He clearly saw the rock towards which they were drifting. (2) That he was the messenger of Christ—forerunning one more glorious than himself. That done, and Christ having arrived, his office ceased. 3. Truths so obvious must have silenced his too zealous followers. They could not now but remember what he had said. Let us learn that not hearing only, but profitable hearing is our duty. III. CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE CHURCH RELATIVELY TO JOHN'S (ver. 29). 1. Christ's relation to the Church is that of bridegroom. John here alludes to a common Old Testament emblem. The Jews understood the marriage of the first pair as typical, and so that of Abraham with Sarah, and Isaac with Rebecca. The marriage relation was that which God sustained to His people (Ezek. xvi.; Psa. xlv.; and Song of Solomon). 2. John ascribes to Christ the glory due to Him, and it is of vital interest that we should receive his testimony. Christ qualified Himself for entering into this alliance with us by sharing our nature while retaining His own. He entered upon it by special contract with the Father. He fulfilled every legal obligation, and "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." He participates with His people and provides for them, and whatever a faithful, tender husband might do, He has engaged to do and actually does. 3. John's relation was that of the Bridegroom's friend. The bridegroom, on all nuptial occasions, had his "friend," whose office was to conduct the bride to the bridegroom. Thus, Moses was God's "friend," when he brought Israel into the wilderness. Similarly John was, and all ministers are Christ's "friends" to bring the Church to him. IV. THE NECESSARY ISSUE OF JOHN'S MINISTRY AND CHRIST'S (ver 30). The course of Christ was that of the sun in the firmament. John's that of a lamp to shine on a dark path until the orb of day appeared. In the consummation of this ministry John rejoiced. (*Ibid.*) *John and Jesus*:—The points of contrast between Christ and the Baptist, as stated by the latter in these five verses, are five-fold; thus: He is the Christ: I am but the forerunner. He is the Bridegroom: I am but the friend of the Bridegroom. He must increase: I must decrease. He is from heaven: I am of the earth. He speaks what He has seen and heard in heaven: I speak of the earth. With the last of these compare a somewhat similar opposition in Heb. xii. 25. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) **I am not the Christ . . . I am sent before Him.**—*John first, then Jesus*:—I. WHAT DID JOHN PREACH? 1. He delivered the whole law against sin; even in the case of Herod (Mark vi. 18–20) and of the Pharisees (Luke iii. 7). He showed how the law extended to the words and thoughts of men (Matt. iii. 8, 9). He counselled circumspection in the walks of ordinary life, with a view to the final account. Thus he aroused the consciences of the people. 2. He made a demand for immediate repentance, and its fruits in a new life (Matt. iii. 2). 3. He heralded Jesus as the Messiah predicted of old (Matt. iii. 3). In this way he connected Moses with Christ. For himself he took pains to withdraw and resist every claim (chap. i. 20). Thus he gave a forward look to all his denunciations of sin in view of the true baptism cleansing from it. 4. He announced the special office of Jesus as the Redeemer of men. Thus he prepared the way for a gospel which based all its invitations of peace on the doctrine of sacrifice. II. WHAT DID JESUS TEACH WHEN IT CAME TO HIS TURN? 1. Christ testified to the entire accuracy of John's doctrine. He accepted the ministry of His forerunner without one question. 2. He proclaimed the full necessity of an atonement. Not even John exceeded Christ in denouncing sin and requiring renewal of heart. 3. He declared that the necessary sacrifice was now to be accomplished by Himself (ver. 16). 4. He thus raised no new issues between man and God; but rather narrowed all the old into one: He made it clear that faith was the instrument of salvation (Chron. vi. 28, 29). He offered the freest gospel, but He left no chance of mistake to those who might suppose a simple issue was a weak one (ver. 18; Mark xvi. 16). III. THE ORDER BETWEEN THE TEACHING OF JOHN AND JESUS. John's came earliest in fact and logical necessity. 1. The historic position of the two men is enough to show all that is here claimed. Our Lord's life was part of His teachings, and each step depended on whatever steps went before. John's work was a necessary and solemn prerequisite to the work of Jesus. 2. Their methods of procedure were similar, John presented the law first, then the gospel; but his office was plainly to press the law into prominence. Jesus presented the law first, then the gospel: but His office was to bring the gospel into prominence. In both cases the law came earliest. 3. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable. Law work precedes gospel work in all God's dealing with souls. IV. PRACTICAL INFERENCES. 1. We see why religious instruction sometimes proves inefficacious; Jesus is preached without John. The Lord does not

seem in the still, small voice, because men miss the preparation of wind, earthquake, and fire. 2. Why inquirers are so slow in finding peace. There has been nothing to awake conscience. 3. Why there is so much of unrest and misgiving among Christ's people. They have no intelligent sense of Christ's loyal work in bearing the curse of the law for them. 4. Why backsliding is so frequent as the sin of converts. Somebody has been daubing them with untempered mortar. 5. We see how the new life begins and continues according to the revealed plan (Rom. v. 1, 2; viii. 1, 3). (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*)

Vers. 29, 30. **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom . . . standeth and heareth.**—*The Bridegroom and His friend*:—I. THE PECULIAR TOUCHES IN THE BAPTIST'S PORTRAIT HERE EXHIBITED. 1. Elsewhere he appears like Elijah flashing in terrific flames of anger and rebuke in the sins of the age; another Moses with a stern countenance bearing the table of God's law. Here we find him, after he had baptized the Lord, shining with reflected rays such as streamed from the dove-like glory. It is an evangelical lustre which encircles him now. He is more apostle than prophet. His words are inspired with Christian faith. 2. In other passages he appears as an ascetic. He dwells in the desert. His disciples fast. He carries the burden of the Lord. Here he rejoices greatly, because of the Bridegroom's voice. The Man of Sorrows rejoiced in Spirit; so also did His forerunner here. 3. Elsewhere the Baptist is a popular preacher. People went in crowds, not merely to listen to, but to live with the great revivalist. In all such excitement there is a power of reaction upon the author of it. He gathers back in his own soul the influences which, torrent like, have been rushing out of him, but when the ebb comes and the congregations thin; when another and greater prophet eclipses the lesser, whose mission has been fulfilled, is not that an hour of trial? testing the purity an disinterestedness of him whose popularity is on the wane. John was paling before the brighter light, and some reminded him of the change going on. How noble was his conduct! What an example for ministers and all men! II. THE REFERENCE OF THE TEXT TO CHRIST AND CHRISTIAN MINISTERS IN GENERAL. 1. The relation which Christ sustains to the Church. This imagery has been abused, but there is a precious truth in it which the evangelist loved to expound (Rev. xix. 6–9). Christ's love to His people is pure, intense, everlasting, expressed in a covenant inviolable as the marriage bond. He gave Himself for them; all He is and has is made over to them, and the due response on their part is the consecration of their hearts and lives to Him. 2. The true minister of Christ is the friend of the Bridegroom. Christ's disciples are more than servants—servants lifted up into the sphere of friendship; and never does a preacher fulfil his office in a more beautiful way than when he feels that he is not only in service, but in fellowship—not only that he has an obligation but a privilege, "He standeth and heareth." The minister of the gospel is a listener and an echo. He catches voices from the other world, and repeats them—like Samuel "Speak Lord!" &c., like David, "Come all ye that fear God"; like the Cherubim bending over the ark to learn "things which the angels desire to look into"; like the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach. 3. In reference to the Divine Bridegroom, the minister's motto should ever be, "He must increase, and I must decrease," words which testify to the growing glory of Christ and the disposition of faithful friends to lose themselves in Him. (1) Ministers must not preach themselves or seek to display their own powers and attainments. Self must be reduced to a minimum that He may be all in all. (2) They should seek to be forgotten, absorbed in Him, getting behind Him, "nor showing even the tip of one's little finger;" (3) and not only by speaking, but by living. (*J. Stoughton, D.D.*) *The Bridegroom and Bride with their retinue*:—I. HERE IS AN INTERESTING PORTRAITURE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH AS THE GLORIOUS BRIDEGROOM AND HIS ILLUSTRIOUS BRIDE. 1. Christ is the Bridegroom (Psa. xlv.). 2. The Church the Bride (ibid). 3. The union of the Bridegroom and the Bride. "He that hast." Which has reference to the fact that she is Christ's (1) in the purpose of His good pleasure; (2) By the price paid for her redemption; (3) By the voluntary surrender of herself to Him for ever. 4. The entireness of the union. II. A STRIKING REPRESENTATION OF A PART OF THE BRIDEGROOM'S RETINUE. John well deserved to be called the friend of Christ, in that he was wholly devoted to the interests of his Master. He represents the Christian ministry. 1. In its character. A minister should be the friend of Christ. Can those be such who deny His Divinity and outrage His laws? 2. In its duties. To "hear the Bridegroom's voice," receive His instructions, and

carry them into execution. 3. Its pleasures. "He rejoiceth greatly." These pleasures are not those of literature, science, art, &c. but, (1) in communion with Christ. (2) Working for Christ. (3) Reward by Christ. (*J. Clayton, jun.*) *Christ the Bridegroom of the Church* :—As such He is represented throughout the Scripture (Matt. xxv.; Eph. v.; Song of Solomon, and Revelation in particular). I. A BRIDEGROOM IS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE STATE IN WHICH HE IS, BUT DESIRES TO EXCHANGE IT AND BE MARRIED TO ANOTHER. So the Lord of Glory was not satisfied to be alone. He was not complete until "the fulness of His body" was united to Him in everlasting and wedded love. II. A BRIDEGROOM, IF A DUTIFUL AND AFFECTIONATE SON, CONSULTS CONFIDENTIALLY WITH HIS PARENTS. So the Son of God "came forth from the Father," "not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him." III. AN OBJECT OF AFFECTION IS NECESSARILY AND NATURALLY FIXED UPON BY THE BRIDEGROOM, WHOSE AFFECTIONS HE DESIRES TO WED TO HIMSELF. Christ fastened His love not on angels but on sinners (Deut. vii.). The earthly bridegroom, however, fastens his affection on something that is attractive, and loves because there is something worthy of his love. IV. WHEN THE BRIDEGROOM HAS FOUND THE OBJECT OF HIS AFFECTIONS HE NATURALLY VISITS HER, ARRAYS HIMSELF IN SUITABLE APPAREL, AND COURTS HER FELLOWSHIP AND SOCIETY. Christ came from the height of glory to woo His Bride. V. WHEN A BRIDEGROOM GOES TO COURT HIS BRIDE, HE NATURALLY ASKS HER IF HER AFFECTIONS ARE DISENGAGED; and if they are engaged to one unworthy of her, warns her of the consequences. So Christ implores His Church to disengage herself from the world. VI. THE BRIDEGROOM USES ARGUMENTS TO INDUCE THE BRIDE TO ACCEPT HIS OFFERS. So our Lord tells His bride of the dowry wherewith He will enrich her, and the heaven He will make her home. VII. THE BRIDEGROOM WILL WAIT LONG BEFORE HE GIVES OVER. Christ stands at the door and knocks. VIII. THE TRUE BRIDEGROOM SEEKS THE BRIDE NOT FOR HER PORTION, BUT HERSELF. This must be the case with Christ; for our very righteousness is but as filthy rags. IX. IF REPULSED, THE BRIDEGROOM WILL USE VARIOUS PLANS AND MEANS TO INDUCE HIS DESIRED BRIDE TO COMPLY WITH HIS REQUEST. 1. He will employ friends, as Christ does His ministers. 2. He will send letters full of persuasive reasoning. Christ sends His gospels. 3. He will send love tokens. Christ has given us Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In conclusion: notice some points of difference between an earthly and the heavenly bridegroom. 1. In this world there is much of self to determine the choice of a man—to render life more happy, &c. But Christ was wholly disinterested. 2. In this world, when a bridegroom has found his bride, he cannot add one feature to her beauty or accomplishments; but Christ, when He takes His bride, adds to her all the glories of heaven, while He removes from her all traces of earth. 3. In this world the love of the bridegroom, who is most affectionate at first, may cool by years. Christ "having loved His own, loves them unto the end." Mark, then (1) The debt of gratitude we owe to Christ. (2) The great guilt and ingratitude of rejecting the offers of the heavenly bridegroom. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*) *The Bridegroom and the Bride*:—I. THE PRIVILEGE OF CHRIST. Christ, as is proper to Him, is the Head and Husband of the Church. A bride hath but one bridegroom; a wife but one husband (Eph. v. 23; Col. i. 18; Hosea i. 11). Christ has this right by virtue of redemption. As the Israelites had a right to marry their redeemed captives (Deut. xxi.), so Christ, having redeemed us from the law (Rom. vii.), hath thereby a right to espouse us to Himself. II. THE PRIVILEGE OF THE CHURCH. The union between Christ and the Church is not imaginary, but real (Gen. ii. 23, 24, *cf.* Eph. v. 30–32). And, therefore, as in marriage, to show the nearness of it, the name of the husband is given to the wife (Isa. iv. 1), so the name of Christ is given to the Church (1 Cor. xii. 12). III. THE FURTHER OPENING OF THIS DOCTRINE. 1. How this contract and marriage is made up. By the mutual consent of both parties (1) Christ gives His consent. (*a*) By so securing our nature that there might be congruity and correspondence (Heb. ii. 11). (2) By giving us His Spirit, which is His love token (Eph. i. 14; 1 John iii. 24). (3) The Church gives her assent by faith; the hand whereby we wed and handfast ourselves to Him. 2. The dowry and jointure—"All things" (1 Cor. iii. 21–23; Eph. v. 30; Rom. viii. 32). Whatsoever the husband hath the wife hath. (1) His own righteousness. We, who have no righteousness of our own, being married to Christ, shine with His beams (1 Cor. i. 30; Ezek. xvi. 8, 9: Rev. xix. 7, 8). (2) The graces of sanctification (1 Cor. i. 30; John i. 16; Ezek. xvi. 9–13). Herein Christ goes beyond earthly bridegrooms, who cannot impart their beauty to their brides (Ezek. xvi. 14). (3) Acceptance of our services (Isa. lxii. 5). (4) Comfort in our infirmities. (5) Access to Christ. (6) Heaven

itself (Psa. xlv. 15; Rev. xxi. 9-11; Hosea ii. 19). 3. The duties of the bride. (1) Thankfulness to Christ for so great honour and love (1 Sam. xviii. 18: Psa. xlv. 10; Ezek. xvi. 8). (2) Constant and faithful love to cleave to Him with all our hearts. (*a*) Forsaking Him not in any afflictions. (*b*) Admitting no strange love. (3) Answerable carriage (1 Pet. iii. 3, 4). (4) Longing for the marriage day (Rev. xxii. 17). (5) Always preparing for the marriage. IV. THE MINISTERS PRIVILEGE AND DUTY. 1. To offer and persuade the marriage to the Church. 2. To fit and prepare the Church for Christ (2 Cor. xi. 2). 3. To hold fast the Church to Christ, being jealous over her for Christ's sake (2 Cor. xi. 2, 3). 4. If the Church break her marriage covenant, to labour to reduce her affections again to Christ (Jer. iii. 1). 5. To rejoice to hear the bridegroom's voice, and to make way for Him. (*J. Dyke.*) *The royal espousals:*—I. THE SPOUSE IS CHRIST. II. THE WEDLOCK is faith. III. THE PLACE OF THE WEDLOCK is the Church. IV. THE PLEDGE of it remission of sins, and the fellowship of the Spirit. V. THE CONSUMMATION—eternal life. *The joy of the bride:*—I. THE PARTIES SPOKEN OF. 1. The bride—the Church (Rev. xxi. 2; Hosea ii. 19; Song of Solomon iv. 9). (1) She is not well born, but of the fallen and guilty family of Adam. (2) Not rich. No tempting dowry does she bring. She owes ten thousand talents, and he who takes her must answer for all she owes. 2. The Bridegroom—Christ Jesus (2 Cor. xi. 2; Matt. xxv. 1; Song of Solomon *passim*). (1) He is of exalted rank. A king's son: Prince of the kings of the earth: "Thy Maker is thy husband (Isa. lxii. 5). (2) He is rich. "It hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." II. THE DOCTRINE concerning the parties spoken of—the bridegroom hath the bride. 1. By destination. In some countries brides are betrothed as children: in this case the bride was betrothed before she was born. Hence, the Son of God was glad when the earth was made. He rejoiced over the spot which was to be the birthplace of His spouse, to which He was to come in due time to seek her, and whisper the astonishing avowal, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." This marriage, at any rate, was "made in heaven." 2. By His own choice. A bride by destination is not always the bridegroom's choice. King's sons are often obliged to marry against their choice. A bride by destination merely may, therefore, well have misgivings. But here is no constraint on the bridegroom, "The Lord hath chosen Zion." 3. By purchase. An eastern usage is for a bridegroom to pay a price for a bride, *e.g.*, Jacob. So Christ purchased the Church. Like Jacob, He became a willing servant. The years of service for Rachel seemed unto Jacob but a few days for the love he had to her. So Christ, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross. By the service of pain and death He bought His Church "with a price." 4. By preparation. Esther's preparation lasted a year. So with the Daughter of Zion. The grace of the Holy Spirit is the oil of myrrh, &c., by which she is purified, and becomes beautiful. This preparation is by the bridegroom as well as for Him. His the fountain that washes every stain, and the clothing of wrought gold. By Him she is sanctified that He may present her unto Himself a glorious Church. 5. By mutual contract. When the day of espousals, the day of conversion comes, it is a day of secret interchanges of love never to be forgotten. What are the stipulations? (1) On the bride's part: To renounce and reject all Christ's rivals, sin, the world, and the flesh, and to love Him with her undivided heart. (2) On the Bridegroom's part. (*a*) He endows her with all He is and has. (*b*) He engages to visit her, and it is no fault of His if He is not at her side at all times. (*c*) He engages to provide for all her wants. (*d*) He engages to defend her. (*e*) He engages to take her home with Him for ever in the many mansions of His Father's house. (*Andrew Grey.*) *The friend of the bridegroom:*—No simile could have been more beautiful and true. In the drama of Syrian love and marriage, the friend of the bridegroom plays a conspicuous part, doing kindly, unselfish service; yet earning no other reward than that of feeling how much he has added to the happiness of a man whom he loves. Sometimes this friend of the bridegroom has to select the bride. At all times he has had to take the oaths of espousal, and to present the mohar, the bridal gift. For the virgin's year, separating the act of betrothal from that of the bringing home, he is the only messenger between youth and maid. With many a laugh and jest, with many a sign and token, he had to pass from the unknown husband to the unknown wife; watching over their common rights, and feeding with his praises their mutual love; for during that virgin's year, the husband, though he may possess much of a husband's power, and may even put his wife to death for wrongs against his bed, is never allowed to see her face. His married joy and sorrow come to him only through his chosen friend. Until the day

of bringing home, when the veil of the bride is to be lifted up, and with a cry of rapture the husband is allowed to gaze into her eyes and kiss her on the mouth, the function of the bridegroom's friend knows no pause. Then the bridegroom's heart is glad, and the friend rejoices when he hears the bridegroom's voice. (*Dixon's "Holy Land."*) *The friend of the bridegroom:*—John was fitly called a friend to this Kingly Bridegroom for four reasons. First, *ex castitate*, for his chastity (See Prov. xxii. 11). John was so "pure in heart," and "gracious in speech," that he had the love of the Bridegroom Christ, though, for the same cause, he felt the wrath of the adulterer Herod. Secondly, *ex militudine morum*. Likeness of manners makes friendship. They were so like, that they were often taken for one the other. They were both *valde humiles*, very humble (comp. Psa. xxii. 7, with St. John i. 23), yet a "worm" hath some substance; "a voice" is in a manner nothing. Thirdly, they were friends *ex similitudine voluntatis;* they both willed the same thing (comp. S. Mark i. 15, with St. Matt. iii. 2, and St. Mark x. 19, with St. Luke iii. 13, 14). Their faces looked one towards another (Exod. xxv. 20), and they embraced each other with their wings; and John (*Angelus ante faciem*) looked with joy on the face of the great Angel, embracing His doctrine, and agreeing with Him in all things. Fourthly, He was the Bridegroom's friend *ex-officio*, by his place: for as the *Paranymphus* (so the fathers call John) prepares the bride, with all fitting instruction and ornament, against her spouse come to marry her, so John came to instruct, adorn, and fit the Church for the receiving of her Living Spouse, Christ Jesus. (*W. Austin.*) *Christ the bridegroom announced by prophecy:*—Such a Bridegroom all the prophets had, in one form of speech or another, been discoursing of. They had proved that they were dealing in no metaphors—pouring out no Oriental rhapsodies; for their revelation of Him had been connected with the homeliest exhortations to domestic union and purity; they had affirmed the relation of the particular husband and wife to have its foundation in this higher relation; they had treated all branches of the marriage vow as indications and results of the adultery of the race to its unseen husband. And though the race meant in their minds Israel, the people whom God had chosen, and with whom He had made a covenant, yet their language was always too large for their limitations. When the King, who was to reign over the Gentiles, should be revealed as the glory of His people Israel, He would certainly be revealed as the Light to lighten all the nations; *i.e.*, whensoever He appeared as the Christ of God, He would certainly appear as the Bridegroom of humanity. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Christ the Bridegroom:*—As a man leaves his father and mother that he may join himself to his wife, so Christ surrenders His heavenly glory that He may become one flesh with His Church: He did it when He became flesh, and He does it still in the Lord's Supper, until He comes fully to satisfy the bride's longing for Him. Oh, what will it be when on that day the cry is made: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The love of Christ in espousing the Church:*—It magnifies the pure and endless love of Christ towards His Church, that He should so love us, as to make us His beloved spouse. Men marry commonly either for beauty, or person, or wealth, or parentage. Beauty often sways men's affections, where nought else. And where beauty and person are wanting, yet wealth and riches will mend all. Yet where all these are wanting, yet sometimes good manners, education, nature, and grace are means to make women gracious in men's eyes, and these are spokesmen to woo for them. All these, or some of these, commonly are the cement of men's affections. But, behold, Christ's love is pure love; we had nothing in us to move Him, or win or woo Him, neither person, parts, portion, beauty or grace in us to draw His affections (Hos. ii. 19). His own mercy was our spokesman; His compassion of our woe wooed for us. Not our parentage (Ezek. xvi. 3), not our wealth or credit (Ezek. xvi. 5), not our beauty. See what goodly fair pieces we were (Ezek. xvi. 6). In every one argument of loathing, and cause of distaste. He loved not us because we loved Him first, for we hated Him: not for our portion, for we were miserable, and poor, and naked (Rev. iii). Not for our beauty (Rev. iii. 17; Ezek. xvi. 7). (*J. Dyke.*) *The purpose of being:*—1. Every man has his own life-work as truly as the Baptist had his. 2. The importance of knowing what this is is obvious. 3. This, moreover, is (1) ascertainable—by Divine direction. (2) Accomplishable—by Divine help. (3) Blessed. By fulfilling the purpose of our being we shall realize—I. THE JOY OF HAVING DONE SOME TRUE THING. Our sleep is more restful after a day of worthy toil. The man who works apart from the Divine plan does nothing satisfactory or satisfying. Our Master found work most joyous—

"My meat is to do," &c. II. THE JOY OF HAVING DONE OUR OWN WORK. There is blessedness in knowing that we are filling the place appointed by God, however lowly (Gal. vi. 4). III. THE JOY OF ANTICIPATING OUR REWARD. Much of this is reaped in this world, but most is "reserved in heaven" for those who are faithful on earth. IV. THE JOY OF WITNESSING THE INFLUENCE OF OUR WORK, in the comfort of the sorrowful, the strengthening of the weak, the saving of the lost. V. THE JOY OF HAVING DONE SOMETHING IN WORKING OUT THE PLAN OF GOD. That plan, the restoration of fallen humanity, seems far too magnificent for us to take any part in it. Yet this is, and will through eternity be, the Christian worker's joy. (*W. Jones.*) *John's joy at His Master's increase* :—Envy is a pain and torment in the heart at the sight of superior excellence and happiness. It is most dangerous. "For envy" our Master was delivered up. We find it among good people. The disciples of John were envious for their Master. We are to guard against this and subdue it, and are incited thereto by the noble example of the Baptist. I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND WHEN JOHN SAYS, "HE MUST INCREASE." 1. That He would increase in the esteem and affection of all who knew Him. 2. That He would increase in the number of His followers and the extent of His empire. 3. That the happiness of Christ's subjects would increase. II. BY WHAT MEANS ARE THE INTERESTS OF CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM PROMOTED. 1. By the diffusion of knowledge. 2. By the preaching of the gospel. 3. By the influences of the Holy Spirit. III. HOW DO WE KNOW THAT HE MUST INCREASE? 1. Because of the natural tendency of religion itself. 2. Because of the zealous efforts of Christ's people. 3. Because the Lord has said it. IV. HOW IS THE PROSPECT OF THE INCREASE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM A SOURCE OF JOY. 1. Satan does not rejoice, nor infidels, wicked men, nor even nominal professors. It affords true joy however to—2. All who are become true converts of Christ. 3. All God's people. 4. All Christ's ministers. 5. The angels of God. 6. Jesus Himself. Conclusion: 1. A word to all enemies of Christ—you cannot oppose Christ with success, and without injury. 2. A word to the friends of Christ—how encouraging to know that we follow a Captain who shall not fail nor be discouraged. 3. A word to ministers—(1) Young ministers—you must increase, safely, humbly, universally, unostentatiously. (2) Fathers—you must decrease. Learn this lesson so as to profit by it, and be encouraged to know that our work will not fail when we do. (*John Stephens.*)

Ver. 30. **He must increase, but I must decrease.** I. JOHN'S MAGNANIMITY. His character was here put to the proof—1. For it is natural to envy the growing reputation of others, and to be jealous when it seems likely to trench upon our own. We speak, and justly, of this as littleness of mind; but it belongs to most, if not to all; and he wins a fine triumph who can be contented, provided that the cause of God be advanced. In God's service, by its very nature, God's glory, and not personal distinction and aggrandisement, is the thing aimed at; and there is therefore ground for expecting, if this end is reached, there will be gladness in all Christians, whoever may be the honoured agent. Alas, for the infirmity of human nature! 2. It is here that St. John's character is displayed under its most striking aspect. We can admire him as he lives a severe life in the desert, and as he stands before Herod; but nowhere does he appear so transcendently great as here. II. THE TRUTHS WHICH JOHN INTENDED TO CONVEY. 1. The temporary character of his own mission, and the enduring character of Christ's. He well knew that he had not taught the truths that were to be revealed under the new dispensation; that his baptism had been but introductory; that the mortification of the flesh and the performance of certain duties which he had urged could not secure men from wrath; and that, consequently, unless he were to be followed by one charged with a clear message of mercy, his own would be fruitless and leave the world where he found it. And, therefore, it was far from his wish that he should not be displaced by Christ. It was his glory to feel that when the Sun of Righteousness, to which he had served as the morning star, should arise, he himself would decline and sink out of sight. 2. Personal religion: what it is, and how alone it can flourish. The Gospel is a system, constructed on purpose to abase the sinner and exalt the Saviour. The glories of Christ are discerned in the same degree as our own vileness and depravity. John's confession is what every true Christian must say. The sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, the cleansing power of His blood, the prevalence of His intercession—these must be increasingly recognized. Though He cannot become greater in Himself, He must become greater in our esteem. 3. The words are prophetic. He echoed the prediction of Isaiah: "Of the increase of His govern-

ment there shall be no end." Here we launch on an ocean without a shore' (*H. Melville, B.D.*) *The servant and the Son*:—I. THE UNCONSCIOUS GREATNESS OF THE SERVANT. 1. His lofty contentment (ver. 27, *cf.* 1 Chron. xxix. 14; Psa. cxxix. 1, 2; Dan. iv. 35; Acts. xvii. 26) a maxim of universal application, in the realm of nature (Rom. xi. 36) and in the sphere of grace (1 Cor. iv. 7; xii. 6; James i. 17); specially significant with reference to individual success, in the world (Psa. lvii. 2), in the Church (2 Cor. iii. 5). Christ's popularity, so far from exciting John to jealousy, filled him with holy peace; exhibiting the spirit afterwards exemplified by Christ (Matt. xi. 26; xxvi. 39) and by Paul (Acts xxi. 14). 2. His profound humility (ver. 28). This man, who was in danger of being mistaken for the Messiah, and whom Christ pronounces the greatest of men, forms the most lowly estimate of himself throughout, in chap. i. as here. 3. His absolute unselfishness (ver. 29). Had he been inflamed with ambition, he could have played the *rôle* of a Messianic pretender, and snatched a crown; or have founded a rabbinical school; or at least drawn around him an independent gathering. Instead of this, the end of his aspiration and effort was to espouse the nation to its Lover, and then stand aside. John pleased not himself, but lived for his Lord. 4. His cheerful resignation (ver. 30). This was just what he desired, for what he had lived; he could, therefore, view Christ's popularity and his own supercession with delight. II. THE TRANSCENDENT GLORY OF THE SON (ver. 31–36). 1. His pre-existent Being. The historical appearing cannot be explained on natural principles. 2. His universal sovereignty "above all"—all persons, all things—in the dignity of His person, the elevation of His character, the vastness of His power, the absoluteness of His authority and sway. They are His creatures, for He made them (chap. i. 3, 10; 1 Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iii. 9; Col. i. 16, 17; Heb. i. 2); His property (ver. 35); His subjects (Psa. viii. 6; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; Eph. i. 22; Heb. ii. 8). 3. HIS AUTHORITATIVE TESTIMONY. John exhibits this as resting on three things, which mark him off from ordinary witness bearers: (1) A direct vision of the truth (ver. 32). (2) A special commission to reveal the truth (ver. 34). (3) A complete impartation to Him of the truth (ver. 34). 4. His supreme Divinity, implied in what has already been said and in His Sonship. 5. His twofold work. (1) Salvation. (2) Condemnation. Lessons: 1. The secret of true greatness: humility before Christ. 2. The insignificance of human glory compared with that of Christ. 3. The dignity of ministerial service: that of acting as Christ's friend. 4. The pathway to renown: to efface one's self for the sake of Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The increase of Christ*:—I. WHY DO WE, IN THE FACE OF UNBELIEF AND ADVERSE CRITICISM, ENDORSE THE ASSERTION THAT CHRIST MUST INCREASE? 1. Because this is the design of God the Father. He has commissioned His Son to destroy the works of the devil, and to fill the world with His glory (Isa. ix. 7; Psa. ii. 7, 8; Phil. ii. 10). Failure in this is impossible. For what Divine design has failed? (1) When our first parents sinned, He promised a Deliverer. Let the manger, the cross, and the open tomb say whether He failed. (2) Did He fail when He threatened the Flood? (3) Did He fail to give Canaan to Abraham's seed, although Egypt and five centuries lay between the promise and the fulfilment? 2. Because the forces employed are adequate. (1) Love. To what is not human love, imperfect as it is not equal? But this force is the love of God, making, redeeming, and preparing heaven for man. (2) The Holy Spirit, who has power to convert every sinner upon earth. 3. The Holy Scriptures. Ask Mohammedanism why it fears the Bible? Because the Koran, when it comes in contact with it, loses its power. Ask Romanism. Because the power of priestcraft dies in its presence, and the chains of superstition are sundered. Is the Bible a power? Ask the fires in which its enemies have endeavoured to burn it. While the writings of Porphyry, Julian, Hume, Voltaire, are lost or forgotten, where is the Bible? Wherever there is light. These, with their adjuncts, are adequate to the consummation of the text. II. WHAT DOES THIS INCREASE MEAN? 1. Individual felicity. Examine the experience of all who have fully embraced Christ. With this increase the circle of those enjoying happiness will extend. 2. Social elevation. The increase of Christ subdues the savage in man's breast, make marriage honourable, child-life happy, elevates woman, liberates the slave, provides refuges for the homeless, &c. 3. National advancement. Look at once famous empires, and compare them with the condition of countries in which Christ has increase. III. HOW IS THIS INCREASE TO BE SECURED? 1. By individual effort and influence (chap. i. 40–51). One of the conditions of Christ's increase in the heart is to contribute to His increase in the world. 2. By organised advance upon the strongholds of darkness. (*A. B. Chambers, LL.B.*) John was one of

God's nobility. Christ was deeply impressed with his intellectual, moral, and even professional greatness. The commanding proof of this is his state of heart and his conduct relative to the Messiah. The popularity of Jesus perplexed and annoyed John's disciples, but it made him profoundly glad. As a friend of the Bridegroom, the Bridegroom's voice was to him the sweetest music. I. "I MUST DECREASE." John was not thinking of himself—1. As subject to the law of decay and death. We are all subject to that, good and bad; and in the article of temporal death there was no difference between John and Jesus. 2. As an immortal being. His path shone more and more unto the perfect day. We can put no limit to the growth of holy intelligencies. 3. As being held in lesser esteem in the future. He is thought as highly of now as he was then; and the Master passed upon him the highest eulogium, and this Christians accept. 4. But that his authority and influence as the forerunner, or a religious reformer, would of necessity be taken up and absorbed by the higher authority and influence of the Messiah. After Christ's entrance, there was nothing for John but to point to him. "Behold the Lamb of God" now took the place of "Repent." Christ's rise was unavoidably John's fall; and to no one was it clearer or more welcome than John. It would have been a serious thing for John as a sinner and as a forerunner had this not been the case. But his influence was only relatively lost as a river flowing into the sea. II. "HE MUST INCREASE." About this there is a glorious indefiniteness. John did not go into details as to the amount and manner. All he says is that it was a moral necessity. 1. When we take into account the marvellous progress already made, we can see that "Christ *shall* see the travail of his soul," &c. The leaven must go working on. The issue of the great contest between Christ and Satan is not uncertain. "He *must* reign," &c. 2. Some Christians cannot see this as they look on hindrances, corrupt institutions, depraved customs, false systems, inert and inconsistent Christians; but Christ *must* increase. 3. Not that God will ever compel men. All that the Gospel wants is a fair chance; and this it will eventually secure for itself. 4. The advance of Christianity is undoubted, although it has receded in certain places. 5. The real progress is much greater than the seeming progress. The atmosphere of certain countries has become impregnated with Christian elements, and their inhabitants cannot help breathing it. 6. Humanity needs Christ, and Christ is adapted to humanity. So much so, that the two *must* coalesce. A strong confirmation of the Baptist's saying. (*G. Cross.*) *The increase of Christ*:—I. AN IRREFRAGABLE TRUTH. 1. That Christ must still increase would appear probable even though we had no express assurances of it. (1) God has abolished a partial dispensation and established one suitable to all mankind. (2) Christ has made by His atonement a satisfaction for the sins of all. (3) Therefore we naturally believe and hope and desire that the tidings of salvation will be carried to all for whom He was given. 2. But we have stronger grounds—the plain and unequivocal promises of God—and are therefore firmly persuaded. Listen to David (Psa. xxii. 27, lxxii. 8, 11, lxxxvi. 9). To Isaiah (ii. 2, xl. 5, xi. 9). To Daniel (vii. 13, 14, 27). To Malachi (i. 11). To John (Rev. xiv. 6, xi. 15). 3. Can these promises fail? If so; owing to what? Want of wisdom? Want of power? Want of faithfulness? (Num. xxiii. 19). 4. Resting, then, on the promises of a God omniscient, almighty, faithful, the Church may bid defiance to all her enemies (Isa. viii. 9, 10). II. AS A SOURCE OF CONSOLATION. 1. Can a man inflamed with love to God fail to be grieved as he views the idolatry of the heathen and the sins of nominal Christendom? His mind can find no rest but in the assurance of the increase of Christ. 2. This truth is no less effectual to heal those wounds which proceed from love to the Saviour as it contemplates His present wide-spread rejection. 3. The lover of mankind is comforted by the thought that the increase of Christ will exterminate the rampant miseries over which he groans. III. A DIRECTORY OF DUTY. 1. We should pray earnestly. 2. Labour diligently. 3. Give liberally. (*E. D. Griffin, D.D.*) *The increase of Christ*:—I. THE ULTIMATE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD TO CHRIST IS A MATTER OF INDUBITABLE CERTAINTY. 1. Many things render this probable. (1) The introduction of a system adapted to the wants of the whole race. (2). The known kindness of Jehovah. (3) The amazing apparatus of the Gospel. 2. The prophecies render it certain. II. THIS GREAT MORAL REVOLUTION WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY ORDINARY MEANS OF HUMAN INSTRUMENTALITY UNDER THE BLESSING OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT. 1. Not by miracles. 2. Not by a Millennial dispensation. 3. But by the preaching of the gospel. III. AMONG THE MEANS MISSIONARY SOCIETIES HOLD A HIGH AND DISTINGUISHED PLACE—not excluding individual efforts. (*J. A. James.*) *Spiritual increase*:—

I. This is true of CHRIST HIMSELF—take His miracles, *e.g.*—beginning with water turned into wine and culminating at the Resurrection. II. This is true of His CHURCH. At first a few persons meeting in an upper room, now in millions and still there is room. Increase will be promoted by—1. Preaching. 2. A good example. 3. Prayer. III. This is true of CHRISTIANS. We must grow in grace. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Great workers must be content to die and be replaced by others*:—It is a humbling lesson to human vanity and tends to check the growth of self-importance to consider how well the world will go on when we are laid in the dust and no longer partake in the direction of its affairs. Leaves fall in autumn! trees are felled in the spring! but the next vernal season renews the foliage. Another age replaces the veteran oak removed by the axe or the tempest, and the forest still presents its broad expanse and deep shade to the eye of the traveller. So it is with the Church of God. Its members and its ministers die; but others are baptised for the dead and fill up their vacant seats in the spiritual house. (*J. A. James.*) John here figures himself by the moon, whose light wanes and decreases when the month is drawing to a close, and when the morning light of the sun begins to break forth; and he figures Jesus Christ by the sun, which is to eclipse and destroy his brightness. John the Baptist, the witness of Jesus Christ, is justly figured by the moon, which is called the faithful witness in heaven; being the witness to the sun's existence, and of his future coming, whereas it is not yet seen, because it shines by a borrowed light, and except for the sun's existence and original light, it would not itself shine, and would be as nothing. So when, and as soon as the day begins to spring, the light of the moon fades and is invisible, and all eyes which were turned to it, and delighted in it, are now at once turned to the sun itself, as all men now came to Christ to be baptized, who before delighted and were satisfied to be baptized with John's baptism. (*S. R. Bosanquet.*) *Opinions of self*:—Opinion of ourselves is like the casting of a shadow, which is always longest when the sun is at the greatest distance; but by the degrees that the sun approaches the shadow still shortens, and under the direct meridian light it becomes none at all; it is so with our opinion of ourselves: whilst the good influences of God are the greatest distance from us, it is then always that we conceive best of ourselves; but still, as God approaches, the conceit lessens; till such time as we receive the fuller measures of His graces; and then we become absolutely voided, pure nothing in our own conceit, and God appears to be (as really He is) "All in all." (*Dean Young.*) *Self abnegation*:—Mr. Durham, a father of the Scottish Church was walking one Sabbath to his place of worship with a much admired young minister who was to officiate in one adjoining. Multitudes were thronging into the one, and only a few into the other. "Brother," said he to his young friend, "you will have a crowded church to-day." "Truly," said the other, "they are greatly to blame who leave you and come to me." "Not so, dear brother," replied Mr. Durham; "for a minister can receive no such honour and success in his ministry except it be given him from heaven. I rejoice that Christ is preached, and that His kingdom and interests are gaining ground, though my estimation in people's hearts should decrease; for I am content to be anything, so that Christ may be all in all." (*W. Baxendale.*) *The certain increase of the glory and kingdom of Jesus*:—I. IT IS PROPOSED TO CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THAT INCREASE, WHICH THE BAPTIST CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED SHOULD ATTEND HIS BLESSED LORD. 1. It was announced, that "He must increase"; and, lo! in the midst of poverty and reproach, of apparent weakness, and of cruel sufferings, Jesus exhibited an increasing display of Godlike fortitude and resolution; of spotless purity and rectitude; of infinite zeal for His Father's honour; and of the riches of grace and compassion for wretched ruined man. 2. On these transactions all the future increase of His kingdom absolutely depended. But now the purchase of redemption has been completed, what shall prevent the Saviour from receiving His full reward (John xii. 23, 24)? 3. Well, then, might John the Baptist affirm, "He must increase," when he foresaw that His shameful death would be followed by so glorious a resurrection. 4. And how much more did the transactions of Pentecost justify this blessed prediction. II. LET ME PROCEED TO LAY BEFORE YOU SOME CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY CONFIRM OUR FAITH IN THE ASSURED EXPECTATION THAT HE MUST INCREASE. 1. Because He is the Son of God, in the highest and most absolute sense, and therefore heir of all things. 2. We are persuaded, therefore, that He must increase, because He hath all power to overcome every enemy that opposeth His blessed reign. 3. He must increase, for the decrees of heaven ascertain the great event. 4. A great part of Scripture consists of promises of the increase of the Messiah's kingdom, and it is evident that the

season of their chief accomplishment is yet future (see Isa. xl., lx.). 5. We conclude that Jesus must increase, since this world and all others were "made by Him, and for Him." (*J. Ryland, D.D.*) *Christ's increase, and our decrease:*—I. "HE MUST INCREASE." In one sense the words do not apply. The Saviour is God, very God of very God, and there can be no increase to that which is already infinite. He is also perfect man, without spot or imperfection, but it was in His office of Mediator, and in the glories of His mediatorial kingdom, that the Saviour was capable of increase. The greatness and glory of His work was to be manifested; the love which promoted, and the wisdom which carried out, the wondrous plan of salvation, were to be revealed, and fresh conquests to be achieved. Through faith in a crucified, yet risen and ascended Saviour, His people also shall prevail, yea, and be made more than conquerors through Him that loved them; and then as one nation after another has been brought into professed subjection to Christ, and as soul after soul has been rescued from Satan and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, we see the fulfilment of the words, "He must increase." II. "I MUST DECREASE." We have already noticed, that in a high and important sense, the increase of Christ is the increase of His people—they are concerned in the triumphs of His grace, and are to share His glory. But there is also a sense in which the believer in Christ, who is rejoicing in his Lord, and in the full salvation he has secured, can join in these words of the Baptist, "I must decrease." Yes, there is the carnal self, that which is of the earth, earthy—the old man, the old nature—which still retains so much of power, even in the regenerate, that which the believer desires daily to crucify, the flesh with its affections and lusts. All this is to decrease, and finally—although not entirely until he has put off the body of this death—to disappear. Surely we greatly need to decrease in self-esteem, in pride, in carnality, in all that tends to hinder us in our Christian life, and bring dishonour on our Christian profession. We are to decrease in having self as the all-engrossing object. New hopes and desires are to have fuller power over us; the great motive of the love of Christ is to have its place, constraining, compelling, drawing. Opportunities of usefulness, and of actively working for God, may also be diminished, and in failing strength and energies the Christian reads the words, "I must decrease." The work of Christ, indeed, will not suffer. (*J. H. Holford, M.A.*)

Vers. 31–36. **He that cometh from above is above all.** *Christ "above all" as a Teacher:*—I. IN THE SUBLIMITY OF HIS ORIGIN (ver. 1). All others, from Enoch to Malachi were "of the earth." II. IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS DOCTRINES. What does He teach? 1. The realities of which He Himself was conscious (ver. 2) and not speculations. 2. Realities which were moral in their influence upon His hearers. They were not compelled to receive them, so many rejected Him. But those who believed Him had an assured consciousness that God was true (ver. 33). 3. Realities which were pre-eminently Divine (ver. 34): not the sciences, but God Himself, the Root and Branch, Centre and Circumference of all truth. III. IN THE AFFECTION OF HIS FATHER (ver. 35). 1. No teacher shared so much of the Divine love as Christ. The Father loveth all. All true teachers may expect a special share of this affection. But He loves Christ pre-eminently, and as He presents His Well-beloved He says, "Hear ye Him." 2. No teacher deserved so much of the Divine love as Christ did. He never offended the Father or misrepresented Him in doctrine or conduct. 3. No teacher ever had such demonstrations of Divine love as Christ. "All things," the administration of all blessings and the authority over all souls. IV. IN THE EXTENT OF HIS ENDOWMENTS (ver. 34). Other teachers had the Spirit in a limited degree; Christ fully. This is clear from the fact that He knew what was in man, and from His miracles. But He had more of the Spirit than the old prophets, as is manifest by comparing—1. Their theology with His. 2. Their spirit with His. 3. Their lives with His. V. IN THE NECESSITY OF HIS MISSION. Faith in Him is essential to man's eternal welfare (ver. 36). 1. The faith He requires is faith in HIM: not merely in the facts of His history, or the truth of His prepositions, but in Himself as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. No other teacher ever required this. To so trust the best of them would be ruin. 2. Faith in Him determines the destiny of the soul. (1) Those who believe in Him have now everlasting life. (2) God's wrath abides on the unbeliever. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ is above all:*—Cæsar is not Cæsar still, nor Alexander Alexander still: but Jesus is Jesus still, and shall be for ever. (*J. Donne.*) *Christ is God as well as man:*—We have seen a copy of the Gospels and Epistles which was warranted free

from all trace of the Trinity, but it was not the testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We beheld it and we received instruction. It did not want beauty, for the parables, and the Sermon on the Mount, and many a touching passage were still there. It looked like a coronation tapestry with all the golden threads torn out, or an exquisite mosaic from which some unscrupulous finger had abstracted the gems and left only the common stones. It was a casket without the pearl. It was a shrine without the Shekiuah. And yet, after all, it was not sufficiently expurgated; for, after reading it, the thought would recur, How much easier to fabricate a Gnostic testament, exempt from all trace of our Lord's humanity, than a Trinitarian testament ignoring His Divinity. (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *An earthly mind*:—As ducklings have always their bills in the mud, as swine are ever recking in the mire; like that fish in the gospel, either dumb or with nothing but money in their mouths. (*J. Trapp.*) *Earthly mindedness*:—It is storied of Henry the Fourth of France, asking the Duke of Alva if he had observed the eclipses happening in that year? He answered, that he had so much business on earth, that he had no leisure to look up to heaven. A sad thing it is for men to be so bent, and their hearts so set on the things of this world, as not to cast up a look to the things that are in heaven; nay, not to regard though God brings heaven down to them in His Word and Sacraments. Yet so it is, most men are of this Spanish general's mind; witness the oxen, the farms, the pleasures, the profits and preferments that men are so fast glued unto, that they have hardly leisure to entertain a thought of any goodness. *Christ's testimony to be received*:—I. CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL SUPREMACY, WHICH EXCLUDES ALL COMPARISON WITH WHAT IS EARTHLY (ver. 31). 1. Christ was from above. Thence He came to His own. Of Him alone can this be asserted: a glory belonging to Him and not to another. (1) He is pre-eminent; with reference to the whole creation, among all that are illustrious in His Church, all His predecessors who are types of Him and all His followers who are sent by Him. (2) He is invested with universal dominion. (3) John speaks of what He is, not has been or will be, merely. (4) It was true therefore that Christ must increase. There could be no result but progress. 2. John was of the earth—(1) In His origin and condition, as were all His predecessors and all His followers, partaking of weakness and imperfection. (2) In His office and doctrine, receiving both as an earthly teacher, and inferior therefore to Christ as earth was to heaven. 3. Let us be impressed—(1) With Christ's glory and yield the submission and obedience which are His due. (2) With the subordinate place occupied by His ministers yet rejoicing that He employs them. II. THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF HIS TEACHING AND ITS GENERAL RESULT (ver. 32). 1. Christ's testimony is of what He has seen and heard (ver. 11). It was direct without the intervention of a third party, as in the case of Moses and the prophets. 2. The general result—(1) Not what might have been expected, but, (2)—sadly true, then and now. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF RECEIVING HIS TESTIMONY (ver. 33). 1. God thus submits Himself to the judgments of men. They can have a full knowledge of His character in no other way. He demands, therefore, that they shall consider the testimony thus uttered. 2. Those who receive Christ and His doctrine find that they have to do with a true God. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) **What He hath seen and heard that He testifieth.**—*John's last testimony to Christ*:—I. THE DIVINENESS OF CHRIST'S TESTIMONY (ver. 32). II. THE UNBELIEF WITH WHICH CHRIST'S TESTIMONY WAS RECEIVED (ver. 32). "All men come to Him! Why no man believes Him!" The emotions aroused by John's preaching of repentance and the Lamb of God had passed off; for were not His disciples setting Him up against His Lord? And it took Christ's chosen ones three years to receive it. How differently a man counts who loves and adores Jesus from a mere hero worshipper. John would have not large crowds merely going after Jesus, but genuine believers. III. THE APPRECIATION OF THOSE WHO DID BELIEVE IN ANY DEGREE (ver. 33), like Andrew and John (chap. i. 40). This is a fine and simple account of faith in its nature. Some document is produced having legal authority behind it. Those who, believing in the King as true, will sign their names to it become entitled to certain privileges. Men go forward and append their signatures, realizing in so doing, "The privilege is mine." But here is one who cannot write. He goes forward, seal in hand, and stamps it down, which is as good as signing. That is faith, stamping down one seal, with decisiveness, to that gospel text, saying as we do it, "That is true." IV. THE DIVINENESS OF CHRIST'S TEACHING REAFFIRMED (ver. 34). "For" is emphatic. The reception and attestation of what Jesus spake was the reception and attestation of what God spake. V. ANTICIPATION

OF THE WORDS OF CHRIST HIMSELF (ver. 35; *cf.* Matt. xi. 27, xxviii. 18; Luke x. 22; Heb. ii. 8). VI. WEAL OR WOE (ver. 36). 1. True faith is faith in the true thing. "On the Son"—atonement, resurrection, and glory were yet to come. Christ Himself the object of faith. 2. The wrath of God cannot abide in a being who has ceased to be. The Baptist warned men before to "flee from the wrath to come." 3. Our relation or non-relation to Jesus Christ determines where we shall spend our eternity. (*A. B. Grosart, D.D.*) *Christ the Divine teacher*:—We notice the perfect originality and independence of His teaching. We have a great many men who are original, in the sense of being originators, within a certain boundary of educated thought. But the originality of Christ is uneducated. That He draws nothing from the stores of learning can be seen at a glance. The impression we have in reading His instructions justifies to the letter the language of His contemporaries, when they say, "This man hath never learned." There is nothing in any of His allusions or forms of speech that indicates learning. Indeed, there is nothing in Him that belongs to His age or country—no one opinion, or task, or prejudice. The attempts that have been made, in a way of establishing His mere natural manhood, to show that He borrowed His sentiments from the Persians and the Eastern forms of religion, or that He had been intimate with the Essenes, and borrowed from them, or that He must have been acquainted with the schools and religions of Egypt, deriving His doctrine from them—all attempts of the kind having so palpably failed, as not even to require a deliberate answer. If He is simply a man, as we hear, then He is most certainly a new and singular kind of man, never before heard of; one who visibly is quite as great a miracle in the world as if He were not a man. We can see for ourselves, in the simple directness and freedom of His teachings, that whatever He advances is for Himself. Shakespeare, for instance, whom we name as being probably the most creative and original spirit the world has ever produced, one of the class, too, that are called self-made men, is yet tinged in all his works with human learning. His glory is, indeed, that so much of what is great in history and historic character lives and appears in his dramatic creations. He is the high-priest, we sometimes hear, of human nature. But Christ, understanding human nature so as to address it more skilfully than he, never draws from its historic treasures. He is the High Priest, rather, of the Divine nature, speaking as one that has come out from God, and has nothing to borrow from the world. It is not to be detected by any sign that the human sphere in which He moved imparted anything to Him. His teachings are just as full of Divine nature as Shakespeare's of human. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Why men refuse Christ*:—Among those who stay away from Christ, who will not believe in Him, who will not come to Him, the motive of the chief part has ever been, that they are destitute of the consciousness of sin, and of all thoughts and wishes rising above the objects of the senses, or else that they love their sins, and are determined to cleave to them, in despite of all that God can do to draw them away. Others there are who will not believe in Christ through pride and self-righteousness. Others have involved themselves inextricably in the labyrinthine abstractions of a sceptical understanding. Some will say, in their high-swelling imaginations, that they need no Redeemer, no Ransom, no Reconciler, no Atonement, no Pardon—that they can find the way to God by themselves—that they can build up a tower of their own virtues, a grand and gorgeous tower, virtue above virtue, the top of which shall reach to heaven. Such men there have been more or less in all ages; and the way their devices have been baffled has ever been the same, by the confusion of tongues. They have been unable to understand one another's language. When one of them has asked for bread, his neighbour has given him a stone; when asked for a fish, he has given a serpent; indifference and scorn, instead of sympathy and encouragement. The hand of each has been against his brother. There has been no unity of spirit amongst them, but variance and strife and railing: they have never entered into the bond of peace. This is the other form of sin by which men are kept away from Christ. The great mass stay away because their hearts are paralyzed and crumbled by carelessness and self-indulgence, or rotted by the cankering pleasures of sin; the few, because their hearts are hardened and stiffened by pride. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *Many men are deaf to the charms of the gospel*:—A musical amateur of eminence, who had often observed Mr. Cadogan's inattention to his performances, said to him one day, "Come, I am determined to make you feel the power of music; pay particular attention to this piece." It was played. "Well, what do you say now?" "Just what I said before." "What! can you hear this and not be charmed? I am surprised at your insensibility! Where are

your ears?" "Bear with me, my lord," replied Mr. Cadogan, "since I too have had my surprise; I have from the pulpit set before you the most striking and affecting truths; I have found notes that might have awaked the dead; I have said, Surely he will feel now; but you never seemed charmed with my music, though infinitely more interesting than yours. I too might have said—'Where are his ears?'" *Few hearers saved:*—Though a gun be discharged at a whole flight of birds, there are but a few killed. Though the net be spread over the whole pond, but a few fishes are taken: so most hearers do busy their heads with their own sensual or worldly thoughts, and so escape the pain of the truth. (*Train.*) *Christ often refused:*—It is said of Handel, the great musician, that while composing the well-known oratorio of "The Messiah," he was frequently found in tears, and that one day, while sobbing bitterly, it was found that the words which had broken down his spirit were these three words of the prophet Isaiah, "He was despised." And yet this short saying was abundantly fulfilled when Jesus came to show us His great love. (*R. Brewin.*) *The sureness of Christ's testimony and its rejection:*—1. It is Christ's prerogative to have the knowledge of Divine truths of Himself from the Father, and to have all others who know anything beholden to His bounty and illumination; for, His doctrine is, "what He hath seen and heard," in a way peculiar to Him. 2. It sets out the bounty of Christ, that He doth not keep this knowledge, but discovereth it, that so sinners may have a sure guide and teacher, and the solemn testimony of an eye and ear witness, on which they may lean; for, "what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth." It is called a testifying both in respect of the certainty of the matter, and in respect of Christ's earnest persuading of men to embrace it (Acts xviii. 5). 3. Christ's gracious condescendence in revealing the counsel of God concerning man's salvation, gets but ill entertainment in the world; the most part of men either not hearkening to Him, or not embracing His offer with respect, affection or faith, for no man (that is, very few or none in comparison of them who do otherwise, though some there are, ver. 33) receiveth His testimony. Let them hear it as they will, yet they do not receive nor embrace it as becometh; and therefore also it is called a testimony, as witnessing against them, that they receive not so certain a truth. 4. It ought and will be matter of regret to all the friends and servants of Christ, that His doctrine is so ill received in the world; for, whereas John's disciples complained (ver. 26) that all men came to Christ, He seeth rather cause to complain that no man receiveth His testimony. (*G. Hutcheson.*) To Jesus nothing seems more natural and familiar than the heavenly state, when He discourses of it. It is like a prince, who having been educated in a splendid court, could speak with ease of many magnificent things, at the sudden view of which a peasant would be swallowed up in astonishment, and would find himself greatly embarrassed in an attempt to explain them to his equals at home. (*Doddridge.*) **He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.**—*The sealed testimony:*—I. THE SAVIOUR'S TESTIMONY (Isa. lv. 4, *cf.* John xviii. 37; Rev. i. 5). Christ came into the world when it was enveloped in ignorance and begirt with the miasma of heathen superstitions and unconsecrated philosophies. Even the Jewish Church had lost its glory and a wretched formalism taken the place of spiritual religion. Christ came to give us a testimony which should be all-sufficient in reference to the way of salvation. 1. Its nature. It included—(1) The revelation of God (chap. i. 18). The knowledge of God was fast perishing. The spirituality of His nature—the perfection of His attributes—the sovereignty of His government—the boundless depths of His mercy, were rescued from oblivion by Christ and received clearer light and richer illustration. His own life was a revelation of God (chap. xiv. 9). (2) The true character of man. Here all heathen sages had failed. They did not know man, his antecedents, requirements, capacities. Hence their specifics fell short of the occasion. Christ discovers the heart of man to Himself (chap. ii. 25). (3) The exposition of the ancient Scriptures. He constantly taught that His life and labours were the fulfilment of prophecy. (4) Many sublime and precious subjects—the dispensation of the Spirit; the nature, worth, and reality of prayer; practical religion; future rewards and punishments; the resurrection of the body. 2. Its manner. Note—(1) The simplicity of His precepts. (2) The familiarity of His examples. (3) The expressiveness of His figures. (4) The grace of His method. (5) The gentleness of His language. (6) The condescension of His temper. (7) His patience with the ignorant. (8) His encouragement of the inquiring. (9) His comfort of the sorrowful. II. THE RIGHT MODE OF ITS RECEPTION. 1. Divine truth demands admittance into the heart. It first accosts the intellectual faculties, then accosts

the conscience, but completely triumphs only when it enters the holiest of all. Human learning appeals only to the intelligence. Christ claims the heart. 2. Its impartation proceeds directly from Christ (Gal. i. 12; John iv. 42; 2 Cor. x. 5). The practical improvement of the process is that which makes us solicitous for evidence of the work of God in the soul through the Spirit's effectual conveyance of the Word. 3. We should rejoice in its reception, because the deliverance it works is so great, the blessings it imparts so vast, and the prospect it opens so excellent. III. THE EFFECT ASCRIBED TO BELIEF IN IT. Just as unbelief is an imputation on the Divine veracity, so cordial, unprejudiced reception is a mark of adoption into His family. It liberates a man from harassments and doubts. The obedience of the heart leads after it conviction of mind (chap. vii. 17). The believer can set his seal over against the promise and affirm that "not one thing hath failed." Many an ancient mark may be seen in the aged saint's Bible showing that the promise has been fulfilled. (*W. G. Lewis.*) *The testimony and the seal:* —I. THE TRUE NOTION OF CHRIST'S DOCTRINE—IT IS A TESTIMONY. 1. The nature of it. A testimony is a sort of proof necessary in matters that cannot otherwise be decided by rational discourse. (1) In matters that depend upon the arbitrary will of another. The gospel cannot be found out by the light of nature, but Christ, who was in the bosom of the Father, knew His heart and hath given testimony how it stands affected to the salvation of men (Matt. xi. 27, *cf.* John iii. 16). Salvation proceedeth from the free motion of God's will. (2) In matters of fact. Matters of law are argued by reason, but matters of fact is only proved by credible witnesses. In this sense the gospel is a testimony that Christ came into the world, taught the way of salvation, died for our sins, and rose again to confirm all. The apostles were witnesses of these things (Acts i. 21–22; ii. 32; x. 39). 2. The value of Christ's testimony which will appear if we consider—(1) The person witnessing. He who was promised in paradise (Gen. iii. 15), shadowed in the sacrifices of the law, and foretold by the prophets (chap. v. 39); He who was owned of God by a voice from heaven (Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5; John xii. 28); it is His testimony whom God the Father hath sealed (chap. vi. 27), and to whom He has given the Spirit without measure (ver. 34). (2) The testimony itself. (*a*) It is such a testimony as men need. Men need a religion that will allay their fears and satisfy their desires. The gospel provides pardon for sin and eternal peace and happiness. (*b*) It has a fair correspondency with the principles of reason. That there is a wise, good, and powerful God; that men have sinned and become liable to punishment; that there are not hopes of freedom from this punishment but by satisfaction; that the universal soul must have higher and more abiding satisfactions than those afforded by the world. (*c*) It has a convincing evidence in itself (2 Cor. iv. 2–4). 3. The use of it as a testimony. (1) To bless God that the way of enjoying Him is not left to our uncertain guesses, but is made known in an authentic way by Christ. (2) To show us with what success we may build upon the hopes of the gospel; it is God's testimony (1 John v. 9). (3) Our danger is great if we disbelieve and reject this testimony (Matt. xxiv. 14; *cf.* Mark xiii. 9). First, to them, then against them. II. THE RESPECT THAT IS DUE TO THIS TESTIMONY. 1. Hear it or regard it we must. For us to disregard it is the greatest affront that we can offer God (Matt. xxii. 5). 2. Understand it we must, or we do not receive it. A man must have it (chap. xiv. 21) in his judgment before he can keep it in his memory, heart, and conscience. 3. We must firmly consent to and acquiesce in this testimony (1 Tim. i. 15; John vi. 69, xvii. 8). 4. To embrace it with all affection (Acts ii. 41). 5. To build our hope and confidence thereupon while we continue with patience in well-doing (Psa. cxix. 166; Luke xviii. 15). III. HE THAT THUS RECEIVETH DOTH RATIFY THE TRUTH OF GOD and solemnly bear witness to it. 1. The manner of confirming. Doubtful things we do not confirm, but those things of which we are assured (1 Kings xxi. 8; Neh. ix. 38; Esther viii. 8; Jer. xxxii. 18). But how can we confirm the truth of God? God's truth is the same, and needeth not our confirmation, but He will put this honour upon us that we should honour His truth by our subscription (Rom. iii. 4). Our sealing is of great use—(1) To ourselves. To bind us more firmly to believe that doctrine and life according to it which we have owned by our consent (Isa. xliv. 5; Psa. lxxxvii. 6). (2) To others (Isa. xliii. 10). God's people that have such proofs of His power and providence are able to give sufficient testimony for Him, and others are confirmed in the faith of that which we attest when we live in holiness, patient and joyful under the cross (1 Thess. 1. 5–7). 2. The matter confirmed—that God is true. (1) God's truth is a great prop of faith (Heb. xi. 11). God can do anything, but can-

not lie. (2) The honour of His veracity is most pleasing to God (Psa. cxxxviii. 2), just as men cannot endure the imputation of falsehood. (3) The setting to one's seal that God is true supposeth some precedent obligation. God is engaged by promise to Christ that He will justify, sanctify, and glorify all those who believe in Him (Isa. liii. 10, 11). The soul that receiveth this testimony giveth it under hand and seal that God is as good as His word. 3. The use is to persuade us to so receive Christ's testimony that we put to our seal that God is true. (1) From the honour done to God. (2) The honour put upon us that we should confirm God's promises. (3) The dishonour to God done by discrediting His word (1 John v. 10). Conclusion: In this sealing there are many things implied that most people want. 1. Spiritual evidence (1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. i. 17, 18). 2. Some experience of the truth in comforting and changing the heart (1 John i. 1, 2). 3. Confidence in temptations (Job xiii. 15). 4. Holiness (1 Thess. i. 5-7). (*T. Manton, D.D.*) *Christ's testimony received*:—I. THE TESTIMONY THAT HAS BEEN BORNE. 1. The testimony borne to Christ antecedently to the completion of His work. (1) That of prophecy. (2) That of the angels and the magi at the incarnation. (3) That of Anna and Simeon in the temple. (4) That of the Father at the baptism. 2. The testimony which Christ bore Himself. (1) As to the nature of His ministry. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me," &c. "I am come not to be ministered to," &c. (2) To His Messiahship. "I and My Father are One." "God so loved," &c. (3) To His own purpose and plans. (4) To the everlasting awards. (5) All the truth taught by Christ was on His part a witness. 3. The testimony which came afterwards. (1) By angels again. (2) By the apostles. (3) By the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. (4) By Paul. 4. Remark—(1) That knowledge is for the most part derived from testimony. Everything in connection with ancient history, biography, foreign countries. It is easy to ridicule testimony, but without it a great tract of our life would be left in darkness. (2) That the testimony borne to Christ and His salvation comes to us with the clearest signatures and the strongest authentications. It comes to us in a book which is unique in its condemnation of lying. II. THE RECEPTION OF THE TESTIMONY. 1. It must be examined with precision, so that we may know what it is. 2. This reception embraces the admission of the things contained in it as true. As to the great matters in question, they are true or false; if false, let them be rejected; if true, let them be accepted as true. 3. There must be no hostility to it, because it is very possible that the testimony may be understood and accepted, and yet hated, as it is by the devils, as it was by the Jews. This is of the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost. 4. There should be appreciation of the value, importance, and dignity of it. 5. It must be loved. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (1) Love of Christ Himself. (2) Love of His truth. 6. There is a course of life and conduct to be adopted in accordance with the truth of the testimony. III. Having received the testimony, we can SET TO OUR SEAL. A seal and signature are intended to authenticate a document and the thing which that document contains. We not calling God a liar, but, attesting the truth of the witness of the Lord Jesus, are said to "set to our seal that God is true." But mark—1. The truth of God and the testimony of Christ are true irrespective of our seal. God cannot lie; and the matter for amazement is that God should condescend to receive our attestations. 2. Then let the signature be written. Bring in the document. What signatures are already there! Those of apostles, martyrs, &c. 3. If you put your signature to the truth of God, God will put His on thee. (1) On thy forehead, the mark of His preservation. (2) On thy heart, the mark of His grace. (*James Stratten.*) *Sealed unto Christ*:—I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEAL. The seal is one of the old legal forms that still survives, and gives a peculiar character to documents on which it is stamped. Let us note some of its characteristics. 1. As a necessity. In many cases an instrument without a seal is of none effect. The lawyer may draw up a will with the utmost care, but until the seal is affixed to the will the lawyer's skill and the legator's resolve count for nothing. So one may hear the gospel preached, but that is not sufficient. He must set to his seal the testimony—receive it, believe it, live in accordance with it. 2. As a personal distinction. In the old times few men knew how to write even their own names. They could do no more than make their mark, which was easily counterfeited; therefore each man who had occasion to use it, if possible possessed his own seal. Joseph was placed in charge of the king's seal, and wherever he affixed it, it carried all the king's authority with it. So religion is an intensely personal matter. Each must settle the great question of

salvation for himself. No one can accept Christ for me. I must set to my seal that God is true. 3. As a finality. The ancient seal was often used to denote the conclusion of a matter. Daniel was told to seal up the prophecies—implying that they were finished. He that accepts Christ, accepts Him for all time. We enter into God's service, not for a few years, not merely for a lifetime, but for eternity. "There is no discharge in that war." We have set to our seal that God is true, once for all. II. THE NATURE OF THE TESTIMONY. It is—1. An indictment. God charges us with violation of His law, and we are to plead guilty or not guilty. If we deny our guilt we reject the very first proposition with which the Saviour comes to us. Shall any one dare to do this? Nicodemus thought he had kept the law, but the Saviour told him that he must be born again, and Paul felt this when he wrote (Rom. vii. 9), "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." 2. Pardon. After the American civil war, when a general amnesty was offered, each man, to profit by the act, was required first to take the oath of allegiance. We are rebels against God; from Him alone can we look for pardon. Through Christ it is offered to every one, but it must be accepted before it becomes effective. We must set to our seal this testimony of pardon—take the oath of allegiance to God's government. 3. A testament. If property comes into my possession by will, it is necessary that my name and a seal be affixed to the will before the property is at my disposal. The testimony of the gospel is that God has made a testament for us. He not only grants us pardon, but peace and joy in this life, and in the world to come life eternal. These are offered to each of us freely; but we must set our seal to the testimony by accepting it in faith. (*G. H. Smith.*) *Set to his seal*:—The method of sealing seems to have been very ancient. Judah had a signet as well as a bracelet. The document sent to the elders respecting Naboth and his vineyard is said to have been sealed with the king's signature. So was that which commanded the extermination of the Jews in the time of Esther sealed. So in the days of Jeremiah, when his property was sold, the document which contained the account of the sale was sealed and signed. So have we the great seal of England, which affixed to a document authenticates the document. There are the seals and signatures in like manner of foreign potentates. And to make it still more clear and easy, and to bring it nearer home, in many matters of business, in the ordinary transactions between man and man, there is an agreement which is signed and sealed. Being signed, and sealed, and attested, the document stands; it is good and substantial, and has authority and weight in law. When in like manner, I suppose, we are represented as putting our seal and signature to God's great document, authenticating it as far as our belief and our conviction goes as true, this is what is meant. Exactly as in the prophet Isaiah, when it is said by the Almighty, "Ye are My witnesses." We set to our seal that God is true. (*James Stratten.*) *Sealing the truth*:—The firmness of the venerable Polycarp in persecution unto death is known to all. Urged by the chief officer to pay religious honours to the emperor, he mildly replied, "I shall not do as you advise me." "Swear, curse Christ, and I release you." "Sixty-eight years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good; how, then, can I curse Him, my Lord and my Saviour?" At the stake, when they were about to bind him, he said, "Leave me as I am. He who has strengthened me to encounter the flames, will enable me to stand firm at the stake." *The testimony of human experience to the Divinity of Christ*:—As there can be no argument in chemistry in proof of odours like a present perfume itself; as the shining of the stars is a better proof of their presence than the figures of an astronomer; as the restored health of his patients is a better argument of skill in a physician than laboured examinations and certificates; as the testimony of the almanac that summer comes with June is not so convincing as the coming of summer itself in the sky, in the air, in the fields, on hill and mountain, so the power of Christ upon the human soul is to the soul evidence of His Divinity based upon a living experience, and transcending in conclusiveness any convictions of the intellect alone, founded upon a contemplation of mere ideas, however just and sound. If Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God, in the experience of those who trust and love Him there needs no further argument of His Divinity. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The best evidence of the truth of Christianity*:—As I looked upon the sun this November morning shining through some beautiful clouds, a man called upon me to prove that the sun was, in his judgment, as far as he could make out by "the tables," about sufficient to light the world. He turned over long pages of logarithms, fractions, and decimals, and long processions of figures. He asked me for a slate and pencil, and he was going

to make it out to my satisfaction that the sun was just about sufficient to enlighten a hemisphere at a time. I ordered him off! Why? I saw it! I felt it! (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Experience the teacher's best helper* :—"Oh! when a truth has broken your heart; when it has afterwards bound it up; when Christ has spoken it to you till you have felt it, then will you speak as men could speak who are ambassadors for God. George Fox was called a Quaker because, when he preached, he often trembled. Was that a folly? No. He had so felt the power of what he spoke that his very body trembled while he delivered that truth to others, and well may you and I tremble at His Word. Whenever that Word, however, comes home to the heart with sweetness, why, then, with what sweetness a man tells it again! There is nobody can speak it like the man who has experienced it. You know the tale of a tale, the report of a report is a very poor thing; but when a man says, 'I saw it, I was there,' then you listen to him. So, if you can say of Christ, 'He is precious, for He is precious to me; He can save, for He has saved me; He can comfort and cheer and gladden, for He has done all that to me,' then you speak with power because Christ has spoken with power to you." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Seal* :—The supposed necessity of a seal to attest the signature is shown in the following: "At Jezreel, the chief desired Captain Wilson to make a report to the governor at Jenin, and our dragoman was accordingly directed to write a letter in Arabic, and submit it for signature. . . . This was duly signed by Captain Wilson; and as the chief insisted on a seal being appended to the signature, an old monogram was cut off a sheet of note paper and affixed to the letter. This was supposed to prove the genuineness of the document, as a man's seal cannot be forged." (*Recovery of Jerusalem.*) *The purpose of sealing* :—In courts of law, in olden times, a witness gave his statement of that which he professed was truth. Having done so, parties present who were cognisant of the veracity of the speaker, or who were in circumstances that they might be expected to be so, when called on to testify their knowledge, in confirmation of what had been asserted, by doing this set to their seal that what had been spoken was true, and that the witness who had spoken was faithful. But parties who, being thus appealed to, and being qualified to testify, declined to speak in corroboration of the testimony delivered, were held, by that declining, to make the witness a liar. To this practice allusion is made in the text. God hath spoken by His Son to the world; He has spoken that which all men may know, that which all men are bound to know to be true, that they may be able to confirm it as His word of truth. Being commanded to become acquainted with the things which are spoken, they are then, as a great duty, commanded to bear testimony to the truth, to the veracity of Him by whom it has been uttered. When they refuse to know what God speaks, they offend against His authority. When they refuse to testify to the truth—to set to their seal that He is true in the Word which has been given to them—they offend against His veracity; they make Him a liar. (*A. Beith, D.D.*)

Vers. 34–36. **He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.**—*The Mediator* :—I. CHRIST'S EXCELLENCY IN HIS PROPHETICAL OFFICE (ver. 34). 1. He is the sent of God. His mission is the measure of Divine love to the world. God sent other messengers, the prophets, John, ministers; but as there is but one sun in the firmament, though men have furnished themselves with many derived lights, so there is but one messenger from God—one great centre of illumination for the use of all who are beyond the limits of the unapproachable light. 2. They are the words of God which He speaketh. The same is true of every true minister, but they are derived. Christ spoke the very oracles of God. 3. God giveth not the Spirit by measure to His Son. The prophets had the Spirit to discharge their commissions, but under such limitations as were necessary to their limited capacities and occasions. But there was no such limit in regard to Christ. II. CHRIST'S DIGNITY AS THE APPOINTED SOURCE OF ALL GOOD TO THE CHURCH (ver. 35). For the use of this language the Baptist had Old Testament warrant. 1. The Father loveth the Son. He loves the world—some with a love of good will, others with a love of delight, but not even angels share such a love as this; and indeed they and men are loved for and in the Son. 2. All things have been given into Christ's hands. If God so loved the world that He gave His Son, He so loves the Son that He hath given Him all things—all government, all the economy of redemption. 3. What obedience then is due to the Son! If God hath withheld nothing, shall we? III. THE SAFETY OF THE SOUL IS DEPENDENT ON CHRIST (ver. 36). 1. Salvation is laid up in Christ as its fountain and dispensing author. 2. This

salvation is to be sought in Christ by faith. 3. No salvation without faith. Unbelief refuses Christ's testimony, declines all personal alliance with Christ, opposes God's purpose, and is the fruit of an evil heart. 4. The unbeliever shall not see life. 5. Upon the unbeliever the wrath of God abides. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) **The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.**—CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE FATHER AND TO MAN. 1. The excellency of Christ above all other ambassadors is that He is the Son and they are but servants. 2. Christ is the object of the Father's love in a peculiar way: as a Son, and not a servant in respect of His Person; and as Mediator, He is pointed out as the beloved Son in whom God will be found well pleased (Matt. iii. 17); as He who is beloved, and hath purchased love to others because of His death (John x. 17) (so willing was the Father to be reconciled), as He whose being beloved answereth our being unworthy of love, and is a pledge of the Father's love to us (John xvii. 23). 3. In carrying on the redemption of sinners, as the matter is accorded betwixt the Father and the Son, so the redeemed are not left to themselves, but are put on Christ's hand, to purchase and be forthcoming for them; and all things are conceredited to Him that may tend to their good. Under "all things" we are to comprehend the elect themselves, together with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit (ver. 34) needful for their conversion and salvation, which are not entrusted to ourselves, but to Him who can keep us and them, and let them out as we need; and a dominion over all things that may contribute to help or hinder His people's happiness, that He may order them so as may be for their good. And this power He hath as God with the Father, and as Man and Mediator, by donation and gift from the Father (Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18). And thus the believer's happiness is firm, being transacted between such parties, the Father being satisfied in the Mediator, and they entrusted to Him whose dear purchase they are, and therefore He will not lose them, who hath capacity to receive their furniture far above what they could hold, power to maintain, wisdom to guide and dispense their allowance, dominion to curb all enemies and opposition, and a commission and charge to be answerable for them. All which may invite us to be content that we be nothing, and that we and all our furniture be in His hand. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *All things in Christ's hand*:—The verse gives us the following teachings—1. The Father is the Origin and Arranger of all things. 2. In His arrangements all things are put into the hands of His Son. 3. One reason of this is the love of the Father towards the Son. 4. Ere Christ came to men there had been a sublime transaction in which a vast administration had been entrusted on the one hand and accepted on the other. To confine ourselves to our point—*What things are put into the Redeemer's hand?*—I. THE ACT OF CREATION. "All things were made by Him." Thus He is clearly marked off from aught that is created. This fact establishes His essential equality with God and His official subordination to God. II. REVELATION. Creation had to do with all worlds; revelation with this. God indeed reveals Himself by His works, the laws of social life, the voice of conscience. But we want a revelation fuller and clearer. Here it is: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." III. PROPITIATION. Where sin is, a revelation of God is not enough: but the Revealer says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." A serious state of things when a man's way to his Father is blocked up save as a Mediator clears it! Yet so it is; but He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. IV. HEART CONQUEST. A power is needed to make the mediation effective manward. At the same moment that the herald says "Behold the Lamb of God," He declares "This is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." The bestowment of the Spirit to convict, convert, and train the Church, is the prerogative of Christ. V. ADMINISTRATION. When won over to Christ, men have to be governed and sanctified. The subjects of the kingdom of grace have to be inspired with a supreme desire to leaven the world with righteousness. His holy inspiration is begun and sustained by Christ. As He formed the kingdom of grace, so He administers it. VI. THE CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS. He who sent Peter to reap the first-fruits will send forth His angels to reap the harvest. (*C. Clemance, D.D.*) *What things?*—I. LIGHT for your mind. II. LIFE for your souls. III. LOVE for your hearts. IV. RIGHTEOUSNESS for your nature. V. ATONEMENT for your sins. VI. GRACE for strengthening. VII. COMFORT for sorrow. VIII. HEAVEN. (*Bp. Gregg.*) *The Father loveth the Son*:—Therefore faith may have firm footing. God hath laid help upon one that is mighty that our faith and hope may be in God. (*J. Trapp.*) *He who has Christ has all things*:—King Porus, when Alexander asked him, being then his

prisoner, how he would be used, answered in one word, "*Basilikeios*," that is, "Like a king." Alexander again replying, "Do you desire nothing else?" "No," said he, "all things are in this one word, 'Like a king.'" Whereupon Alexander restored him again. But this has not always been the happiness of kings and princes. Yet, however, he that hath God hath all things, because God is all things. Take a pen, and write down riches, honours, preferments, they are but as so many ciphers—they signify nothing; but write down God alone, and He will raise them to thousands—hundreds of thousands. And then it is that a Christian is truly happy, when he can find himself, and all things, in his God.

Ver. 36. **He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.**—*Faith and unbelief; with their respective consequences:*—There are three kinds of death. 1. Temporal: the separation of soul from body, the approach of which is usually marked by failure of mental energy and increasing bodily debility. 2. Spiritual: the separation of both body and soul from the Divine favour in this life—the symptoms of which are ignorance of God, neglect of His Word, worldliness, and carelessness about salvation. 3. Eternal: the separation of the whole man from the Divine presence and glory in the world to come—the ills of which will be hope destroyed, despair, the awakening and disappointment of insatiable desire, tormenting sensibility of sin and irremediable woe. This state of things induced by the Fall, Christ has come to remedy. Note—I. THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCE OF BELIEVING ON THE SON OF GOD. He that believeth on the Son hath—1. Life in his Redeemer. God gave us life in Adam, which, with its attendant happiness, we lost. This is restored not directly to us, but in His Son. 2. Life in himself. Once he was unconcerned about spiritual things, buried in the cares, business, and pleasures of the world. Now the Spirit of life having breathed upon him, he is alive from the dead, and the life he now lives in the flesh he lives by the faith of the Son of God. He is a fruit-bearing branch of the living Vine, a lively stone of a living Temple. This life derived from Christ is maintained by communion with Him. 3. Life in promise. The "exceeding great and precious promises" bear upon this, and support the Christian amidst his conflicts and weakness. 4. Life in prospect. He shall dwell in a paradise fairer than Eden for ever, without care, pain, disease, sin, in unalloyed happiness. Because his Redeemer lives he shall live also. II. THE UNHAPPY CONSEQUENCES OF NOT BELIEVING ON THE SON OF GOD. The unbeliever shall not see life. Of all that the believer enjoys he is deprived, and will be, if he persists, for ever. He may have a name to live, but he is dead, condemned already, bearing the eternal wrath of God. If these things be so, then see—1. What is the great condemning sin of the world, the sin comprehending every other sin—Unbelief. For this makes God a liar, tramples on Christ's salvation, does despite to the Spirit of grace, shuts heaven and opens hell. 2. What is the faith of the gospel. Not a dead, inoperative belief, but a vigorous, influential principle, moved by the Holy Spirit, to serve and please God, to fear His displeasure, to obey His will out of love and not from dread of punishment or hope of reward. 3. Who alone are secure from Divine displeasure. Those only who are found in Christ (Acts iv. 10-12). 4. How we may escape God's wrath. By taking shelter in Christ through faith. (*W. Mudge, B.A.*) *Faith and unbelief:*—Evangelical texts lose their freshness from over-familiarity. In order to appreciate their power we must realize their effects on those who have them for the first time. Let us reduce the text to a series of propositions. I. THAT THE HIGHEST GOOD IS ETERNAL LIFE. No heathen needs to be informed that life is more than existence. We cannot feel for a stone as we do for a tree which possesses life in its lowest form. We have a mere community of feeling for animal life; but this is as nothing compared with our regard for human nature. For rational life is better than irrational. But this can be conceived without the capacity of moral distinctions—which men have, however. But, alas! we know that this moral life, if it may be so called, is quite compatible with spiritual death. Men are alive to the perception of moral good, but dead to its enjoyment. Is it not plain that a resurrection from this exalts us into a higher life, spiritual, not merely the life of our spirits, for in a lower sense they were alive before, but a life produced by the Spirit of God and doing God's will and enjoying His favour. This is the highest life of which a creature is capable in kind; its purification from the evils that mar it, its endlessness, and the perfection of its blessedness for body and soul in heaven, make it the highest life in degree. II. Let us suppose a serious heathen to have formed this conception of eternal life, and to be filled with admiration. He would

soon compare it with his own experience and see that between him and it there was a great gulf fixed. That life presupposes a God holy in Himself and in His requisitions. The inquirer thus sees himself opposite to God and odious in proportion to His excellence. A fond hope arises. As sin has been his death, he will sin no more. Now comes a new revelation. He is the slave of sin, and his heart is dead in sin. Can he give it life? No. Here is a new despair. He turns to another method of escape. God will forgive him, and by a sovereign act make him a new creature. As he looks towards the inaccessible light he is completely undeceived on this point. He sees no shadow of connivance at sin. He withdraws his eyes, as he thinks, in eternal darkness. But on that darkness a new light begins to steal. His eye follows it to a point beyond himself, an intermediate object between God's inexorable justice and himself. Sin may be punished and the sinner saved. But a cloud passes over this celestial light. All men are alike, and if a man cannot make satisfaction for himself, how can he for another? But may not God? The thought seems impious till the lost veil is withdrawn and the astonished soul beholds the great mystery of godliness. God manifested in the flesh and becoming the propitiation for sin. But the work demanded of the sinner is hard because so easy: hard to do nothing when we think we must do all, to believe we have only to believe, when we expected to achieve our redemption. When once the soul is brought, however, to see that this is truly God's plan—that the Son of God is able and willing to save, and accepts this salvation, the work is done, and the man justified and safe for ever. By some such process we may suppose a heathen to arrive at the second proposition, viz., THAT ETERNAL LIFE MAY BE ATTAINED BY SIMPLY BELIEVING IN THE SON OF GOD. III. From this He would infer THAT UNBELIEF INVOLVES THE LOSS OF ALL THAT PERFECT AND ENDURING BLESSEDNESS CALLED ETERNAL LIFE. But here he would be liable to error. The mere loss of heaven would not affect the hearts of those who know it not. Indeed, they refuse it, preferring the pleasures of sin. Deprivation, therefore, would be no punishment. The doctrine of the gospel is that he that loses heaven loses this world also. "The wrath of God abideth on him." Hell is the deprivation of all that makes a life of sin tolerable here. 1. Sinners here participate in the outward advantages of the believer, but the wrath of God will separate the lost from the saved for ever, and from all the advantages of order, comfort, and mutual constraint consequent. 2. Sinners have positive enjoyment in sin—those are sentenced to be only for a season, and its native tendency to misery to go on for ever. 3. Sinners are ignorant of anything better which could make the most dissatisfied wish sinful pleasure. The wrath of God will awaken conscience, which will have sufficient light to plant its daggers with unerring accuracy, and the sinner shall know what he has lost. IV. WHAT THESE TRUTHS WOULD BE TO A HEATHEN THEY ARE TO US. If to him they involve the whole way of salvation, they involve no less to us. We have here—1. The great end of existence, eternal life and Divine favour. 2. Its opposite, eternal death and Divine wrath. 3. The way of life by faith. 4. The object of this faith the Son of God, the one sacrifice for sin. In conclusion. On the unbeliever the wrath of God abides already. Let the procrastinating soul be undeceived. Distance of time and place works strange transformations. Tell one who violates the law of man that he will be condemned for it, and he may laugh the law and you to scorn. But how few laugh when told that they are condemned already. Look at the convict at the bar, and see how different his aspect and demeanour from his aspect and demeanour when at large. Such is your case. You are not yet arrested, but you are under sentence. You are condemned already, and reprieve or pardon is your only hope. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Everlasting life connected with believing on the Son of God*:—I. WHAT IS THIS BELIEVING ON THE SON? 1. This believing on the Son, as here mentioned, supposes a distinct knowledge of Him—of His person, natures, and offices. 2. It includes assent to the record that God the Father has given of Him. 3. It includes, in consequence of both the knowledge of Him, and assent to the testimony of God concerning Him, our hearty approbation of Him, as every way qualified, able, faithful, and willing, to save to the uttermost all that believe (Heb. vii. 25, ii. 17; John vi. 37). 4. Chiefly it includes a cordial acceptance of Christ, as offered in the gospel. II. SHOW IN WHAT RESPECTS TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST MAY BE SAID TO HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. 1. They have it in title and right of purchase. 2. They have the blessedness of the heavenly state in the promises of it; therefore it is called "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, has promised" (Tit. i. 2). 3. Believers have the eternal happiness of heaven in their glorified Head and forerunner. He,

as their Forerunner, is entered into heaven for them (Heb. vi. 20); has taken, as it were, possession in their name. 4. They have everlasting life in the first-fruits of it. They have already received some part of their future blessedness in the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit, which are therefore called the "first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 23), and the "earnest of the heavenly inheritance" (Eph. i. 14). (*Sketches of Sermons.*) *The unbeliever's unhappy condition*:—John the Baptist was a preacher who knew how to discriminate. He does not address the people as all lost or saved, but shows the two classes and the line of demarcation. I. THE GUILTY ONES. 1. They are common. They abound in our sanctuaries, and are to be met by thousands in our streets. 2. They are not necessarily sceptics. Many of them are quite orthodox. 3. Not a few are blameless in morals, but like the young man lack the great thing. 4. Many are religious after a sort, attend worship, read the Bible, &c., but alas! there is a worm at the centre of all this fair fruit. 5. If they were criminals no one would wonder, but many of them are highly respectable. II. THEIR OFFENCE. They have not believed on the Son of God. 1. They refuse to accept the mercy of God. Men rejected God's law, now they reject His gospel. To refuse such a blessing provided at such a cost, cannot be a small sin. It is the greatest, for when the Holy Ghost comes to convince the world of sin, that sin is unbelief. 2. In this rejection the unbeliever displays an intense venom against God. He must either accept mercy or condemnation. He chooses the latter. What has God done to deserve this? 3. The unbeliever touches God in a very tender place: slighting the greatest manifestation of His love. 4. He perpetrates an offence against every person in the blessed Trinity. 5. He insults every Divine attribute, justice, wisdom, mercy. III. THE SOURCES OF THIS UNBELIEF. 1. In many, careless ignorance of the way of salvation, and this in a land of churches and Bibles, is so far from being an excuse that it is an aggravation. 2. Indifference. Men are aware that they are not quite right, but hope to be at last; meanwhile it does not trouble them. What grosser impertinence can there be against the supreme Ruler? 3. Pride. Salvation is all very well for harlots, drunkards, &c. 4. Love of sin. IV. THE TERRIBLE RESULT. The wrath of God abideth now and always. 1. You will not escape by ceasing to exist. The Divine wrath cannot rest on a non-existent creature. 2. This must be so because you reject the only remedy. There is but one door, and you close it by unbelief. 3. The wrath will produce no saving or softening effect, but will go on to harden. 4. God has never taken an oath against any but unbelievers. "To whom sware He in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?" Continued unbelief God will never forgive, because His word binds Him not to do so. In conclusion. There is a blessed alternative: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The life eternal:*—I. LIFE ETERNAL IN THIS WORLD. 1. It has its origin here. It is not death, but regeneration—that is the entrance gate to it. He begins to live the same life as he will live in heaven—only that here he is in a state of childhood, and many are the childish things which he does. 2. It is nourished here. God has promised food for it; He has stewards to furnish it with nourishment in due season; and the cupboard and larder is open for it to help itself whenever it likes. The food contained in the Bible is the produce of its native country, and it will not look well unless it will feed often on this. 3. It is trained here for its home. It is away from home here, in an ungenial climate and a strange land. It is not to be wondered at if at times it appears to be weak and feeble; it must do so if it remain long in the unhealthy atmosphere of this world. There is something tender, yet strong, about it. It is too strong ever to die, but it is tender enough to appear sickly. II. LIFE ETERNAL IN THE WORLD TO COME. 1. It will be of age there—"a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The believer is but an infant, in his minority, here. Parents do not allow very young children to enter their drawing-rooms and mingle with their distinguished guests; but they have to wait until they are of a fit age, and know how to conduct themselves in noble company. When they are infants they are not allowed to meddle with the papers and writings of their father; but as they approach maturity it is pleasant to see them take interest in the circumstances and movements of the household. 2. It will be in its own climate there. There are many impediments to its progress here. It is exposed to many diseases, and the believer has to take many a bitter drug, and has to undergo treatment oftentimes which is, for the present, not joyous, but grievous. But by such things is the inward man renewed day by day. The bitter things will not be needed in the world to come; there the climate will be

genial, the atmosphere perfectly healthy; and none of the inhabitants shall say, "I am sick." 3. It will then be in its home. It is but a pilgrim here, travelling through the enemy's land; the god of this world and the children of this world are hostile to it, and do their best to kill it. The Christian has often feared that the "Divine nature" has received a death-blow, he felt so weak and faint. 4. It will be in its Father's house. The believer is away at school; and the only intercourse between him and the Father is by correspondence. Note—1. Heaven or hell will be but a continuation of what man is here. The principle which is now in thy soul, having reached its climax, will constitute thy heaven or thy hell; and that in its native element. 2. All men begin in this world to live the "eternal life" or begin to die the "eternal death." (*David Roberts, D.D.*) *Christ is the sinner's only hope*:—On a huge cross by the side of an Italian highway hung a hideous caricature of the Beloved of our souls, who poured out His life for our redemption. Out of reverence to the living Christ we turned aside, disgusted, from the revolting image, but not until we had espied the words "Spes unica" in capitals over its head. Here was truth emblazoned on an idol. Yes, indeed, Jesus, our now exalted, but once crucified Lord, is the sole and only hope of man. Assuredly, O Lord Jesus, thou art *spes unica* to our soul. "Other refuge have we none, Hangs our helpless soul on Thee." We found this diamond in the mire of superstition: does it sparkle any the less? *Believe or perish*:—Faith in Jesus is the only way of salvation, and if I will not walk in that way, there is no other. Our Lord's teaching leaves us no room to hope for the salvation of unbelievers. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; but what of those who do not believe? May they not be sincerely mistaken? May they not be very good people after all, and be saved in their own way? Our Lord's reply is sharp, clear, and decisive, "He that believeth not shall be damned." He hath nothing else for them but that. Christ is too great and too honest to court popularity, as many do nowadays, by an affectation that right and wrong are much the same. The wicked charity of this age sickens us with its deceptive cant, as it whines out, "It will little matter what you believe; nothing nowadays is of very great consequence; believe what you like, and it shall be all right in the long run." Nay, but according to the gospel of Jesus you must believe the truth, and have faith in the power of the truth, for a lie will not regenerate you, a lie will not fit you to see the face of God, a lie will not conduct you to heaven, but only that truth which hath the stamp and seal of God and of His Holy Spirit. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The peril of unbelievers*:—Your peace, sinner, is that terribly prophetic calm which the traveller occasionally perceives upon the higher Alps. Everything is still. The birds suspend their notes, fly low, and cower down with fear. The hum of bees among the flowers is hushed. A horrible stillness rules the hour, as if death had silenced all things by stretching over them his awful sceptre. Perceive ye not what is surely at hand? The tempest is preparing; the lightning will soon cast abroad its flames of fire. Earth will rock with thunderblasts; granite peaks will be dissolved; all nature will tremble beneath the fury of the storm. Yours is that solemn calm to-day, sinner. Rejoice not in it, for the hurricane of wrath is coming, the whirlwind and the tribulation which shall sweep you away and utterly destroy you. *The dreadful wrath of God*:—A young man went to hear Mr. Whitefield, who took the above passage for his text. "Mr. Whitefield," said the young man, "described the Sadducees' character; this did not touch me—I thought myself as good a Christian as any man in England. From this he went to that of the Pharisees. He described their exterior decency, but observed that the poison of hypocrisy rankled in their hearts. This rather shook me. At length, in the course of his sermon, he abruptly broke off, paused for a few moments, then burst into a flood of tears, lifted up his eyes and hands and exclaimed, 'My hearers! the wrath to come! the wrath to come!' These words sank into my heart, like lead in the waters. I wept, and when the sermon ended, retired alone. For days and weeks I could think of nothing else. Those awful words would follow me wherever I went. 'The wrath to come! the wrath to come!'" The result was that the young man soon after made a public profession of religion, and in a short time became an eminent preacher. *Christ the only refuge from apprehensions of the future*:—I. ALL MEN NEED SOME REFUGE FROM THESE APPREHENSIONS. Our ignorance prevents us from seeing into a future state, and our sinfulness damps what discoveries we may make by a sonse of foreboding and an apprehension of punishment. Man needs light and peace. II. MOST MEN FEEL THIS NEED MORE OR LESS, AND RESORT TO EXPEDIENTS AGAINST THE FEAR OF WHAT FOLLOWS DEATH. No

man of ordinary culture is asleep on this point, and this leads to modes of thinking and action which only disappoint. III. APART FROM REVELATION, ALL SYSTEMS IN WHICH MEN SEEK REFUGE ARE VAIN. Some, indeed, have been partially successful. *Cf.* the rites of Paganism and the delusions of Mohammed. But go where we will, if not to Christ, we have no rest. 1. Shall we go to atheism, the madness of human nature? This does not extinguish fear. It is certain we exist now. How! By chance, says the atheist. But on the same principle of chance may not life be protracted after death? 2. Shall we go to Deism? Nothing can assure the Deist that the Bible is not the Word of God. All he can say is "probably" it is not. But suppose it should be true, what is his position then? IV. CHRIST ONLY HAS THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE. 1. He is the only effective teacher of it. The idea of immortality existed before; but He brought it down from the clouds into sober certainty (John v. 24–25). So with the apostles (2 Cor. v. 1). Who dared to say "We know" but disciples of this Master? 2. He has revealed the only scheme of it consistent with the principles of the Divine government. By answering all the designs of justice in punishing, it has removed the necessity of punishment, and gives room for salvation. 3. The miracles of Jesus prove that He has eternal life—(1) By establishing the divinity of His mission. (2) By proving His power to do whatever He has promised. 4. Facts of every-day occurrence prove that Jesus has eternal life. We do not see Him call Lazarus from the grave, but daily He calls dead souls into life. Every true Christian has witness within himself of this. Conclusion. 1. Those who reject the Gospel Saviour reject their life. 2. Those who receive Him are eternally secure. (*A. M'Clelland, D.D.*) *The wrath of God*:—The wrath of man is fearful to view, and especially to feel. But the wrath of God—no pen can describe it, or imagination conceive it. What will the realization of it be? And this wrath impends over every impenitent sinner. I. It is SURE TO FALL UPON HIM IN DUE TIME. 1. It is not a simple possibility. 2. Not a threat to terrify. 3. It is as sure as God Almighty's throne. (1) Eternal and Omnipotent Justice has decreed it. (2) Revelation declares it on almost every page. (3) The providence of God illustrates and confirms His Word. II. It is sure in due time TO FALL UPON THE SINNER IN ALL THE TERRIBLENESS OF ITS POWER AND SEVERITY. 1. Here mercy tempers justice. Wrath is restrained and grace works. 2. This is the world of probation, not of final award. 3. The day of reckoning is appointed after death. III. THIS WRATH IS JUSTLY DESERVED. 1. It might have been turned aside. 2. Voluntary sin and the persistent refusal of mercy and grace provoke it. (*J. M. Sherwood, D.D.*)

CHAPTER IV.

VERS. 1–42. **When therefore the Lord knew.**—*The first visit to Samaria*:—I. THE STORY ITSELF. 1. The memorable halt (vers. 1–6). 2. The surprising request (vers. 7–9). 3. The opened vista (ver. 10). 4. The proud reminiscence (vers. 11, 12). 5. The perennial fountain (vers. 13, 14). 6. The weary request (ver. 15). 7. The merciful wound (vers. 16–18). 8. The everlasting debate (vers. 19, 20). 9. The majestic annunciation (vers. 21–24). 10. The sublime claim (vers. 25, 26). 11. The marvellous wonder (vers. 17). 12. The startling surmise (vers. 28–30). 13. The hidden manna (vers. 31–34). 14. The cheery parable (vers. 35–38). 15. The glorious harvest (vers. 39–42). II. LESSONS OF THE STORY: 1. The duty of seizing opportunities. 2. A model for religious conversation. 3. The true method of quenching the soul's thirst (vers. 13, 14). 4. The spirituality of Christian worship (vers. 21–24). 5. A test of Messiahship (ver. 29). 6. The sense of vocation the true food (ver. 31–34). 7. Harvesting the Church's privilege and duty (ver. 35). 8. The community of Christian fruition (ver. 36). 9. The present the harvest of the past (vers. 37, 38). 10. The power of a single conversion (ver. 39). 11. Spiritual privileges to be cherished (ver. 40). 12. The superiority of personal experience (ver. 41, 42). 13. A pastor's personal invitation. (*G. D. Boardman, D.D.*) *Christ at Jacob's well*:—This history teaches us that—I. NO SOUL IS SO LOST BUT THE LORD CAN FIND IT. Frivolity was natural to this woman. She had lived without restraint and morality. Woman has one safeguard against sin—innate delicacy. This lost, all is lost; and this was so with the Samaritan. How many would have turned away from her as hopeless. But Christ turns to her because she is a soul whom

the Father has given Him to save. II. No OCCASION IS SO TRIFLING BUT THE LORD CAN USE IT. The woman comes to draw water, a common act, by a common way. Who would have thought that the way would have led to everlasting life? The least trifle may become in God's hand a means of salvation: a word spoken at random, a familiar scene, an unforeseen hindrance, the monotony of life, the influence of a friend. God's seeking grace encompasses us like the air we breathe. III. No STRENGTH IS SO FEEBLE BUT THE LORD CAN INCREASE IT. Few could have been morally weaker than this woman. She lacked the power to understand Christ and to know herself. Christ had to awaken everything in her. So are we impotent; but the Spirit of Christ helps our infirmities. Christ asks in order that He may give. He requires humility, but only to exalt, the surrender of the old life in order to confer life eternal. IV. No BEGINNING IS SO SMALL BUT THE LORD CAN LEAD IT TO A BLESSED END. What a small beginning here! And yet before long a disciple and evangelist is found. Don't despise little beginnings and struggling souls. (*Carl Keogh, D.D.*) *Jesus at the well*:—I. A SYMPATHETIC COMPANION. 1. Sharing human infirmity (ver. 6; Isa. liii. 3; Matt. iv. 2; Mark xiv. 34; John xi. 35, xix. 28). 2. Accepting human supplies (ver. 7; Matt. xxi. 17; Mark ii. 16; Luke vii. 36, xix. 5, xxiv. 41). 3. Surpassing human expectations (ver. 9; Matt. viii. 27, ix. viii., xxii. 22; Mark v. 20; John iii. 9). II. A HELPFUL COMPANION. 1. Dispelling ignorance (ver. 10; Mark ii. 10; Luke xix. 42; John x. 38, xiii. 7, xv. 15). 2. Arousing desire (ver. 14; Matt. v. 6; xi. 28; John iii. 12, xiv. 12, xvi. 24). 3. Begetting prayer (ver. 15; Matt. ix. 27, xv. 22, xx. 30; Mark x. 47; Luke xviii. 41). III. A DIVINE COMPANION. 1. Knowing all things (ver. 17; John i. 48, ii. 25, xvi. 30, xxi. 17; Col. ii. 3). 2. Illustrating true worship (ver. 23; Exod. xx. 3; 2 Kings xvii. 35; Psa. xcvi. 9; Jer. xxv. 6; Matt. iv. 10). 3. Avowing the Messiahship (ver. 26; Psa. ii. 6; Matt. xvi. 16; John xi. 27; Acts iii. 18, xvii. 7. (*S. S. Times.*) *Jesus at the well*:—How immense the distance between "Give Me to drink" and "I am He." I. AN OBJECT-LESSON IN THE ART OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. 1. No duty more difficult than that of opening out a conversation on the things of the soul. This an art, because we must learn it by practice through mistakes and discouragement. Jesus left few discourses, because His teaching was mostly conversational, suggested by passing things. Beginning here with human thirst and eliciting questions, He gradually and naturally led up and on to the highest truths. 2. Notice the skill with which Jesus avoids a plain answer to a plain question, and so replies that He becomes the questioner and arouses deepening curiosity and interest. 3. The use He made of the woman's moral intuitions and the truths she already knew. This was the favourite method of His dialectics. 4. Here do we need our lesson from Christ. (1) How perfectly He entered into human need! (2) He had infinite patience with the narrow and dull and earthbound. (3) With all this went an equal faith in that hidden but immortal power to which He appealed. II. THE TRUTHS OF THIS DISCOURSE. 1. Living water. (1) The comparison of spiritual blessings to water familiar in Scripture. (2) The characteristic of this water is that it is a gift. Men do not have to fetch, buy, nor earn salvation, but receive it. (3) This water of life is not Christ, for He gives it, but the whole truth and grace which make for salvation. 2. True worship. (1) The vital inward power brings one into the true attitude of worship. The heart first, form afterwards. (2) True worship must be an inward secret thing. Ritual, music, &c., only aid the silent movements of the soul towards God. (3) True worship must be true to God's requirements and our own moral wants, not merely honest and sincere, although misguided, but in accordance with the reality of things. (4) The Father seeks such worship. 3. Jesus the Messiah. Salvation was of the Jews, but Christ was the fulfilment of hopes as old as the race. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The woman of Samaria*:—1. The person here introduced was a member of a race specially hateful to the Jews; but Jesus was above the prejudice of His nation. 2. The Samaritan was a woman. "Never speak to a woman in the street, even if she be thy wife"; "Burn the words of the law rather than teach them to a woman," were current maxims in Jewish society. But Christ, in the unsullied purity of His manhood, brushed aside as cobwebs all social regulations which tended to perpetuate feminine servitude. 3. This woman lived in habitual sin. But Christ came to save sinners. Notice Jesus Christ—I. ENLIGHTENING THE WOMAN. He leads her from natural to spiritual subjects. 1. Observe His sweet courtesy. He opens the conversation, not with a sneer or opprobrious epithet, after the manner of a Jew, but with a request; and notwithstanding her ungracious rebuff, not one word of rebuke escapes Him. A most gentlemanly stranger. True religion teaches

us to be courteous. This urbanity impressed her, and He became successively in her eyes Jew, Sir, Prophet, Christ. The truth must be spoken in love, and love will impress quite as much as truth. 2. Notice that the woman's lack of culture did not hinder Christ making the grandest disclosures. A radical mistake is made when the attempt is made to simplify the gospel beyond what Christ has done. The sublime will always awaken the corresponding consciousness. This is one reason why the words of Christ have more power and permanence than the systems of men. 3. The Lord made a discovery to this woman which He never made to any one else—His Messiahship. Why? Because that would not have been safe in Judæa or Galilee? Rather because of the different dispositions of those He addressed. II. RECLAIMING THE WOMAN. The object of His enlightening her was to save her. 1. Christ always aimed at doing good. (1) In ancient times men did good spasmodically; relief was the result of natural impulse. But in Christianity impulse has been dignified into a principle. (2) Plato and Aristotle teach you to love men for your own sakes; Christ for their sakes and His. The essence of the gospel is not self-interest, but self-sacrifice. 2. He sought to do the highest good by reclaiming the worst characters. There are three stages in history relative to this subject. (1) A state of well-nigh complete insensibility. The Iliad delineated heroes and cowards, strong men and weak, but not good and bad. (2) The next stage is marked by the awakening of conscience and of the idea of right and wrong. Virtue is applauded, vice censured. But the idea of justice taught men to sympathize with the man sinned against, not the sinner. (3) The last stage is that of full-orbed mercy in Christ, teaching us to compassionate both the injurer and the injured. Christ changed the attitude of the world in respect to its notorious sinners. 3. To accomplish these ends He threw into His philanthropic movements unprecedented zeal (ver. 34). (1) He had infinite faith in human nature. He saw its hidden potentialities. A lady, examining one of Turner's pictures, remarked: "But, Mr. T., I do not see these things in nature." "Madam," replied the artist, with pardonable *naïveté*, "don't you wish you did?" Christ saw what none of His contemporaries saw. The age was pessimistic; Christ was the only optimist of His time. (2) According to the strength of His hope was the fervour of His zeal. III. INSPIRING THE WOMAN, inparting to her His own enthusiasm. 1. She at once set about converting her neighbours. She did not lecture them; she only related her experience. We can also "say" if we cannot preach. Despise not the day of small things. Her "saying" led to the evangelization of a whole city. 2. The success attending the woman's simple efforts filled the Saviour with holy joy. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Christ and the woman of Samaria*:—I. THE MINGLED TACT AND CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST IN DEALING WITH A CARELESS SINNER. He does not begin with reproof, but with a request for water, a subject uppermost in her thoughts. This at once threw a bridge across the gulf between them. So Christian workers must go to the sinful, and bear down upon them in the spirit of friendly aggression, studying the best avenues to their hearts, and avoiding any show of superiority. II. CHRIST'S READINESS TO GIVE MERCIES TO CARELESS SINNERS. If she had asked, He would have given. "Ask and receive." III. THE PRICELESS EXCELLENCE OF CHRIST'S GIFTS WHEN COMPARED WITH THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD (vers. 13, 14). Thousands of men have every temporal good, and are yet weary and dissatisfied. Jesus alone can give solid happiness. His waters may have their ebbing seasons, but they are never completely dried. IV. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF CONVICTION TO CONVERSION. The woman was comparatively unmoved until our Lord exposed her breach of the seventh commandment. From that moment she is an inquirer after truth. Till a sinner sees himself as God sees him he will continue careless and trifling. Conscience must be pricked by the preaching of the law. V. THE USELESSNESS OF ANY RELIGION WHICH ONLY CONSISTS OF FORMALITY. True and acceptable worship depends on the state of the worshipper's heart (1 Sam. xvi. 7). VI. CHRIST'S GRACIOUS WILLINGNESS TO REVEAL HIMSELF TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS. Nowhere in the gospels do we find such an explicit avowal as in ver. 26. Whatever a man's past life may have been there is hope and a remedy for him in Christ. He will undertake to cure the apparently incurable. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The lost one met and saved*:—I. THE JOURNEY. 1. The occasion (ver. 1; *cf.* Isa. li. 13). 2. The route. There were four routes (Matt. xix. 2; Acts xxiii. 23). The Jews usually chose that by the Jordan valley, to avoid Samaria. 3. The reason (Luke ix. 10). 4. The rest. Notice Christ's humanity. II. THE MEETING. 1. The woman—(1) A Samaritan; (2) with some knowledge of God (ver. 20); (3) expecting the Messiah (ver. 25). 2. The time. Midday. Not the usual hour for

drawing water; but a time for such an one to do so unobserved. 3. The request. Compliance with it would have done honour to an archangel. Christ placed Himself in the position of one desiring a benefit. 4. The reply (ver. 9). This man is not like other Jews. III. THE CONVERSION. 1. The first flash of light (ver. 10; *cf.* Eph. v. 14). Water is sold in Egypt as the "gift of God." 2. Its reception (vers. 11, 12). The woman is perplexed, and seems to struggle between the literal and the spiritual. She changes her mode of address—"Sir." Our Lord takes no notice of her query, but addresses her state of mind. 3. The leading on (vers. 13, 14). The woman's desire is intensified. The light becomes obscured. How true a picture of an awakening soul! 4. The revelation (ver. 16). The request is granted in Christ's way, not in her's. He flashes light on her soul and her past (vers. 18, 29). 5. Her anxious inquiry (vers. 19, 20). How is salvation to be obtained? Not by forms, places, &c. 6. The gift received (vers. 25, 26). IV. THE EFFECT (ver. 28). She hastens away a saved sinner to save others (John i. 41–45). See a mark of her change, as showing its reality in the fulness of her confession (ver. 29; *cf.* ver. 17; Luke xix. 8, xxiii. 41; Rom. x. 10). (*J. Gill.*) *Jesus at the well of Sychar*:—The Fourth Gospel may be called the Gospels of the Conversations, for, more than any other, it reports particular interviews of our Lord with individuals. These conversations, too, are real conversations, for Jesus was not like some famous men, who discourse in monologue. Even His addresses to the multitude were often interrupted by the inquiries or remarks of others, and, in smaller companies, He guided the conversation, while apparently taking the lesser part. The "golden silences" of Jesus are very marked, and George Borrow, in that fascinating book, "The Bible in Spain," relates that the taciturn people of the little Republic of Andorra noticed these silences, and said of them, "Jesus played the Andorran." While He spoke with authority, yet He dispelled all feeling of restraint, and even seemed to awaken in others unwonted freedom. Not unfrequently He gave the thought, and let them do the talking. Christ never appears to have saved anything for a large audience, nor feared that any utterance of truth, breathed into the receptive heart of however humble a hearer, could fail of its effect. And these conversations all have a personal turn. They attach great principles to common life, and they lead people through their own needs to the grandest spiritual truths. Jesus evidently has confidence in the living power of truth, and therefore does not press it, but leaves His hearers to follow out the idea and make the application for themselves. If, then, we would understand the effect of our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria, we must read it in the message she bore to her people: "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Can this be the Christ?" This perfect knowledge of the Christ is our greatest safeguard. It is needful, to defend us from plunging farther into sin, that we have the confidence of a loving Saviour. When we are on the verge of temptation, the thought that He knows and grieves over our past sins may win us back. When will we learn the noonday lesson taught at the well of Sychar, that it is the Christ who reveals us to ourselves! It is not for you to find out your sin, but for Him to reveal it to you. With the Psalmist, you ask God to search you, "that you may be led in the way everlasting." You are to become acquainted with your own heart by having Him read it to you; and all you can tell Him will be of that which He has told you before. Repentance now loses its bitterness, because it is the revelation of the Christ. "Once," says Luther, "I thought no word so bitter as repentance; now there is none more sweet, and those passages in the Bible that used to terrify me now smile and sport about me." In the same spirit, Augustine says, in his "Confessions," "I will now call to mind my past foulness and the carnal corruptions of my soul; not because I love them, but that I may love Thee, O my God. For love of Thy love I do it; reviewing my most wicked ways in the very bitterness of my remembrance, that Thou mayest grow sweet unto me." The power of such a revelation of the Christ is manifest in the fact, that the largest harvest of souls our Lord ever gathered while on earth was reaped in the two days He spent at Sychar. A soul brought face to face with Him, beholding His glory by being self-revealed, is a fit instrument to convey to others the advent of the Christ. (*James G. Vose.*) *The model Teacher*:—I. HIS ZEAL. 1. He went to a most unwelcome neighbourhood. His hereditary prejudices were arrayed against it, yet, when the world of Palestine was open to Him, our Lord must needs go through it. 2. He became a teacher. What condescension of His; what an ennobling of the office. 3. He was satisfied with a class of one scholar. He talked just as long, kindly, and eloquently as He did to thousands. The great

doctrines were in many cases given quietly to individuals. Regeneration to Nicodemus; resurrection to Martha; spirituality of worship to this woman. 4. He occupied Himself with a disagreeable pupil. Never was there more unpromising scholar. 5. He laboured with her when He was wearied almost to exhaustion. II. HIS TACT. 1. How ingenious He was in catching an illustration to interest her mind. He took her water-pot for His text, as He did afterwards fish, loaves, &c. Try to link the unknown on to the known. 2. How quick He was in turning the illustration so as to impress her conscience. He knew He had done nothing until He made her feel that she was a sinner. So McCheyne, standing before a forge fire, said gently to the workmen, "Who can dwell with everlasting burnings"; and Payson to his coach companion on nearing their destination, "Are you prepared for the end of the journey which is so much longer than this?" III. HIS SPIRITUALITY. He made the interview religious. Like all other sinners, the woman wanted to talk about something else. 1. Jesus avoided all discussion of sectarian questions. She—(1) Proposed sectarian questions; (2) Suggested ritualistic points; (3) Ventured on speculative inquiries. 2. Jesus pressed home the one lesson He wanted her to learn first of all. He told her of—(1) The exact state of her case, and drew her to an admission of it; (2) The demands of Divine law; (3) The Redeemer's help. 3. Jesus completed His work by disclosing Himself. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The pedagogy or rudimentary teaching of Jesus*:—The Church has a twofold mission. 1. To collect the masses, to bear patiently with them and educate them. 2. To go after individuals, personally to lay hold of their inner life in order to bring them into a state of salvation. Particular communions have leaned some to one side and some to the other. Romanism has cultivated the social element; lesser communities have laid greater stress on individual faith. Both objects ought always to be united. Let us learn from the pedagogic example of the Lord. Here He reaches the community through the individual; but the individual must first be educated to the faith and knowledge of the truth. There are three steps. I. The first is reached BY AWAKENING IN THE WOMAN A SENSE OF A DEEPER WANT, the desire for something better than this well can offer. 1. She had regarded life as a matter of sensual enjoyment. The accusations of conscience had not troubled her, and she was happy in her way. 2. Jesus makes her discontented. It was not cruel, only inevitably painful, as is a surgical operation. To destroy quiet is the first step to the cure. Suspended between heaven and earth our souls are drawn to God, but bound to the world, and in the latter we seek happiness. This is the delusion of sin. A life of worldliness assumes a variety of forms, from the most degraded to the most refined, but the principle is the same. And that all is vanity is the first lesson we must learn and teach, to excite the desire for "living water." II. "Go, CALL THY HUSBAND," is the second stage. The first is of doubtful result. It may lead right or left; to pride and contempt of other men who have no aspiration. Christ's words, therefore, lead us from the struggle without to that within, to sin as the occasion of the mischief. This sin we must willingly know and renounce. This the woman was led to by the look of love which read her history in her heart. This teaches us to enter lovingly into personal life. A tender solicitude unlocks the heart and encourages confession. The word which exposes sin is the law in the hand of love. III. Conviction of sin awakens the desire for forgiveness in prayer. The inquiry respecting Gerizim and Jerusalem was no evasion, but led to the third step, where our Lord refers her to THE HISTORICAL REVELATION FOR SALVATION. "Salvation is of the Jews." God must be worshipped in Spirit, yet the revelation of Himself was in Israel, and its end the Messias. It is not enough to tread the path of inward self-knowledge; we must walk also in the way of faith. Not only do we move to meet God, He is come to meet us. The truth of salvation is historical, and the historical gospel is a moral certainty. So the woman proved. The saved individual now seeks to save society. "She left her water-pot," &c. Conclusion: 1. We should go forth and lead souls to Christ as Christ led this woman. 2. No doubt we shall be weary sometimes, but, if the Master was weary, we need not be ashamed. And the wells which men have dug will then be doubly refreshing; for whatever the Creator has given to man to enjoy is also given for the refreshment of the soul. 3. But the soul lives not by these alone, and when the highest matters press we must be prepared to renounce them, for they do not quench the soul's deepest thirst. (*C. E. Luthardt, D.D.*) *Characteristics of Christ displayed in this conversation*:—I. Our Lord's MERCY is remarkable. That such an one as He should deal so graciously with such a sinner is a striking fact. II. His WISDOM,

How wise was every step of His way in dealing with this sinful soul! III. His PATIENCE. How He bore with the woman's ignorance, and what trouble He took to lead her to knowledge. IV. His POWER. What a complete victory He won at last! How almighty must that grace be which could soften and convert such a carnal and wicked heart! (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Subsidiary points* :—I. HUMAN FOLLY AND DIVINE WISDOM in contrast. II. OUR LORD'S REAL HUMANITY in His subjection to weariness and thirst. III. OUR LORD'S REAL DIVINITY in the mastery of all the secrets of the human heart. IV. OUR LORD'S WILLINGNESS TO IMPART THE DEEPEST TRUTHS TO THE HUMBLEST understanding, thus assuring us that, although God has hid these things from the wise and prudent, He has revealed them unto babes. (*H. J. Van Dyke, D.D.*) **When . . . the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.**—*The journey to Samaria* :—I. THE DEPARTURE. The reason for it was the jealousy of the Pharisees at Christ's success. 1. Jesus saw that a storm was coming, and withdrew. To abandon the profession or defence of the gospel from dread of suffering is quite a different thing from the persecuted Christian in one city fleeing to another to there hold forth the Word of life. 2. It is that persecutors are not always the open enemies, but are sometimes the professed friends, of religion, and that the name of God has often been associated with relentless cruelty. 3. The Pharisees did not hear Christ, but received reports doubtless exaggerated, for they heard that He personally baptized. 4. The great work of the ministry is not to baptize, but to preach. They are Christ's fellow-workers in discriminating the truth, but not fellow-workers with the Spirit in communicating grace. II. THE ARRIVAL. 1. Although the district was alien, there were souls to be saved. (1) To the eye of man Jesus appeared to be fleeing from persecution. (2) To the eye of God the visit was part of a mysterious plan by which the glory of the Divine government was to be revealed. (3) To the eye of faith it offers an illustration of the manner in which the purpose of God is fulfilled. 2. Christ's presence and work at Sychar, with its illustrious antecedents, offer encouragements to prayer for those who are to come after us. (1) Parents should be stimulated to pray for children's children. (2) Believers to plead for the future of the Church. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ driven away* :—I. FALSE TEACHERS ARE ENEMIES TO THE TRUE. They will join with corrupt magistrates and favour their villainies (Isa. ix. 15), as the Pharisees did Herod against John. Christ, therefore, will rather trust Herod in Galilee than the Pharisees in Judæa (*cf.* Acts xxv. 11). II. IT IS NO UNCHARITABLENESS, BUT WISDOM, TO SUSPECT WICKED MEN; as Christ did the PHARISEES. III. WHEN ONE TEACHER IS GONE GOD CAN RAISE UP ANOTHER. The Pharisees thought themselves well when John was out of the way, but Christ gives them more displeasure (Mark i. 14). They thought themselves sure when Christ was crucified, but Christ raised up twelve more to do greater things than Himself. Ministers are mortal, but the Church is immortal (Psa. ii. 1). IV. PROMISES ARE TO BE SEALED TO THOSE ONLY WHO REPENT AND BELIEVE. 1. Disciples were made—2. Then were baptized. V. GOD TURNS THE MALICE OF MEN TO THE GOOD OF HIS CHURCH. The Pharisees drove Christ to Galilee, but on the way a whole city was brought to Him. An ill wind that blows nobody good. (*Jer. Dyke.*) *The retreat of Jesus* :—The first turning point in His official life. I. MOTIVES. The Pharisees began to watch Him with hostile eyes; the Baptist is imprisoned. II. CHARACTER. Free consciousness. He retreats—1. In free discretion, without fear. 2. In holy discretion, "the Lord knew." III. RICH RESULTS. Beneficent sojourn in Samaria. IV. SIGNIFICANCY. 1. He ceases to baptize. 2. He tarries in Samaria on His return. *The rite of baptism* :—I. AS PRACTISED BY JOHN (chap. i. 25–28, 33, iii. 23; *cf.* Matt. iii. 12; Mark i. 4–8; Luke iii. 3, 20). 1. Its nature—water baptism. Its mode uncertain. The word signifies either the application of an object to water or water to an object. Hence to immerse (2 Kings v. 14) or to wash (Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 38). Against immersion in the present case stand—(1) The multitudes; (2) The impromptu and public manner; (3) Its practice in all seasons. In favour of pouring is the contraposition of "with water" and "with the Spirit" (chap. i. 33), by which the two baptisms are distinguished. The believer is not immersed in the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost descends on the believer. 2. Its import—purification of the outer life; reformation rather than regeneration. 3. Its design—preparation for Messiah. 4. Its obligation—faith. The recipient was bound to believe in and go over to the Messiah when He appeared. II. AS CELEBRATED BY CHRIST (through His disciples) (chap. iii. 22–26). 1. Its resemblance to John's. (1) Performed in the same way. (2) Possessed the same significance. (3) Looked towards the same end. 2. Its difference from John's. Administered—

(1) By Christ's express authority. (2) To such as professed their faith in a "come" Messiah. (3) With a view of admitting to Christian discipleship. (4) As an acknowledgment of obligation to learn and obey. III. As ADMINISTERED BY THE APOSTLES (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 41, vii. 13, 36, ix. 18, &c.). 1. How far it agreed with the preceding. (1) In form it was a baptism with water. (2) In authority it rested on the commandment of Christ. (3) In significance it symbolized purification and sealed faith in the Messiah. (4) In effect it introduced to the Messianic Church. (5) In design it bound to acceptance of the teaching and obedience to the rule of Christ. 2. How far it went beyond the preceding. It—(1) Rested on the authority of the risen as well as of the incarnate Christ. (2) Symbolized inward renewal by the reception of the Holy Ghost. (3) Was administered on a profession of faith, not simply in the Messiah, but in the Trinity. (4) Was not restricted to the Jewish people. (5) Was not provisional, but permanent. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Why Christ did not personally baptize*:—Lightfoot mentions because—1. He was not sent so much to baptize as to preach. 2. It might have been taken as a thing somewhat improper for Christ to baptize in His own name. 3. The baptizing that was most proper for Christ to use was not with water, but with the Holy Ghost. 4. He would prevent all quarrels and disputes among men about their baptism, which might have risen if some had been baptized by Christ and others only by His disciples. To these reasons we may add another of considerable importance. Our Lord would show us that the effect and benefit of baptism do not depend on the person who administers it. We cannot doubt that Judas Iscariot baptized some. The intention of the minister does not affect the validity of the sacrament. One thing seems abundantly clear, and that is, that baptism is not an ordinance of primary, but of subordinate, importance in Christianity. The high-flown and extravagant language used by some divines about the sacrament of baptism and its effects is quite irreconcilable with the text before us, as well as with the general teaching of Scripture (see Acts x. 48; 1 Cor. i. 17). *The three baptisms*:—There are three degrees in the institution: John's baptism, which was a general consecration to the Messianic kingdom by repentance; the baptism of Jesus, an attachment to His person as a disciple; baptism as reconstituted by Jesus after His resurrection as a consecration to the possession of salvation thenceforth acquired by Him for the whole world. We do not find that the subjects of the first baptism (the apostles, *e.g.*) were afterwards subjected to the second or third. It was they, on the contrary, who were charged with administering the two last (ver. 2; Acts ii.). (*F. Godet, D.D.*) **He left Judæa.**—From Jerusalem to Nazareth, by way of the hill towns of Shiloh, Sychar, Nain, and Endor, the distance, as a bird would fly, is about sixty-four miles, being nearly the same as that from Oxford to London. By the camel paths, and there are no other, it is eighty miles. A good rider, having little baggage and less curiosity, may get over the ground in two long days; to do so, however, he must make up his mind to spend twelve hours each day in the saddle, on stony hill-sides, with very little water, and still less shade, under the blazing light of a Syrian sun. An easy journey, with time to rest and read, to see the wells, ruins, and cities on the route, may be made in four days; though better still in five. The Lord and His disciples went through the land on foot, resting by the wells, under the shade of fig-trees, in the caves of rocks. The first part of this journey, a ride of thirty-six miles from the Damascus gate, to be done in about twelve hours, brings you to one of the most lovely and attractive spots in Palestine—the site of Joseph's tomb and Jacob's well. (*W. H. Dixon.*) The original word, *ἀφίημι*, is a remarkable one; *καταλείπω* might have been expected (Matt. iv. 15; Heb. xi. 27); and there is no exact parallel in the New Testament to this usage (yet comp. chap. xvi. 28). The general idea that it conveys is that of leaving anything to itself, to its own wishes, ways, fate; of withdrawing whatever controlling power was exercised before. Christ had claimed Jerusalem as the seat of His royal power, and Judæa as His kingdom. That claim He now in one sense gave up. (*Canon Westcott.*) **He must needs go through Samaria.**—*Christ and the Samaritans.*—The ministry of Christ may be divided into two sections, the Galilean and the Judæan. Taking Capernaum as a centre and describing a circle of ten miles, and taking the Temple as a centre and describing another circle of equal radius—between these two points the life of Christ oscillated. Separating the two provinces was a strip of country inhabited by a mongrel semi-alien race—the Samaritans, between whom and the Jews there was a long-standing feud. How will Christ treat it? Will He pass round it? Will He widen the chasm? Or will He join the two in one? Let us

see. I. WHEN CHRIST SPEAKS OF THE SAMARITANS IT IS IN WORDS OF FAVOUR AND COMMENDATION. 1. In the Samaritan "Stranger" of Luke xvii. 11–20, He finds the truest worship of Jehovah offered, not on Moriah, nor yet on Gerizim, but by the wayside. 2. In the parable of the Good Samaritan a comparison is drawn between the Samaritan and the Jew, to the eternal honour of the one, and the eternal shame of the other. The former is placed beside the very *élite* of Judaism, the priest and Levite, and the Master uses their selfish inhumanity as a foil to throw out more clearly and brightly the noble generosity of this "stranger." 3. Christ is Himself called a Samaritan (chap. viii. 48), doubtless because of His strong Samaritan leanings, and He does not protest. II. CHRIST SEEKS TO REMOVE THE PREJUDICES OF HIS DISCIPLES BY PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE DESPISED RACE. 1. The exception (Matt. x. 5) is due to their narrow views and prejudices. 2. Christ takes them with Him into Samaria (chap. iv.) and sends them to "have dealings" with the Samaritans; and tarries with them there two days (ver. 40), and thus the old prejudices are removed by friendly hospitalities. III. CHRIST OFFERED TO THE SAMARITANS THE PRIVILEGES OF HIS KINGDOM. 1. He deigns to ask a favour of the Samaritan woman and speaks one of the sublimest discourses of His ministry. 2. She and her fellow-citizens proclaim Christ the Messiah. 3. As a result of this the chasm is filled up (Acts i. 8, viii. 5–8). Henceforth the Samaritan is no more the "stranger," but "a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God." (*H. Burton, M.A.*) *Utilizing disagreeable necessities*:—1. The first signs of hostility to Christ (ver. 1). 2. The prudence of the Master. Just as it was necessary for Him to die for a world's salvation, so now it is required that He should live in order that the true cause and nature of His death may be manifest. There is therefore nothing unworthy about this escape. 3. We must seek the explanation of this movement, not in the eternal decrees. Samaria would prove a neutral zone to keep His enemies at a distance, and while passing through it would not probably be followed. And besides, it admitted of His utilizing what might have been an anxious period and a waste of time. I. HE IGNORED A FALSE DISTINCTION. Ceremonial cleanness and goodness were confounded by the Jews; a confusion rectified by the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Church and society are still full of such distinctions. 1. It is for us, not wantonly, but on sufficient occasion to expose and set at nought the error. 2. To get at true distinctions one must first expose false ones. But we must be sure that it is false and that the true does not preponderate, and that we have something better to substitute. 3. Wisdom and courage are, therefore, necessary. 4. No safer guide can be found than a strong desire to do good and glorify God. II. HE CONVERTED AN INCONVENIENCE TO A SPIRITUAL USE. He is a fugitive, but He does not hurry through the country, nor forget its spiritual destitution in His own sorrows. 1. Annoyance or ill temper at the disturbance of settled plans ought not to make us weary in well doing. Many are idle in the Church because they cannot get the particular thing they like best. But the greatest discoveries and reforms have been effected by the determination to do what we can. 2. Illtreatment on the part of professors is no excuse for idleness or cynicism. 3. Nor ought we to be engrossed with our own troubles. Doing good is the way to recovery. 4. Let us try to improve the unpleasant and unfortunate people and leave the world better than we find it. III. A SPECIAL BLESSING ATTENDED HIS IRREGULAR EXTEMPORIZED MISSION. Each incident links itself easily on to another. It almost seems a beautiful creature of circumstances. Inconveniences are often Providential. A fault in the strata may point to richer seams. (*A. F. Muir, M.A.*) *The needs be*:—I. BY THE DETERMINATE COUNSEL AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD. 1. A wandering star was to be reclaimed from its devious orbit. 2. The locality was most unpromising. 3. What the Church would have missed had this chapter been lacking. II. THE PEERLESS VALUE OF A SINGLE SOUL IN THE SIGHT OF CHRIST. The narrative is the parable of the Lost Sheep in impressive reality. III. THE YEARNING PERSONAL LOVE OF THE SAVIOUR. IV. LET NONE DEEM THEMSELVES BEYOND THE PALE OF CHRIST'S SYMPATHY AND SUCCOUR. (*J. Macduff, D.D.*) *The occasion of the journey*:—He must needs go through Samaria, not only because that province lay in His way, but because He was hungry, and in poor half-heathen Samaria lay the savoury meat which His soul loved. In the same manner He must needs pass through our nature and our world, as He goes from the glory of the eternity past to the glory of the eternity to come. It was not any physical necessity; for the Maker of all worlds might have found another path from glory to glory without visiting this shooting star. But He must needs pass through the abode of fallen humanity on His way to the throne of the kingdom, because He longed to save the lost with a longing like

hunger, and here only could be found the food that would satisfy His soul. His own sovereign love laid the necessity upon Himself. The sun, His creature, is under an inherent necessity of giving out light; so Christ, the light of the world, must needs give out the light of life, and therefore He casts Himself in the way of a dark world, as the hungry seeks food and the thirsty makes his way towards water-springs. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *In the path of Christ*:—Happy for them that they lay in our Saviour's way to be looked upon: His paths drop fatness. Luther had rather be in hell with Christ than in heaven without Him. (*J. Trapp.*) *Providence shown in conversions*:—Now, there are divers things in those providences which are versant about this work, and exceedingly sweet and taking; as, viz., The wonderful strangeness and unaccountableness of this work of Providence in casting us into the way, and ordering the occasions, yea, the minutest circumstances about this work. Thus you find in Acts viii. 26–30. The eunuch, at that very instant when he was reading the prophet Isaiah, had an interpreter, one among a thousand, that joins his chariot just as his mind was, by a fit occasion, prepared to receive the first light of the knowledge of Christ. So, for the conversion of the Samaritans, it is observed (chap. iv. 4) Christ must needs go that way, because it lay just in the road betwixt Judea and Galilee, and at the sixth hour, *i.e.*, high noon, He rests Himself upon Jacob's well, still seeming to have no other design but His own refreshment, by sitting and drinking there; but, oh! what a train of blessed providences follow this, which seemed but an accidental thing! First, the woman of Samaria, and then many more in that city, are brought to believe in Christ, as you find in verses 29 and 41. (*J. Flavel.*) *Unquenchable enthusiasm*:—When I was going to Europe in 1867, my friend Mr. Stuart, of Philadelphia, said, "Be sure to be at the General Assembly in Edinburgh, in June. I was there last year," said he, "and it did me a world of good." He said that a returned missionary (Dr. Duff) from India was invited to speak to the General Assembly on the wants of India. This veteran missionary, after a brief address, told the pastors who were present to go home and stir up their churches to send young men to India to preach the gospel. He spoke with such earnestness, that after awhile he fainted, and they carried him from the Hall. When he recovered he asked where he was, and they told him the circumstances under which he had been brought there. "Yes," he said, "I was making a plea for India, and I did not quite finish my speech, did I?" After being told that he did not, he said, "Well, take me back and let me finish it." But they said, "No, you will die in the attempt." "Well," said he, "I shall die if I do not," and the old man asked again that they would allow him to finish his plea, When he was taken back, the whole congregation stood as one man, and as they brought him on the platform, with a trembling voice he said: "Fathers and mothers of Scotland, is it true that you will not let your sons go to India? I spent twenty-five years of my life there. I lost my health, and I have come back with sickness and shattered health. If it is true that we have no strong grandsons to go to India, I will pack up what I have and be off to-morrow, and I will let those heathen know that if I cannot live for them I will die for them." (*D. L. Moody.*) *Commendable enthusiasm*:—Exception being taken, as I have said, to his energy and vehemence, Rowland Hill told how he had once seen a vast bank of earth, below which some men were at work, suddenly rend asunder; and leaving its bed, precipitate itself forward to bury them alive before they could utter a cry, or move a foot to escape. And who then, he asked, found fault with me, because, in my anxiety to save them, my cries for help were loud enough to call the neighbourhood to the rescue, and be heard a long mile away. Left there, they perished, miserably perished—needing what God, not man, always is, "a very present help in trouble." (*Dr. Guthrie.*) *Our attitude towards Samaria*:—There is much in the disposition of the Samaritans that reminds us of the feelings of thousands of our own population to-day. Not only are they alienated from our faith, but they suspect us of a haughty and exclusive, or at least patronising attitude towards them. There is no fiercer resentment than the pharisaic spirit excites. Note the example of Christ. I. CHRIST DOES NOT AVOID SAMARIA. He will not shun those who entertain prejudices unpleasant to encounter. And we shall never restore the slums to piety if we skirt them with dainty feet. II. CHRIST DOES NOT HURRY THROUGH SAMARIA, BUT SEEKS CONVERSE WITH ITS INHABITANTS. None mere hurried visits to the headquarters of prejudice, rushing as through a cloud of suffocating smoke we must encounter, but amidst which we will not stay, will suffice. There must be true intercourse. III. CHRIST IS FORBEARING IN HIS ATTITUDE. His first overture is met with a half-playful, half-bitter reminder of what He never sanctioned, the division of sentiment between

Jew and Samaritan. What do we oftener meet? It is irritating to be taunted with the conduct of those whose spirit we do not share, though we may nominally share their religious name. But we ruin our influence by recrimination or bitter rejoinder. Like Christ, we must gently ignore the taunt. IV. CHRIST, WITH SACRED TACT, INTRODUCES HIS GOSPEL. Had He commenced controversially, the woman's heart would have been hardened; had He commenced with His final announcement (ver. 26), she would have been sceptical; had He commenced with such words as He used to learned Nicodemus, she would have been hopelessly bewildered. But He takes "water" for His text to this water-carrier, and in a picture lesson unfolds the truth. Ours are blind eyes if they see not texts in the commonest things, wherefrom we may preach the gospel of the kingdom. In that gospel Jew and Samaritan alike find hope and peace. (*W. Hawkins.*) **He cometh to a city of Samaria called Sychar.**—*The locality:*—This name is only found in St. John iv. 5, but it is universally considered to be the same as Sichem or Shechem, which is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament history. Dr. Robinson (*Bib. Res.* iii. 118) says, "In consequence of the hatred of the Jews, and in allusion to the idolatry of the Samaritans, the town Sichem probably received among the Jewish common people the by-name of Sychar, which we find in the Gospel of St. John; while Stephen, in addressing the more courtly Sanhedrim, employs the ancient name (Acts. vii. 16). Sychar might be derived from a Hebrew root, meaning either falsehood or drunkard." Josephus describes Shechem as between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The present Nabulus is a corruption of Neapolis; and Neapolis succeeded the more ancient Shechem. The city received its new name from Vespasian. The situation of the town is one of surpassing beauty. It lies in a sheltered valley, protected by Gerizim on the south and Ebal on the north. The feet of these mountains, where they rise from the town, are not more than 500 yards apart. The bottom of the valley is about 1,800 feet above the level of the sea, and the top of Gerizim 800 feet higher still. The site of the present city, which is believed to have been also that of the Hebrew city, occurs exactly on the water-summit; and streams issuing from the numerous springs there, flow down the opposite slopes of the valley, spreading verdure and fertility in every direction. Travellers vie with each other in the language which they employ to describe the scene that bursts here so suddenly upon them on arriving in spring or early summer at this paradise of the Holy Land. "Here," says Dr. Robinson (iii. 96) "a scene of luxuriant and almost unparalleled verdure burst upon our view. The whole valley was filled with gardens of vegetables, and orchards of all kinds of fruit, watered by several fountains, which burst forth in various parts, and flow westward in refreshing streams. It came upon us suddenly like a scene of fairy enchantment. We saw nothing to compare with it in all Palestine. Here, beneath the shade of an immense mulberry-tree, by the side of a purling rill, we pitched our tent for the remainder of the day and night. . . . We rose early, awakened by the songs of nightingales and other birds, of which the gardens around us were full." (*F. H. Dunwell, B.A.*) *Its history:*—Few places in Palestine, after Jerusalem, have had so much of Bible history connected with them. Here God first appeared to Abraham (Gen. xii. 6). Here Jacob dwelt when he first returned from Padan-aram, and here the disgraceful history of Dinah, and the consequent murder of the Shechemites took place (Gen. xxxiv. 2, &c.). Here Joseph's brethren fed their flocks when Jacob sent him to them, little thinking he would not see him again for many years (Gen. xxxvii. 12). Here, when Israel took possession of the land of Canaan, was one of the cities of refuge (Josh. xx. 7, 8). Here Joshua gathered all the tribes, when he addressed them for the last time (Josh. xxiv. 1). Here the bones of Joseph were buried, and all the patriarchs were interred (Josh. xxiv. 32; Acts vii. 16). Here the principal events in the history of Abimelech took place (Judges ix. 1, &c.). Here Rehoboam met the tribes of Israel after Solomon's death, and gave the answer which rent his kingdom in two (1 Kings xii. 1). Here Jeroboam first dwelt, when he was made king of Israel (1 Kings xii. 25). And finally, close by Shechem was the city of Samaria itself, and the two hills of Ebal and Gerizim, where the solemn blessings and cursings were recited, after Israel entered Canaan (Josh. viii. 33). A more interesting neighbourhood it is difficult to imagine. Whichever way the eye of a wearied traveller looked, he would see something to remind him of Israel's history. (*Bp. Ryle.*) **The parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.** In two different ways this had come into the hands of Jacob. First, he had purchased it from the "children of Hamor," and then, when the Amorite invaded it, and took violent, unrighteous possession, he had, with his "sword and his bow,"

recovered it. The land thus belonged to Jacob by right of purchase and by right of conquest: it became the property of his son by gift, by inheritance, and by grateful acceptance on his part. Our spiritual Jacob has both purchased our inheritance and taken it out of the hand of the Amorite; so likewise He bestows it freely on His dear children and they gratefully receive it, and rejoice in it as their portion. Eternal life is at once the gift of God and the fruit of faith. It becomes ours according to His eternal purpose, and also by the faith which accepts it—such faith as that of Joseph. Joseph was in Egypt, apparently independent of Canaan. The time when he or his seed could claim the inheritance was far distant—four hundred years of dreadful bondage were included in the intervening period—but Joseph believed. "God will surely visit you," said he to his descendants, when he was dying, "and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." A similar faith had dictated the words of Jacob. "Behold I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again to the land of your fathers." A faith having the same origin, exercised against the same discouragements, and producing the same blessed fruits of patience, endurance, and hope, must be ours. (*A. Beith, D.D.*)

Now Jacob's well was there.—*Jesus found at the well*:—Some years since there lived in the west of England a well-known character called "Foolish Dick." Not being considered quite sharp, one day he was going for a pitcher of water, when a good old man hailed him with "So, Dick, you are going to the well." "Yes," he replied. "Well, Dick, the woman of Samaria found Jesus at the well." "Did she?" was the answer. "Yes," said the good old Christian. Dick passed on, full of thought; the remark riveted on his mind by the Holy Spirit, quickening him into new life. He thought, "Why should I not find Jesus at the well? Oh, that I could find Him! Will He come to me?" He prayed, and found Christ at the well; left his water-pot to tell his neighbours what he had found, and from that time proved the reality of his conversion by his holy and active life, proclaiming Christ to others. *Suffering begets sympathy*:—Jesus Himself being weary was the more able and apt to help this poor Samaritress. He that hath had the toothache will pity those that have it. "We are orphans all," said Queen Elizabeth in her speech to the children at Christ's Hospital, "let me enjoy your prayers, and ye shall be sure of my assistance." (*J. Trapp.*) *No sympathy without suffering*:—Johnson, whose robust frame was not in the least affected by cold, scolded me as if my shivering had been a paltry effeminacy, saying, "Why do you shiver?" Sir William Scott told me that when he complained of a headache, in the post-chaise, Johnson treated him in the same manner. "At your age, sir, I had no headache." (*Boswell.*) *Jesus sitting on the well*:—Many things remind us of our Lord: a well, a weary peasant resting at noon. How truly human was Jesus! 1. How worn was His humanity. He was more weary than His disciples. (1) He had a greater mental strain than they. (2) He had a weariness they knew not of. 2. His self-denials even then were remarkable. (1) He would in all points be made like unto His brethren. (2) He would not exempt Himself from fatigue. (3) He would not work a miracle for His own refreshment. (4) He would not refuse to bear heat, thirst, exhaustion. 3. He has thus made Himself able to sympathize with—(1) The traveller who rests by the road-side. (2) The labourer worn out with toil. (3) The sufferer who feels pain. (4) The poor man who must rest on a cold stone, and look for refreshment to the public fountain. (5) The weary mind. I. LET YOUR CONSCIENCE DRAW A SPIRITUAL PICTURE OF YOUR WEARIED SAVIOUR. He is wearied with our—1. Sins (Isa. xliii. 24). 2. Formal worship (Isa. i. 14). 3. Errings through unbelief (Psa. xcv. 10). 4. Resistance of His Spirit (Isa. lxiii. 10). 5. Cavillings and rebellions (Mal. ii. 17). Perhaps we have specially wearied the Lord, as we read in Amos ii. 13, where singular provocations are mentioned. That is a grave question asked by the prophet Isaiah (vii. 13). II. LET YOUR CONSCIENCE DRAW A SPIRITUAL PICTURE OF YOUR WAITING SAVIOUR. He waits—1. For comers to the well: He seizes on all occasions to bless, such as affliction, the hearing of the Word, the recurrence of a birthday, or even the simplest event of life. Men have other errands; they come to the well only to draw water, but the Lord meets them with His greater errand. 2. For the most sinful: she that had five husbands. 3. To enlighten, convince, convert. 4. To accept and to commission. 5. To begin by one convert the ingathering of a great harvest. How long He has waited for some of you! At how many points has He been on the outlook for you? Is He not waiting for you at this very hour? Will you not yield to His patient love? III. LET YOUR PENITENCE DRAW ANOTHER PICTURE. Alter the position of the character. 1. Be yourself weary of your sinful way.

2. Sit down on the well of your Lord's gracious ordinances. 3. Wait and watch till your Saviour comes. 4. Ask Him to give you to drink, and, in so doing, give Him to drink, for this is His best refreshment. 5. Drink yourselves of the living water and then run to tell others. Conclusion: Will you not do this at once? May His Holy Spirit so direct you! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The weary pilgrim*:—1. If now, with all the comforts of tent and equipage, the modern traveller finds locomotion oppressive and exhausting, what must it have been to Christ with no aid but the staff and rough sandal? 2. It is in such incidental occurrences that our Lord's humanity and condescension are most touchingly exemplified. 3. He worked miracles for others, never for Himself. 4. My Saviour is my brother. He took not on Him the nature of angels. (1) Because angelic nature is a Spiritual essence and incapable of corporeal suffering. (2) Because He could not then have participated in feeling with those He came to redeem. 5. But my Saviour is my Lord or He could never have relieved my want. I. Let the WEARY WITH LIFE'S JOURNEY, with pain, travail, and loneliness consider Him, lest they be weary and faint in their souls. II. Let the WEARY WITH SIN who have come up through hot valleys of temptation, and are now sitting by poisoned wells, the pitcher broken at the cistern, the zest of life gone, without shelter, hear Him say, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest." III. Let those WEARY WITH THE BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY IN THE MIDST OF THEIR LIFE'S CALLING, in manhood's sixth hour, one half of existence over, hasten to Him, lest the valley of death, like the valley of Shechem, be close at hand while the fountain of life is neglected. Conclusion. You are Spiritually between the Ebal of courses and the Gerizim of blessings—Which are you to choose? (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Christ in His human weakness and Divine exaltation*:—I. WEARY AND YET THE REST OF A WEARY SOUL. II. THIRSTY AND YET A FOUNTAIN. III. HUNGRY AND YET ENJOYING HEAVENLY FOOD. IV. LEFT ALONE AND YET IN SPIRIT SURROUNDED WITH APPROACHING NATIONS. (*Lange.*) *Weariness and work*:—1. This world is a place of weariness through sin; but love is a weariness that heaven approves, that of the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep. 2. There is a great mystery in this weariness: for the weary man was God; but He was weary that we might have rest. I. CHRIST'S WEARINESS AS IT REFLECTS OUR OWN. 1. Christ was weary in His work, not of it. 2. We need not be surprised, therefore, if we are weary. 3. When so, wait upon Him to renew thy strength. II. WEARINESS CAN BE PUT TO PURPOSE. 1. Under the most unlikely circumstances God can bring us work and refreshment at the same time. Christ had to all appearance turned His back on His work; but He had not, and when He seemed most unfit He did it most effectively. So Paul was taken from work to prison, but then he was instrumental in the jailers conversion. 2. The willing heart will often create its own opportunities. Christ was weary but watchful. A willing heart can find its work at any time and place. We think we could do more were we better placed. But Christ says, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." 3. An earnest mind will avail itself of small opportunities, and through little things become really great. Christ was contented with a congregation of one. He did not preach sensational sermons, but sermons which created a sensation. He spake as earnestly to one as to a thousand. III. CHRIST ASKS US THROUGH HIS WEARY REPRESENTATIVES TO MINISTER TO HIS WEARINESS. The poor, sick, widows, orphans, overworked pastors, &c., in Christ's name cry, "Give me to drink." (*W. Poole Balfern.*) *The realness of the scene*:—By a singular fate this authentic and expressive memorial of the earliest dawn of Jewish history became the memorial no less authentic and expressive of its sacred close. Of all the special localities of our Lord's life in Palestine, this is almost the only one absolutely undisputed. By the edge of the well, in the touching language of the ancient hymn, "Quœreus me, sedisti lassus." Here He halted, as travellers still halt, in the noon or evening of the day. Up that valley His disciples "went away into the city." Down the same gorge came the woman to draw water, according to the unchanged custom of the East; which still, in the lively concourse of veiled figures round the wayside wells, reproduce the image of Rebekah, and Rachel, and Zipporah. Above them, as they talked, rose "this mountain" of Gerizim, crowned by the Temple, of which vestiges still remain, where the Samaritan sect "said men ought to worship," and to which still, after so many centuries, their descendants turn as to the only sacred spot in the universe: the strongest example of local worship in the world, where the sacredness of local worship was declared to be at an end. And round about them spread far and wide the noble plain of waving corn. It was still winter or early spring, "four months yet to the harvest;"

and the bright golden ears had not yet "whitened" their unbroken expanse of verdure. He gazed upon them; and we almost seem to see how the glorious vision of the Gentile world, with each successive turn in the conversation, unfolded itself more and more distinctly before Him, as He sate absorbed in the opening prospect, silent amidst His silent and astonished disciples. (*Dean Stanley.*) *Jacob's well an emblem of the sanctuary*:—Note that—I. NO GOOD DEEDS ARE EVER DONE IN VAIN, AND THAT THEY HAVE POWER TO BLESS MANY AGES TO COME. 1. None can measure his power for good. Influence may be mightier after death than in life. When Jacob dug that well, he little thought of the multitudes for whose refreshment he was providing, or of this sacred incident. Do you think the discoverer of printing foresaw the penny newspaper, or Columbus New York, and Boston, and Chicago? God watches over good efforts, and influences to bless them. 2. But if Jacob knew not all his well would do, he knew it would bless. How like a well is a gospel sanctuary! Look at the desert all around—how refreshing this spot in contrast. Here the weary find rest, the thirsty water. 3. Churches, like wells (1) are made by man's effort, but filled with God's gift; (2) Are not stagnant pools but living springs? II. JESUS STILL REFRESHES HIMSELF AT WELLS BUILT BY HIS PEOPLE. 1. What was it that refreshed Him here? "My meat," &c. 2. And Jesus still comes into our sanctuaries, and asks for small gifts of love as the return for His own greater love. He is yearning to find satisfaction in souls—waiting to see the full fruits of His servants efforts to save men. 3. How grateful was Jesus for this seat. He commanded John to record this gratitude. None of us will ever regret anything done to please Jesus. 4. You say, if I had seen Him, I would have invited Him to my home. Have you opened you heart to the heavenly Guest? III. THIS WELL IS CHRIST'S APPOINTED PLACE TO MEET UNSATISFIED SOULS. 1. He was there before the woman, waiting for her, and thoughtfully sent away the disciples that no restraint might check her conversation. Has He not promised to meet His people in His house? Have you not often said, "It was as though the preacher knew all my circumstances." 2. That woman, often like ourselves, little expected to find her Saviour. 3. She left her water-pot, and how often have you left your burdens. IV. THIS WELL IS THE PLACE FOR QUIET FREE CONVERSATION WITH THE SAVIOUR, where Christ wants to enlighten, refresh, and pardon. (*R. H. Lovell.*) *Why religious ordinances are sometimes unprofitable*:—The ordinances of religion are compared to wells of water; but then they are like Jacob's well. The water lies far below the surface, and to the man of the world, the mere professor of religion, who has the name but not the faith of a Christian, we may say, as the woman said to our Lord, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." Faith is, as it were, the rope, and our souls the vessels, which we let down into this well to fill them with living water. But that they do no good to some forms no reason why we should despise or neglect ordinances. It is no fault in the bread that, thrust between a dead man's teeth, it does not nourish him. Water will revive a withering, but not a withered, plant; wine will revive a dying, but not a dead, man; the breath of your mouth, or the breeze of heaven, will re-kindle the smouldering coal, but not the cold, grey ashes of the hearth. And it is only spiritual life that can derive benefit from such ordinances as are intended to revive the faint and give strength to the weary. (*D. Guthrie, D.D.*) *The ordinances necessary*:—Christ is the well of the water of life. It is by faith the soul reaches out after this living water. Faith is the soul's muscular action, by which the water is drawn up and brought into use. But faith needs as an implement those means which Christ has appointed. These means are the pitcher in which the water is conveyed. Faith is not a Christ; neither are sacraments a Christ; but faith (under all circumstances) and sacraments where they may be had, are necessary to the appropriation and enjoyment of Christ. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Influence after death*:—It is related of a broker in one of the Italian cities that his strict economy brought on him the reputation of miserliness. He lived plainly and poorly, and at his death a hundred thousand men in the city were ready to curse him until his will was opened, in which he declared that early his heart was touched with the sufferings of the poor in the city for the lack of water. Springs there were none, and the public wells were bad; and he had spent his life in accumulating a fortune that should be devoted to bringing, by an aqueduct, from the neighbouring mountains, streams that should pour abundantly into the baths and dwellings of the poor of the city; and he not only denied himself of many of the comforts of life, but toiled by day and by night, yea, and bore obloquy, that he might bless his fellow-citizens. He is dead; but those streams pour their health yet into the city. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Value*

of a well in the East:—When we remember that in the land where most of the Scriptures were written there was, for the greater part of the year, but burning and scorching heat; that there was no winter, as we understand the term; that water was as precious as gold; and that the digging of a well was the work of kings and princes; that shadow was a luxury, to attain which hours of sore and weary travelling were accounted well spent—we can understand the beauty and force of such figures as Jesus uses in speaking to the woman of Samaria. Digging a well rendered a man the benefactor of his race. "Canst thou do more than dig a well?" was the meaning of the woman's question to Jesus. (*Ibid.*) *Topography of Jacob's well and neighbourhood*:—As the well is near magnificent springs gushing from the roots of Gerizim, and flowing to the East, the Patriarch's task in sinking so deep a well and building a wall round it, can only be explained by the jealousy which the Canaanites, like all Eastern peoples, regarded their own springs. To have trusted to these would have been to invite trouble. It was, therefore, much better for Jacob to have a well of his own, so as to be independent. This well lies a little off the road, on the right hand. There is nothing visible now above ground. A little chapel, about twenty feet long, once built over the well, has long ago fallen; its stones lying about in heaps. The ground slopes up to the fragments of the broken-down wall. The church dates from the fifth century, but, except these stones, the only traces of it are some remains of tessellated pavements and carvings, which are hidden beneath the rubbish. Over the well is a large stone, with a round hole in the middle, large enough for the skin buckets of the peasantry to pass down. This stone is probably as old as the twelfth century. The mouth is 7½ feet across, and its depth, which some centuries ago was 105 feet, is still about 75 feet, though for ages every visitor has thrown down stones to hear the echo when they strike the bottom. It is cut through a thick bed of soil, and then through soft rock; the water filtering through the sides to the depth occasionally of 12 feet, though it is dry sometimes for years together. It is thus rather a "beer" or rain pit than a spring well; hence, the contrast between "this water" and "living water." Our Lord must have sat with His face towards the S.W., since He speaks of Gerizim as "this mountain." Around Him were the same sights as are before the visitor of to-day—the rich valley running up westward towards Shechem, with a rippling streamlet in its centre; the groves that border the town hiding the houses from view; the heights of Gerizim, towering in rounded masses one over another to a great height, close before Him on the south. Mount Ebal, steep but terraced almost to the top into gardens of prickly pear, lay behind them; the little hamlet of Balâta, where Abraham's altar once stood under the sacred tree; the mud huts of Sychar; a little village now called Askar, not half as far off as Shechem, and the dome of Joseph's tomb being at its foot. To the east, beyond the great plain, was Salim, near to Ænon, where the Baptist preached, and the wooded Hill of Phinehas, with the tomb of the once fiery high priest. (*C. Geikie, D.D.*) *The interior of the well*:—Some men were set to work to clear out the mouth of the well, which was being rapidly covered up. A chamber had been excavated to the depth of ten feet, and in the floor of the chamber was the mouth of the well, like the mouth of a bottle, and just wide enough to admit a man's body. We lowered a candle down the well and found the air perfectly good, and after the usual amount of noise and talking among the workmen and idlers, I was lashed with a good rope round the waist, and a loop for my feet, and lowered through the mouth of the well by some trusty Arabs, directed by my friend, Mr. Falcher, the Protestant missionary. The sensation was novel and disagreeable. The numerous knots in the rope continued to tighten and to creak, and after having passed through the narrow mouth I found myself suspended in a cylindrical chamber, in shape and proportion not unlike that of the barrel of a gun. The twisting of the rope caused me to revolve as I was being lowered, which produced giddiness, and there was the additional unpleasantness of vibrating from side to side, and touching the sides of the well. I suddenly heard the people from the top shouting to tell me that I had reached the bottom, so when I began to move I found myself lying on my back at the bottom of the well: looking up at the mouth the opening seemed like a star. It was fortunate that I had been securely lashed to the rope, as I had fainted during the operation of lowering. The well is seventy-five feet deep, seven feet six inches diameter, and is lined throughout with rough masonry, as it is dug in alluvial soil. The bottom of the well was perfectly dry at this time of the year (the month of May), and covered with loose stones. There was a little pitcher lying at the bottom unbroken, and this was an evidence of there being water in the well at some seasons, as the

pitcher would have been broken had it fallen upon the stones. It is probable that the well was very much deeper in ancient times, for in ten years it had decreased ten feet in depth. Every one visiting the well throw stones down for the satisfaction of hearing them strike the bottom, and in this way, as well as from the *débris* of the ruined church built over the well during the fourth century, it has become filled up to probably more than a half of its original death. (*Lieut. S. Anderson, R.E.*) *Jacob's well a type* :—Now Jacob's well was there. The Samaritans were infinitely corrupt in their doctrine and worship, yet they had the fountain of the Mosaic doctrine among them. They had received the Pentateuch, and worshipped God according to Jacob's rites, and the letter of Moses' law. But the letter without the spirit is dead. The stagnant well of water, becoming muddy by agitation, and corrupt by lying undisturbed, is inferior for use and gratification, and is not like the running water of the living spring, which continually freshens itself, and runs itself clear, and is always replenishing itself in purity and copiousness, for use and enjoyment. A greater than Abraham, or Jacob, or Moses, must give them this spring. Jacob's children, after the flesh, drank of that well, but his spiritual children, and they only, should drink of this water. (*L. R. Bosanquet.*) *Christ and the woman of Samaria* :—I. THE SAVIOUR AS A JEWISH TRAVELLER. Observe three things. 1. The simplicity and humbleness of His life. He comes to this earth as a poor man. Learn from this: (1) That poverty is perfectly compatible with extensive religious usefulness. (2) That religion in particular cases imposes much labour on its disciples. (3) Those who wish to study the Scriptures, must study and labour hard too. 2. The superiority of moral to bodily pleasures. Our Saviour was thirsty, but we do not read that He immediately quenched His thirst. 3. In our Saviour a beautiful instance of amiableness and general benevolence. II. THE VIEW GIVEN OF OUR SAVIOUR AS A DIVINE TEACHER.—"Sir, I perceive Thou art a prophet!" What did He teach? 1. He instructed the woman in divine worship. 2. Let us look on the same subject in another form, and consider the Saviour as giving the doctrine of worship. 3. And worship of God should be in accordance with His nature and character. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must do so in spirit and in truth. Our Saviour had in view the overthrow of three great errors: one is atheism. The next error is idolatry. The other error at that time in reference to God and His worship was pantheism. 4. The other lesson our Lord Jesus Christ taught this woman was, He told her all that ever she had done. III. THE THIRD LIGHT IN WHICH JESUS MANIFESTED HIMSELF, WAS AS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. Here He spiritualizes the scene, and represents Himself as possessing that which was essential to the happiness of men—living water. (*Caleb Morris.*) *The appropriateness of the place for the purpose* :—Not inappropriate, surely, was it that He should occupy a spot beneath the shadow of Gerizim, "the mountain of blessing;" He Himself about to become so, in a nobler sense, to an outcast, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) **Sat thus on the well.**—The adverb may designate the attitude of a man who is there, awaiting what God will say; or it reproduces the notion of fatigue; thoroughly worn out with fatigue, as He was; or perhaps it signifies, without any preparation, taking things as He found them. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) **The sixth hour.**—I think that the "sixth hour," in the text before us, means twelve o'clock, for the following reasons: 1. It seems exceedingly improbable that St. John would reckon time in a manner different to the other three gospel-writers. 2. It is by no means clear that the Romans did reckon time in our way, and not in the Jewish way. When the Roman poet, Horace, describes himself as lying late in bed in a morning, he says, "I lie till the fourth hour." He must surely mean ten o'clock, and not four in the afternoon. 3. It is entirely a gratuitous assumption to say that no woman ever came to draw water except in the evening. There must surely be exceptions to every rule. The fact of the woman coming alone, seems of itself to indicate that she came at an unusual hour, and not in the evening. 4. Last, but not least, it seems far more probable that our Lord would hold a conversation alone with such a person as the Samaritan woman at twelve o'clock in the day, than at six o'clock in the evening. The conversation was not a very short one. Then the woman goes away to the city, and tells the men what has happened, and they all come out to the well to see Jesus. Yet by this time, in all reasonable probability, it would be quite dark, and the night would have begun. And yet, after all this, our Lord says to the disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields" (chap. iv. 35). There is a special seemliness in the fact that our Lord held His conversation with such a person as this Samaritan woman at noon.

day. When He talked to Nicodemus, in the preceding chapter, we are told that it was at night. But when He talked to a woman of impure life, we are carefully told that it was twelve o'clock in the day. I see in this fact a beautiful carefulness to avoid even the appearance of evil, which I shall entirely miss if the sixth hour meant six o'clock in the evening. I see even more than this. I see a lesson to all ministers and teachers of the gospel, about the right mode of carrying on the work of trying to do good to souls like that of the Samaritan woman. Like their Master, they must be careful about times and hours, especially if they work alone. If a man will try to do good to a person like the Samaritan woman, alone and without witnesses, let him take heed that he walks in his Master's footsteps, both as to the time of his proceedings as well as to the message he delivers. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The self-abnegation of Christ*:—In the case of Nicodemus, He was ready to give him the time set for rest; here He does the same when tired and thirsty at noon. (*C. E. Luthardt, D.D.*) **There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water.**—*Connection between the conversations with the woman of Samaria and with Nicodemus*:—I. THERE IS A STRIKING CONTRAST AND COMPLEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO. The woman, the Samaritan, the sinner, is placed over against the Rabbi, the ruler of the Jews, the Pharisee. The nature of worship takes the place of the necessity of the new birth; yet so that either truth leads up to the other. The new birth is the condition of entrance into the kingdom; true worship flows from Christ's gift. II. THERE IS A REMARKABLE SIMILARITY OF METHOD IN Christ's teaching in the two cases. Immediate circumstances, the wind and the water, furnished present parables, through which deeper thoughts were suggested, fitted to call out the powers and feelings of a sympathetic listener. III. THE MODE IN WHICH OUR LORD DEALT WITH THE WOMAN finds a parallel in the synoptic gospels (Luke vii. 37, &c.; comp. Matt. xxvi. 6, &c.). The other scattered notices of the Lord's intercourse with women form a fruitful subject for study (chap. xi., xx. 14, &c.; Matt. ix. 20 and parallels, xv. 22, &c., and parallels, xxvii. 55 and parallels, xxviii. 9, &c.; Luke viii. 2, &c., x. 38, &c., xi. 27, &c., xiii. 11, &c.). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Christ and the woman*:—I. A MEMORABLE INTERVIEW DESCRIBED (ver. 7, 8). 1. Memorable to Jesus. (1) For the place where it occurred: Jacob's well, a scene of loveliness and fertility, marred only by the city of liars or drunkards; a spot consecrated by sacred memories. (2) For the time when it happened—at noon in Midsummer—an unusual season and hour; at the close of a long journey in obedience to His Father's will; at a moment of weariness and loneliness and perhaps sadness at having to leave Judæa; waiting for the next opportunity. 2. Memorable to the woman. Because of—(1) The person she met. (2) The truths to which she listened. (3) The discoveries she made. (4) The treasures she found. 3. Memorable to the Evangelist. On account of—(1) The insight it afforded into Christ's character. (2) The light it cast upon the work. (3) The prospect it opened of the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God. II. A PROFITABLE CONVERSATION OPENED. 1. A simple request preferred (ver. 7); natural (Judg. iv. 19); moderate (1 Kings xvii. 20); courteous (Psa. xlv. 2; Luke v. 22); condescending (Matt. xi. 27); honouring the woman; gracious. 2. An astonishing answer returned (ver. 9). Persons of narrow intelligence generally surprised to find others capable of throwing off prejudice. 3. An important truth announced (ver 10). What keeps men from becoming Christians is ignorance (Eph. iv. 18)—(1) Of God's gift (John vii. 39; Acts ii. 38); (2) Of Him through whom that gift is offered (John viii. 19; 1 Cor. ii. 8); (3) Of the terms upon which it can be secured: by asking (Matt. vii. 7; James iv. 3) freely (Isa. lv. 1); (4) Of the certain success of every application, Christ denying none who ask (John vi. 37; Rev. xxi. 6); and (5) Of the value of the gift (John vii, 38, 39; Rom. viii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 6; Gal. vi. 18). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The drawer of water*:—I. WHAT BRINGS HER THERE? The distance was a mile and a half, and much nearer were two copious fountains as old as the Canaanites, besides springs in and around the city. The hour, too, was peculiar. It is only the wayfarer or caravan that pause at noon for refreshment. Moreover, it was not the public well of the city, because there was no accommodation for drawing water. The answer is a superstitious virtue supposed to attach to the well. In Europe we have many monasteries and shrines reared around sacred fountains, to which pilgrims resort. The objection to this, grounded on the profligacy of the woman, is answered by the fact that abject superstition is often allied with licentiousness; as in the case of many Mohammedans, Roman Catholics, and Hindoos. II. THE GUIDING HAND WHICH BROUGHT HER AT THAT TIME. Nothing, in an earthly sense, was more purely accidental. Who can doubt that all unknown and unforeseen by

her it was one of those ordinary every-day providences of God which we are compelled to believe if we would unriddle the mystery of the world. The same "needs be" which brought the Redeemer there brought also her. The same truth is often illustrated in our individual histories. Events apparently trivial and unimportant form the mighty levers of life shifting our whole future. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *The woman of Samaria*:—Though this woman was a sinner, her coming forth to draw water herself was commendable. It is the devil that meets with us when we are idle. The angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds while they were keeping watch over their flocks by night. Matthew was called at the receipt of custom. Peter, and Andrew, his brother, were fishing; James the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, were mending their nets, when called by the Saviour. Elisha was ploughing when Elijah cast his mantle upon him, and said, "Follow me." Saul was seeking his father's asses when he met with Samuel, who anointed him king over Israel. How favourable the season! "His disciples were gone away into the city, to buy meat." How unsuitable would company have been in a case like this. There is business that can only be tranacted between God and the soul. How often does religion take its rise from solitude. It teaches us what He is in Himself; "The gift of God"; by way of emphasis and distinction. It teaches us what He has to bestow; "living water." It teaches us how we are to obtain this blessedness of Him. We must ask: nothing less is required, nothing more. It teaches us the reason why men do not apply to Him. It is because they do not know Him. It is in religion as it is in nature, the understanding sways the will and the affections. "Wisdom is the principal thing"; therefore we are to "get wisdom, and with all our getting to get understanding." And hence we see the difference between this woman and blind Bartimeus, on a similar occasion. Bartimeus was sitting by the wayside begging, when Jesus was passing by—but he knew that it was Jesus; and therefore he cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (*W. Jay.*) **Give Me to drink.**—*The thirsting Saviour*:—I. A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUE HUMANITY OF OUR LORD. In His spiritual thirst for the woman's salvation we must not lose sight of His natural thirst. Christ was thoroughly human. Grasping this we see—1. His ability to suffer death. 2. The power of His example. 3. His kinship with us. 4. His sympathy for us. II. AN IMPLICATION OF HIS DEITY. 1. Had He been a man claiming Divine powers would He have asked for water? A pretender would have attempted a miracle. 2. His Godlike reserve. Christ is never prodigal of miracles because conscious of the fulness of His Divine power. He uses natural means whenever they can serve His purposes. III. AN INSTANCE OF THE FREENESS AND GREATNESS OF HIS LOVE TO SINNERS. 1. The woman embodied all that could excite the aversion of a Jew. (1) Her Samaritan birth rendered her an object of sectarian hatred, (2) Her sex forbade a rabbi to be familiar with her. (3) Her loose life would have brought down the contempt of a Pharisee. 2. But Christ had no national animosity, sectarian bigotry, professional dignity, or self-righteous loathing. 3. He sees a lost soul in whom longings for better things have not been wholly stifled and sets Himself to save her. IV. A LESSON OF WISDOM, TACT, AND ZEAL IN SAVING SOULS. 1. Christ suits His method to individual characters and circumstances—touching with equal ease the two extremes of society. 2. He seizes trifling opportunities. 3. He sets a signal example of turning secular things to sacred uses. 4. The lesson He here teaches can only be learned by practice. 5. The encouragement to learn this lesson is that our wise and Divinely-directed efforts in small matters may yield rich results. V. AN EMBLEM OF HIS THIRST TO SAVE SINNERS. 1. This was deeper than His spiritual craving. 2. He thirsts now for you. 3. This thirst can only be quenched by your surrender. (*A. Warrack, M.A.*) *Christ's request*:—In this notice—I. A GRACIOUS ACT OF SPIRITUAL AGGRESSION ON A SINNER. He did not wait for the woman to speak to Him, but was the first to begin conversation. II. AN ACT OF MARVELLOUS CONDESCENSION. He by whom all things were made, the Creator of fountains, brooks, and rivers, is not ashamed to ask a draught of water from the hand of one of His sinful creatures. III. AN ACT FULL OF WISDOM AND PRUDENCE. He does not at once force religion on the attention of the woman, and rebuke her for her sins. He begins with a subject apparently indifferent, and yet one of which the woman's mind was doubtless full. He asks her for water. IV. AN ACT FULL OF THE NICEST TACT, and exhibiting perfect knowledge of the human mind. He asks a favour, and puts Himself under an obligation. No

line of proceeding, it is well known to all wise people, would be more likely to conciliate the woman's feelings towards Him and to make her willing to hear His teaching. Simple as the request was, it contains principles which deserve the closest attention of all who desire to do good to ignorant and thoughtless sinners. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Christ abolishing prejudices:*—I. OF THE ANCIENTS AGAINST THE FEMALE SEX. II. OF STATUTE AGAINST THE FALLEN. III. OF NATIONALITY AGAINST AN ALIEN RACE. IV. OF RELIGION AGAINST SEPARATISM AND HERESY. (*Lange.*) *The conference:*—Each one of us must come to have a personal dealing with Christ. 1. It may be at one of the crisis-hours of existence. 2. It may be at a dying hour. 3. It must be at the day of Judgment. I. CHRIST OFTEN COMES AND SPEAKS UNEXPECTEDLY. When the woman left her home she never dreamed of this interview. Christ often comes—1. In sudden sicknesses. 2. Sudden reverses. 3. Sudden sanctuary visitations. II. CHRIST OFTEN COMES AND SPEAKS TO THE SINNER WHEN ALONE. Had the woman come with other females at the customary evening hour this conversation would have been impossible. So in another case (chap. viii. 9, 10). III. CHRIST OFTEN SPEAKS IN THE MIDST OF THE ORDINARY DUTIES OF LIFE. So with the apostles. Christ thus puts His seal on life's daily drudgery. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Chance in the Divine economy:*—Here, then, we have an instance of what appeared to be chance, and what was chance as much as any human affairs can be so, being made subservient to a great and beneficial end. It was with no design of meeting the woman that Christ passed through Samaria, nor did He sit down by the well because He knew she would repair thither, but because He was weary; neither did the disciples go into the city that Christ might be left alone for this interview, but to buy meat; nor did the woman go to the well to meet a teacher and to receive instruction, but to draw water. The coincidences were all of them unconnected with each other. And this is what in common language we properly enough call chance. But in all such cases, though on the part of man the circumstances and results are undesigned and accidental, on the part of God they are foreknown and fore-ordained. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) *The real significance of the woman's coming to Christ:*—As at the memorable scene of patriarchal days the ark of the testimony was placed between the adjacent hills, so now did the true Ark stand between her and the Ebal of curses directing and conducting her up to the mountain of blessing, and saying, "Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee." Shechem, her ordinary dwelling-place, was one of the old cities of refuge. She may possibly have seen with her own eyes the manslayer hastening with fleet foot along the plain of Mokhna up the narrow valley she had just traversed to be safe within the appointed walls from the avenger of blood. That Old Testament institution and type had, in the Adorable Person standing by her side, a nobler meaning and fulfilment. Though all unconscious at the moment of her peril and danger, He was to her the great antitypical Refuge from the avenging sword of that law which she had so flagrantly outraged in heart and life. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *The Jewish treatment of women:*—It is worth noting that this freedom of speech between man and woman was condemned by the rabbins. One rabbinic precept is: "Prolong not speech with a woman"; a later edition reads: "One's own wife is meant—how much less the wife of another"; and a third statement goes so far as to intimate perilous consequences in the next world for those who disregard this injunction. The Talmud declares it scandalous for a man to talk to a woman on the street; and women were prohibited from keeping schools because that would imply consultation with the fathers of their scholars. (*S. S. Times.*) *The revolution Christ effected in the treatment of women:*—If proof were needed of a strange abnormal disturbance in the history of the human race, it would be found in the treatment woman has received at the hands of society. Throughout the animal world the female sex is treated with consideration. Among birds and beasts the female is never systematically maltreated. This occurs only among men. The Saviour, however, in the unsullied purity of His manhood, brushed aside as cobwebs all social regulations which tended to degrade or oppress women. But He could not do it without exciting the wonderment even of those who knew Him best. Notwithstanding her life of illicit indulgence, the Saviour enters into earnest holy conversation with her. We have an account also of Socrates once holding a parley with the "strange woman." What is the purpose of his conversation? Does he endeavour to reclaim her? Nay; he only teaches her how to ply her infamous trade with greater success, furnishing her, out of his deep knowledge of human nature, with new foibles wherewith to entrap the unwary. In extenuation of his offence it has been alleged that he was only making an experiment with his much-vaunted

"method." Maybe; but it conclusively proves that he had no adequate conception of the gross turpitude of moral evil, and that he was animated by no strong desire to win back to virtue those who had fallen from feminine integrity. What infinite distance separates the conversation of Socrates with the courtesan from the conversation of Christ with the Samaritan woman! (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *Christ's gentleness with the fallen*:—A hawthorn, near Glastonbury Church, one of the oldest churches within these realms, was reported to bud and blossom in mid-winter; whereas the bushes and trees round about looked bare and naked, this particular one appeared clad in beauty. What was the cause of its flowering in mid-winter? Tradition answered that Joseph of Arimathæa, the supposed first missionary of Christianity to Britain, and the accredited founder of the Glastonbury Church, touched it one day in passing with the fringe of his garment, whereupon extraordinary virtue flowed into the bush, and it forthwith blossomed. What is not true naturally may be true spiritually. Let men of prickly characters, the cantankerous thorns of humanity, be gently brushed by the hand of love, and forthwith they will flower in all the beauty of holiness. (*Ibid.*) *Soul-winning tact*:—A colporteur entered an Austrian shop. He relates: "A little girl asked me what I wanted. 'I have Bibles to sell.' The little girl brought word that her parents had plenty of books, and would rather sell than buy. This led me to a little more boldness in my attack. I walked in a little nearer, and talking to some one supposed to be in the room, I explained what my books were. 'My husband is a Roman Catholic,' was the reply; 'he would object to read the Bible.' 'But I am very fond of my Bible; may I just read a short portion to you?' Within a second room the husband himself was at work. He overheard our conversation and the passages read, and, peeping round the corner, said he would buy a copy. By-and-by a second man issued forth from the inner room. He would also take a copy. A regular talk began, and the people said, 'Stay and have some dinner with us.' I did, and we parted capital friends." (*Bible Society Report.*) *Tact and kindness will win souls*:—At Mr. Moody's mid-day meeting, a minister rose and said he endorsed all which had gone before, and then related the following incident. "I was holding a mission in a colliery district, and in the course of the morning when I was inviting people to the evening meeting, I knocked at a door and found a woman at the washing-tub. I said to her, 'I called to tell you I am holding mission services at such and such a chapel, will you and your family join us?' 'Chapel,' she said; 'I am up to my eyes in washing. I have three black men coming in, and there's that wringing machine, I gave fifty shillings for it, and it's broken the first round.' She was in a towering passion, and I thought I would not say any more to her, so I took a look at the machine and found it was not broken, but had only slipped out of its gear, so I unscrewed it altogether, and set it right, and then said, 'Now you have been hindered so I'll just take a turn at the wringing.' So I went to work, turn, turn, turn. At last she looked up and said: 'Where did you say the chapel was?' I told her. She said: 'I'll tell my husband to-night, and we'll come.' That woman got blessed, and her husband and all her family, and she turned out the best worker in the village, and there was a blessed work of God in that place. She went from house to house, saying, 'Come and hear the minister, it's he as mended the machine!'"

Vers. 9–10. **How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?**—It is remarkable that while the Samaritan woman here is taunting the Lord with being a Jew, the Jews, in a somewhat similar passage, charge Him with being a Samaritan (chap. viii. 48). (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Askest and saith*:—There is a singular decorum in the use of words here. The woman has said, not unnaturally, "How is it that Thou askest of me?" But *αἰτεῖν* is a word of petition as from an inferior to a superior, in this different from *ἐρωτᾶν*, which has more of equality in it. Christ therefore when He refers to that request of hers does not take up and allow her word. He says not, "Who is it that asketh," but who it is that saith (*λέγων*) to thee; while the asking is described as the proper attitude for her, "Thou wouldest have asked (*ἤτησας*) of Him." There lies often in such little details an implicit assertion of the unique dignity of His person, which it is very interesting and not unimportant to trace. (*Abp. Trench.*) *Dealings and gift of God*:—The former word seems to explain the first part of our Lord's answer. She had come day by day to draw water at that well. Had she never known that that water was a gift of God? Had no thirst on a hot day or no failure of the spring taught her that? Was water a thing to "traffic in"? (*F. D.*

Maurice.) *The significance of giving drink:*—Among us even an enemy might ask or receive a drink of water without fear of compromising himself or his opponent; but not so in the East. There, the giving and receiving of a drink of water is the seeking and the making of a covenant of hospitality, with all that that covenant implies. It is not, indeed, like a covenant of blood, or a covenant of salt—indissoluble; but it is like the covenant of bread-sharing, which makes a truce, for the time being, between deadliest enemies. Aboolfeda tells, for example, of the different receptions awarded by Saladeen to the king of the Franks on the one hand, and to Prince Arnald of Caracca on the other, when the two Christian leaders were received in his tent by the victorious Saracen after the battle of Hatteen. Saladeen seated the Christian king by his side, and gave him drink cooled with snow. When the king, having tasted it, offered it also to Prince Arnald, Saladeen protested, saying, "This wretch shall not drink of the water with my permission; in which there would be safety to him;" and then, rising up, he smote off the head of the prince with his own sword. Over against this we are told that when Hormozan, a Persian ruler, surrendered to the Khaleef Omar, the successor of Aboo Bekr, and was brought a prisoner into the presence of his captor, he asked at once for a drink. Omar asked him if he were thirsty. "No," he said; "I only wish to drink in your presence, so that I may be sure of my life." He was assured that he might rest perfectly secure; and that assurance was kept. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *History of the Samaritans:*—After the Assyrian conquest colonies from the East were placed in the deserted cities. The country having been desolated by war wild beasts multiplied, and became the terror and scourge of the new inhabitants. The barren heights of Hermon and Lebanon are to this day infested with bears, panthers, wolves, and jackals. The strangers attributed the calamity to the anger of the local deity, of whose peculiar mode of worship they were ignorant. They therefore petitioned for Jewish priests to instruct them in religious rites; and after they had heard them "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 24–41). In after times the Jews refused to acknowledge them in any way, and would not permit them to assist in building the second temple, though their refusal cost them many trials (Ezra iv.). Being cast off by the Jews, the Samaritans resolved to erect a temple of their own on Gerizim. The immediate occasion appears to have been the circumstances related by Nehemiah, that a son of Joiada, the high priest, had become son-in-law to Sanballat, and had on this account been expelled from Jerusalem (Neh. xiii. 28). The date of the temple may thus be fixed about B.C. 420. Shechem now became the metropolis of the Samaritans as a sect, and an asylum for all apostate and lax Jews (Joseph. "Antiq." xi. 8–6). These things tended to foster enmity between the two nations, which resulted in the total destruction of the Temple of Gerizim by the Jews under John Hyrcanus. The very name Samaritan became a byword and a reproach among the Jews, just as the name Yehûdy, "Jew," is among modern Syrians; and some even supposed that the Jews nicknamed the city of Shechem Sychar, "Falsehood," to mark their opinion of the pretended origin of its inhabitants. In our Saviour's time the Samaritans retained their worship on Gerizim, though the temple was in ruins; and they had some vague expectations of a Messiah. During the reign of Vespasian Shechem was rebuilt, and renamed Neapolis, "New City," an appellation which has run into the Arabic Nabulus—one of the very few instances in which the Greek has supplanted the Semitic name. The ancient Samaritans and modern Druses appear to have had very much in common both in character and origin. The ancient Samaritan was part heathen, part Jew; and the modern Druse of Mount Lebanon is part heathen, part Christian; and some have thought that the modern Druses derive their origin from the very same tribes as the ancient Samaritans. "After the second captivity of Israel, Esarhaddon re-peopled the wasted strongholds of Samaria with the tribes whose names are given with so much particularity in Scripture (2 Kings xvii. 24; and Ezra iv. 9), races of fierce habit and degraded faith, whose heathen practices, engrafted on the corrupt Judaism which lingered amongst the earlier Samaritans, brought down on the new colonies the especial Nemesis of God. Of these fierce tribes there were some who, Cuthites in name, were of the family of the Royal Scythians, or Gordyans, from the Gordiæan mountains, whom in subsequent times the Greeks knew by the name of Carduchi (Xen. "Anab."), and with whom we are familiar as Koords. Some of these were settled in the Lebanon, and from them it has been said that the Druses spring, and draw the tenets of an ancient but unholy worship. (*Lord Carnarvon's "Druses of the Lebanon."*) *The hostility of*

the Samaritans towards the Jews:—The Samaritan sought by every petty annoyance to irritate the Jew. Their country was the nearest road for the caravans of northern pilgrims going to the feasts in Jerusalem. The Samaritans churlishly refused these the poorest rites of hospitality, and compelled them often to avoid maltreatment, by taking the circuitous and more fatiguing route by the Jordan Valley. Again, it was one of the few consolations enjoyed by the bands of exiled Jews in Babylon to have announced to them, by means of the only ancient telegraphic communication—beacons on the mountain-tops—the appearance of the paschal moon. The first beacon-fire was lit on the summit of Olivet, and thence caught up from mountain to mountain in luminous succession, until, within sight of the Euphrates, they could, for the moment at least, take down their harps from the willows as they remembered Zion and its holy solemnities. But the Samaritans indulged the mischievous delight of perplexing and putting them out of reckoning by the use of false signals. Another wicked and successful exploit is recorded; and occurring as it did under the government of Coponius only a few years previous to the gospel era, may have tended at this time to deepen these animosities. A band of Samaritans succeeded in stealing to the courts of the Temple of Jerusalem during the Passover season, and defiling the sacred precincts by scattering them with dead men's bones; thus incapacitating the Jews that year from celebrating the great feast of their nation. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Samaritan churlishness*:—On asking drink from a woman near Nablus who was filling her pitcher, we were angrily refused—"The Christian dogs might get it for themselves." (*Canon Tristram.*) *The hatred of the Jews for the Samaritans*:—The Jew was no way behind in his manifestation of malevolence. The son of Sirach says, "There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation; they that sit upon the mountain of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwell in Sichem." So that this false race dwelling at Sichem is more offensive to the pious Sirach than apostate Israel, with its worship of the golden calves on the mountains of Samaria (Ecclus. xlvii. 23, 24), or even than the Philistines themselves, those hereditary enemies of God's people. He abhors an Israel which demeans itself as if it were no Israel; he abhors the no-Israel which persists in its hostility and defiance to the true Israel; but most deeply of all does he abhor the no-Israel which demeans itself as if it were Israel, the heathen wearing the mask of Israelite. To eat with them was for a Jew "as if he did eat swine's flesh." He denounced the Samaritan as a base time-server who would not hesitate to purchase immunity from pains and penalties by forswearing Jehovah and kissing the impious shrine of Baal or Jove. He regarded him as unclean as the evaded leper; to harbour him in his house would entail a heritage of judgments on his children. The name Samaritan became a byword of reproach. He was publicly cursed in the synagogue—cursed in the name of Jehovah, by the writing on the two tables of the law, by the curse of the upper and lower house of judgment. He was pronounced unworthy of eternal life—excommunicated alike from the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. The bitterest word of scorn the Jew could hurl at the Infinitely Pure One was this, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." The yet untutored apostles shared the same exasperated feelings when they asked their Lord to call down fire from heaven on some Samaritan village. All worthy of remembrance is His gentle but sharp reproof, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." (*Ibid.*) *The evils of national rivalry*:—I do not know anything more ludicrous among the self-deceptions of well-meaning people than their notion of patriotism, as requiring them to limit their efforts to the good of their own country—the notion that charity is a geographical virtue, and that what is holy and righteous to do for people on one bank of a river is quite improper and unnatural to do for people on the other. It will be a wonderful thing some day or other for the Christian world to remember that it went on thinking for two thousand years that neighbours were neighbours at Jerusalem, but not at Jericho; a wonderful thing for us English to reflect, in after years, how long it was before we could shake hands with any one across that shallow salt wash which the very chalk dust of its two shores whitens from Folkestone to Ambletense. One magnificent attribute of the colouring of the late twelfth and the whole thirteenth and the early fourteenth century was the union of one colour with another by reciprocal interference, that is to say, if a mass of red is to be set beside a mass of blue, a piece of the red will be carried into the blue, and the reverse, sometimes in nearly equal proportions. And I call it a magnificent principle, for it is an eternal and universal one, not in act only, but in human life. It is the

great principle of brotherhood, not by equality, nor by likeness, but by giving and receiving; the souls that are unlike, and the nations that are unlike, and the natures that are unlike, being bound into one noble whole, by each receiving something from and of the other's gifts and the other's glory. (*John Ruskin.*) *The evils of sectarian bigotry*:—The utter absence of real charity and love among men in the days when our Lord was upon earth ought not to be overlooked. Well would it be if men had never quarrelled about religion after He left the world! Quarrels among the crew of a sinking ship are not more hideous, unseemly, and irrational than the majority of quarrels among professors of religion. An historian might truly apply St. John's words to many a period in Church history, and say, "The Romanists have no dealings with the Protestants," or "the Lutherans have no dealings with the Calvinists," or "the Calvinists have no dealings with the Arminians," or "the Episcopalians have no dealings with the Presbyterians," or "the Baptists have no dealings with those who baptize infants," or "the Plymouth Brethren have no dealings with anybody who does not join their company." These things ought not so to be. They are the scandal of Christianity, the joy of the devil, and the greatest stumbling-block to the spread of the gospel. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The Jews and Samaritans*:—Josephus writeth that at Samaria was a sanctuary opened by Sanballat for all renegade Jews, &c. The Jews therefore hated the presence, the fire, the fashion, the books of a Samaritan. Neither was there any hatred lost on the Samaritan's part, for if he had but touched a Jew he would have thrown himself into the nearest water, clothes and all. (*J. Trapp.*) *The forbearance of Christ*:—You may have gone along the road on a hot summer day, tired and thirsty, and have seen the gleam of a cottage in the distance. Suppose you went to the door and asked for a drink of water, exactly as our Lord did; but your speech betrayed you, and you were asked, How do you, being a Protestant, ask drink of me, a Roman Catholic; or, How do you, being Scotch, ask of me who am Irish, for the Scotch have no dealings with the Irish? You would have ground your heel on the gravel, and vowed never to give any one the chance of so speaking to you again. But insults are just as they are taken; and you can't insult a man who won't let you. Jesus bows His head, and lets your ignorant speeches fly past Him. (*John McNeill.*) *Christ cares not for classes or races, but for souls*:—People when they talk of "the working classes" think that they have described the whole thing with one touch. They imagine that, like the "enter such and such a one" in Shakespeare's stage directions, when they have said "the working classes," then everything by way of definition that is to be said, is said. They label the article, so to speak, and then expect you to understand all about it. How difficult it is indeed to bridge across the chasm between class and class! But more difficult it is to remember that "the working class," or any class, is made up of individual souls. Our dear Lord did not speak to classes only. Jesus spoke to souls. He took men one by one, and each finite creature with his infinite future, each immortal being with his own history, his own work, his own sins, his own feelings, his own sorrows, was an object of tender interest to Jesus Christ. (*Knox Little.*)

Ver 10. **If thou knewest the gift of God.**—*Wayside opportunities*:—I. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF WAYSIDE OPPORTUNITIES. Speaking after the ordinary manner this transaction was accidental; apparently unpremeditated on the part of Christ, unexpected on the part of the woman. 1. We go into transactions which involve our highest good or greatest loss as unexpectedly. The woman was looking for the Messiah, but she little expected to find Him a tired traveller. You expect to find God in Church: do you ever expect to find Him in common events? 2. The character of a man, his real strength or weakness, appears not in his seizure of great events but of ordinary ones—not in martyrdom, but in endurance. 3. Opportunities for serving Christ are offered when truth has to be done or spoken, in doing and speaking it not boastfully or independently or impudently, but simply and in love. 4. You meet Christ by the wayside in every duty, great or small, which calls you from the wrong to the right. 5. Opportunities for religious instruction and worship are not confined to one day, place, or act, but every day, everywhere, and by everything that brings us in contact with God. And as the highest religious truth in nature lies close by the way if we will only pluck it, so in the Bible the great truths lie on the surface. II. HOW CHRIST USED HIS OPPORTUNITIES. 1. He made them the occasion of a great and effective religious work. 2. The freedom and spontaneousness of Christ's teaching fill us with wonder. It

is perfectly independent of times and places, but makes all times and places consecrated and effective. 3. Why? Because religion in Him was a real matter. It is unreality that makes it unnatural, constrained, vague. 4. The man who is truly religious never forces His religion on any one. It goes wherever he goes. If the conversation takes a religious turn, what he says comes as spontaneously as it did from Christ. 5. This is the power of effective preaching. Some preaching is simply the setting forth of abstract doctrines. The real preaching passes the life up into the doctrines, being based on the realities of life. III. THE WOMAN'S OPPORTUNITY. 1. That of ministration to the necessities of Christ. We cannot do this as she did; but Christ's doctrine is, that what is done to the least of His brethren is done to Him. With every needy, weak claimant by the wayside Christ comes. 2. That of reception. The gift of God was her opportunity. Our evil is that we do not know our wants, and therefore do not know our opportunities. (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) *The two fountains*:—I. HERE IS A CONTRAST BETWEEN CHRIST'S PRESENT BODILY NEED AND HIS PERMANENT SPIRITUAL ABUNDANCE. "Give me to drink. . . . He would have given thee living water." 1. The contrasts in the life of Jesus are very striking. (1) Even in physical things. He sleeps from weariness, but awakes to hush the storm; He is hungry, but dooms the fig-tree to perpetual barrenness. (2) More so in spiritual things, as when, "crucified through weakness," He promised life to the malefactor. 2. The living water was not mere happiness, but the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life. There is in man a thirst for God which only the Spirit can quench, a thirst of need or a thirst of desire. 3. Jesus would not have had living water to bestow had He not been in a condition to require the refreshment He asked. It was because He assumed a humanity, tempted in all points like as we are, that He could give the water of life. II. THERE IS A CONTRAST HERE BETWEEN THE NARROWNESS OF RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE AND THE GENEROSITY OF CHRISTIAN GRACE. To tell a thirsty man that he belongs to another religion! The gift of man is hindered by what should have arrested and inspired it, "the gift of God." Knows no obstacle but our unfitness. 1. The desire to bless was strong, constant, and spontaneous in Jesus. 2. As we possess Christ's Spirit we shall do likewise. Do we want occasions for doing good? It is the occasions rather that want us; and the heart filled with Divine love will use occasions as they present themselves, just as water flows through the channels made for it. 3. In proportion to our likeness to Him will be our generosity. Living water cannot be restrained. Mere beliefs, feelings, customs, may be stagnant ponds, but the power of the Divine Spirit is like running water: its movement keeps it fresh. Love must act to live. Grace gains by giving. III. HERE IS A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE WOMAN'S RELATION TO CHRIST AND HER OWN CONCEPTION OF IT. She did not know Him or the boon He bore. A man may know and not do, but he cannot do unless he know. And knowledge of the principles of religion would secure its possession. If men knew Christ's unspeakable gift they could not fail to seek it. The woman's ignorance made her look on Christ as one to be ministered to. Had she known Him she would have been the supplicant. Our ignorance of Him is continually misrepresenting His requirements. 1. He requests our obedience, and we consider whether or not we shall comply, as if in doing we were to oblige Him. A full knowledge will make us realize our indebtedness to Him, and to see in His mighty help the only possibility of doing His will and to crave it. 2. The thought applies to the efficiency of works of faith and love. We think that is due to the intrinsic excellence of our deeds. But He employs us and renders His work effectual. 3. The same is applicable to rewards, which we expect on the ground of worthiness; but all our goodness is from Him, and knowledge of Christ would make eternal glory a thing to be sought, not deserved. IV. A CONTRAST BETWEEN EAGERNESS FOR THE LOWER GOOD AND INDIFFERENCE TO THE HIGHER. When the woman mistook Christ as meaning literal running water she said, "Give me the water." Yet we are not told that when she learnt the sense of Jesus, she asked to be supplied with His spiritual gift. So men labour for the perishing and neglect the eternal. (*A. J. Morris.*) *The gift of God and living water*:—I. THE GIFT OF GOD. 1. There is nothing that is not a gift of God. "Every good and perfect gift is from above." But what are all earthly gifts combined compared to the gift of God's only-begotten Son? 2. The greatest gift sanctifies all minor ones: as the sun beautifies the tamest landscape. Christ is like the numeral which, put before the unmeaning cyphers, invests them with value. 3. While feelingly alive to God's goodness in His other gifts we can heartily join in the estimate of the apostle, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." With this, "Having nothing we possess all things."

II. LIVING WATER—the purchased blessing of Christ's salvation, beginning with pardon here, and culminating in glory. Observe, it is—1. Living water. The tiniest stream has more true glory than the stagnant lake: the smallest flower than the inanimate trunk of the giant tree. So with all dead things wherein the soul has no part, and which are earthy, the mere accident of fleeting existence. They are streams, but not living streams—they evaporate as they flow; but the blessings of salvation are as deathless as the God who gave them. 2. The fountain head of this water is living. The gift of God is not dry doctrine, but a living Being. III. THIS VERSE IS A GOLDEN GATE, TO OPEN WHICH THERE ARE TWO KEYS. 1. The key of faith. Had the woman apprehended Christ's meaning, what a barrier there would have appeared between her and mercy—how often must she climb Gerizim to load its altars with sacrifices! Christ says, "If *thou knewest* the gift of God." Faith brings the soul into immediate contact with the Saviour without the intervention of preparations and penances. 2. The key of prayer. "Thou wouldst have *asked*." How many blessings are lost for the want of this! How often is the Divine saying verified, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye my face in vain!" (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Living water*:—The life of the Lord, living water, in distinction from the stale water of this world's life. I. The latter PROVOKES THIRST, the former QUENCHES IT. II. The one BECOMES FOUL, the other TAKES AWAY FOULNESS. III. The one STANDS IN A MARSH, the other GUSHES AND FLOWS. IV. The one SINKS OR EVAPORATES, the other becomes an ETERNAL FOUNTAIN. (*Lange.*) *Christ's testimony concerning His mission*:—It is said that "there is no passion so strong in human nature as an educated religious hatred," and history by many an example proves the assertion true. When fathers not only hand down to their children an heritage of antagonism against any party or sect, but, from a sense of duty to God, conscientiously teach them that the party or the sect is their natural foe with whom no terms can ever be made and no intercourse be held, it is not difficult to see what result will ensue. Bitterness, contempt, strife must be inevitable fruits of such an education. At any moment the passionate hostility will flame forth, and all humane and generous feeling will wither in the burning heat. How often you may find generation after generation inheriting and perpetuating the hatreds and conflicts of their ancestors! The memory of some wrong inflicted long ages ago, or of some fierce controversy which ought to have been dead, buried, and forgotten, is cherished with religious zeal, and manifests itself whenever an opportunity occurs. "Peace on earth and goodwill among men" are made almost impossible, because we all more or less inherit our ancestors' prejudices. We start in life with an animus against certain people or forms of thought, and the hardest of all tasks is to free ourselves from the narrowing effects of our education. Illustrations of educated religious hatred are not wanting in the various churches of Christendom at the present day, and they are sometimes as fierce as the enmity was between the Jew and the Samaritan. This, as you know, rose to such a pitch that they refused all intercourse with each other. The education of the Jew made him a very determined hater, and every patriotic impulse and the whole fervour of his religious feeling quickened and intensified the hatred and contempt with which he looked upon a mongrel race who practised idolatry—the greatest crime known to a Jew—under the pretence of a rival worship of Jehovah. It was because of this strong national abhorrence that the woman of Samaria, when asked by this weary stranger for a draught of water, exclaimed, "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, asketh drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." It was a natural surprise on her part to find one of the proud race turned into a suppliant. No doubt she regarded Him as an enemy, and felt something of the antagonism of her race and education excited by His request. But I do not think that she meant to be particularly cruel, or to allow animosity to destroy her humanity. She had no intention to refuse what He asked. She seems to have been a shrewd, yet genial, easy-dispositioned sort of creature; but, human-like—perhaps woman-like—she could not refrain from this little bit of tantalisation and apparent triumph before giving the stranger what He, in His weariness, so much required. However, this bitter utterance of hers gives our Lord the opportunity which He desired to teach her some great spiritual truths. He makes no mention of the enmity of the two peoples; He will not enter upon that old controversy which she had started; He will not stir, by the slightest word of His, any anger in the soul He seeks to save. Yet in a way He accepts the challenge, and responds to her words, though in a different manner from that which she had expected. She had seemingly set herself in antagonism against

Him—"Thou" asketh "me!"—and Christ answers by putting His power of supply over against her need, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." You will mark here an important difference. Christ mentions nothing about Samaritan or Jew. He does not say, "If thou, being a Samaritan, hadst asked of Me, a Jew, I would have given thee living water." 1. THE CHARACTER IN WHICH JESUS CHRIST PRESENTS HIMSELF TO THE WORLD. He declares that He is the gift of God. He claims to be a person of the highest importance. He does not disguise Himself, but boldly announces the majesty of His nature and the glory of His work. The woman saw in Him as yet only a wearied, travel-stained man of another race, and as such she treated Him. Her eye could not penetrate beneath the outward form to the Divine nature enshrined within it. He begins by awakening her curiosity concerning Himself. "You regard Me," He seems to say, "only as a Jew; but if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, your speech and conduct would be entirely changed; for I have resources in Me of which you know nothing." "Living water." As we think of it, however, what could be more delightfully expressive than such a figure? Perhaps we in these cold lands, where water is often in superabundance, cannot appreciate the deep and attractive beauty of the phrase; but to an Eastern mind the idea conveyed by it is of the most fascinating character. Water is inexpressibly precious in a land where it is often scarce, where a well is a family fortune. Had she never known that the water was a gift of God? Had not thirst on a hot day, or the failure of the spring, taught her that? Was water a thing to traffic in? Did she never think of the gift of water as something very free and universal? Christ stands as God's response to the thirst of human souls. Friends, there is no real need of your natures, however deep, that Christ cannot and does not meet. There is one who wants to know truth. He is ever asking questions that trouble and burden him. Is there a God? Is He mindful of men? Is He a Father? Is there a life hereafter, or are we extinguished at death? Brother, Christ meets that thirst of yours with living water, for he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father, and He has brought life and immortality to light. There is another who has aspirations after nobleness, yet is sadly, bitterly conscious of sin. He would rise, but he is dragged down. Christ came to enter into your condition, to fight with your temptations, to sacrifice Himself for the removal of your sins, to stand by you in the terrific encounter, to sanctify your nature, to make it strong and brave and pure. II. THE EFFECT WHICH A RECOGNITION OF CHRIST WOULD PRODUCE IN HUMAN HEARTS. There are three things here which are like links in a chain, a golden chain—three steps which naturally follow one after the other. First, "If thou knewest;" second, "Thou wouldest have asked;" third, "He would have given." Let us see how these processes and results are related to one another. 1. The first is—knowledge. Mark how tenderly and gently our Lord charges His solitary hearer with ignorance. There is an exquisite tone of compassion in the words, "if thou knewest." It recognizes at once that there is no wilful opposition to Him as the Christ, or to His great mission, for she had hitherto had no chance of knowing anything whatever about Him. Her religious responsibility had not yet begun. Reproach! condemnation! Christ has nothing of all this for the ignorant; it is their misfortune, not their fault. We have received the knowledge; Christ has been revealed to us. He stands before us in the glory of His character as the gift of God. To know Christ, that is the first thing; to know Him in all the glory of His Divine commission, in all the plentitude of His life-giving power, in all the reviving, refreshing, inspiring sweetness of His love, this is what is necessary, necessary to awaken trust and love; for does not Christ Himself declare, "If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked, He would have given"? Here we have the second step or link. 2. It is confidence. Knowledge produces trust. "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." Jesus Christ's confidence in the effect of the revelation of Himself is most decisive. Most firmly do I believe that this is everywhere true. It is He who has created the desire, the appetite for these things, by making them known to us. It is as with children—so long as they are ignorant of the various good things which others enjoy, so long, of course, they have no wish for them; but bring them within the range of their knowledge, show them how beautiful and desirable and attainable they are, and immediately the craving to possess them arises. Their conceptions are enlarged by every new object presented to their view, and, as a rule, the desire to obtain it follows. It is so in all that pertains to our civilized life—it is know-

ledge that awakens appetite and longing to possess. All this, however, is general, and the particular illustration is, perhaps, that which we most require. Therefore I say that as soon as you and I see Christ as He really is, as soon as we know Him in the full purpose of His mission, we must seek the gift He has to bestow. When I see that He has come to teach me about God, I want to know about God; when I see that He has come to redeem me from sin, I realize how much I need redemption from sin; when I hear Him offering heart-rest amid the strifes of the world, and eternal rest hereafter, I know that is just the supreme and unspeakable blessing which will satisfy me. I never felt all that till Christ was revealed to me, and so in my ignorance I did not cry, "Give me to drink." 3. The third link in the chain, the supreme result, is this—the asking is always followed by the giving. The asking must precede giving; but let this condition be fulfilled, and the result will ensue. So Christ teaches this ignorant woman the great secret of Divine giving. It is the response to prayer. (*W. Braden.*) *Christ and the woman of Samaria*:—These words open up to you three of the features of the Lord Jesus. 1. It shows you His care of individual souls. 2. Christ loves to save the worst. 3. Christ bears with stupidity. This woman was very stupid in Divine things; the words of Christ seemed to make no impression. Let us attend closely to these words, and let us consider—I. THAT CHRIST IS THE GIFT OF GOD. "If thou knewest the gift of God," &c. This is one of the sweetest names Christ bears—"the gift of God." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift"; "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son"; "The gift of God is eternal life." Whose gift is He? The gift of God. Some seem to think that no good thing can come from God. When they hear that God has kindled eternal fire for the wicked, they say, can any good thing come from Him? But, ah! there is this and this good thing. Observe what the gift is—"The gift of God." He did not give a creature. He did not give angel or seraph. He gave His Son. Why did He give this gift? "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," &c. Ah! here is the guilt of unbelief, that you do not take up what God has laid down. II. CHRIST IS NEAR TO SINNERS. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it was that said unto thee, give Me to drink," &c. 1. He is nigh thee on account of His two natures (chap. i. 18). 2. Christ has promised to be near in His ordinances—"I will come near and bless you." In secret prayer He records His name. In the broken bread and in the poured out wine He records His name. There are some of you who are awakened by the Spirit; now it is to such that Christ is near. Christ is as near to you as He was to the woman of Samaria. If Christ is so near, you ought to improve Him. You know that the farmers know how to improve the seasons. You know, brethren, that merchants do not let seasons pass. III. IT IS IGNORANCE THAT KEEPS SINNERS FROM APPLYING TO CHRIST. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink," &c. It was ignorance that made the Jews crucify Christ. It was ignorance that made Paul persecute the Church. It was ignorance that made the woman answer Christ so rashly at the well. You are sailing over the sea of life, and you do not know that there are pearls below you. There is a thought comes over me, and it is this—that some of you will know when it is too late. IV. WHAT IT IS THAT CHRIST IS WILLING TO GIVE SINNERS, even the chief, "If thou knewest the gift of God," &c. The living water here spoken of is the Holy Spirit. Christ offered her here the very thing that she needed. It was an impure heart; now, Christ here says, I will give thee water to make thy heart clean. Again, this woman's heart was full of sin. She had a constant craving for sin. But Christ says, I will here give thee water that will make thee thirst no more. Again, this woman's heart was constantly boiling up with sin. Christ says to her, I will here give thee a well of water springing up—not a pond that may dry up—but a well of living water springing up into everlasting life. Again, this woman's heart would have ended in the second death. Christ says, I will here give thee water—a well of water that will spring up to everlasting life. (*R. M. McCheyne.*) *The gift of living water*:—The turning points in our career have commonly nothing in them to distinguish them from common events, nothing to show that they are turning points. We do not know the faces that lie hidden all around us. We pass all our life along side of that which would make all eternity different to us, and yet, for lack of knowledge, for lack of consideration, for lack often of one hour's serious, heart-searching thought, the thin veil continues to hide from us our true and lasting blessedness. Like the crew that were perishing from thirst, though surrounded by the fresh waters of the River Amazon that penetrated far into the salt ocean; so are we sur-

rounded on all hands by God—the living, loving God—and upheld by Him, and living in Him, yet do not know Him, and refrain from dipping our buckets and drawing out of His life-giving fulness. How often, looking on those who, like this Samaritan woman, have gone wrong and know no recovery, who go through their daily duties sad and heavy at heart and weary of sin—how often do these words rise to our lips, "If only thou knewest!" How often does one long to be able to shed a sudden and universal light into the minds of men, that they may see things as they really are, that would reveal to them the goodness, the power, the all-conquering love of God! Two particulars our Lord mentions as being defective in this woman's knowledge. I. SHE DID NOT KNOW THE GIFT OF GOD. Her expectations were limited by her earthly condition and her physical wants. She had no belief that she had to do with the eternal loving God, and that God desired to communicate to her what was in Himself—deep and lasting blessedness. Through all ages, and for all men, there remains this gift of God, sought and found by those who know Him; different from, and superior to, the best human gifts, inheritances, and acquisitions; not to be drawn out of the deepest, most cherished wells of man's sinking; steadily arrogating to itself an infinite superiority to all that men have regarded and busily sunk their pitchers in—the gift which each man must ask for himself, and having for himself, knows to be the gift of God to him, the recognition by God of his personal wants, and the assurance to him of God's everlasting regard. This gift of God, which carries to each soul the sense of God's love, is his deliverance from all evil, his reunion with God Himself. II. SHE DID NOT KNOW WHO IT WAS that said to her, "Give Me to drink." And until we know Christ, we cannot know God. Often, like this woman, we are in Christ's presence without knowing it, and listen, like her, to His appeals without understanding the majesty of His person and the greatness of our opportunity. It is always the same request that He urges, "Give Me to drink." Is it cruelty to refuse a cup of cold water to a thirsty child, and no cruelty to refuse to quench the thirst of Him who hung upon the cross for us? Ought you to feel no shame that the Lord is still in want of what you can give? Has Christ not sufficiently shown the reality of His thirst for your friendship and faith? (*Marcus Dods, D.D.*) *Characteristics of living water*:—I. BRIGHTNESS. II. REFRESHMENT. III. FREENESS. IV. ABUNDANCE. V. CONTINUITY. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come." Now. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The gift of God*:—I. WHAT IS THE GIFT OF GOD? 1. The truth. The Old Testament gives this thought more than once. So Christ was taking an old illustration and applying it to His gospel. "The old, old story" is the story still. We commonly call this gift revelation. Men could not discover or shape it. Consider—(1) Its realness as contrasted with the shadows and dreams of idolatry and philosophy. The truth of God is a fact. Test it, O doubter! (2) Its finality. Athens, with its thousands of gods, confesses there is an unknown God. In the gospel man gets his soul's desire and is at rest. He has nothing to do but to keep drinking. (3) Its dogmatic character. We wish to reason out and understand, but God's dogmas are all axioms. 2. Christ Himself (1 Cor. x. 4). Nor does this oppose the first interpretation, for Christ is "the Truth," and pre-eminently "the gift of God." (1) Other good gifts only satisfy certain parts of our nature; this fully satisfies. (2) Others satisfy only for a time; this for ever. 3. The present opportunity. Every invitation and opportunity is a gift of God. This woman embraced it. How many neglect it and lose it! II. HOW THIS GIFT DESERVES THE NAME. 1. To be a gift it must be free. And so it is free and unmerited. The sinner has no resources. You cannot offer to God as purchase money what is His own. 2. That it is a gift appears in the eternity of its plan. God's generosity is shown in His eternal purpose. 3. The fulness of the word appears when we consider how it is pressed on our acceptance. "The word is nigh thee," brought to our very door. 4. The truth of the title given to the living water appears still more clearly when we learn how thoroughly it becomes ours in accepting it. (1) It is absolutely bestowed. (2) It becomes part of ourselves. Our heart becomes not a cistern, but a spring (ver. 14). "Christ in you." Conclusion: The inheritance of this gift brings responsibility. 1. Springs of water are not for beauty, but for use and reproduction. 2. This reproduction is not a thing of constraint, except so far as constrained by the love of Christ. 3. Therefore with joy draw this water out of the well of salvation. (*J. J. Black, LL.B.*) *The gift of God*:—Perhaps no cry in Cairo is more striking than that of the water carrier. "The gift of God," he says, as he goes along with his water skin on his shoulder. It is very likely that water, so invaluable, and so often scarce in hot countries, was

in Christ's days spoken of, as now, as "the gift of God," to denote its preciousness; if so the expression to the woman would be extremely forcible and full of meaning. (*Ragged Life in Egypt.*) *The gift of the Spirit:*—The purifying, refreshing, and fertilizing qualities of water aptly symbolize the operations of the Holy Spirit (chap. vii. 38, 39; Zech. xiv. 6; Isa. xliv. 3). I. THE HOLY GHOST IS "THE GIFT OF GOD," and is so styled by way of pre-eminence. He is a *gift*—1. Which virtually comprehends every other blessing. 2. Without it every other *gift* is unsatisfying. 3. Its attainment not only compensated for the loss of Christ, but made His departure expedient (chap. xvi. 7). 4. Without it even the unspeakable gift of the Saviour is vouchsafed in vain (1 Pet. i. 2). II. The Holy Ghost is here represented as the GIFT OF CHRIST as well. "He would have given thee." 1. From first to last the merits of Christ are the only procuring cause of our redemption. 2. As Mediator He has obtained the disposal of this gift (Col. i. 19; Acts ii. 33; Eph. iv. 7). III. PRAYER IS THE APPOINTED MEANS FOR OBTAINING THIS GIFT. "Thou wouldst have asked." 1. While Christ declares His readiness to bestow, He intimates the necessity of application. So does the Scripture throughout (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). This at once consults the honour of God and the infirmity of man; leaving to God the glory of supplying our necessities, but constituting a test of our humility, faith, and obedience. 2. The efficacy as well as the necessity of prayer is pointed out. "He would have given" (Luke xi. 13). IV. ONE CAUSE WHY MEN NEGLECT THIS GIFT IS THEIR IGNORANCE RESPECTING IT. They know not its nature and value; nor their own need of it; nor the manner of obtaining it; nor Christ's power and willingness to impart it; therefore they make no inquiries about it. "If thou knewest." 1. Whence does this ignorance arise? not from want of opportunity, instruction, or capacity, but want of attention to revealed truth. Whatever excuse may be urged for the woman there is none for you. 2. This ignorance will not extenuate guilt (Isa. v. 12, 13, xxvii. 11; Luke xix. 44). *Ignorance and instruction:*—I. THE WOMAN'S IGNORANCE. Knowledge is acquired by few; ignorance is inherited by all. 1. She was ignorant of the Messiah with whom she was conversing. She saw the Jew, but not the Son of God; the weary man, but not the rest for weary souls; the thirsty pilgrim, but not one who could quench the world's thirst; one who sent for provisions, not one whose meat and drink was His Father's will; a lonely person, but not one who had myriads of angels at His command. 2. She was ignorant of spiritual things. She mistook living water for running water. She asks for material and overlooks eternal things. Earth was all, and heaven nothing. 3. She was ignorant of the gift of God. She valued the well, but could only trace it to Jacob, not to God. God gives us all good gifts; some of them through our fathers, some through our own hands. All these must perish. One gift comes direct; that abides, even the Holy Spirit. II. CHRIST'S INSTRUCTIONS. They were—1. Progressive. The first impression was that He was a Jew; next she wanted to compare Him with Jacob; next He is a prophet; lastly the Messiah. Such was Christ's gradual unfolding of Himself to her. 2. Effective. They had their desired effect in spite of her efforts to thwart them. He touched her conscience, awakened her thirst for God, and gave Himself for its satisfaction, after continuous evasions. 3. Practical. III. GOD'S BLESSING. 1. Christ was so blessed that He forgot His thirst. 2. The woman was so blessed that she forgot her pitcher. As heaven becomes clear we lose sight of earth. (*W. Griffith.*) *Saving knowledge:*—One difficulty lay in the way of this woman's salvation—ignorance of Christ. She was not an uninstructed woman. She was acquainted with portions of Bible history. She was versed in sectarian peculiarities. She shared the hopes of the Jewish and Samaritan people. In this age there are hundreds who know something about everything save Christ. Our text speaks—I. OF A GIFT, AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF IT. 1. It informs that the gift is Christ Himself. (1) In the eternal purpose; (2) in promise; (3) in history; (4) in experience; (5) the faith that receives Christ is a gift; and (6) the eternal life in which it issues is a gift. 2. The definite article shows this to be God's gift beyond all others; the gift which comprehends and sanctifies all others. (1) It is an unrivalled gift. (2) It sweetens other gifts, and makes them effective. (3) A most precious gift, because he who has it has, as the richest without it has not, the favour of God. (4) If thou hast it, thou must prize it, because it is a token of thine everlasting salvation. 3. Knowledge is put with the gift. (1) Till her eyes were opened Hagar could not see the well, nor can you see this gift of God. (2) This knowledge is the gift of God. "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. (3) This knowledge is personal, not second-hand, of a personal Christ. II. IF thou knowest the gift of God, WHAT THEN? 1. It supposes that many have

not this knowledge. 2. It suggests that all may know it, and that a great change will come over them. (1) The unconverted would be much happier. (2) The scoffer would become a sympathizer. (3) The trifler would make the present moment his convenient season. (4) Darling sins would be renounced for the greater sweetness of Christ. (5) The very worst would hope, believe, and find mercy. 3. Every point in Christ's character, if known, would work good for us. 4. If we take a walk abroad, to how many could we apply the text, and its suggestions. If they knew the gift of God—(1) The working classes would spend their sabbaths differently. (2) The formal worshippers in churches and chapels would worship the Father in spirit and in truth. (3) The Christless preacher would abandon his eloquent flights, and declare the preciousness of Christ's salvation. (4) The ritualist would lay aside his robes, and confess the sinfulness of his priestly assumptions. (5) The sinner, dying without hope, would depart in joy and peace. III. How DOES THE "IF" CONCERN BELIEVERS? There are tens of thousands who know not this gift. Is this your fault? 1. How shall they hear without a preacher? 2. Have you spoken so as to be understood? 3. If not, resolve that for the future no man shall perish for lack of knowledge through your fault. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The preaching of Christ*:—Our Lord found many a topic of discourse in the scenes around Him. Even the humblest objects shine in His hands as I have seen a fragment of broken glass or earthenware, as it caught the sunbeam, light up, flashing like a diamond. With the stone of Jacob's well for a pulpit, and its water for a text, He preached salvation to the Samaritan woman. A little child, which He takes from its mother's side, and holds up blushing in His arms before the astonished audience, is the text for a sermon on humility. A husbandman on a neighbouring height, between Him and the sky, who strides with long and measured steps over the field he sows, supplies a text from which He discourses on the Gospel and its effects on different classes of hearers. In a woman baking; in two women who sit by some cottage door grinding at the mill; in an old, strong fortalice, perched on a rock, whence it looks across the brawling torrent to the ruined and roofless gable of a house swept away by mountain floods—Jesus found texts. From the birds that sung above His head, and the lilies that blossomed at His feet, He discoursed on the care of God—these His text, and providence His theme. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *Salvation must be accepted as a free gift*:—A Christian lady was visiting a poor, sickly woman, and after conversing with her for a little she asked her if she had found salvation yet. "No," she replied, "but I am working hard for it." "Ah, you will never get it that way," the lady said. "Christ did all the working when He suffered and died for us, and made complete atonement for our sins. You must take salvation solely as a gift of free unmerited grace, else you can never have it at all." The poor woman was at first amazed beyond measure, and felt for the moment as if all hope had been taken from her; but very soon the enlightenment came, and she was enabled to rest joyously on Jesus alone. *Christ, a priceless blessing*:—Charles, Duke of Burgundy, being slain in battle by the Switzers at Nantz, anno 1476, had a jewel of very great value, which, being found about him, was sold by a soldier to a priest for a crown in money; the priest sold it for two crowns; afterwards it was sold for seven hundred florins, then for twelve thousand ducats, and last of all, for twenty thousand ducats, and set into the Pope's triple crown, where it is to be seen at this day. But Christ Jesus is of far more value, better than rubies, saith Solomon; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to Him. He is that pearl of great price which the merchant purchased with all that ever he had. No man can buy such gold too dear. Joseph, then a precious jewel of the world, was far more precious, had the Ishmaelitish merchants known so much, than all the balms and myrrhs that they transported; and so is Christ, as all will yield that know Him. (*J. Spencer.*) *Salvation is a free gift*:—Mr. Miller spoke of dealing with a very intelligent young man, an engineer, at one of the meetings in the Temperance Institute. The sermon had been on the grace of God, and one of the illustrations that Mr. Moody used was very helpful to the young man. It was that of a teacher who offered his watch to various members of his class, who one after another declined to receive it, thinking that the teacher was only joking with them. Presently, however, a very little boy reached out his hand and took it. This anecdote threw light into the man's mind; he had no idea that salvation was so free, or that, in fact, it was open to every man to receive or refuse it. *Living water*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE GIFT REPRESENTED BY LIVING WATER. 1. Christ, in an especial manner, is the "gift" of God (John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32; 2 Cor. ix. 15). (1) He is the chief fountain of salvation, both as the gift of God and living water.

(2) An application to Him for this water arises from a knowledge of Him in order to which we must receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. i. 17). 2. But the Holy Spirit is rather intended because He—(1) Cleanses the soul from the guilt and pollution of sin (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). (2) Refreshes the thirsty (ver. 14; chap. vii. 37). (3) Is the only source of life to the dead in sins, and having quickened He makes them fruitful in righteousness (Isa. xxxii. 15–18, xliv. 3, 4, li. 3; Eph. ii. 9). II. THE NECESSITY OF THIS WATER. 1. We are filthy, and need to be cleansed. 2. We are unhappy, and need to be refreshed. 3. We are dead, and need to be made alive. 4. We are barren, and need to be made fruitful. III. THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS WATER (ver. 14). IV. WHERE THIS WATER IS TO BE HAD, BY WHOM, AND ON WHAT TERMS. 1. It is to be had in Christ, not only as our God, but as our Brother. (1) It is procured for us by His death (chap. xvi. 7), and received on our behalf, in consequence of His resurrection and ascension (Psa. lxviii. 18; Acts ii. 33). (2) Hence He waits to bestow it on those who apply to Him (John vii. 37; Rev. xxi. 6); and from this consideration we have great encouragement to ask Christ for it. 2. It may be had—(1) by all that are poor, and need it (Isa. xli. 17); (2) by all who thirst for it (John vii. 37; Rev. xxi. 6, xxii. 17); (3) by all who come to Christ, "If any man thirst," said He, "let him come unto Me"; (4) and by all who ask, "Thou wouldest have asked of Me." 3. Though it was purchased dear by Christ, He gave a great price that He might have a right to impart it to sinners, and that He might render them capable of receiving it, yet we may have it as a free gift, "without money and without price." V. THE REASON WHY MEN ARE INDIFFERENT ABOUT IT, AND EITHER APPLY NOT TO CHRIST FOR IT, OR APPLY WITHOUT SUCCESS. 1. They know it not (chap. xiv. 17); neither its nature, value, nor necessity. 2. They know not Christ in the dignity of His person—in His great condescension and love—in the sufferings He endured that we might have this water—and as the fountain of it. 3. They do not apply, confess their need, nor ask its communication, or, if they ask, they do not ask aright, sincerely, earnestly, importunately, perseveringly, believingly, consistently. Application: 1. Ignorance, arising from an aversion to saving knowledge, and the love of sin, is no excuse (Isa. v. 12, 13; Luke xix. 44). 2. The state and danger of those who remain destitute of the sacred influence of the Spirit. 3. The duty and advantage of immediate and fervent supplication for it (Prov. i. 22–28, 32). (*J. Benson.*) *The living water:*—Water is the emblem of the Holy Ghost. All that is necessary to our life, and which has not died for us, is the emblem of the Holy Ghost. Breath, Light, Fire, Water: these are the figures which set Him forth. We need not dwell at any length upon the meaning of the words. Within us are great needs and deep thirsts which God only can satisfy: a thirst which grows within us by all else with which we seek to quench it. To know God; to rest in His love; to be led by His wisdom; to seek to please Him; to have His presence; to journey towards His house as our home—this is our rest, our peace, our satisfaction. (*Mark Guy Pearse.*)

Vers. 11–12. **Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.**—*The woman's first rejoinder:*—I. It is the property of natural men to take up spiritual things in a carnal way, and they are not able to discern grace till they have it; for, so doth this woman understand Christ, as if He were speaking of elementary water. II. We are naturally enemies to our own good, for she reasons against this living water, as, in her judgment, impossible to be had or given. III. We are also naturally so addicted to our own carnal sense, that we will believe nothing revealed by Christ further than we can see a reason or outward appearance for it; for she judged it impossible He could have living water, seeing He could not draw it out of that well, nor show a better. IV. A chief deceiving principle, making men careless of truth and grace, is their pretence of antiquity and succession unto it, and their descent from religious progenitors; for she boasted Jacob was their father, who gave the well, and therefore slighted the offer of a better, as being well enough in her own conceit. V. None are so ready to boast of antiquity and of interest in pious progenitors as those who have least cause so to do; for they were but heathens who had come in the room of Jacob's children, who had forfeited their right; and they were far from Jacob's spirit, who would satisfy their soul with that which only supplied his bodily necessity, and served his cattle as well as him. VI. It is a notable injury done unto Christ to plead any antiquity or succession to it, in prejudice of Him or His truth, or to cry up any above Him; for it was her fault to cry up Jacob, and her interest in him, that she might slight Him and His offer: "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" &c. VII. Sobriety and a simple way of

living. It is a notable ornament to grace in the godly; when nature, which is content with little, is not overcharged with creatures, to the dishonour of God, abuse of the creatures, and prejudice of men's better state; and when men by their carriage declare that their bodies and flesh is not their best part, which they care most for, so much doth Jacob's practice teach us. (*G. Hutcheson.*) *The source*:—Our Lord's object was to bring the woman to seek salvation of Him. Our desire is the immediate conversion of all now present. The Samaritan woman accepted the Saviour upon the first asking. Many of you have been invited to Jesus many times—will you not at last comply? Our Lord aimed at her heart by plain teaching and home dealing—we will take the same course with our hearers. When His interesting emblem failed to reach her, He fell to downright literalism, and unveiled her life. Anything is better than allowing a soul to perish. I. WE WILL EXPOUND THE PRECEDING TEACHING. The figure was that of living water in contrast to the water collected in Jacob's well, which was merely the gatherings of the surrounding hills—land-water, not spring-water. 1. Christ meant that His grace is like water from a springing well. (1) Of the best and most refreshing kind. (2) Living, and ministers life. (3) Powerful, and finds its own way. (4) Abiding, and is never dried up. (5) Abounding, and free to all comers. 2. Furthermore, He intimated to the woman that—(1) He had it. There was no need of a bucket to draw with. (2) He had it to give. (3) He would have given it for the asking. (4) He alone could give it. It would be found in no earthly well. II. WE WILL ANSWER THE QUESTION OF THE TEXT. In ignorance the woman inquired, "Whence then hast Thou that living water?" We can at this time give a fuller reply than could have been given when our Lord sat on the well. He has now a boundless power to save, and that power arises—1. From His Divine nature, allied with His perfect humanity. 2. From the purpose and appointment of God. 3. From the anointing of the Holy Ghost. 4. From His redeeming work, which operated for good even before its actual accomplishment, and which is in full operation now. 5. From the power of His intercession at the Father's right hand. 6. From His representative life in glory. Now all power is delivered into His hand (Matt. xxviii. 18). III. WE WILL DRAW CERTAIN INFERENCES FROM THE ANSWER. 1. Then He is still able to bless. Since He has this living water only from His unchanging self, He therefore has it now as fully as ever. 2. Then He needs nothing from us. He is Himself the one sole Fountain, full and all-sufficient for ever. 3. Then we need not fear exhausting His fulness. 4. Then at all times we may come to Him, and we need never fear that He will deny us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) Ver. 11 may be affirmed—I. With regard TO THE INSUFFICIENCY OF REASON APART FROM REVELATION IN FATHOMING THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD. The name of Jehovah is "secret" or "wonderful," and so are all the problems which concern the human spirit and its relationship to God. The world, for 4,000 years deifying reason, strove to work out the solution. But "the world by wisdom knew not God" or man. But when reason fails, revelation, like rope and pitcher, fulcrum and lever, comes to our aid. In the Bible we have something to draw with, deep though the well may be. II. WITH REGARD TO THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL DEALINGS. Many a sorrowing one has wailed out, "Thy judgments are a great deep," and there is nothing to gauge them in this imperfect world. But the hour will come when you shall have the needed appliance—"In Thy light we shall see light." III. With regard to THE UNVEILING OF THE FUTURE. With all the pain of its mystery is it not a mercy that the well is deep, and that we have nothing to draw with? But our greatest comfort is that it is not too deep for Him, and He is drawing up what will work together for good to those who love Him. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Nothing?*—I. DO NOT ALL THE STREAMS OF LIFE FLOW FROM HIM? II. WHO FILLED THE OCEANS FROM THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND? III. WHO CAUSES THE CLOUDS AND MAKES THEM TREASURIES OF HIS RAIN? IV. WHO FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS HAS OPENED FOUNTAINS OF JOY IN MYRIADS OF HEARTS? (*Van Doren.*) **Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?**—*Hero-worship*:—I. THIS IDOLATRY OF HEROES HAS BEEN MAN'S INFIRMITY FOR AGES. II. THE INUTILITY OF THE RELICS OF ALL THE SAINTED MARTYRS WHEN TREASURED BY SUPERSTITION. III. SAMARIA, THE DWELLING OF JACOB AND THE TOMB OF JOSEPH, WAS A LAND OF BARENESS. (*Ibid.*) *The bucket*:—The ἀντλημα, here "bucket" of most of our early versions, must not be confounded with the ὑδρία, or "water-pot" (ver. 28). It is the situla, generally made of skin, with three cross sticks tied round the mouth to keep it open. It is let down by a rope of goat's hair, and may be seen lying on the curb-stones of almost every well in the land. We may suppose the woman to have held this in her hand while she talked with the Lord, and reminded Him

that He had nothing of the kind. (*Abp. Trench.*) *Conduits for the water of life*:—This well of the water of life is very deep, and we have nothing to draw with; therefore we must have our pipes and conduits to convey the same unto us; which are the Word of God preached, and the administration of the sacraments (chap. v. 25, vi. 63). (*W. Perkins.*) *Deep wells*:—1. The well was so deep that it had already lasted a thousand and a half years. It was so deep that after as many more centuries have passed away it still exists. The neighbouring Sychar is no longer; but this spring rises as at the beginning as if to—(1) Show the perpetuity of Nature's simplest and purest gifts. (2) To teach how much longer lived is a single word of benevolent utility than conquests and empires. (3) How much more deserving to live is the good deed that hides itself, as it were, underground, and connects itself with an eternal source, than all the monuments of pride that are piled up to perish. 2. More enduring than that ancient fountain, and ever fresh as its drops, and deep as the wants of man, Christ's gospel gushed up among the fainting nations. And profound as it was, that was no reason why all should not come empty-handed; no need of anything to draw with but a sincere and earnest wish to be supplied. What had the world done to deserve it? What had it brought to secure it? It had done evil and brought nothing but its emptiness and insufficiency. This train of reflection may be carried further. I. THE NATURE THAT WE SHARE IS DEEP. It would seem, if we were acquainted with anything it would be with this. We are perpetually observing it and acting it. And yet it is scarcely less beyond our perfect penetration than its Maker Himself. Whence we? What? Whither? Some navigator once struck the bottom of the Atlantic midway between its opposite shores; but who shall sound the soul of man?—so mean, so noble; so weak and mighty; so good and evil. What shall we draw with? With fellow-feeling and good-will. Enter with a generous sympathy into the joy and sorrow of others, and you shall know "what spirit you are of." II. HUMAN LIFE IS DEEP. Its successive ages as they move along from infancy to decrepitude, its common concerns, sudden changes, inscrutable appointments, various fortunes, unavoidable accidents, bewilder us. What shall we draw with? We must bring a spirit of submission, a religious spirit. We may hang for ever over the abysses of our being, and only grow giddy. We shall survey it best when we look above it to that Almighty One by whom its whole mystic relations are combined—"Our life is hidden in God." Through Him it must receive its interpretations. III. RELIGIOUS TRUTH IS DEEP. Some have said that it is impossible to understand in the least so immeasurable a subject. I do not say how much we can absolutely know of God. But there is a capacity in us to be fully satisfied. Faith removes the worst difficulties by taking away every disposition of mistrust and resistance out of the heart. (*N. L. Frothringham.*) *The difficulty of arriving at truth*:—I. WHENCE IT COMES TO PASS THAT TRUTH WHICH SEEMS SO NECESSARY FOR EVERY MAN TO KNOW, SHOULD YET GENERALLY BE SO DIFFICULT FOR ANY MAN TO COME AT. 1. It has been an ancient complaint among philosophers that truth hath lain in so deep a pit that they have never been able to discover the bottom of it. The like complaint we meet with in Scripture (Job xxviii.; Eccles. iii. 11, xi. 5, viii. 16). 2. This is true—(1) Of the knowledge of the works of God in the power of nature. (2) Of the works of God in the moral world (Psa. lxxii. 2, 15; Jer. xii. 1; Eccles. iv. 1). (3) Of practical duty itself. 3. This arises from the following facts: (1) There is necessarily in the nature of things themselves some difficulty, and in our understandings much imperfection. Some things are entirely above our capacities, and others we can only attain to by labour and study. Some things we can only know as probable at best. And those things which are most level to our understandings have at the bottom some subtle intricacies which limit the degree of our knowledge. In the clearest prospect there is a distance no eye can reach, and in the most intelligent parts of the works of God there is a depth which no finite eye can penetrate. But then these secrets are no part of that truth which it is necessary for us to know, and with care sufficient may be known of truth as is necessary to salvation. (2) Men perplex themselves by aiming at things not necessary to be known in regard to Christian practice, or at such degrees of knowledge as are not possible to be arrived at. Those persons are at a great distance who, while they have lost themselves in the labyrinth of an imaginary secret will of God, have neglected to obey His positive commands. Under this category come the Jewish doctors and the speculative philosophers and divines. (3) Prejudice and prepossession arising from custom of education and from men's depending on the opinion and authority of particular persons without examination. (4) The wicked-

ness and perverseness of men, who for their own interests sometimes conceal it on purpose. II. BY WHAT MEANS EVERY SERIOUS AND SINCERE PERSON MAY YET CERTAINLY OBTAIN TO SUCH A DEGREE OF TRUTH AS IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION. 1. He must take care that he in the first place resolves to do the will of God, then he shall know of the doctrine (Psa. xxv. 14). 2. He must be firmly resolved never to be deluded into the persuasion of anything contrary to plain and evident reason, which is the truth of God's creation; contrary to the attributes of God, which are the truth of the Divine nature; or contrary to the eternal differences of good and evil, which are the truth and foundation of all religion in general. Had men kept to this "candle of the Lord," men even of the meanest capacities could never have believed—(1) Impossibilities such as transubstantiation, or contrary and unintelligible explications of true doctrines such as the subtle and empty speculations of the schoolmen, which are contrary to the truth of God's creation. (2) Nor that God absolutely decreed men to everlasting misery, which is contrary to the primary truth of the Divine nature. (3) Nor that cruelty and persecution should be set up for His sake, who came not to destroy but to save. Nor that any other wickedness should be made part of religion, which are contrary to the very foundation of religion. 3. He must diligently study Holy Scripture as the only authoritative guide in religion, so as to obey its plain precepts and believe its plain doctrines, and not be contentious or uncharitable about those he does not understand. (*S. Clarke, M.A.*) *What may be seen in the well:*—There is a tradition regarding one of the other sacred wells of Palestine—the Well of the Wise Men between Jerusalem and Bethlehem—that when the Eastern Magi had at one time lost the guidance of the mystic star, while stooping over this fountain they saw it once more reflected in its waters; forthwith it guided them to the place where the young child was—"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." True, at all events, is this beautiful tradition regarding God's providential dispensations. At times we lose the guiding star; it is swept from our firmament; we travel on in darkness, in our unpiloted way, led in our sorrowful musing to exclaim, "Where is now my God?" But when on our bended knees we stoop over the well—ay, often in our very darkest night of mystery and sadness—lo! the heavenly light reappears; we see the lost star of Providence mirrored in the fountain of salvation. The work and the love of Christ explain what is otherwise often inexplicable. God our Maker—God our Redeemer—giveth "songs in the night." (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) **Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again.** *The contrast:*—I. IN EVERY BREAST THERE IS A CRAVING AFTER HAPPINESS. "Who will show us any good?" There are many streams of human enjoyment; some lawful and having the favour of God upon them; some mean and unworthy. But even the best, apart from the infinite excellence, can give no permanent satisfaction. The finite—philosophy, rank, conquest, gold—can never satisfy that which was born for the infinite. II. WHAT IS TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THIS WORLD'S BROKEN CISTERNS? You cannot dislodge one object of earthly affection without the substitution of something better. Nature abhors a vacuum. III. CHRIST DOES NOT CONDEMN MANY EARTHLY STREAMS OR FORBID THEM. The wants of our physical and social natures are co-ordinate with our spiritual. Jesus recognizes both, but says, "If you restrict your journeyings to the wells of human happiness you will not be satisfied. But I have a well of living waters." IV. THE BELIEVER HAS AN INNER WELL IN HIS SOUL which makes him independent of earthly good. This source of lasting joy is ever full, and having access to it he may say, "Having nothing, yet possessing all things." Christ in us the hope of glory. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *True religion:*—I. IS THE GIFT OF CHRIST. This fact is confirmed—1. By reason. The evidences supplied by—(1) Nature, (2) the Bible, show that their origin is Divine. So does—(3) A holy life. 2. By the Bible. 3. By the song of the redeemed in heaven. This fact shows that—(1) Christ's excellence is immense. (2) Christ's compassion is great. (3) Christ is worthy of all praise. II. HAS ITS RESIDENCE IN MAN'S INNER NATURE. Therefore—1. It cannot be destroyed by outward circumstances. In the cases of Job and Paul. 2. It will ever maintain its hold in man. Circumstances may take away every other gift, but not this. III. TRANSCENDS IN VALUE THE BEST THINGS IN NATURE. 1. It gives permanent satisfaction to the soul in this life—unlike the best other things. 2. It raises its possessor to perfect happiness in the future. IV. IS TO BE SECURED BY MAN'S OWN EXERTIONS. "Whosoever drinketh." 1. This is natural. God gives food, but we must eat: so God works in us what we have to work out. 2. This is reasonable. V. PRODUCES THE SAME EFFECT IN EVERY HEART. Whoever he may be religion will give

him satisfaction. This shows—1. That it demands the reception of man universally. (1) It is adapted to the world. (2) It is what the world wants. 2. That it will one day secure universal order. (*W. Griffiths.*) *The blessings of the gospel:*—I. IN THEIR PHYSICAL TYPE. "Water." 1. The flow of water represents the spread of the gospel (Isa. xxxv. 6, 7, xliii. 19, 20). 2. The influence of water on vegetation illustrates the power of religion on human life (Psa. i. 3; Jer. xvii. 8). 3. The pleasant quietude of water represents the repose of soul which God affords (Psa. xxiii. 2). 4. The quickening energy of water typifies the vivifying power of God's Spirit (Ezek. xxxvi. 25). (1) No physical life without water, no moral life without religion. (α) Vegetable and animal life are absolutely dependent on water. (β) Water as an obstacle to terrestrial radiation saves our world daily from death. (γ) So in every way the life of the soul depends on Christ. (2) No physical cleanliness without water; no moral purity apart from Christ. II. IN THEIR CONDITION OF PROFIT. "Drinketh." They are—1. For all. 2. For all on one condition. 3. For all on the same condition—personal appropriation. III. IN THE MEDIUM OF THEIR COMMUNICATION. "I shall give him." We are indebted to the sun for all water fit for use. The sun lifts the water of the sea in the form of vapour, and by its unequal heat in different sections of the air causes the vapour to descend in rain and dew. All our fresh water owes its origin to this. The impure compound of the sea passes through heaven's laboratory and descends fit for use. All the energies of the Spirit's life are passed beneath Christ's magic touch. IV. IN THEIR PRACTICAL INFLUENCE. "In Him," &c. As the mountain is to water, so is a heart full of Christian sympathies to spiritual energies. 1. The water in dew and rain falls on the mountain; living things are refreshed, the land made fertile and beautiful; life made joyous. 2. The hills absorb the excess of moisture, the water percolating through the rock to inner caverns. 3. Thus when there is no rain or dew, and the heat is great, the mountain pours forth the stream it has treasured up to satisfy the wants of thirsty comers. So the child of God—1. Receives. 2. Is blessed. 3. Gives and blesses others. (*Evan Lewis, B.A.*) *Life's ever springing well:*—You have been busy all the week with external things, let us now turn to the inner life. We make even our religion too much external—let us turn from ecclesiastical ceremonies and questions to the life of the soul. Spiritual life is—I. A DIVINE GIFT. 1. It is not a principle dwelling in man naturally, to be brought out of obscurity. Man is dead in trespasses and sins. 2. It is not produced in men by their own efforts, through the imitation of good examples, early instruction or gradual reform. 3. It is the gift—(1) Of the Father, for He hath begotten us again into a lively hope. (2) Of the Son, through whose atoning sacrifice we receive it. (3) Of the Holy Ghost who dwelleth in us. 4. What is the practical lesson but that we must make our solemn appeal to the mercy of God for it? Justice awards death; grace alone can bring life. II. INWARD AND PERSONAL. 1. "In Him." Unconverted men find it too much trouble to look after the inward life, but take an easier method and imitate its outward manifestation. In the churches are many Christians like the stuffed animals in a museum: there is no difference between them and the living except in the vital point. The invisible, but most real, indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes the difference between the sinner and the saint. 2. "In Him." It is a personal matter. The presence of life in fifty relatives is of no service to the fifty-first if he is dead. All religion that is not personal is void. All the virtue that adorned your ancestors will not save you. The water which Jesus gives must be in every one of us if we would be saved. 3. How fares it with thee? Suppose there were no chapels or churches or means of grace, wouldst thou still be a Christian? III. A VIGOROUS AND ACTIVE PRINCIPLE. Not a stagnant pool, nor a stream gently gliding on, but a spring forcing itself upwards. Springs are in perpetual motion, and no known power can stop them. 1. If heaps of rubbish are piled upon them they will force a course for themselves. So grace can well up—(1) Through a mass of ignorance—as in very uninstructed but very beautiful Christians. (2) Through a mass of error—as in devout Roman Catholics. 2. Surrounding circumstances do not operate upon them as might be supposed. In frosty weather when the river is all ice the spring-head flows as ever. So a Christian may be placed in the worst circumstances, in an ungodly family, without the means of grace, but the inner life will not freeze. 3. This life passes through the severest ordeals and survives them—poverty, suffering, slander; over these the Christian triumphs. 4. Temptations threaten to destroy it; but let a man cast what rubbish he may into a living spring, the spring will purify itself and eject the filth, and so will

the true Christian. IV. A CONTINUAL AND EVERLASTING THING. Jesus might well have reminded the woman how many had gathered round that well and passed away, but there was the old well unchanged. So all the world may change, but the inward principle in the Christian does not decay. Some wells are drained dry by drought, or because some deeper well has taken away the supplies. But the Christian's spring never fails, because he has struck the main fountain. His life is hid with Christ in God. V. PRE-EMINENTLY AND CONSTANTLY SATISFACTORY. He who has Christ in him, the hope of glory, is perfectly satisfied. He could not have been content with the whole world beside. 1. Learning would only have revealed his ignorance. 2. Fame would only have made him more ambitious. 3. Wealth would have bowed him down with avarice. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The spring of living water*:—Suggests—I. THE CONTINUAL FRESHNESS OF LIFE IN CHRIST'S DISCIPLES. The idea of a running brook is that of freshness, a cheerfulness that never grows dull, an unwearied energy. 1. We have not to go far before we see weary faces that tell us that life has lost its freshness and has become a dreary thing, like a stream whose course has been obstructed, when the water stagnates and cannot carry off the foul and decaying things which have accumulated. 2. This has not been because of evil intent, but because life has become so dull and wearisome that they have not cared to keep it fresh and pure. 3. Once these lives were pure and gladsome, but something has come down into them that has put a stop to it all. 4. What is the cure? Not by removing the log or boulder, but by increasing the flow so that the stream can pass over or by it, or sweep it away. So God deals not with our circumstances, but with ourselves. He augments our spiritual life that in the rush of the mighty torrent the obstruction is removed. II. ALL THE MUSIC AND BRIGHTNESS OF THE BROOK ARISE FROM THINGS THAT WOULD PROVE OBSTACLES WERE IT WEAKER. The pebbles or boulders would alike stop the music and flow of the stream that was not large enough to pass them. So it is with us. If we have within us that spring that leapeth up into eternal life it will make music out of the very things that would otherwise have stopped our prayers. Out of the cares of life, the sudden shocks of misfortune, there shall be nothing but joyous song. (*A. Poulton.*) *The springing fountain*:—There are two kinds of wells, one a simple reservoir, another containing the waters of a spring. It is the latter kind which is spoken about here, as is clear not only from the meaning of the word in the Greek, but also from the description of it as "springing up." That suggests at once the activity of a fountain. A fountain is the emblem of motion, not of rest. Its motion is derived from itself, not imparted to it from without. Its silver column rises ever heavenward, though gravitation is too strong for it, and drags it back again. So Christ promises to this ignorant, sinful Samaritan woman that if she chose He would plant in her soul a gift which would thus well up, by its own inherent energy, and fill her spirit with music, and refreshment, and satisfaction. I. First, CHRIST'S GIFT IS REPRESENTED HERE AS A FOUNTAIN WITHIN. Most men draw their supplies from without; they are rich, happy, strong, only when externals minister to them strength, happiness, riches. For the most of us, what we have is that which determines our felicity. Take the lowest type of life, for instance, the men of whom, alas! the majority, I suppose, every time is composed, who live altogether on the low plane of the world, and for the world alone, whether their worldliness take the form of sensuous appetite, or of desire to acquire wealth and outward possessions. The thirst of the body is the type of the experience of all such people. It is satisfied and slaked for a moment, and then back comes the tyrannous appetite again. And, alas! the things that you drink to satisfy the thirst of your souls are too often like a publican's adulterated beer, which has got salt in it, and chemicals, and all sorts of things to stir up, instead of slaking and quenching the thirst. And even if we rise up in a higher region and look at the experience of the men who have in some measure learned that a man's life "consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesses," nor in the abundance of the gratification that his animal nature gets, but that there must be an inward spring of satisfaction, if there is to be any satisfaction at all; if we take men who live for thought, and truth, and mental culture, and yield themselves up to the enthusiasm for some great cause, and are proud of saying, "My mind to me a kingdom is," though that is a far higher style of life than the former, yet even that higher type of man has so many of his roots in the external world that he is at the mercy of chances and changes, and he, too, has deep in his heart a thirst that nothing, no truth, no wisdom, no culture, nothing that addresses itself to one part of his nature, though it be the noblest and the loftiest, can ever satisfy and slake. If you have Christ in your heart then life is possible,

peace is possible, joy is possible, under all circumstances and in all places. Everything which the soul can desire, it possesses. You will be like men that live in a beleaguered castle, and in the courtyard a sparkling spring, fed from some source high up in the mountains, and finding its way in there by underground channels which no besiegers can ever touch. The world may be all wintry and white with snow, but there will be a bright little fire burning on your own hearthstone. You will carry within yourselves all the essentials to blessedness. If you have "Christ in the vessel" you can smile at the storm. II. CHRIST'S GIFT IS A SPRINGING FOUNTAIN. The emblem, of course, suggests motion by its own inherent impulse. Water may be stagnant, or it may yield to the force of gravity and slide down a descending river-bed, or may be pumped up and lifted by external force applied to it, or it may roll as it does in the sea, drawn by the moon, driven by the winds, borne along by currents that owe their origin to outward heat or cold. But a fountain rises by an energy implanted within itself, and is the very emblem of joyous, free, self-dependent and self-regulated activity. "And so," says Christ, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a springing fountain;" it shall not lie there stagnant, but leap like a living thing, up into the sunshine, and flash there, turned into diamonds, when the bright rays smile upon it. So here is the promise of two things; the promise of activity, and the thought of activity, which is its own law. 1. The promise of activity. Some of us are fretting ourselves to pieces, or are sick of a vague disease, and are morbid and miserable because the highest and noblest parts of our nature have never been brought into exercise. Surely this promise of Christ's should come as a true gospel to such, offering as it does, if we will trust ourselves to Him, a springing fountain of activity into our hearts that shall fill our whole being with joyous energy, and make it a delight to live and to work. It will bring to us new powers, new motives; it will set all the wheels of life going at double speed. 2. And there is not only a promise of activity here, but of activity which is its own law and impulse. There is a blessed promise in two ways. In the first place, law will be changed into delight. We shall not be driven by a commandment standing over us with whip and lash, or coming behind us with spur and goad, but that which we ought to do we shall rejoice to do; and inclination and duty will coincide in all our lives when our life is Christ's life in us. And then, in the second place, that same thought of an activity which is its own impulse and its own law suggests another aspect of the blessedness, namely, that it sets us free from the tyranny of external circumstances which absolutely shape the lives of so many of us. III. The last point here is THAT CHRIST'S GIFT IS A FOUNTAIN, "SPRINGING UP INTO EVERLASTING LIFE." The water of a fountain rises by its own impulse, but howsoever its silver column may climb it always falls back into its marble basin. But this fountain rises higher, and at each successive jet higher, tending towards, and finally touching, its goal, which is at the same time its course. The water seeks its own level, and the fountain climbs until it reaches Him from whom it comes, and the eternal life in which He lives. We might put that thought in two ways. 1. The gift is eternal in its duration. The Christian character is identical in both worlds, and however the forms and details of pursuits may vary, the essential principle remains one. So that the life of a Christian man on earth and his life in heaven are but one stream, as it were, which may indeed, like some of those American rivers, run for a time through a deep, dark canon, or in an underground passage, but comes out at the further end into broader, brighter plains and summer lands; where it flows with a quieter current and with the sunshine reflected on its untroubled surface into the calm ocean, He has one gift and one life for earth and heaven—Christ and His Spirit, and the life that is consequent upon both. 2. And then the other side of this great thought is that the gift tends to, is directed towards, or aims at and reaches, everlasting life. The whole of the Christian experience on earth is a prophecy and an anticipation of heaven. Christ's gift mocks no man, it sets in motion no hopes that it does not fulfil; it stimulates to no work that it does not crown with success. If you want a life that reaches its goal, a life in which all your desires are satisfied, a life that is full of joyous energy, that of a free man emancipated from circumstances and from the tyranny of unwelcomed law, and victorious over externals, open your hearts to the gift that Christ offers you; the gift of Himself, of His death and passion, of His sacrifice and atonement, of His indwelling and sanctifying Spirit. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Human expedients and Divine provision*:—I. HUMAN EXPEDIENTS of happiness. "Whosoever . . . thirst again." 1. Gross and dissipated pleasure brings disappointment and remorse. 2. In refined and intellectual pursuits "is much grief, and he that

increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." 3. Business brings gain, but "they that will be rich fall into a snare," &c. 4. Leisure makes the hours hang heavily, is attended with satiety, and becomes a burden. 5. The conscience-stricken seeks a palliative in drowsy reflection or in resolutions and duties, but finds that he is compassing himself about with sparks that yield no warmth. All "broken cisterns" and "vanity and vexation of spirit." II. DIVINE PROVISION. "Whosoever . . . shall never thirst," &c. This water, the saving grace of Christ, is—1. Excellent in its nature. The property of water is to cool, cleanse, fertilize, and refresh; no element is so indispensable. The rich grace of Christ produces, maintains, increases, completes life and makes it immortal. 2. Divine in its origin. Seek it not in ordinances; they are only channels. Use them, but do not rest in them. Look to Jesus, the author and fountain of life. 3. Free in its communication. "Give." Nothing is more free than a gift. Why is the grace of Christ so free? Because—(1) It is too precious to be bought. (2) It is already procured by Christ. (3) He must have all the glory. 4. Satisfying in its effects. "Shall never thirst"—(1) Offer any other water, but he will ever thirst for this, and the more he receives the more he will crave. (2) He shall be satisfied with the kind of food he finds, though not with the degree. (3) These effects are not produced by hearing, but by receiving. 5. Constant in its supplies—(1) Not only near, but in him. "A good man is satisfied from himself." (2) A well, not a shallow draught, a scanty stream, or stagnant pool—denoting the plentiful effusion, the large abundance, the continued freshness, the glorious sufficiency of the grace of the Saviour. 6. Active in its operations. It is not given to be dormant, but to operate. 7. Eternally glorious in its results. III. BY WAY OF IMPROVEMENT INQUIRE WHAT YOU THINK OF THIS. 1. Some are ignorant and careless. 2. In some there is beginning of thirst. 3. Some have drunk. Then—(1) Be thankful. (2) Remember your constant need of Christ. (3) Seek the salvation of others. (*T. Kidd.*)

Holy water:—I. THE WAY OF OBTAINING TRUE RELIGION. 1. It must come to us as a gift. There is no suggestion—(1) Of digging; it is freely handed to us. (2) Of purchasing; it is presented without price. (3) Of fitness. The woman was a sinner. The Divine life is not in us by nature, cannot be produced by culture, nor infused by ceremonies, nor propagated. Wisdom cannot impart it, nor power fashion it, nor money buy it, nor merit procure it; grace alone can give it. 2. It is a gift from Jesus. All its details are connected with Him: redemption, forgiveness, deliverance from the power of sin, instruction, example. He is our all in all. 3. It is a gift that must be received. When we drink water it enters into us and becomes part of us: even so must we receive Christ into our innermost self; not professing to believe in Him or admiring Him; but so trusting Him, loving Him, living in Him that He becomes one with us. II. THE SATISFYING POWER OF TRUE RELIGION. 1. Grace relieves our soul thirst as soon as received. A man once startled from sinful indifference finds an "aching void" within him. He tries riches, but money cannot satisfy him; he seeks after knowledge, but study is a meanness; he dazzles his fancy with fame, charms his eye with beauty and his ear with music, but "all is vanity." But he who has received Christ has received at-one-ment with God, and God delights in him. 2. Grace continues to quench our thirst—though it strives to return it is always met by the well within. 3. This is a matchless blessing and averts a thousand ills. What should we have been without it? III. THE ABIDING CHARACTER OF TRUE RELIGION. 1. It is "in Him." Here is a man trying to write poetry, but it is not in him, and it cannot come out of him, so he rhymes his nonsense, but a poet he never becomes; but if a man has it in him who can take it away? So with art and education. Much more with religion. 2. It is in him a well of living water, always there as an operative force as permanent as Jacob's well which was there in the patriarch's day, and is there now. True religion is like a well, because it is independent of surroundings and circumstances. In summer and winter does it flow. The pond overflows because there has been a shower of rain, but the deep well is full in the drought. So the believer is not exalted by wealth nor crushed by poverty. 3. It is a well that is springing and never ceases to flow. The great motives which set a believer working at first are as forcible in old age. 4. It springs up into everlasting life. Grace blossoms into glory. IV. THE PRACTICAL OUTCOME OF ALL THIS. 1. Where did you get your religion? From your Father, or is it of your own manufacture? 2. What has your religion done for you? Has it quenched your thirst? 3. Does your religion abide with you or do you remove it with your Sunday hat? 4. Does your religion spring up within you by the energy of the Holy Spirit? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Living water:*—

The incident shows—1. The equal right of womankind to spiritual privileges. 2. The intellectual capacity of woman. The topics discussed were no less abstract than those talked over with Nicodemus. 3. Our Lord's mode of inculcating religious truth. (1) From homely facts. (2) Facts of which the hearers' minds were full at the time. I. RELIGION TYPIFIED BY WATER. Water has three main uses. 1. Fertilizing. There is an inspiring power in the truths, motives, and enjoyments of religion, and tends to transform the man. 2. Purifying. Religion cleanses the character, sanctifies the life, destroys sinful habits, fosters pure thoughts, kindles holy feelings, and stimulates to holy conduct. 3. Thirst quenching. Religion meets the soul's aspiration for life by the promise of life everlasting; quenches its thirstings for happiness by giving it fellowship with God; meets its dissatisfaction with the world by opening before it heaven's joy. II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGION AS TYPIFIED BY THE WELL-WATER. 1. Its activity is implied in its being a spring well, not a pool. Religion is a never-ceasing stream of influence. When it is still it stagnates and becomes foul, promotive of the worst qualities of human nature. 2. This activity is elevating and progressive in its effects. Water springs up into life in all it nourishes. In the tree it supplies the roots with sap, which is water springing up into fruit and flower. The results of religion are growth in those moral qualities which live for ever in happiness. III. THE ADVANTAGES OF RELIGION AS TYPIFIED BY THE WELL IN THE MAN. 1. Where it is within the man it exercises its power over his life apart from external influences and in spite of them. Men's moral characters must be moulded from within. External motives demoralize. 2. The comforts of religion, seeing they are within the man, are ever sure and uninterrupted. In ancient times when cities were liable to be besieged and all outside sources cut off, it was a matter of no small moment to have wells within the walls. This rendered the inhabitants more defiant of the enemy, seeing they were thus scarce of the necessaries of life. (*A. J. Parry.*) *Living water*:—1. It is characteristic of John that this metaphor omitted in the other Gospels should be preserved by him. 2. This emblem of spiritual vitality was not new (Isa. xii. 3, xli. 17, 18; Jer. ii. 13). 3. The prophetic Scriptures, however, were unknown to the woman, for the Samaritans only received the Pentateuch, and had she known them it is not likely that she would have caught their inner sense. 4. Christ is the true well of life. In Him all fulness dwells. What a claim to be made by the carpenter of Nazareth; either an unpardonable exaggeration or a witness to His Divinity. 5. The water drawn from Christ as the well is the Spirit of life He imparts. 6. The points of analogy are obvious. (1) As the well was free to all comers, so is Christ free and accessible to all (Isa. lv. 1). (2) As water is a necessary of life and has power to enliven the faint and refresh the weary, so the Holy Spirit is necessary to the interior life and able to restore the discouraged and revive the languid. 7. The point of contrast was that water from Jacob's well would give but temporary relief, because water imbibed is soon worked off or consumed in the waste of the system. But the living water is not spent or exhausted in the operation of the spiritual life. The Holy Ghost abides. 8. See how we have to do with the Christ without and the Christ within. As the woman had to go beyond the town to reach the well, so every one must go beyond himself and his whole social environment and come to Jesus. Then Christ enters the heart that has asked of Him and dwells there. 9. There ought to be increase of spiritual life. The inward well may be deepened and the stream have a more copious flow. Alas! how often is it choked and all but dried up with worldliness! 10. The career of Jesus is an example of life in the Spirit. How strong its current was is shown by His forgetfulness of His physical want when the opportunity came of opening spiritual things. (*Donald Fraser, D.D.*) *Living water*:—I. THE NATURE OF THE GIFT. Spring water, *i.e.*, Christ Himself the Life is His own gift. II. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Always fresh. (1) History is a storehouse of buried memories, some of which are galvanized into momentary life by antiquarians, but which soon die away since they belong to a past age and do not answer to our wants or correspond to our sympathies. But Christ's words spoken 1800 years ago have the same force and attraction as though they were novelties of yesterday. His actions, His life as a whole speak to the nineteenth century as to the first, provoking the same hostility, winning the same empire. (2) As He is in history, so He is in the soul. In that treasure house of the dead, amid all that is stagnant, all that belongs to the irrevocable past, all that bears the mark of change and corruption, there is for Christians one thought that is for ever fresh, one memory for ever invigorating, one tide of pure passion—Jesus. 2. A spring of water is in perpetual motion; so—(1) Christ, in history and in

the soul, is ever different and yet the same. The sky presents the same outline of clouds on no two days; the sea, visit it when we may, never looks quite as it looked before. Yet they are the same. So Christ is to us what He was to our forefathers, and yet displays to each successive generation new aspects of His power and perfection: at the same time stability and progress. (2) He is the source of movement in the soul. He has set it moving, and keeps it moving—even the very intelligence that would drive Him from His throne; for His truths have moved the depths of our being, so that whether a man accepts them or not he cannot rest as though he had never heard them. Faculties dormant for years are stirred to meet Him, and He keeps them in motion by fresh aspects of His power and beauty. (3) In Christian theology. The Christian creed is said to be the stagnation of active thought. Undoubtedly it gives a fixed form to our ideas, so as to render superfluous the discussion of matters on which the light of Divine certainty has been thrown. But fixed thought is no more the antagonist of active thought than the rim of the well was hostile to the springing water. 3. Springing water fertilizes. (1) Christ is the great fertilizer of the soul of man—of (*a*) The intellect; for He made it capable of the productions of genius. (*b*) The affections. Family life in Europe is His work. His authority reflected in the Christian father, His tenderness in the Christian mother, His obedience in the Christian child. (*c*) The will; making it capable of new measures of sacrifice and heroism. (2) Christ is the fertilizer of nations, and without Him the civilization of Europe would be exchanged for the civilization of China or Japan. III. THE SCENE OR SEAT OF THE GIFT. "In Him." 1. Others have done great works—(1) Effecting vast changes on the surface of human life in founding empires, changing customs, laws, and languages. (2) Some have gone deeper—founding empires of ideas. 2. Christ has done more—more than the founding of a kingdom or of a philosophy; for a government may be hated while obeyed, a philosophy accepted without love. But Christ reigns and teaches in human hearts as a friend. 3. Hence Christians know the secret of man's dignity. Before Christ came the dignity of man as man was unknown. When He came He placed within the reach of emperor and slave the only ennobling gift—His presence and power within. 4. This gift is also the secret of the Christian's spiritual independence. If Christians were dependent on the things of sense, the world might crush it out. The world prescribed Christian worship, destroyed the Scriptures, but was powerless against the presence of the Divine Redeemer. IV. ITS EFFECT. "Everlasting life." Without it man would not be happy in heaven. (*Canon Liddon.*) *Living water, or vital religion*:—I. In its SOURCE. 1. It is a gift. Human nature is an arid desert, unproductive of a single drop of water. 2. It is a free gift. Water is one of the freest gifts of nature. You charge for milk, you give water. Christ gives liberally, and upbraids not. He is too rich to sell, we too poor to buy. 3. It is a free gift, which only Himself can give—not His apostles or their successors. 4. A free gift to whomsoever desires it. He has enough to quench the thirst of all mankind. II. In its NATURE. 1. It is personal. Christian nations do not make Christian individuals, but *vice versâ*. The former one a great blessing, the latter a greater. 2. It is inward. (1) "Our life is hid with Christ in God"; that is, our objective or justification life. (2) God's life is hid with Christ in us; that is, our subjective or regenerate life. 3. It is Divine—the same in kind as in God. "All my springs are in Thee." III. In its OPERATION. 1. It is active. It varies in feeling; but let us not forget that it is first principle—a well of water, not necessarily hot water. You may adopt means to make it hot, but hot or cold it is water all the same. 2. It is cleansing. (1) Hercules turned a river through the filthy Augean stables; Christ turns the river of Divine grace into the sinner's heart. Springs in soft soils carry up particles of sand in order to carry them away. So grace, as it bubbles up in the heart, disturbs the sands of defilement. (2) It cleanses society, and has washed away unnameable sins, and will go on with the work of refinement till the face of the earth is made like the face of heaven. 3. It is satisfying (Psa. xxxvi. 8). IV. In its DESTINATION. 1. It is aspiring. Christianity is aspiring, but not satiating, not inconsistent with hope and effort. The believer wants nothing but God, but more of Him. 2. It will at last reach everlasting life. The life implanted in regeneration will continue for ever. (*J. Cynddylan Jones, D.D.*) *The water of life*:—I. ITS DONOR. Yonder poor man who asks for refreshment—1. Professes to have this water. 2. Is able to supply it. 3. Was appointed to give it. 4. Has the disposition to do so. 5. Has never denied it. II. ITS RESIDENCE. "In Him." 1. The internal principle of religion is not to be opposed to external practice: works must evidence experience. 2. Yet Divine things must

be known and felt before they can govern us. God begins with the heart. 3. The religion of some people is all external. (1) That of some depends on external occurrences, like a stream produced by a storm instead of being supplied by a spring. Sickness, poverty, &c., make some men religious for a time. (2) That of others consists in external performances. Obedience is not enjoyed as their meat, but as their medicine. (3) The religion of a third is found in their connections. They leave it to their ministers or parents to think for them. (4) The religion of a fourth is all in Christ. They ridicule the very notion of a work of grace in us. III. ITS ACTIVITY. 1. Real Christians are everywhere represented as active—husbandmen, reapers, warriors, racers. 2. The design of the gospel is to produce a people zealous for good works. 3. The graces of the Holy Spirit are not dormant, but active. 4. All the images of the gospel imply the same thing—leaven, fire, force of vegetation. IV. ITS TENDENCY. 1. It weans us from the world. 2. It sets our affections on things above. 3. It promotes the heavenly life below. (*W. Jay.*) *The longing for unknown happiness*:—"We have an idea of happiness," says a great French writer, who has bequeathed, as a legacy, the stray but profound imaginings of his mind about God—"we have an idea of happiness, and yet we cannot grasp it; we are conscious of an image of the true, yet we possess only the false. There is an ignorance; yet not absolute. There is a knowledge; yet not certainty." Yes. We are always haunted by a memory or stimulated by a hope. We are always looking after something; we hardly know what it is. (*Knox Little.*) *Riches unsatisfying*:—Very few men acquire wealth in such a manner as to receive pleasure from it. Just as long as there is the enthusiasm of the chase they enjoy it; but when they begin to look around, and think of settling down, they find that that part by which joy enters is dead in them. They have spent their lives in heaping up colossal piles of treasure, which stand, at the end, like the pyramids in the desert sands, holding only the dust of kings. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The unsatisfying nature of worldly things*:—As a cup of pleasant wine offered to a condemned man on the way to his execution; as the feast of him who sat under a naked sword hanging perpendicularly over his head by a slender thread; as Adam's forbidden fruit, seconded by a flaming sword; as Belshazzar's dainties overlooked by a handwriting against the wall: such are all the empty delights of the world—in their matter and expectation, earthly; in their acquisition, painful; in their fruition, nauseous and cloying; in their duration, dying and perishing; in their operation, hardening, effeminating, leavening, puffing up, estranging the heart from God; in their consequences seconded with anxiety, solitude, fear, sorrow, despair, disappointment. (*J. Spencer.*) *Worldly things unsatisfying*:—He that seeks to satisfy his lusts goes about an endless business. "Give, give!" is the horse-leech's language. The worldling hath enough to sink him but not to satisfy him. (*J. Trapp.*) *Worldly things unsatisfying*:—I have read a story of a man whom Chrysostom did feign to be in prison. "Oh," saith he, "if I had but liberty, I would desire no more!" He had it; and then cried, "If I had enough for necessity, I would desire no more." He had it; and then cried, "Had I a little for variety, I would desire no more." He had it; and then cried, "Had I any office, were it the meanest, I would desire no more." He had it; and cried again, "Had I but a magistracy, though over one town only, I would desire no more." He had it; and then sighed, "Were I but a prince, I would desire no more." He had it; and then sighed, "Were I but a king, I would desire no more." He had it; and then cried, "Were I but an emperor, I would desire no more." He had it; and then exclaimed, "Were I but emperor of the whole world, I would then desire no more." He had it; and then he sat down with Alexander, and wept that there were no more worlds for him to possess. Now, did any man come to enjoy what he is said to desire, it would be but a very mean portion compared with God. (*Thomas Brooks.*) *The worth of the water of life*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WATER CHRIST GIVETH. The gifts and graces of the Spirit (chap. vii. 38, 39). 1. The gift of regeneration to become God's child. 2. The gift of faith to believe God's promises. 3. The gift of obedience to do God's will. 4. The gift of prayer to seek God's presence. 5. The gift of comfort to endure God's trials. 6. The gift of strength to hold out and continue God's servant. II. CHRIST IS ABLE AND WILLING TO GIVE THIS WATER. 1. Able (Psa. xxxvi. 9; Zech. xiii. 1; Col. i. 19, ii. 3). 2. Willing (Matt. xi. 28; John vii. 37; Rev. xxii. 17; Isa. lv. 1). III. How CHRIST BESTOWS THIS WATER. 1. By the preaching of the Word. 2. By the sacraments. 3. By prayer. IV. THE PARTIES TO WHOM CHRIST WILL GIVE THIS WATER. Those who thirst (Isa. lv. 1; Matt. v. 6; John vii. 37; Rev. xxii. 18). If there be no

thirsting, there shall be no refreshing. V. THE BENEFIT OF ENJOYING THE WATER. Never thirst, because the fountain is never dry. VI. THE SIGNS OF HAVING THIS WATER. 1. A clear sight of thine own soul's estate. 2. Purity of heart. 3. Satisfaction in Christ. (*S. Hieron.*) *The deceptive character of this world's good* :—Many years ago, when the Egyptian troops conquered Nubia, a regiment was destroyed by thirst in crossing this desert. The men, being upon a limited supply of water, suffered from extreme thirst, and deceived by the appearance of a mirage that exactly resembled a beautiful lake, they insisted on being taken to its banks by the Arab guide. It was in vain that the guide assured them that the lake was unreal, and he refused to lose the precious time by wandering from his course. Words led to blows, and he was killed by the soldiers whose lives depended on his guidance. The whole regiment turned from the track and rushed towards the welcome waters. Thirsty and faint, over the burning sands they hurried; heavier and heavier their footsteps became, hotter and hotter their breath, as deeper they pushed into the desert, farther and farther from the lost track where the pilot lay in his blood; and still the mocking spirits of the desert, the afreets of the mirage, led them on, and the lake, glistening in the sunshine, tempted them to bathe in its cool waters, close to their eyes, but never at their lips. At length the delusion vanished; the fatal lake had turned to burning sand. Raging thirst and horrible despair! the pathless desert and the murdered guide! lost! lost! all lost! Not a man ever left the desert, but they were subsequently discovered, parched and withered corpses, by the Arabs sent in search. (*Sir S. Baker.*) *Unsatisfactory nature of this world's good* :—A striking proof we have of this is the example of Solomon, who, with every advantage, made the experiment what earth and earthly things could do to satisfy the soul of man. Whichever way he turned, and in whatever quarter he inquired, he found that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. If he thought to prove his heart with mirth, and to enjoy pleasure, this also was vanity; so that he was forced to say of laughter, "It is mad," and of mirth, "What doeth it?" If he increased his goods, and gathered silver and gold, he found what the experience of all ages has confirmed, that he who loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase—this also was vanity. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) The most renowned of earthly conquerors seated himself by that well. He brought the monarchs of the world to be his drawers of water; each with his massive goblet going down for the draught, and laying the tribute at the victor's feet. But the tears of the proud recipient have passed into a proverb; and if we could ask him to translate these dumb tears into words, his reply would be, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Perennial supplies* :—There is an Eastern legend which says that there was a fair fountain by which an angel once rested, and in a favoured hour he infused into it a mysterious power, so that if only some drops of its water were scattered in a barren plain a fountain would spring up; and thenceforth any traveller who came to the spring might, after refreshing himself, take some water from it, and carry with him on his journey the secret of unfailing springs, and might suffer no fear of thirst. And is not the water which Christ gives like that, only it is given by the Lord of angels? (*Donald Fraser, D.D.*) *Life-streams* :—The Son of God gives living water—first, by giving Himself to redeem the world which was pining away in death; and secondly, by making the life which is in Him for the redeemed, to be, through the Holy Ghost (Rom. viii. 2), a happy, blessed life in them. In the beginning life was in Him (chap. i. 4); and this life-stream of the eternal Word, which forth from Paradise flowed through this world's dark valley of death, until its whole fulness was collected in the flesh of the Son of Man—this life-stream will never dry up, but will ever become deeper and broader (Ezek. xlvii.); in the kingdom of grace, imparting grace for grace to all who drink thereof for their healing from sin and death, and in the paradise of the new, glorified earth, refreshing the perfected saints with rapture for ever and ever (Rev. xxii. 1–17). (*R. Berser.*) *The freeness of salvation and the cost of the means* :—Dr. Adam Clarke once preached on the words, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." At the conclusion of the discourse he announced a collection. "How can you, Doctor," asked a lady afterwards, "reconcile the freeness of the water of life with the collection at the close"? "Oh, madame," answered the learned and venerable divine, "God gives the water without money and without price; but you must pay for the water-works, for the pipes, and the pitchers which convey the water to your neighbourhood." Remember, you pay nothing to God; you are charged nothing for the water; but you cannot have convenient chapels to sit in without paying for them,

nor a regular ministry to urge the water on your acceptance, without making a suitable provision for its support. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The satisfaction within*:—I visited two lakes not far apart in a mountainous district of North Wales, namely, Bala and Arenig. Having noticed that one was somewhat muddy and discoloured whilst the other was beautiful and clear, quite transparent down to its bed, where the eye could distinctly see the fishes flitting to and fro, I asked my companion what might be the reason for this difference. He replied, Bala Lake, whose waters are discoloured, is replenished by streams which flow into it, and which bring with them the soil and *débris* they gather up in their course down the hill-side and through the alluvial earth. But the Arenig, whose water is so beautifully transparent and placid, is supplied by springs bubbling up within its own bosom; hence they bring with them no defiling elements. Herein I found a parable. The motives which are supplied by the world—its pride, its wealth, its fashion, and fame—are corrupt, and as they enter the mind they pollute it. But those supplied by religion, which is a well-spring within, are pure in themselves and purify the whole man. (*A. J. Parry.*) *The best happiness within*:—Here the fountain is within, the streams of happiness have their source in the heart itself, they do not flow to a man from without, but spring up in his own happy breast. A good man, it is written, shall be satisfied from himself; he is not happy because his corn and wine and oil are increased; but because God lifts up upon him the light of His countenance, and fills him with joy and peace in believing, so that he abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. He despises not the earthly comforts which God gives him, nor does he turn austerely from them. Nay, he enjoys them with double relish as the gifts of a reconciled Father, and eats his meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. The joys of friendship and social intercourse, and the charities of domestic life, he can taste too as well as others, and has them of a purer and more exalted kind. But still his best happiness is from within, a peaceful conscience, a pure heart, a firm trust in God, a freedom from anxious care and covetous desire, love of the brethren, the delight of doing good, patience in adversity, and the hope of eternal glory. (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) *Man's longings satisfied by Christ*:—If you look over the dreamy aspirations of the Ancient and Middle Ages, you will find that they resolve themselves into two—a thirst for the elixir of immortality, and a longing for the philosopher's stone. The elixir was believed to possess the power to impart immortality to man, and the stone to possess the power to convert all baser metals into pure gold. The elixir was to set me right, the stone to set my circumstances right. But I need not remind you that the alchemists could neither concoct the one nor discover the other. Notwithstanding all their efforts, man remained both mortal and indigent. But these, like all other deep longings of our nature, are met and satisfied in Christianity. Christ gives to man "the white stone with the new name"—this is the real Philosopher's Stone, and it will set our circumstances right by and by. He also gives us the Water of Life, which is the genuine Elixir of Immortality, and will render our persons really and truly immortal. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) "*Springing up into everlasting life*":—Water, by a well-known law of hydrostatics, never rises above its own level; and so the best of earthly joys and rills of pleasure can rise no higher than earth: they begin and terminate here. But the living water with which Christ fills the soul, springing from heaven, conducts to heaven again. Flowing from the Infinite—flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, from the city of the crystal sea—it elevates to the Infinite. It finds its level in the river of the water of life which flows in the midst of the celestial Paradise. And just as on earth, so long as our mighty lake-reservoirs are full of water and the channel unimpeded, the marble fountain in street or garden, sends up, on the gravitation principle, its crystal jets in unfailing constancy; so (with reverence we say it) never shall these fountains of peace and joy and reconciliation and hope cease in the heart of the believer until the mighty reservoirs of Deity are exhausted; in other words, until God Himself ceases to be God. Everlasting life is their source, and everlasting life is their magnificent duration. We have witnessed the memorable and interesting spot at the roots of Mount Hermon, familiarly known as "the sources of the Jordan." There, the river of Palestine is seen bubbling out of a dark cave, and thence hastens on through its long tortuous course to lose its waters in the Sea of Death. That is the picture and illustration of every stream of earthly happiness. They terminate with the grave. But this inner fountain in the hidden man of the believer's heart flows onward to the Sea of Life; and the hour which terminates the worldling's happiness only truly begins his. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Jesus a spring*:—A

little girl who had been instructed in a Sunday School in the country was very fond of her Bible. There was a spring at a small distance from her cottage, from which the family supplied themselves with water. Her father had noticed that she was sometimes longer than necessary in going to the spring. One day he followed her unperceived, and observed her set down the pitcher and kneel to pray. He waited till she arose, and then, coming forward, said, "Well, my dear, was the water sweet?" "Yes, father," said she; "and if you were but to taste one drop of the water I have been tasting, you would never drink of the waters of this world any more." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him," says Jesus, "shall never thirst." *Religion a spring:*—When you were children, as you went along through the park, has your eye been attracted by a tiny jet of water springing up among the green grass? You said, "It is a spring!" And then, because you had nothing to do in those happy days, you said, "I will cover it up, and keep the spring down." You have gathered leaves and earth and stones, and built a compact house, and said, "No more water from that poor spring will ever get out of that prison." By and by the earth loosened and fell and crumbled away before the irresistible stream of gentle water. (*J. Watson, M.A.*) *Salvation to be received as a free gift:*—A great many people are looking at their feelings; a great many people are looking at themselves. Do not be looking at your feelings, but look at heaven. Suppose a man who had been in the habit of meeting in the street one whom he had known for years as a beggar, and were to see him to-night with a nice suit of clothes on, and were to accost him with, "Hullo, beggar," and he were to answer, "Don't call me a beggar; I am no beggar." "But are you not a beggar?" "No, sir, I am not a beggar." "What is the reason you are not a beggar?" "Why, I was sitting there to-day, and I put out my hand and asked a man to give me something. A gentleman came along, and put five thousand dollars right into my hand." "How do you know it is good money?" "I took it to the bank." "How did you get it?" "I put my hand out, and he just put it in my hand." "How do you know it is the right kind of a hand?" "Oh, pooh, what do I care what kind of a hand it was?" (*D. L. Moody.*) *Christian character forceful:*—A gentleman relates that he was one morning riding along a new road, where he saw the road-makers hard at work blocking up a little spring which kept gushing out in the road they were making. They put in earth and stones, and beat them down, to choke the fonntain, and then rolled the roller up and down to make the road solid. So they worked and worked away, and contrived to keep the spring under during the day. But at night, when the traveller returned, the little spring, which had been hindered, but not destroyed, was at work again, dislodging the stones, throwing out the dirt, and scooping for itself a channel. So it is often with God's children. (*G. Litting, LL.B.*) *Earthly and spiritual blessings:*—His lips water not after homely provision that hath lately tasted of delicate sustenance. (*Trapp.*) *The activity of grace:*—I tell you the living spring cannot be stayed in its action. If you have a cistern-full of water it will be quiet enough, but if it be a spring it is for ever seething, bubbling, gushing. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The inward spring:*—The Christian has a *fons perennis* within him. He is satisfied from himself. The men of the world borrow all their joy from without, and, like gathered flowers, though fair and sweet for a season, it must soon wither and become offensive. Joy from within is like smelling the rose on the tree—it is more sweet and fair, and, I must add, it is immortal. (*G. H. Salter.*)

Ver. 15. **Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not.**—*The thirst of life and its satisfaction in Christ:*—I. The poor sinful heart—astray and deceived—UNSATISFIED. II. The soul led aright and brought to itself by repentance—BEGINNING TO BE SATISFIED. III. The soul transformed into purity and blessed life by grace—PARTIALLY SATISFIED. IV. The soul in glory rejoicing in the beatific vision—FULLY SATISFIED. *The water of life:*—I. I AM TO TRY TO EXCITE YOUR DESIRE BY A DESCRIPTION OF THIS WATER. Spiritual things must be described by natural analogies. You must have water or you die. So must you have grace. Water is—1. Thirst removing. 2. Life preserving. 3. Filth purging. 4. Softening. The hardest heart yields before the power of the love of God. 5. Fire quenching. The fire of lust, envy, malice, anger, and unholy desire. 6. Spring creating. Wherever the water of life falls it makes a new spring, and never gets flat, dull, or dead. 7. Fruit producing in proportion to the quantity we drink. 8. Heaven ascending. Water rises to its level. If we have grace that began with us it will never get higher than ourselves. If grace which the priest gave, no higher than the priest. But the true grace of God

comes down from heaven, and will carry us whence it came. II. TO CHEER YOUR HEARTS WITH SOME REFLECTIONS UPON THE LIKELIHOOD OF YOUR GETTING THIS LIVING WATER. Supposing that you want it. 1. No ordinary man would deny another water. The giving of grace by the Saviour no more than the giving of water by you. 2. If you would refuse water to some, you would not refuse it to the thirsty; and Jesus never refused a thirsty sinner yet. 3. There is plenty of it, and it is free. John speaks of a river. Who fears to exhaust the Thames? The source may be private, but as soon as it gets a considerable stream it becomes a public highway and water supply. 4. It flows on purpose for the thirsty. What could Christ have made an atonement for but for sinners? 5. No one has been refused yet. 6. It is to Christ's glory to give it, and therefore be sure that He will not withhold it. The more a physician cures the greater his fame; the more Christ saves the higher His honour. III. TO URGE YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER. A desire is like seed in the sack, but prayer sows it in the furrow: like water in the bottle, but prayer drinks thereof. 1. Begin, then, by honouring Christ. The woman gave Him the highest title she knew. You call Him "Lord"; for if you reject His divinity you shut yourself out from His kingdom. 2. Confess your undeservingness. "Give," not "sell." Mercy must be given. 3. Make this a personal prayer. "Give it me." Never mind your neighbours or your children just now. Look after their salvation when you are saved. 4. Offer it in the present tense. The worst of most men is that they would serve the devil all their lives and then cheat him of their souls at last. If God be God serve Him now. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Spiritual laziness:*— The spirit of the second reason for this request animates men to this day. The prevalent disposition is to seek religious benefit in some way which does not involve endeavour and responsibility. I. MEN DO NOT EXPECT PHYSICAL RESULTS EXCEPT BY APPROPRIATE EFFORT. Parents do not pray that God would inspire their boys with a useful trade. They apprentice them and pray God that they may attend to their business and take proper steps to learn. Skill of hand is to be developed by training and not by praying. There are those who still speak of luck, but the number decreases with intelligence and enterprise. II. MEN DO NOT LOOK FOR INTELLECTUAL RESULTS EXCEPT BY THE APPLICATION OF MEANS TO ENDS. 1. We never pray for general knowledge, nor teach our children to do so; but to use their eyes and ears, to keep company with intelligent persons. And this is not inconsistent with the prayer that God will sustain us in the exertion of our natural faculties. So no one prays for books, or the results of professional skill without the drill which leads to them. 2. There is one apparent exception, that of genius. But genius is only what belongs to one whose organization is so fine and large that it acts by its own stimulus. If on the art side, we have an art genius. A man is a genius in the direction in which his faculties are highly organized. Such work more easily than others, but they have to work much. The eagle moves faster and easier than the ant, but both move by the same (muscular) power. And the greatest geniuses in poetry (Milton), in music (Handel), in war (Frederick and Napoleon), have been the hardest workers. III. BUT MEN DO LOOK FOR RELIGIOUS RESULTS WITHOUT PERSONAL EFFORT. 1. There is an impression that God works irresistibly by His Spirit, and that the distinguishing qualities of Christian life fall down upon us of their own accord like dewdrops on the flowers. Now we must pray for everything that it is proper for us to have, for the highest as well as for the lowest; but there is no more reason that we should pray for morality than for corn, for meekness than for flowers. 2. Religiousness is rightmindedness towards God and man. To be religious is to act in accordance with the laws of the mind from the highest to the lowest of its endowments. I should have, of course, no hope as a minister without a belief in the all-prevalent vitalizing Spirit, and should as soon attempt to raise flowers where there was no atmosphere, and fruits without light and heat, as to regenerate men without the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless this Divine influence is not irresistible in such a sense as to relieve men from the responsibility of developing every one of the spiritual elements. God wakes up the soul and then says, "Work out what I work in" (Phil. ii. 12, 13). 3. Conversion is not a completed work. Here is a lazy vagabond, depending on his relations, and he is taken to the West and put upon 150 acres of ground and told to work out his own living. The ground is not converted yet; but he goes to work and brings it under cultivation. He has been converted from a street beggar into a man of means and respectability; but his own conversion is no more complete than that of his farm. When a man is converted he has a new start and has to go forward. If a man, therefore, expects there is any labour-saving conversion he is greatly mistaken. 4. Conversion makes a man a disciple,

and places him in Christ's school, where he has to learn and place himself under discipline. And the experiences of Christ's school are not to be had by prayer only. If an intemperate man wants to be temperate, a passionate man meek, a proud man humble, he must not only pray, but tame himself. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Carnal pleasures tire:*—Hilly ways are wearisome ways, and tire the ambitious man. Carnal pleasures are dirty ways, and tire the licentious man. Desires of gain are thorny ways, and tire the covetous man. Emulations of higher men are dark and blind ways, and tire the envious man. Every way that is out of the way wearies us. *Lassati sumus, et lassis non datur requies;* we labour, and have no rest when we have done; we are wearied with our sins, and have no satisfaction in them; we go to bed to-night, weary of our sinful labours, and we will rise freshly to-morrow to the same sinful labours again (Lam. v. 5; Isa. v. 18). (*Dr. Donne.*) *The heavenly and the earthly mind:*—Never was there such a contrast in a conversation as that presented in the conversation between Christ and the woman of Samaria. Christ speaking from the top of all spiritual apprehension, the woman from the bottom of sensuous knowledge. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Spiritual thirst prepares us to receive the living water:*—They say that the water of the Nile is very sweet. We have heard some of our fellow-countrymen assert that a very little of it was too much for them, and that they never wished to drink of it again. There is no use in disputing about tastes, but surely people might agree upon the quality of the water. Yet some praise this Nile water to the skies, and others call it muddy stuff. The reason why the water of the Nile is so sweet to Egyptians is that their climate is dry, and the people are thirsty, and other water is scarce. Under a burning sun a drink of water is very refreshing. To the soul that is thirsty after mercy and reconciliation and eternal life, every promise of the Lord is delightful. Nothing puts such a savour and flavour into the gospel as that work of the Holy Spirit, by which we are made to feel our great need of it. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Mercy a free gift:*—It is not "Sell me this water," but "Give me this water." Confess that it is a gift: thou shalt never have it otherwise. Mercy must be given, or thou shalt never have it. "Sir, give me, give me, give me of Thy free mercy, give it me, Lord. I come empty-handed, naked, poor and miserable, Give it me. I have nought to buy it with." Friend, does your pride kick at this? Be wise, I pray thee, and bow thy neck to the yoke of grace. (*Ibid.*) *Salvation must be realized by the soul:*—You go to the throne of grace; to a fountain deeper than Jacob's well; you draw water, living water, from it; but, instead of drinking the water, as you should, you are satisfied with having raised the bucket to the ground, and you retire. The end of drawing water is to drink it: the meaning of praying is to reach something beyond it. Prayer is not a religious duty, but the means of attaining spiritual blessings. (*J. Cumming, D.D.*)

Vers. 16–18. **Go, call thy husband, and come hither.**—Whence learn—1. As grace is little known or esteemed of so long as we know not our misery, so, where the offer of mercy doth not persuade, Christ will discover their misery to make them either come quickly to Him, or else resolve on hell; for, therefore, after the former offers had no success, doth He rip up her bosom. 2. Christ is very meek and tender, even in discovering of misery to men, so long as they are not incorrigible, and is willing that they should judge and accuse themselves, that He may deal tenderly with them; therefore doth He so mildly bid her, "Go, call thy husband," that He might draw a confession out of her own mouth. 3. It is not every sin whereof natural men are guilty for which they can at first be capable of conviction, for every sin will not be odious to every one in every condition, but there are some sins which only grace, and much grace, and grace in exercise, will see to be sinful; therefore, though she was guilty of many other sins, yet Christ pitcheth only on this sin of gross filthiness as that which would be seen best by her. 4. It is not every sight of sin that will convince the sinner, but Christ must put it home upon the conscience, and discover sin to be marked by His all-searching eye, before it work upon him; for she knew her own condition (and therefore saith, "I have no husband," as shifting the matter whereof she supposed Him to be ignorant), but without any sense, till He rip up her bosom and let her say He knew her. 5. Christ will commend a small good under much dross, and particularly He accounts of a true acknowledgment, even of a heinous crime, as a commendable duty. Therefore doth He make so much of her confession, "Thou hast well said, thou saidst truly." 6. Christ hath particular knowledge of what sins men are lying in, how hid soever, and particularly He hath an eye upon secret uncleanness; and

how loath soever sinners be to be discovered by Christ, yet, where He pleaseth and hath a purpose of mercy, no shiftings will hide them. So much doth this large discovery, after her shifting confession, teach, "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou hast is not thy husband." 7. Such is the pollution of our nature, that lust will be insatiable unless grace curb it. So much appeareth in this woman who, after so many marriages, doth live in uncleanness. (*G. Hutcheson.*) **The woman answered, . . . no husband.**—These words were an honest and truthful confession, so far as they went. The way in which our Lord received her declaration makes it probable that she did not profess to be a widow, and very likely her dress showed that she was not. In this point of view the honesty of her confession is noteworthy. There is always more hope of one who honestly and bluntly confesses sin than of a smooth-tongued hypocrite. Our Lord's commendation of the woman's honest confession deserves notice. It teaches us that we should make the best of an ignorant sinner's words. An unskilful physician of souls would probably have rebuked the woman sharply for her wickedness, if her words led him to suspect it. Our Lord, on the contrary, says, "Thou hast well said." (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The power of private reproof*:—John Wesley, having to travel some distance in a stage coach, fell in with a pleasant-tempered, well-informed officer, whose conversation was sprightly and entertaining, but frequently mingled with oaths. When they were about to take the next stage, Mr. Wesley took the officer aside, and, after expressing the pleasure he had enjoyed in his company, told him that he was thereby encouraged to ask from him a very great favour. "I would take a pleasure in obliging you," said the officer, "and am sure that you will not prefer an unreasonable request." "Then," said Mr. Wesley, "as we have to travel together some time, I beg that, if I should so far forget myself as to swear, you will kindly reprove me." The officer immediately saw the motive, and, feeling the force of the request, said with a smile, "None but Mr. Wesley could have conceived a reproof in such a manner." (*J. Gill.*) *Preparation for blessing needful*:—She has asked for this living water. She knows not that the well must first be dug. In the depth of her spirit there is a power of life; but like the source of a spring, it is hidden. Many a hard rock of impenitence was there, and many a layer of every-day transgression, and many a habit once formable as clay, now hard as adamant, and many a deposit of carnal thought which had left nothing but its dregs behind. All this must be dug through before she can have the living water, and this well, too, must be deep. The command, "Go, call thy husband," is the first stroke breaking up the surface of that fair appearance, and revealing the foulness of the life beneath it. (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) *Sin must be confessed before salvation can be obtained*:—There is no salvation till you confess your sin. There was a man in India who, one evening having nothing else to do, went to play at religion with the parson—as some of you have come here this afternoon. "Religion is all very well," began the officer, "but you must admit that there are difficulties—about the miracles, for instance." The chaplain knew his man, and quietly answered him, "Yes, there are some things in the Bible not very plain, I admit; but the seventh commandment is very plain." The man's temper rose, and he swung himself out of the tent; but a little later he came back, no longer to raise false difficulties, but to ask how a poor adulterous British officer might be saved. There are men and women here kept from salvation by what kept back this Samaritan woman. Give up that man, give up that woman, if you would be saved. The pitcher must be emptied before it can be filled. (*John McNeill.*) *Conscience must be aroused*:—Here He comes home to her conscience; so must all that will do good, striving not so much to please as to profit. The eagle, though she love her young ones dearly, yet she pricketh and beateth them out of their nest; so must preachers drive men out of their nest of pleasure. (*J. Trapp.*) *A plain word spoken in season*:—A lad in his teens had his home for a time with a good woman, who made him very comfortable; and when he was leaving her, he asked if there were anything he could do in return for the motherly care she had shown him. Her reply was, "Yes, 'Let the wicked forsake his way,' &c." (Isa. lv. 7). The young man's life had not been at all strikingly vicious; but the above passage of Scripture, thus unexpectedly presented to him, was blessed by the Holy Spirit, and took such hold on his mind that he could not rest till he had sought and found the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. *Christ's skill in dealing with the conscience*:—No mariner is more prompt to mark and utilize every breeze, no plant more sensitive to sun and rain, or more skilful to convert the one into colour and the other into sap, than Jesus to observe

and adapt Himself to the changes of the hearts of men for their salvation. (*G. A. Chadwick, D.D.*) *Christ looks into the inner life*:—The eye of Jesus, which from the throne saw a sinful and saddened world; which saw Nathanael under the fig tree and Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree; the eye which from the hill-top gazed on doomed Jerusalem, and which now follows both saint and sinner through all their ways; that bright, beautiful, expressive, sleepless, all-seeing eye pierced the veil of deceit which this sinner thought impenetrable, discerned her ways, read her thoughts, and dissected all her motives with more than microscopic distinctness. Then, with the master skill of more than a prophet, Jesus exposed her whole wanton career as by a lightning flash; and fastening upon her existing and current offence "as the crown and consummation of all her sins," He seized her conscience. (*J. H. Hitchens, D.D.*) *We must faithfully apply the truth*:—A minister was spending a few days in a town, and while there a young man was thrown much in his society. The young man was not a Christian, but learning that the minister intended to preach in the city gaol, asked to be allowed to accompany him. The minister preached to the audience with so much earnestness as to deeply impress the friend who had accompanied him. On their return home the young man said, "The men to whom you preached to-day must have been moved. Such preaching cannot fail to influence." "Friend," answered the minister, "were you influenced?" "You were not preaching to me, but to your convicts," was quickly answered. "I was preaching to you as much as to them. You need the same Saviour as they." The word so faithfully spoken God blessed in bringing this wanderer home to Himself.

Ver. 19. **Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.**—*Personal preaching*:—General discourses are like the beams of the sun dispersed in the air; they may warm us a little, but that is all. Conviction is like a burning glass, that gathers all the beams into one point or centre, and fastens them upon the soul, and so kindles and inflames it. . . . It is not the flourishing or brandishing of a sword in the air that will wound or pierce, but the stroke of the weapon must be brought home to the body, or no wound will be given. . . . While Nathan kept aloof in a general discourse and told him a parable, David was never troubled with the sense of his sin, never suspected it concerned him; but when he closed with him and told him, "Thou art the man," then David's heart smote him; he cries out of his sin, and sues for mercy. . . . This is the preaching that Solomon commends, "The words of the wise are like goads," that must be run into the flesh, as nails driven up to the head, fastened and riveted into the soul of a sinner (Eccles. xii. 10, 11; Acts ii. 37; Col. i. 28; Heb. iv. 12). (*Bp. Brownrig.*) *Sinners avoid the truth*:—I could not help smiling as I read the next passage. She is making a wild attempt to get away, to get off the hook. She tries to draw a red-herring across the scent by bringing up that old religious squabble. Just like you: you will go home, some of you, and take me to dinner, while I call God and your conscience to witness that I have struck you between the eyes. Yes, you will talk about me, not about your sin; you will come near to calling me coarse, thou coarsest sinner out of hell, that lovest thy sin! Have a care, my friend. (*John McNeill.*)

Vers. 20-29. **Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.**—*The advent of Christ in relation to the heathen*:—This is the first mission to the heathen. I. Our Lord's MISSIONARY METHOD. He tries to excite in the woman a longing for something higher than the life she was living. In order to do this He touches her conscience and lays His finger on her sin. She, seeing that she is in the presence of a prophet, embraces the opportunity of getting settled a long-standing controversy. In His reply, our Lord does not pretend that there is no difference when there is, but teaches that the difference is to pass away in the light of a higher truth which embraces both sides. The Jews knew what they worshipped, as the Samaritan and the heathen do not. Salvation was of the Jews, and not of the Samaritan or heathen. II. Our Lord's MISSIONARY DOCTRINE. The offering of a man's whole self to God, and not the substitution of anything in its place. But man can only offer himself, *i.e.*, worship in spirit, by being re-born of the Holy Spirit; can only worship in truth by being united to Him who is the Truth. Man can therefore worship the Father in spirit and in truth by the offering of his whole self in union with the Eternal Son and by being filled with the Eternal Spirit. III. Our Lord's AUDIENCE REPRESENTS THE HEATHEN WORLD. 1. In her separation. She is outside the kingdom of God and the chosen race. 2. In her unconscious thirst for God—

the living water. 3. In her sin. 4. In her blind worship of the unknown God. IV. The REVELATION OF WEAK POINTS IN MODERN MISSIONS. 1. There is too much vagueness in modern Christianity as to whom and what we worship—no clear grasp of the incarnation and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's "We know what we worship" much wanted. 2. There is too much feeling that Christianity is a thing of European civilization, and not universal. 3. It was the despised Samaritans, and not the favoured Jews, nor even the apostles, who were the first to find out that Christ was the Saviour of the world. V. Our Lord's VINDICATION OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS in the declaration that the Father seeketh worship. He knew that man cannot find satisfaction save in Him. (*Canon Vernon Hutton.*) *Human curiosity and Divine mystery*:—1. According to the Grecian sage, all knowledge commences with wonder or curiosity. Without this knowledge would never have taken the strides it has. But it is not always those objects which most excite our curiosity that we are most capable of becoming acquainted with. This is true with the objects of nature, the sun, *e.g.*, but much more with that sublimest of all objects, the unseen God. And because He shrouds Himself round with a veil of mystery, all the more our hearts desire to know something about Him. And yet "who can by searching find out God?" And then we have to reflect upon the errors into which men have fallen in their attempt to make the discovery, their attempt to satisfy their desire by a substitute of their own imagination, which ended in leaving the desire unsatisfied and the object still unknown. 2. But just as the art of optics was required to enable men of science to make progress in their knowledge of the sun, so it was necessary, before men could be acquainted with God, that He should be brought within the region of human observation. "Lord, show us the Father!" was the cry of humanity. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" was the response. 3. This woman was a subject of spiritual curiosity, and desired to know something of God. She identified herself with a religion which, however, instead of leading her to God, only supplied a substitute for Him. "Ye worship ye know not what." She knew what many a man of the nineteenth century knows to his cost, that this was true. As at Athens so at Gerizim there was an altar to the unknown God. 4. What was wanting at Gerizim? Two elements conspicuous in the creed of the Jew—a system of ritual in the temple worship, with all its symbolic teaching, and the utterances of the prophets. These two elements were closely connected with the promise as to the "seed of the woman," with the person and work of the Messiah, with God's attitude towards guilt in laying the iniquity of us all on the head of His guiltless Son. Thus the Jew was able to form such an ideal of the character of God as was impossible to the Samaritans. So the former "knew what He worshipped." Is not agnosticism the inevitable result of not receiving or of rejecting the revelation of God through Christ in the present day? 5. This agnosticism is not to be wondered at even with our clearer light. God is defined as an infinite Spirit—two splendid negations. When the woman heard Christ's declaration of the nature of God, she immediately fell back on another thought—the Messiah. Trace the progress of this spiritual growth—the awakening of a vague thirst; the definite conviction of sin; the desire to worship truly; the conviction of the coming of a perfect teacher; Christ's disclosure of His Messiahship; His glad communication; the conviction on her word and by personal experience, of the Samaritans that Christ was the Saviour of the world. (*W. M. H. Aitken, M.A.*) *The Church of the future*:—I. This Church is to be looked for NOT IN THE PREVALENCE OF ANY SINGLE FORM OF WORSHIP OR IN ANY PHILOSOPHICAL CREED, though both of these will go along subordinately as working forces, BUT IN THE CONDITION OF THE HUMAN RACE. There will never be a time in which it will not be necessary to compass education by definite institutions. But these are only instruments. So in the course of religion this or that sect is only a kitchen where the loaf is prepared; and the loaf is mankind. And yet we have just the same exclusive and conceited views of our particular sect as the Jews had of theirs. But local churches are but streams flowing into the ocean until the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The smallest rill is of use; the navigable river is invaluable; but none of them, not even the Amazon, is the ocean. And when the whole human family are gathered into one substantial brotherhood, living as sons of God, the Divine influence circling the whole, that will be the Church of the future. II. In that great Church MEN WILL EMPLOY EDUCATING INSTITUTIONS AND DOCTRINAL FORMS; but such things will fall out of their present idolatrous position, and become merely relative and subordinate. Of course it will have a creed. What is a man who has

no beliefs? But the form of creeds will be changed while the substance will remain. Belief, existence, and authority of a personal God will never die out, but will come forth in clearer light. So with the moral government of God, the influence of the Holy Spirit, the sinfulness, yet salvability, and destiny of man, and the vicarious suffering of Jesus. III. IN THIS CHURCH ORDINANCES WILL BE HINTS, HELPS, BUT NEVER AUTHORITIES. They are like child's clothes which are necessary for the child, but are not the child; like school books, useful helps but not yokes. Men make idols and middle walls of ordinances: whereas their only use is to produce good fruit. IV. In this Church NOT ONLY MAY WE EXPECT GREAT LIGHT ON SCRIPTURE, BUT A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN REVEALED AND SCIENTIFIC TRUTH SO THAT THEY WILL CO-OPERATE AS PARTS OF A COMMON REVELATION. The distinction between secular and religious, revealed and natural, will be much narrowed if not entirely done away. All truth will be sacred. Nature and religion will stand upon a common level, not by lowering religion, but by lifting up our conceptions of nature. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The old worship and the new*:—I. Consider HOW THE DESCRIPTION OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP HERE GIVEN SHOULD AFFECT THE EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR WORSHIP. 1. Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to appeal to any Jewish precedent without inquiring whether the ancient institutions rested on permanent principles or were merely temporary. 2. When God commanded His people to construct a sanctuary that He might dwell among them it was to impress the truth that He was a God nigh at hand and not afar off, and by restricting ceremonial worship to that spot to emphasize the fact of the Divine unity. 3. Great then as were the gains of such a sanctuary yet the arrangement was not without its perils. (1) Good men away from the temple felt as though banished from God. (2) The tendency was to regard Jehovah as a God of the Jews, not of the Gentiles. Thus the spirituality and infinity of God was obscured by His special presence in the temple. As, therefore, it was expedient for Christ bodily to go away to manifest an universal spiritual presence; so it eventually became expedient that God should be no more thought of as dwelling in a temple made with hands. 4. It is contrary to the whole genius of Christianity to suppose that God is nearer to us in one spot than another, or that He confers special sanctity on material structures. The temple was a sign of God's willingness to listen to human worship, and was the visible embodiment of the Divine promise; a Church is the visible embodiment of human faith. The two ideas essentially differ. 5. The design of the temple structure was symbolical throughout. There was a local manifestation of God, and therefore a most holy place. God was approached by a ritual which only priests could perform. And if we believed in Christ's presence in the consecrated bread there ought to be an altar; and if ministers are priests a chancel devoted to their use. But Christ, on the contrary, is in regenerated souls. If any part of a church is sacred every part is so. Every part is altar, for Christians are the body of Christ; every part is chancel, for Christians are a royal priesthood; every part is holy of holies, because "the glory Thou hast given Me I have given them." 6. But should not the structure of our buildings indicate their sacred purpose? Yes. I may be led to the choice of a certain order of architecture to indicate what it is; but in the interior I should be guided by the fact that Christians are to assemble there to be instructed and to worship. If it is convenient to have transepts, have them, but not to symbolize the Cross; and to diminish the convenience of the building by placing the chancel out of line with the nave to indicate the inclination of Christ's crucified body is to ignore the chief end for which it was erected. Have a tower and side aisles, if convenient, but not to remind us of the Trinity. 7. The same principles should determine the order of service. Everything should be made subordinate to the spirituality, intelligence, and reality of worship. The Jewish service was instructive and symbolic rather than æsthetic; and in discussing the questions of a liturgy *versus* free prayer, we have to ask, not what is most imposing, but what is most useful to devotion. The same with Psalmody. II. THE SPECIAL PROVISION FOR A TRUE AND SPIRITUAL WORSHIP IN THE DISPENSATION UNDER WHICH WE LIVE. 1. God is revealed to us in His moral and spiritual attributes as He never was before Christ. We preserve the whole wealth of previous revelations; but the moral perfections have been revealed in a new and higher way, in the life of Christ, which renders possible a higher form of spiritual worship. 2. The Holy Ghost has a more intimate union with those who serve God, and exerts a mightier power over their spiritual life. He was indeed operant in Old Testament times—but nowhere do we meet with such disclosures as in the Epistles. There is possible, therefore, to us an energy and depth of spiritual life

to which they could not attain. It follows, then, that we may have a more spiritual worship because all our spiritual affections may be inspired with a fuller life and nobler vigour. 3. A nearer and truer approach to God is granted under the new dispensation than under the old. "The truth" liberated from all merely symbolical circumstances. At the Ascension these passed away and the realities were revealed. We stand in the real Holy of Holies, of which that of the Temple was a shadow. In conclusion, notice the greatness of the obligation which our Lord's words impose on the Church. That Church exists for a threefold purpose: 1. To make known to man the love of God in Christ. 2. To increase the knowledge of God's character and will among those who know Him, and to train them, body, soul, and spirit, to the keeping of His commandments. 3. To maintain from age to age a true and spiritual worship. To fulfil the last in this restless age is no easy task, but one of the most solemn obligation. (*R. W. Dale, LL.D.*) *Christian worship*:—I. NEGATIVELY CONSIDERED. 1. It is not sectarian. Sectarianism is not denominationalism, but spiritual monopoly. The former may be justifiable, but never the latter. Party distinctions as such are of no importance in the sight of God. God is no respecter of persons, and all persons have a right to worship Him according to their conscience. 2. It is not local. Here both Jews and Samaritans were in error. In the former case Deut. xii. 5, 7 was perverted, and the command to sacrifice at a given place interpreted to invest that place with a special sanctity apart from the character of the worshipper. The same feeling prevails amongst Hindoos and Mohammedans; how passing strange that it should ever have prevailed among Christians. 3. It is not external. Music, vestments, and ceremonies may, and often do, excite the emotions which will be produced by any other pageant, and which are totally disconnected with devotion. II. POSITIVELY CONSIDERED. 1. It is spiritual. Lip homage is offensive to man much more to God. When local and external worship was in full operation something more was necessary to acceptance (1 Kings viii. 27). In one respect this worship was independent of the moral character of the worshipper. But no typical character belongs to Christian worship, and without devout feelings it is worse than useless. 2. It is filial. Terror is the predominating spirit of idolatry. Its ceremonies are therefore deprecatory and often cruel. Awe was the predominating spirit of Jewish worship. Christianity merges the sterner attributes of the Divine character into those more attractive. God is a Father, and to worship Him truly is to offer the affection of sons. 3. It is universal. Non-restricted—(1) To buildings—upper rooms, prisons, barns, as well as cathedrals, &c. (2) Persons—"rich and poor meet together." Conclusion: In the exercises of God's house avoid—(1) a superstitious spirit either as regards the special sanctity of the place or the magical efficacy of ordinances. (2) A formal spirit. "Bodily exercise profitest little." (3) A bigoted spirit. A church is God's house, and all its privileges should be open to all His people, due care being taken to exclude only the ungodly. (4) A slavish spirit. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" for worship. (*R. Brodie, M.A.*) *Spiritual worship*:—I. ERRORS WHICH HAVE INTERFERED WITH THE PURITY OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP. 1. That which arises from a tendency to localize God. "Where?" asked the woman. "Nowhere in particular—everywhere," said Christ. We see this tendency among—(1) The heathen, who confine a god to a district. (2) The uneducated in their notion of a cemetery. (3) The more refined, in the mystery which they attach to church, altar, sacrament. What is sanctity of place? It belongs to the law of association. Worship, *e.g.*, in a festive room would suggest notions uncongenial with devotion. Hence the use of consecration, sitting apart. This view said to be dangerous and unsettling. But—(*a*) Consider the shock this woman received; all her little religion had clung to Gerizim and was shattered at a blow. (*b*) We are only concerned with the truth, and God's truth cannot be dangerous. The fact is, the Church is holy if a holy congregation be in it; if not, it is bricks and mortar. The holiest place is not where architecture and music yield their spell, but perhaps a wretched pallet on which one of Christ's humblest ones is dying. 2. That which arises from the idea that forms are immutable—"Our fathers worshipped," &c. A form is the shape in which an age expresses a feeling. The spirit of religion remains but the expression alters. 3. That which arises from ignorance, "Ye worship ye know not what." The feeling of devoutness is inherent. But the question is, what we worship. To many there are three deities—(1) The heathen bent before power—God in the whirlwind, &c. This is ignorance. (2) The philosopher is above this. He bows before wisdom. Science tells him of electricity, &c. He looks down on warm devoutness, and admires mind in nature. He calls it rational

religion. Ignorance also. (3) The spiritual man bows before goodness. "The true worshippers worship the Father." We know what we worship. 4. That which mistakes the nature of reverence. The woman had reverence; veneration for antiquity—the mountain, the prophet. But what was her life? Reverence, &c., are a class of feelings which belong to the imagination and are neither good nor bad. Some men are constitutionally so framed that they do not thrill at painted windows, but adore God, and love Christ, and admire goodness and hate evil. They have bowed their souls before justice, mercy, truth, and therefore stand erect before everything else that the world calls sublime. II. TRUE CHARACTER OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. 1. A right appreciation of God's character—(1) as a Spirit. The mind and pervading life of the universe. In this, however, only a God for the intellect, not for the heart. (2) As a father—a word uniting—(1) Tenderness with reverence. (2) Discipline with kindness. 2. Spiritual character. "In Spirit and in truth. Holy character a kind of worship." Before a material God a material knee would have to bow; before a spiritual God nothing but prostration of spirit acceptable. Application; 1. Christ came to sweep away everything that prevented immediate contact with God. 2. Scripture insists on truth of character. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *The true worship of God*:—I. IS NOT RESTRICTED TO LOCALITIES. 1. Before the Advent it was. The Pentateuch, to which Jews and Samaritans appealed, decided this without naming the locality (Exod. xxx. 24; Deut. xii. 5, 11, xvi. 6, xxvi. 2, xxxi. 11). In selecting Jerusalem the Jews believed themselves to be under Divine guidance (Psa. cxxxii. 13; 2 Chron. vii. 17; Isaiah lvi. 7; Zech. xiv. 17). The Samaritans finding no mention of Jerusalem, but observing the prominence given to Gerizim (Deut. xi. 29, xxvii. 12; Josh. viii. 33), built a Temple there. Christ, however, waived the controversy, and announced a new era emancipating the spirit of worship from place and form. 2. Since Pentecost it cannot be so restricted. (1) Men, like the Jews, still cling to localities, notwithstanding the clear lesson of destruction of the Temple. (2) Isaiah had a glimpse of this truth (lxvi. 1). (3) Christ formally established it (Matt. xviii. 20, xxviii. 20). It became possible (Acts ii. 17). II. LIES IN THE LINE OF GOD'S GRACIOUS REVELATIONS (ver 22). 1. It had been so with the Jews. Accepting the prophets, they had a more accurate idea of God. God's gracious purposes had developed along the line of Jewish history. 2. It must continue to be so with the Christian. Having manifested himself in Christ, any worship that ignores this must be unacceptable (Col. ii. 23). It must also accept the subsequent revelations of the Spirit. III. ACCORDS WITH THE BEING AND ESSENCE OF GOD HIMSELF (vers. 23, 24). 1. Spiritual, since God is Spirit. Not *a* Spirit, one among many, nor impersonal because the article is wanting, but absolute Being; hence worship must ascend from the innermost personality. 2. True, since God is this Truth. 3. Filial, since God is the Father (Matt. v. 45, vi. 9; Rom. vii. 15; Gal. iv. 6). Lessons: 1. Controversies mostly settle themselves when left to time. 2. Questions about the externals of worship do not belong to its essence. 3. Christian freedom is not the same thing as will worship. 4. The characteristics of Christian worship fit it to be universal. 5. In these lie the prophecy of its triumph. 6. The Founder of such worship requires no surer witness to His supreme Divinity. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Our fathers worshipped in this mountain.**—*Not where, but how is the main thing*:—Dr. Guthrie tells of a poor woman who dwelt in one of the darkest and most wretched quarters of Edinburgh. Away from her native home, and without one earthly friend, she had floated there, a stranger in a strange land, to sink into the most abject poverty; her condition but one degree better than our Saviour's—in common with the fox, she had a hole to lay her head in. Yet, although poor and outwardly wretched, she was a child of God, one of the jewels which, if sought for, we should sometimes find in dust-heaps. With a bashfulness not unnatural, she had shrunk from exposing her poverty to the stare of well-robed congregations, resorting on Sabbath-days to the well—appropiate place—where a pious man was wont to preach to ragged outcasts, crying in the name of Jesus, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." In ignorance of this, and supposing that she was living, like the mass around her, in careless neglect of her soul, Dr. Guthrie begun to warn her; but she interrupted him, and, drawing herself up with an air of humble dignity, and half offended, said, "Sir, I worship at the well, and am sure that if we are true believers in Jesus, and love him, and try to follow Him, we shall never be asked at the Judgment-day, 'Where did you worship?'" (*Clerical Library.*) *How to worship God*:—1. Is He a Saviour? Then we should come to Him as sinners; for sinners only need a Saviour. All others will be rejected. There can be no acceptable worship until we are convinced of sin, and humbled on account

of it. 2. Is God a Father? Then we should worship Him as children. 3. Is He a Spirit? Then, "We must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Whether as a Saviour, a Father, or the Great God, He will accept only the worship of the mind, the heart, the understanding. An idol god might be satisfied with the bended knee and uplifted hand, but our God looks on the heart. (*Dean Close.*) *This mountain*:—The Samaritans now believe what in all likelihood they believed in our Saviour's time, about mount Gerizim. It is for them the holy mountain of the world; on its summit was the seat of Paradise; from its dust Adam was formed; and the spot is still pointed out where he reared his first altar; the place, too, where Seth did the same. Gerizim is the Ararat of Scripture, on which the ark rested (Gen. viii. 4); which the waters of the flood never overflowed; and which thus no dead thing borne by those waters had defiled. They point out, further, the exact spot on which Noah reared an altar when the flood had subsided (Gen. viii. 20); and its seven steps on each of which he offered a burnt-offering. The altar, too, is to this day standing on which Abraham had bound his son, and the spot known where the ram was caught. At the summit is Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 12, 19). There is a good deal more in the same fashion. That poor woman, who may have accepted all this with implicit faith, would have had warrant for more than her boast if only a small part of it had been true. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Mount Gerizim*:—The Patriarch Jacob had offered sacrifice at Sychar, or Shechem (Gen. xxxiii. 20). From Mount Gerizim the six tribes had solemnly pronounced the blessings that should be on those who kept the Ten Commandments (Deut. xxvii. 12). At Shechem, Joshua before his death, had recounted to the assembled Israelites God's merciful dealings with them (Josh. xxiv). A temple, if not then standing, had formerly stood on Mount Gerizim. All this might seem to convey a kind of right and legality to the worship offered there. But God had chosen one place for His worship, one place only for sacrifices to be offered to Him (Deut. xii. 13). This place was Jerusalem. Neither length of time, nor the eminence of the worshippers, could invest any other place with the right, which God had given to Jerusalem alone. (*F. H. Dunwell, B.A.*) *Veneration for places of ancient worship*:—The reverence of this woman for the place where her father worshipped is common to men of every country and every creed. When surrounded by revered walls consecrated by the confessions and thanksgivings of many generations, a solemn awe steals over the heart, which the most gorgeous cathedral, fresh from the hands of the architect, fails to inspire. Nor is this impression produced merely by the pathetic beauty which clings to noble and stately structures in their decay. We are affected, not because the broken columns and the crumbling tracery, grey with long exposure and covered with the kindly growth of ivy, have a loveliness to the eye far surpassing that which the ancient builders looked upon; the rudest, meanest building, the open moor, the mountain side, if our fathers worshipped there, stir the deepest and most sacred emotions of human nature. To this day the miserable remnant of the Samaritans cling with indestructible affection to their ancient mountain; and among the Jewish people the passion has not been exhausted by the centuries of suffering, shame, and despair. Week by week men and women and little children sit down in the dust outside the walls of the Mosque, which stands where the Temple once stood, and utter loud and grievous wailings over the fall of their beautiful sanctuary, and pray for its restoration. (*R. W. Dale, D.D.*) *Traditional religion*:—Custom, as it is commonly said, is a second nature; and men cannot easily leave that which they have long used themselves to; and they will not easily leave that which they have seen and known to be used by their predecessors. The Ephraimites, in the Book of Judges, that had been brought up to say Sibboleth all their life, cannot say Shibboleth to save their life; but they perish, two-and-forty thousand. . . . This, the more is the pity, is the religion of too many thousands in this land and time; men and women are too commonly and generally pinned in religion, and in practice of religious things, upon the customs and usages of ancient days, and they are loth to be parted from them. The woman of Sychar was zealous for the temple upon mount Gerizim; but the best reason she can give for that is that her fathers worshipped there. (*J. Lightfoot, D.D.*) *The breadth of Spiritual religion*:—The more spiritual is a man's religion the more expansive and broad it always is. A stream may leave its deposits in the pool it flows through, but the stream itself hurries on to other pools in the thick woods. And so God's gifts a soul may selfishly appropriate. But God Himself the more truly a soul possess Him, the more truly it will long and try to share Him. (*Phillips Brooks, D.D.*)

The vanity of religious controversy:—What was it to her, living in sin, whether Jerusalem or Samaria was the more acceptable place for worship? She could not worship acceptably in either of them. How easily every one sees, in her case, that she had no business with these curious questions; that the one thing for her to do was, as Christ had told her her sin, to desire Him to tell her how she might escape the punishment due to it. And yet her fault is far from being uncommon. There are many who are living in the known breach of God's plainest commandments, who yet will pay some attention to religion; but then it must not be a personal thing; it must not be admitted into their conscience, and allowed to interfere with their vices. These it is not convenient for them to part with. They will lie and defraud, or drink to excess, or live in the lust of uncleanness, or in a covetous and worldly spirit; these things they do, and will do. They ask not therefore any religious questions which come close to their conscience; but they inquire what form of worship is most scriptural, what mode of preaching to be preferred; whether churchmen or dissenters come nearest to the primitive standard of church government; or what denomination is best. What is it to you which denomination of Christians is the best? Let which will be best, you are wrong, and in the road to hell, even though you should belong to the purest society in the world. There is one question only which concerns you at present; and this it behoves every one of you to put with all earnestness, and without delay—"What shall I do to be saved?" (*J. Fawcett, M.A.*) **Ye say.**—Religion is not a hear-say, a presumption, a supposition; it is not a customary pretension and profession; it is not an affection of any mode; it is not a piety of any particular fancy, consisting in some pathetic devotions, vehement expressions, bodily severities, affected anomalies, and aversions from the innocent usage of others; but it consisteth in a profound humility and an universal charity (Matt. v. 1–11). (*Dr. Whichcote.*) *Christianity non-centralized*:—In the days of the apostles, the Church Catholic had no local centre. Jerusalem was destroyed for this, I believe, among other special reasons, that it might not become such. Christianity was designed for every land alike; it was gifted with power to make every city a Jerusalem, a habitation of peace, a city of God; and every man, of every tribe, a citizen of the Zion above (Deut. xxxiv. 6). (*J. Boyd.*)

Vers. 22, 23. **Ye worship ye know not what.**—*The true worship*:—I. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SAMARITANS AND THE JEWS. 1. Samaritan worship was offered in ignorance. They were little better qualified than the Athenians. Rejecting the prophets, their faith rested on tradition, and was given up to superstition. As they were ignorant of the object so they were of the form of worship which God had appointed. "Will worship," however costly and apparently honouring, is rejected. So the Saviour brought home to the woman the sad fact that she had never worshipped. This is just the case of those who only repeat the words of prayer taught them in childhood. 2. The true worshipper's worship with knowledge. (1) The Spiritual Israel. Christ was a worshipper of God not only as Mediator but as man. As High Priest He gives to His people His informing Spirit, through whom they have an intelligent knowledge of God's character and will, and the form by which to approach Him. (2) The literal Israel to whom were committed the oracles of God, and such worshippers as Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna. 3. A special relation existed between the Jews and the great Salvation. (1) Its author was a Jew. (2) Its first messengers were Jews. (3) And as Salvation so the true worship was of the Jews. To that all the Old Testament worship pointed. II. THE TRUE WORSHIP. 1. Who are the true worshippers? Those—(1) Who have Spiritual knowledge of God; (2) Who worship with grace in the appointed way; (3) Who are opposed to all false worship; (4) Who apprehend the true medium of worship and so have admission into the holiest. 2. What is it to worship the Father? (1) Not as the judge and avenger. (2) With the fellowship of children, not the penance of bond servants. 3. What is worship in Spirit? (1) Not mere outward worship. (2) Not mere intellectual worship. (3) But "praying in the Holy Ghost" in that new nature He has given and with the help He has promised. 4. What is worship in truth? (1) That which corresponds with the nature of the God of truth. (2) Through Him who is full of grace and truth, by whom alone we have access to God. 5. What is "the hour?"—(1) As coming it is the object of Divine appointment. (2) As come, the era foretold, the dispensation of the Spirit had actually arrived. (3) Is there not a personal hint of that supreme moment which the woman made the crisis of her spiritual history! Only then can

true and Spiritual worship begin. III. ONLY THE TRUE WORSHIP IS PLEASING TO GOD. The Father has a right to determine this and has done so. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ's revelation of God* :—I. THIS REVELATION INCLUDES THREE THINGS. 1. God is real—not a dream or picture, a thought or an abstraction. The living God IS. Thou art born of Him, and thy power to think of Him is proof of His existence. 2. God is Spiritual—not a material substance or a physical force. These cannot create thought, feeling, and free will. I am greater than mountains, rivers, gravitation, electricity; I reason, love, hope, will. The object of my worship must be like me and far above me. 3. God is personal—(1) Positivism tells us that He is abstract and general. "A Being immense and eternal—Humanity" (Comte). But adoration fixes itself on a single person. (2) Pantheism tell us that He is everything, the Eternal substance which appears as conscious in our thought and unconscious in nature (Hegel). But we can no more worship this than a leaf can a tree, or a wave the ocean. (3) Agnosticism tells us that He is unknowable, "the Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness" (M. Arnold). But behind the power we seek the Will, behind the law the Giver. (4) From these vague abstractions the soul flies to God the Father with an eye to pity and an arm to save. II. THE INFERENCE is swift and inevitable. 1. Our worship must correspond to the reality of God's nature. 2. The text does not condemn outward forms. Christ used and instituted them. But all forms are dead and meaningless without reality. 3. In the temple there must be a spiritual altar; on the altar a living fire—the motion of the heart towards God. As fire is manifest in light and heat so is worship in praise and prayer. Without the intercourse of the two spirits it is only a painted fire. Lessons: 1. When you are bewildered in your religion remember that the most adorable attributes are not metaphysical but spiritual. Our Father brings Him near to us. 2. True worship is no light thing. It is not found in a careless sleepy hour; not possible to a divided frivolous mind. 3. This text does not unconsecrate the Church; it consecrates the world. (*H. J. Van Dyke, D.D.*) **We know what we worship.**—*Can we be sure of God?*—I. CHRIST SPEAKS OF GOD, the Father, the God of salvation, God the Spirit, IN A TONE OF INTENSE AND UNFALTERING CONVICTION. "We know"—not guess, dream, desire. He knows Him not as an empty name, or a key to interpret creation, or as a central sun of the philosophy of Providence. At least, then, Jesus is not an agnostic, but knew God as God knew Him. Christ is our example as thinker and knower. Can we then climb to the height of His full assurance of understanding? II. THIS QUESTION, ALWAYS INTERESTING, IS JUST NOW CHARGED WITH EXTRAORDINARY URGENCY. These are days of the revision and reconstruction of religious knowledge. 1. The word God is so overwhelming and vast that some thoughtful souls shrink from declaring their belief in Him. Atheism has done us this service: that it has forced on us what a great thing it is to maintain the existence of God. 2. Others occupying a different standpoint infer that we have not the faculties requisite for grasping this revelation. 3. It is essential to manhood, conduct and character that we do not trifle with this question. Either God can be known or He cannot, and we ought to settle what the facts really are and be sure that there is no chance of knowing God, or else search for Him with all the heart; for what a man knows and is sure of is the measure of His peace, power and growth. For the world's regeneration God must be more than an enigma, He must be known. III. THE ANSWER TO THIS INQUIRY IS NOT SO DIFFICULT AS IT SEEMS. It is not dependent upon the range of our information, but upon the use of the right organs and methods of verification. Though we know little we need not be less positive and assured about it. We may rejoice in the boundless expanse and be sure of the patch of blue above us, and of the ray of truth that shines through it; though we cannot embrace its illimitable sketches of beauty and glory. A real agnosticism is for ever being married to a practical and life-enriching positivism. Though we cannot be sure of anything, it does not follow that we can be sure of nothing. "We cannot by searching find out God." Even Moses could only catch a glimpse of the glory of His goodness. Who of us knows his friend in his totality, much less God. Christ's knowledge was limited and yet He knew the Father so well that He took the plan of His life from Him as a boy of twelve, and never lost it till He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit." This is the secret of human progress. Men built in certitute have been creators of new epochs and saviours of men. Paul's "I know" was the inspiration of His "One thing I do." IV. If God then cannot be fully known, WHAT IS THE KNOWLEDGE WE MAY HAVE, HOW MAY WE GET IT AND TEST ITS VALIDITY? Christ gives the answer, "for salvation is of the Jews." We Jews know God because we are the

depositaries of salvation for ourselves and for all men. Salvation is life, character, ethical stability, enthusiasm for righteousness, God. We are gloriously and divinely saved, and therefore divinely and surely taught. 1. This tells us that nothing assures like life and fortifies like experience. Truth is set in the clear radiance of our deliverance from false thoughts, base passions, wrong aims, and mean deeds. 2. The case cited by Christ proves His principle. From the Jews salvation has gone forth. They were a people saved of the Lord and knew Him through their salvations. (1) Where will you find a people so completely freed from mental perplexity about God? (2) To what people will you go for evidence of a more persistent ethical stability? (3) Nor is there a literature of hope so rich as the Old Testament. 3. It follows that our assurance of God does not depend upon our speculative faculties, but on our practical powers which every man can and must use. (1) Intuition, the direct gaze of the soul on creation and life, compelling the recognition of a presence and power as the clearest and most real of all facts. Life sees life, and in life sees law, order, mind and heart. (2) Science shows that this idea of God is the deepest and most essential of all that get a place in human thought. The total results of human inquiry is to prove—(*a*) The existence of an energy, infinite and omnipresent, underlying and comprehending all the phenomena of the universe. (*b*) That it works for righteousness. (*c*) That it is personal, a living and holy will. (3) History is a revelation of God. "Salvation of the Jews" is only part of God's redeeming work. Redemption is the pivot on which the entire human story turns. (4) Life. You will derive your largest aids from personal devotion to Christ, acceptance of His discipline, and effort to do all His will. (*J. Clifford, D.D.*) *How we may know God:*—The writer asked an aged negress if she had known Washington. She answered by asking, "Do you know God?" "I hope I know something of Him, ma'am." "How, then, may one know God, sir?" "We may learn something about His goodness and handiwork from what we see in yonder garden, and in these beautiful trees." "You are right, massa; but is there no other way of knowing him?" "Yes, ma'am, we may also learn something of Him from His dealings with the sons of men, the history of nations, and the lives of individuals." "Can we? But in no other way?" "From the Bible we gain more knowledge of God than from all the other sources put together." "Yes, indeed! and is there no other way?" "By experience." Laying her hand upon her heart, and lifting her bleared eyes to heaven, she exclaimed, "Ah, now you have it, massa!" (*New Cyclopædia.*) *Ignorant worshippers:*—The Dowager-Duchess of Richmond went one Sunday with her daughter to the Chapel-Royal, at St. James's, but being late, they could find no places. After looking about some time, and seeing the case was hopeless, she said to her daughter, "Come away, Louisa; at any rate, we have done the civil thing." (*Raikes' Diary.*) *Ignorant worship affects the life for evil:*—A Thug at Meirut, who had been guilty of many murders, was arrested, and cast, heavily ironed, into prison. There a missionary visited him, and preached Christ to him with such success, that he professed conversion. As he was brought before the judge, and confronted by many witnesses, he said, pointing to them, "No need of these; I am ready to avow the crimes of my dreadful life." He then proceeded to declare, that, having been brought up among the Thugs, he fully believed, that, by the shedding of the blood of each victim, he had not only pleased the dreadful goddess Kali, but procured her favour for himself. And he recounted murder after murder in which he had been engaged, some of them attended with such cruelty, that those present who had begun to feel some pity for him again shrunk back; the judge himself lifting up his hands, and exclaiming, "How could you be guilty of enormities like these!" The only reply the poor man made to the judge was to place his hand in the bosom of his linen vest to take forth a little book; then, holding it up in his hand, he said, "Had I but received this book sooner, the book of Jesus, my Saviour and my God, I should not have done it." *God may be worshipped anywhere:*—Isaac's closet was a field. He went out to meditate in the field at the eventide. David's closet was his bedchamber. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." Our Lord's closet was a mountain. "When he had sent the multitude away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come, He was there alone." Peter's closet was upon the house-top. Peter "went upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour." Hezekiah's closet was turning his face towards the wall, and praying unto the Lord. (*E. Bickersteth.*) **Salvation is of the Jews.**—*One nation and all nations:*—I. THE WHOLE PRIDE OF MODERN WISDOM IS THIS: "SALVATION OF MAN IS FROM MAN." This has been differently understood. 1. Human nature

formerly was each individual man. 2. Latterly human nature has been considered one person or society. 3. However, at no time could man have regarded himself merely as an individual being, for society is to man what the soil is to the plant. 4. Between the two man found a resting place in nationality, a beneficent idea when we place it in the line where individuality and humanity meet. But so far from this individuality lost its finest character. Personal religion, by being made national property, was merged in the community and humanity was almost entirely effaced. II. HISTORY IS FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW THE CHRONOLOGY OF NATIONALITIES, AND GOD HAS RECTIFIED AND CONSECRATED THE IDEA OF NATIONALITY TO THE TRIUMPH OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INDIVIDUALITY AND HUMANITY. 1. Thus the Christian can accept Christ's statement that Christianity is of the Jews. Non-Christians, however, object. (1) One would not deny that salvation in a sense is of, say, the French. (2) Others refuse to allow a particular people to be the dispenser of common felicity. But none but a Christian wishes it to come from the Jews. 2. About the term salvation there is no dispute. It is the welfare of human nature and the fulfilment of its destinies. Christ came to save humanity as well as man. 3. In what sense, then, can it come from the Jews? No one will, of course, mistake the channel for the source (Rev. vii. 10). In its ignorance ancient poetry represented certain countries as the abode of the sun. This is false in physics but true in morals. In the world of grace the rising sun has a home. Salvation is of the Jews. How? Not because Christ was born and lived in Palestine, spoke its language, chose Jews as disciples, or was crucified by Jews. Salvation is of the Jews as the water of a stream comes from the basin in the rock at the top of the mountain. There the water is collected and from thence it flows, but the water is from heaven. 4. This being established, let us avail ourselves of the doctrine that each people is the bearer and representative of an idea, and that each idea in order to fix itself in the world has need of a people. This truth is invariably cultivated at the expense of other truths, and thus becomes exaggerated, and is never more than part of the truth. Now if this be the case, might not a whole people in conformity with this great law be the apostle of the truth which contains all truth! Now God has dealt with a certain people in a manner favourable to the discharge of this function. The Jews were a Theocracy, a people amongst whom God lived, whom God governed, to whom He spake, and whose law was His worship, a people elected for this very purpose. 5. But why confine this truth to the Jews? Was it the whole truth? How is this national deposit reconciliable with the doctrine that salvation is personal acceptance of Christ? Let us see. Christ and your soul have met! But at what cost? You are dying with thirst; a drop of water from the river revives you. It was only a drop, not the river, but the whole volume of water was necessary to carry along the drop. The river therefore saved you. In the same way the Church saved you because it gave you the knowledge of Christ whom you savingly received. The Church by its volume and might carries forward that element by which you are renewed. How has that current been formed? Look well at those waves red with human blood and dark with martyr ashes. Your Christianity, however individual it may be, is extracted from the Christianity of sixty generations. 6. Why, then, since each of us proceeds from the Church, should not the Church proceed from the Jews. As everything ends with the individual, so everything begins. The Church was within the Jewish nation, this whole nation was in the loins of Abraham the father of us all. So the ancient posterity of Jacob find a place in the work of individual salvation. III. OUR PROPOSITION WOULD BE TOO EASILY DEFENDED IF WE COULD SAY THAT CHRIST IS ONLY THE LAST DEVELOPMENT OF THE WISDOM OF THE JEWS. It is not because He is a Jew, but because He is God manifest in the flesh, that He is our salvation. Yet—1. The Jewish race from which He came fulfilled an important function in preparing for His advent. The Old Testament is a progressive instruction that leads us gradually up to Him. The law in the letter is succeeded by the law in the Spirit, a ritual worship by the worship of the heart, legislation by prophecy, Abraham by Moses, Moses by Isaiah, so that when the King arrives there is a people ready to receive Him. 2. This people, which will be the first fruits of a universal Father, could only be drawn from the Jewish people. 3. But apart from the spiritual Israel, the Jewish people as a whole received from God the education necessary to be the forerunner of Christ among the nations, and when Christianity, after having collected in Judæa all that belonged to it, finds Jewish colonies which Divine Providence had scattered which became the first Christian churches. 4. The Jews also carried their history with them which became an immortal lesson for the human race, viz., the manner in

which God interposes in human affairs, just as a specimen of a plant explains the whole species. 5. Here we must turn to Rom. xi. 12. As a political society and race, the Jews had to fall away, because the new economy appealed to individuals. But the falling away is not to be for ever. It must, is, and will be gathered anew according to the principle of individuality and the law of liberty. The world will yet see its fulness, and what will that fulness be? (Isa. xlix. 16–19). (*A. Vinet, D.D.*) *The spiritual ignorance of the Samaritans:*—The assertion of this, as the great calamity of the Samaritan—that he knew not what he worshipped—is abundantly borne out by history. It was in all times a country of superstition, the early home of Baal worshippers, the later home of enchanters and fanatics, and of sects putting forward pretensions to all kind of spiritual powers. The Jew, on the contrary, clung to a distinct object of adoration. He was a protestant against the worship of spiritual fantasies. This poor shadow showed what the substance was which the Jew had inherited, and which was his distinction among all nations. Salvation was to go forth from his land. And salvation, so our Lord teaches us, consists in knowing what we worship; for that knowledge saves men from slavery to the world's idols, and to the idols of their own hearts, which is their great curse and misery. (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *The straightforwardness of Jesus:*—In speaking here to a Samaritan, He indicates some points in which the Jews were superior, and in which her nation might well follow them: while to the Jews, on the other hand (as in the case of the parable of the good Samaritan, and in His remark after the miracle of healing ten lepers), He takes occasion to notice some superiority in the conduct of Samaritans, wherein their nation might well follow them. Thus He corrects the failings of each by pointing out some superiority in the other: reproving each to their own face, but commending them to others: exactly the converse of that conduct which is too common among those who profess to be His disciples, who, on the contrary, are often in the unchristian habit of flattering people in their presence and slandering them behind their back: keeping their faults from themselves, but making them known to others. (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Aptness of Christ:*—Our Saviour always had in view the posture of mind of the persons whom He addressed. He did not entertain the Pharisees with invectives against the open impiety of their Sadducean rivals; nor, on the other hand, did He soothe the Sadducee's ear with descriptions of Pharisaical pomp and folly. In the presence of the Pharisees, He preached against hypocrisy; to the Sadducees He proved the resurrection of the dead. In like manner, of that known enmity, which subsisted between the Jews and Samaritans, this faithful Teacher took no undue advantage to make friends or proselytes of either. Upon the Jews He inculcated a more comprehensive benevolence; with the Samaritan He defended the orthodoxy of the Jewish creed. (*Archdeacon Paley.*)

Ver. 23, 24. **The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers.**—*Worship:*—I. ITS GROUNDS OR REASONS. 1. The perfection of the Divine character. "God is a Spirit." These words are—(1) A mystery, because spirit, like matter, is unknown to us in its essence. We are acquainted with some of the sensible properties of matter, such as extension, figure, colour, &c.; but what the substance is which underlies these we do not understand. So also of spirit; we see its manifold manifestations; we feel, and therefore know, that it does exist; but what it is in itself is a profound and inexplicable mystery. (2) A revelation. By them our Saviour declared the personality of God. What is in the effect must have been first in the cause. The Creator of persons must be a person. (3) As possessing all possible perfections. 2. The nature of man. Intellectual ability, genius, and learning, which are the possessions of the few, call forth our admiration, but there is that in us all which is greater than these, namely, the power to worship our Creator. All men have this; but in many it exists only in a latent state. Thousands of human souls are nothing better than the burial-places of their own faculties. It seems as if some malignant spiritual magician had waved his terrible wand over human nature, causing a deep sleep to fall upon its noblest instincts, and thus preventing its development. One of the greatest dangers of the present time is the weakening of this power in men. The heathen worship senseless idols; the ancient Greeks worshipped beauty; in the days of chivalry men worshipped physical strength, military dignity, valour, and courage; but the tendency of many in our own age is to worship nothing. Even in the Church the idea of worship does not occupy the place it did in other times. The leading conception appears to be preaching. II. ITS CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS. 1. Meditation

upon God. Holy and thoughtful Hebrews contemplated His character in the works of creation, the goodness of His providence, and the words He had spoken by His prophets. These are the three mirrors in which they beheld "the beauty of the Lord." A greater and clearer manifestation has been given to us "in the face of Jesus Christ." It follows that He should be set most prominently before the mind in all our acts of worship. 2. Devout contemplation produces reverence, without which there is no true worship. (1) The science that has in it no reverence is "blind, and cannot see afar off." Philosophy without reverence is wanting in the first element of wisdom, and when art has lost reverence its greatest beauty is gone. There can be no great literature without reverence; piety without reverence will not soar above the earth, and a life without reverence is not worthy of the name. Would you paint science, philosophy, art, poetry, and literature in a becoming manner? Then you should represent them as a sisterhood of angels in the attitude of worship. (2) This spirit, which ought to characterize our whole life, should become intense in our direct acts of worship, for we enter then in a special manner into the Divine presence. "Our God is a consuming fire," and we should therefore approach His throne "with reverence and godly fear." What the fragrance of flowers is to the atmosphere of the summer garden, this feeling of reverence should be to our public worship. 3. Worship is transcendent wonder. "Oh, the depth of the riches," &c. "Great and marvellous are Thy works," &c. "Who shall not fear Thee?" 4. Worship is communion with God. "Our fellowship is with the Father." 5. A profound sense of humility and self-abasement. The angels hide their faces in His presence. Contemplate His holiness, and sin will appear hateful. Behold His greatness, and you will feel how humble you ought to be. (*T. Jones, D.D.*) *God seeks worshippers*:—Oh, how should this fire up our hearts to spiritual worship, that God seeks for such, with "Let me see Thy face, hear Thy voice!" (Cant. ii. 14). He soliciteth suitors. (*J. Trapp.*) *Living worshippers the only true worshippers*:—The magistrates (among the New England Puritans) insisted on the presence of every man at public worship. Roger Williams reprobated the law; the worst statute in the English code was that which did but enforce attendance upon the parish church. "An unbelieving soul is dead in sin"; such was his argument; and to force the indifferent from one worship to another "was like shifting a dead man into several changes of apparel." (*Little's "Historical Lights."*) *True worship binds together all human souls*:—An officer from one of the ships in port—a serious young man—spent the interval between the English and native services with me at the mission-house. As the congregation began to assemble he accompanied me to the door of the chapel, intending to take leave when the exercises should begin, as he was unacquainted with the language, and had been already longer from his ship than he designed; but after standing a few minutes, and seeing hundreds of natives assembling quietly and seriously from various directions, he suddenly exclaimed, while tears glistened in his eye, "No!—this is too much; I cannot go till I worship with these heathen!" (*Stewart.*) *A true worshipper*:—"I have in my congregation," said a minister of the gospel, "a worthy aged woman, who has for many years been so deaf as not to distinguish the loudest sound; and yet she is always one of the first in the meeting. On asking the reason of her constant attendance, as it was impossible for her to hear my voice, she answered, "Though I cannot hear you, I come to God's house because I love it, and would be found in His ways; and He gives me many a sweet thought upon the text when it is pointed out to me. Another reason is, because I am in the best company, in the most immediate presence of God, and among His saints, the honourable of the earth." *Worship* (Church Dedication):—I. WE OUGHT TO ENTER THIS HOUSE WITH JOY, FOR IT IS DEDICATED TO WORSHIP. 1. Worship is man's highest end, for it is the employment of his highest faculties in the sublimest object 2. Worship has been disparaged by representing it as a priestly contrivance for selfish ends. 3. But how came the priest into being, and who gave him power? Religion was earlier than government. 4. In the earliest ages men recognized an immediate interference of the Deity in what powerfully struck the senses. These rude notions have been dispelled by science, which reveals fixed laws. (1) But in these the religious principle finds confirmations of God more numerous and powerful still. (2) The progress of the arts, teaching us the beneficent uses to which God's works may be applied, has furnished new testimonies to God's goodness. (3) The progress of society has made God's creation more attractive. (4) Human improvement has created new capacities and demands for religion. 5) The soul, in proportion as it enlarges its capacities and refines its affections,

discerns within itself a more glorious type of the Divinity. 5. All other wants are superficial and transcient: the profoundest of all is the want of God. 6. Let us rejoice, then, in His house. Heaven has no higher joy, the universe no higher work, than worship. II. When we consider THE PARTICULAR WORSHIP TO BE HERE OFFERED, IT OUGHT TO AWAKEN PIOUS JOY. 1. Worship is of different forms—some unworthy. The idea of God has been selfishly seized and so obscured that little of its purifying power has remained, and men have, by pompous machinery and obsequious adulation, endeavoured to bend the Almighty to their particular interests. 2. This house is not reared to perpetuate the superstitions of past or present. Here are none of the idols which degraded ancient temples, none of the forms which in a rude age Providence allowed to the Jews; none of the cumbersome ceremonies with which Christ has been overlaid. III. THIS HOUSE IS REARED TO ASSIST THE WORSHIP OF THE FATHER IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. For the worship—1. Of one Infinite Person. 2. The Father. God has not always been so worshipped, but Christ has for ever revealed Him as such. What a privilege! What does the term import? Not merely that He is Creator—He made the mountain and the insect—but that He communicates an existence like His own. He made us in His image and likeness, and makes us partakers of the Divine nature. God is a Spirit, and we are spirits. In calling God Father I understand—(1) That He loves His offspring with unbounded affection. Love is the fundamental attribute of a father. (2) That it is His chief purpose in creating and governing the universe to train and ennoble the rational and moral being to whom He has given birth. Education is the great work of a parent. (3) That He exercises authority over His child. (4) That He communicates Himself. It belongs to a parent to breathe into the child whatever is loftiest in his own soul. (5) That He destines His rational moral creature to immortality. How ardently does a parent desire to prolong the life of his child! 3. Of the Infinite Father in spirit and in truth. (1) Intelligently, with just and honourable conceptions of Him. (2) With the heart as well as the intellect. (3) With faith in a higher presence. (4) With a filial, not a fearful, spirit. IV. THE GREAT END OF WORSHIPPING HERE IS THAT YOU MAY WORSHIP EVERYWHERE, that your houses and places of business may be consecrated to God. Adore Him—1. As He is revealed in the universe. 2. As He is revealed in His rational and moral offspring by fulfilling His purposes in regard to Him. Reverence the human soul as His chosen sanctuary, in yourselves and in others, and labour to carry it forward to perfection. Mercy is most acceptable worship. He who rears one child in Christian virtue or recovers one fellow-creature to God builds a temple more precious and enduring than Solomon's or St. Peter's. (*W. E. Channing, D.D.*) *The spirituality of worship*:—I. THE GREAT PECULIARITY OF CHRISTIANITY and proof of its Divinity IS THAT IT IS FITTED TO BE THE RELIGION OF EVERY AGE AND COUNTRY. There is nothing in its institutions which confines it to one place rather than another; and nothing in its requirements which makes its exercise easier at this time or that. The heathen attached special sacredness to some shrine; the Jews could perform the most solemn acts of their worship nowhere but at Jerusalem. This was enough to prove that Judaism was not designed to be permanent, because it could not be universal. Christianity takes the whole world for its Jerusalem, and attaches no sacredness to certain lands and temples. A kind of sanctity must be attached to the scenes of Christ's life, of course. But it is not a religious sacredness. A church built on Calvary would be no holier than anywhere else. II. EVERYWHERE THE FATHER SEEKS TO BE WORSHIPPED IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. Why? Because of His nature. Composed as we are of body and soul, men have formed improper notions of the Godhead, because we are unable to form ideas of a purely Spiritual Being. The Deity differing immeasurably from ourselves, to invest Him with our imperfections is to destroy reverence. Were He not a Spirit He could not possess the properties which belong to the Divine Being—omnipresence, *e.g.*—a body cannot be present in different places at the same time; infinitude—a body cannot fill the universe. But in His spiritual nature He must be immeasurably removed from the highest ranks of created intelligence. We want to stretch beyond spirit, because we cannot but believe that God is infinitely beyond angels; and it is our duty to maintain the thought that God is far above all created excellence. III. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP, THEN, MUST TAKE ITS CHARACTER FROM THE NATURE OF GOD. It follows, therefore, that carnal and ceremonial worship will not be acceptable. Prayer must be based on God's perfections. It were useless to pray unless persuaded of His omnipresence—who could worship a being who was not within hearing?—and equally useless unless convinced of His unchangeableness.

Who could pray unless God's promises and precepts were immutable? This worship is not optional, but obligatory. IV. SPIRITUAL WORSHIP DOES NOT EXCLUDE BODILY. 1. The body as well as the soul is to be sanctified and glorified; with both, therefore, God is to be honoured. 2. Where there is inward worship there will not be outward irreverence. 3. But it is indifferent except as the index and accompaniment of the soul. V. BUT THIS WORSHIP IS PRIMARILY SPIRITUAL. 1. It is an act of the understanding. Not "What ye know not," but "What we know." God as known by the light of nature and revelation. 2. It is an act of the will—surrender and submission to God. 3. An act of the affections—delighting in and sympathizing with God. 4. An act of faith—5. An act of reverence. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Spiritual worship*:—I. THE NATURE OF GOD. "God is a Spirit." 1. How little we know about spirit. We can only contrast it with matter. "The Egyptians are men," &c. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have." 2. The heathen entertained sensual views of God, and "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man," &c. 3. But God is a Spirit, and therefore—(1) Omnipotent. A body can only occupy a certain space. (2) Unchangeable and eternal. Bodies are finite and mutable. 4. As we can understand so little about God as a Spirit, we are grateful for His revelation. (1) In nature. (2) In His Word. (3) In His Son, through whom God's Spirit is brought near in our own nature, that we may the better understand, love, and serve Him. II. THE SERVICE HE REQUIRES. 1. Sincere. However fair the impression and imposing the ceremonial, formality is abhorent to Him. We scorn insincere professions and friendships, and an earthly monarch would repel the adulation of a traitor. 2. Spiritual: the homage of the heart. God's complaint of His ancient people was that they drew nigh with their lips only. To this a spiritual state is necessary, for "the carnal mind is enmity against God"; and also renewal of the Holy Spirit, "praying in the Holy Ghost." 3. Elevation and enlargement in contrast to the Samaritan worship "in the mountain" and to that of the Jews at Jerusalem. No creature was allowed to be offered to God, "except such as could run and fly." 4. God will not reject the tremulous and broken utterances of a contrite heart. III. HIS WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE THIS WORSHIP. IV. THE BLESSINGS IT WILL CONFER ON OURSELVES. 1. Deepened gratitude. 2. Elevated affections. 3. Relief from care. 4. Preparation for heaven. (*T. Barrass.*) *Spiritual worship*:—Note—1. The difference between interest in theology and interest in religion. Here was a woman living in sin, and yet deeply interested in theological controversy. Controversy sharpens our disputative faculties and wakes our speculative ones. Religion is love to God and man. The woman's conduct is typical. The moment Christ appears, she examines His views, not on righteousness, but was He sound on the Temple. 2. All that was worth noticing in the question had disappeared. Wrong as the Samaritan was, he was not so wrong as the Jew for excommunicating him, or half so wrong as he himself was for hating the Jew. Just as worship disappeared in this miserable controversy, so is Christianity going down in ours. Which was worse—to worship on a wrong hill, or to mistake the very essence of worship? Consider—I. THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THE NEW RELIGION RESTS is the revelation made by Christ concerning—1. The Fatherhood of God. This is the emphatic word. Men had worshipped the Father before. The Greeks and Romans spoke of a "Father of gods and men"; the Jewish prophet said, "Have we not all one Father?" But universality was wanting. Therefore the old question was all in all—Where is He to be worshipped? The real question hidden under that was, Who are His children? The appearance of God was the answer: God is the Father of the family of man. 2. The spirituality of God. The definition is not theological, but practical. It is chiefly negative. It says what God is not—not Matter. He is Mind, which has no place. Of love, generosity, thought, can you say, Where? 3. The personality of God—"seeketh." (1) Two erroneous notions are compatible with the idea of Spirit—God as an idea elaborated out of our own minds, and that God is the soul of nature: but both are impersonal. (2) This is redemption. "God is a Spirit; He seeketh." Here is the value of belief in a Person. Not that we seek God; but that He seeks us. II. THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. (1) It is not what a man professes that constitutes worship. A Trinitarian may call Christ "God," and worship mammon. (2) A man cannot decide whether he will or will not worship—he must. The only question is, What? That before which he bows as greater than himself. An infidel may worship Reason. The new worship of God is to be—1. Universal as against Samaritan or Jewish exclusiveness. The "where" is unimportant. 2. "In

spirit." This the better Jews had gradually seen. "What doth the Lord require of thee," &c. All true life is worship. 3. "In truth." The correspondence between acts and laws. God dwells in the humble heart. To be humble, to love God, is His spiritual worship. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *Spiritual worship*:—In this there is—I. APPREHENSION OF THE OBJECT, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ITS PERFECTION. II. UNION WITH THE OBJECT, AND AFFECTION TO IT. III. SENSE OF INFIRMITY, AND DEPENDENCE ON THE OBJECT. IV. THESE ARE THINGS IN WORSHIP, OF WHICH NOTHING CAN BE DONE BUT BY THE SPIRIT (Acts xvii. 23). (*Dr. Whichcote.*) *Spiritual worship*:—I. SOME GENERAL PROPOSITIONS. Spiritual worship—1. Is founded upon and riseth from the spirituality of God. 2. Is manifest by the light of nature to be due to Him; not the outward means, which depended on a law, but the inward manner. "Sacrifice to the gods, not so much clothed with purple garments as with a pure heart" (*Menander*). This could not but result—(1) From a knowledge of ourselves. Psa. c. 1, 2, is a natural principle. Man must know that his faculties were given him to glorify God. (2) From the knowledge of God (Rom. i. 21). 3. Spiritual worship, therefore, was always required by God, and always offered Him. His spirituality fails not, and spirituality must run through all the rights of worship, and did (Deut. xxx. 10). 4. It is, consequently, every man's duty to worship God in spirit as to worship Him at all. He that denies worship to be due to God denies His Deity; he that waives spiritual worship, denies His spirituality. 5. The ceremonial law was abolished to promote spirituality of worship. (1) The legal service is called "flesh," in opposition to the gospel, which is called "spirit" (Heb. vii. 16; ix. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 8; Gal. iii. 3; 1 Cor. x. 18; Rom. ii. 29). (2) The legal ceremonies were not a fit means to bring the heart into a spiritual frame. They had a spiritual intent, but did not work spiritual affections in the soul (Gal. iv. 9; Heb. ix. 9, x. 1). (3) Neither are they hindered spiritual affections; because the people sunk down to the things themselves, and refused to perceive their spiritual intent. (4) Upon these accounts, therefore, God never testified Himself well pleased with that kind of worship; not as they were His own institution, but as they were practised (Hos. vi. 6; Isa. i. 11–14). (5) God, therefore, never intended their permanence, and often mentioned a coming spiritual change (Heb. vii. 18; Gal. iv. 2; Mal. i. 11). 6. The gospel service is spiritual. Spirituality is the genius of the gospel (Rom. xii. 1). Its matter—love of, and faith in, God—its motives (John i. 17), its manner, its assistances, are all spiritual. 7. Yet the worship of our bodies is not to be rejected. (1) Bodily worship is due to God (1 Cor. vi. 20). Both body and spirit are from God, and should be for God. (2) Social worship is due to God, but this cannot be without some bodily expressions. (3) Christ worshipped with His body (Luke xxii. 41, 42). II. WHAT SPIRITUAL WORSHIP IS. 1. From a spiritual nature (Eph. ii. 10). 2. By the influence of the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 13, 26; Eph. vi. 18). 3. Done in sincerity—from the heart (Rom. i. 9; Prov. xxiii. 26; Exod. xxv. 7; Psa. cxix. 108). This is the salt which seasons every sacrifice, and without the heart worship is a stage play (Rom. x. 10). 4. Performed with unitedness of heart (Psa. lxxxvi. 11; Ezek. xxxiii. 31; Matt. vi. 6; Psa. cxix. 10). 5. Discharged with spiritual activity (Psa. lvii. 8), and acting spiritual habits (Psa. ciii. 1). Hence the necessity of—(1) Faith (Heb. ix. 6). (2) Love (Rom. viii. 15). (3) A spiritual sensibility of our own weakness. (4) Spiritual desires after God (Psa. lxiii. 2, 8; xlii. 2). (5) Thankfulness and admiration (Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 11; v. 13, 14). 6. Offered with delight (Psa. xliii. 4; Eph. v. 18, 19). 7. Paid with deep reverence (Isa. vi. 2; Heb. xii. 28), and humility (Hab. ii. 4; Isa. vi. 5; 1 Chron. xxix. 14). God commanded not the fiercer creatures to be sacrificed, but the meek; none that had stings in their tails or venom in their tongues. 8. Performed with holiness (Psa. xciii. 5; Heb. ix. 14; Rev. iv. 8). 9. Performed with spiritual ends and raised aims at God's glory (Heb. xi. 6; Rev. iv. 11). Some worship as poor men offer a present to rich—not to honour them, but to gain a richer reward (Mal. iii. 14). 10. Offered in the name of Christ (1 Pet. ii. 5; Rev. viii. 3). III. WHY A SPIRITUAL WORSHIP IS DUE TO GOD, and to be offered to Him. 1. The best we have is to be presented in worship, on the grounds—(1) Of God's excellency (Mal. i. 13, 14). (2) God's command (Exod. xxix. 13). (3) Heathen precedent, who offered their males and their children. (4) All creatures serve man, by the Providential order, with their best. (5) God has served man with His best. 2. We cannot else act towards God according to the nature of rational creatures. Spiritual worship is due to God because of His nature, and from us because of ours. To withhold our spiritual faculties is to deny them the end and use for which they were given. 3. Without the engagement of our spirits, no act is an act of worship.

The posture of the body is best to testify the affection of the mind. 4. There is in worship an approach of God to man. Ought not our spirits to be prepared to receive Him? (Exod. xix. 10, 11; Ezek. xlviii. 35). 5. To have this worship is God's end in redemption and sanctification (Mal. iii. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 18; ii. 5). 6. Other worship cannot be acceptable, God being a Spirit (1 Pet. ii. 5). IV. TO MAKE USE OF THIS. It serves—1. For information. If spiritual worship be required—(1) How sad their state who, so far from giving it, render no worship at all. Worship is founded on creation (Psa. c. 2, 3), and man in no state can be exempted. Where there is no acknowledgment of God, the gate is open for all sin (Hos. iv. 1, 2; Gen. iv. 16). Worship to a false God, or in a false way, is better than none at all. (2) Diligence in outward worship is not to be rested in (Rev. iii. 1). 2. For examination. (1) How are our hearts prepared to worship? Do we quicken our spirits? (Psa. xxvii. 8.) Are our hearts fixed? (2) How do we act our graces in worship? (3) How do we find our hearts after worship? How as to inward strength, humility, delight? 3. For comfort. 4. For exhortation. (*S. Charnock, B.D.*) *The spirituality of worship* is distinct from—I. FORMALISM and ritualism. II. INTELLECTUALISM. III. FANATIC SPIRITUALISM. (*P. Schaff, D.D.*) *The spirituality and simplicity of Christian worship: its grandeur and glory:*—If we compare the worship of God under the New Testament economy with that under the Old, or that of false gods, the latter is far more impressive and imposing; and, naturally, men do despise the simplicity of the former, for almost from the first an effort has been made to carnalize and embellish it. I. CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IS PRE-EMINENTLY NOT MADE TO DEPEND ON SYMBOL, BECAUSE MORE ELEVATED. The Jewish dispensation was typical and prophetic, the Christian memorial. In foreshadowing more minuteness is required than in calling to mind. A traveller needs very little to recall the scenes he has witnessed, but the non-traveller requires much explanation. We have a full revelation, and do not therefore require scenic representation. II. THE OLD WORSHIP WAS LARGELY DEFEATED. The people were constantly being entangled, worshipped God with their lips, their emotions were wrought upon, their devotions were dead. III. THE OLD ECONOMY WAS STEREOTYPED, severe, uniform. We do not allow children liberty of action, and so in these old times, God prescribed to the child at school everything strictly; when Christ came a measure of liberty was granted from ceremonies. IV. OUR SIMPLE WORSHIP BRINGS BEFORE US THE THINGS OF GOD IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S TRUTH AND IN DEPENDENCE ON THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT. When men are acted on by their senses they are apt to forget the end of all. A telescope is made to see the stars with, but if the astronomer's mind is occupied with the beauty of his instrument, its end is lost. So we need to be on the watch lest amusement and gratification shut out the true purpose of prayer. V. THE RULES FOR CHRISTIAN WORSHIP are—1. Let all things be done in decency and order. 2. Unto edifying. (*Canon H. Stowell, M.A.*) *The axe at the root*:—1. The worship Christ here established involved a change—"The hour cometh." 2. It was a distinguishing kind of worship, separating the true worshippers from the false. 3. It was directed towards the Father as its object. 4. It originates in a work of grace—"seeketh." 5. Its nature is Spirit and Truth. I. THE HISTORY OF WORSHIP. 1. Before the Flood it was of the simple form; the outward ordinances were few, the chief of which were the offering of animal sacrifices. Connected with this, no doubt, was the meeting of gracious hearts for prayer, and also the ministration of truth since Enoch prophesied. But this worship was too spiritual. Cain commenced a schism, and set up taste and self as a guide in religious worship. The result was a general neglect of religion. 2. The patriarchal method. The head of the family offered sacrifice, and, as in the case of Job, household religion was maintained. But very early, although he could not forget God after the Deluge, man began to interpose visible objects between himself and God. The use of Teraphim became common even among those who had some knowledge of God. The nations being dispersed, soon lost the idea of the invisible, and worshipped idols. 3. The ceremonial form was instituted after the spiritual had broken down. This was suitable to the infancy of the Church, but is as unsuitable now as swaddling clothes would be to full grown men. But even while it existed it was spoken of as soon to be superseded, was frequently broken through by Divine authority, and had no visible thing to worship. In spite of it all, however, idolatry was the common sin of Israel, from which they had to be purged by the Captivity. 4. Since that day God has been treated in one of three ways—(1) Adored by outward symbols, as among Brahmins, Romanists, &c; (2) Worshipped through

ritualism or unbending forms; (3) Or neglected altogether for superstition. The lesson of all which is, that men will, if they can, find a substitute for God. 5. Christ comes to tell us now that His worship is wholly spiritual. II. ACCOUNT FOR THE RARITY OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. 1. Because man has fallen, that as his body wants clothing so he is always dressing up his religion. 2. It is more difficult to worship God in spirit than in form. 3. To worship God spiritually men must part with their sins. 4. Men cannot traffic in spiritual religion. III. WHY IS SUCH WORSHIP TO BE RENDERED? Why not with windmills, as in Thibet? 1. God seeks spiritual worship. To set up our own forms, therefore, is to insult God. 2. God is a spirit, otherwise it might be right to worship Him with material substances or something congenial to humanity. IV. WHAT THEN? 1. Let us be particularly jealous of anything which looks like going back to ceremonialism. 2. Let us make it matter of heart searching as to whether this service has been ours. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I. IN SPIRIT, as regards the inward power. II. IN TRUTH, the outward form; the first strikes at hypocrisy, the last at idolatry. (*Caryl.*) *Where to pray*:—We had gone out of doors, and are sent within. Go entirely within—and if perchance you seek some lofty place, some holy place, show yourself within a temple of God. For the temple of God is holy; which temple are ye? If you wish to pray in a temple, pray in yourself. But first be a temple of God, because He will hear the one who prays in His temple. (*Augustine.*) *Appropriate worship*:—He that shall serve God, as a Spirit, in spirit and in truth; he that shall serve God, as Holy, with probity of manners; as Omniscient, with reverence of thought; as everywhere present, with composure of actions; as bountiful, with willingness of heart; as merciful, with imitating that mercy we hope for—such a one shows what Christianity is, and that it is the only standard of a "reasonable service" (Micah vi. 6–8; Eph. v. 1, 2). (*Dean Young.*) **Seeketh.**—The expression is peculiar. There is something like it in the sentence, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke xix. 10). It seems to show the exceeding compassion of the Father, and His infinite willingness to save souls. He does not merely "wait" for men to come to Him. He "seeks" for them. It also shows the wide opening of God the Father's mercy under the gospel. He no longer confines His grace to the Jews. He now seeks and desires to gather in everywhere true worshippers out of every nation. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

Ver. 24. **God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.**—*God is a Spirit*:—There are two ways of knowing and describing God—Affirmatively, which ascribes to Him whatever is excellent; Negatively, which separates from Him whatever is imperfect. The first is like a painting, which adds one colour to another to make a lovely picture; the other like a carving, which cuts away what is superfluous. The latter is the easier. When we say that God is infinite, immense, immutable, they are negatives. Spirit, too, is a negation—not a body. We transfer the term to God because spirit is the highest excellence in our nature. It is signified in the Divine Name (Exod. iii. 14), and expressly declared in text and Heb. xii. 9. I. THE DOCTRINE. God is a pure spiritual being. Otherwise—1. He could not be the Creator. Every artificer has his model first in his mind. 2. He could not be One. If He had a body He would be capable of division. Where there is the greatest unity there is the greatest simplicity (Deut. vi. 4). 3. He could not be invisible (1 Tim. i. 17; John v. 37). Sometimes a representation is made to the inward sense (1 Kings xx. 19; Isa. vi. 1), but not of the Essence. Sometimes men are said to see Him face to face (Gen. xxxii. 30; Deut. xxxiv. 10), but only in the sense of fuller manifestation. 4. He could not be infinite (2 Chron. ii. 6). The very heavens have their limits. 5. He could not be independent. What is compounded of parts depends on those parts, and is after them; as the parts of a watch are in time before it. But God is not so (Isa. xliv. 6). 6. He would not be immutable (Mal. iii. 6). 7. He could not be omnipresent (Deut. iv. 39; Jer. xxiii. 24), since a body can not be in two places at the same time. 8. He could not be the most perfect Being. The most perfect is the most spiritual and simple, as gold among metals is most free from alloy (1 John. i. 5). II. THE OBJECTION. How can God be a spirit when bodily members are ascribed to Him? 1. This is in condescension to our weakness. We are not able to conceive a spirit but by some physical attribute. 2. These signify the acts of God as they bear some likeness to ours. His wisdom is called His eye; His efficiency, His hand and arm; by His face, we understand the manifestation of His favour; by His mouth, the revelation of His will; by His heart, the sincerity of His affections, &c. 3. Truly

those members which are the instruments of the highest actions are thus employed. 4. These may be figuratively understood with respect to the Incarnation. 5. We must conceive of them, therefore, not according to the letter but the intent. When Christ calls Himself a Vine, Bread, Light, who understands Him literally? III. THE USE. If God be a pure spiritual Being, then—1. Man is not the image of God according to his external form, but in the spiritual faculties (Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10). It is unreasonablo to form any image of Him. This was forbidden by Pythagoras, undreamt of by the Romans for 170 years, and deemed wicked by the Germans. God has absolutely prohibited it (Exod. xx. 5; Deut. v. 8–9; Isa. xi. 18). (1) We cannot fashion His image. Can we that of our own souls? (2) To do so would be unworthy of God (Jer. x. 8, 14; Rom. i. 23–25: Exod. xxxii. 31). (3) Yet is natural to man. 2. Our conceptions must be directed towards God as a pure, perfect spirit, than which nothing can be conceived more perfect, pure, and spiritual. Conceive of Him as excellent without any imperfection; a spirit without parts; great without quantity; perfect without quality; everywhere without place; powerful without members; understanding without ignorance; and when you have risen to the highest, consider Him as infinitely beyond. 3. No corporeal thing can defile Him, no more than the quagmire can tame the sunbeam. 4. He is active and communicative. The more anything approaches the nature of spirit, the more diffusive it is—air, *e.g.* As a spirit God is—(1) Possessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. i. 3); (2) Indefatigable in acting. If we be like God, the more spiritual we are, the more active we shall be. 5. He is immortal (1 Tim. i. 17). 6. We see how to communicate with Him; by our spirits. We can only know and embrace a spirit with our spirits (Psa. xi. 17; Eph. iv. 23). 7. He only can he the true satisfaction of our spirits. 8. We must take most care of that wherein we are most like God. 9. We must take heed of those sins which are spiritual (2 Cor. vii. 1). (*S. Charnock, B.D.*) *The spirituality of God*:—I. GOD IS INVISIBLE. We can only see what has form. It is no imperfection in our vision that it cannot see what it was never made to see. A spirit can only be known by its operations through a material body. God manifests Himself not to sense, but to experience. II. GOD CANNOT ASSUME A MATERIAL FORM, for it would confine Him, whereas He is everywhere. Whoever imagined the form of God. The most rapt prophet has only seen light unapproachable as His symbol. III. GOD HAS ASSUMED FORMS BY WHICH HE HAS MANIFESTED HIMSELF. 1. The pillar of cloud. 2. The burning bush. 3. The elements, as at Sinai. 4. A more definite form in Isa. vi. 5. In the fiery furnace as a man. 6. As the angel of the covenant. IV. GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF IN THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST. "The image of the invisible God." (*J. T. Duryea, D.D.*) *Of God and His natural perfections*:—I. THERE IS BUT ONE GOD. We are led to this—1. By the light of nature. There can be but one infinite and supreme; it is a contradiction to suppose otherwise. The wiser of the heathen philosophers had their one supreme god. 2. By revelation (Deut. xxxii. 39; Isa. xliii. 10; Mark xii. 29). II. THIS GOD IS A SPIRIT. 1. He is incorporeal and invisible (Col. i. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 16; John v. 37). 2. He lives and acts (John v. 26; Psa. xxxvi. 9). 3. He has understanding and will (Psa. civ. 24; Eph. i. 11; Isa. xxviii. 29; Dan. iv. 35). III. THIS GOD IS AN INFINITELY PERFECT SPIRIT, and is distinguished in a transcendent manner from other spirits. 1. An infinite Spirit (Isa. xl. 15–17). 2. A self-sufficient and independent Spirit (Exod. iii. 14; Isa. xliv. 24; Job xxii. 2, 3; Rev. iv. 11). 3. An eternal Spirit (Ps. xc. 2, ix. 7, cii. 27). 4. An unchangeable Spirit (James i. 17). (1) In His being and perfection. (2) In His glory. (3) In His blossedness. (4) In His decrees (Job xxiii. 13; Psa. xxxii. 11; Isa. xlvi. 10, 11). (5) In His promises (Isa. liv. 10; Mal. ii. 6). 5. An omnipresent Spirit (Jer. xxiii. 24; Acts xvii. 27, 28; Psa. cxxxix. 7–10). 6. An all-knowing Spirit (Psa. cxlvii. 5; Heb. iv. 13; Job xxxiv. 21, 22). On this ground He challenges the heathen (Isa. xli. 22, 23). All this He knows of Himself without any external medium (Isa. xl. 14; Psa. xciv. 10). 7. An Almighty Spirit (Psa. xxxiii. 6; Eph. iii. 20). Application—1. How absurd and abominable are all images of God (Jer. x. 8, 14; Rom. i. 23–25). 2. What awful sentiments should we entertain of Him. 3. What a dreadful enemy and what a comfortable friend He must be. 4. How thankfully should we embrace a gospel revelation which makes Him accessible. (*J. Guyse, D.D.*) *The nature and worship of God*:—I. GOD IS A SPIRIT. All the substances with which we are acquainted are resolvable into material and spiritual. Between them there is this essential difference, that no matter, however refined, can be so organized as to be capable of originating a single feeling. Where, therefore, there is a judgment, will, affections,

there is the subsistence which we call spirit. Of this kind is the spirit of man. But human and angelic spirits are finite; God is infinite. Because God is an infinite Spirit—1. He is present in every place, and therefore His worshippers may in every place find Him. "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit?" 2. From this property arises the perfection of His knowledge, His omniscience. However matter may be extended, it would possess no consciousness of any object with which it might come in contact. But when we conceive of spiritual presence we conceive of consciousness and knowledge too. Wherever we are present we know. Apply this to God. He is present to mark the risings of desire. Let this admonish the sinner. But it is at the same time most encouraging to the real worshipper, who is conscious of his own sincerity, to know that God searcheth the heart. 3. Hence arises the consideration of His ceaseless activity. We feel conscious of something of this in ourselves. We find no weariness in the operations even of a finite spirit; the power of the soul is now far too mighty for the feebleness of the body. But "My Father worketh hitherto," &c. Every faithful worshipper is absolutely sure, not only of the notice of His eye, but of the unwearied operation of His hand. 4. We thence infer the unchangeableness of His nature. An infinite Spirit must, of necessity, be immutable. Even we, imperfect and changeable as we are, yet, in some degree, partake of this property. The body grows and increases in strength, and then it weakens and decays. Not so the spirit; that remains essentially the same. There are two kinds of change of which created spirits are capable, and which strongly mark their natural imperfection: they may change from good to bad; and from good to better. But God fills the whole orb of perfection at once. II. GOD OUGHT TO BE WORSHIPPED because—1. He ought to be acknowledged; and publicly worshipped, because publicly acknowledged. 2. It is in acts of religious worship that we acquire just views of ourselves. If we do not regularly draw nigh to God, there will spring up within us a principle fatal to our peace and destructive of our salvation. The acts of solemn worship always prevent our thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. 3. We have no reason to expect the slightest blessing except through the medium of His worship. God will be inquired of by us. 4. The exalted pleasure which the soul receives from religious worship. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles," &c. 5. It is one direct means of preparing us for heaven. A great part of the happiness of heaven will consist in worship. III. WE MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH. 1. "In truth." (1) In opposition to the shadowy dispensation of the law. (2) In a true manner: that is, in the way which He has Himself appointed through the mediation of Christ. 2. "In spirit." It is possible to worship Him in truth, and not in spirit. Orthodoxy does not necessarily produce piety. What is implied in this. It is to worship Him—(1) As a known, and not as an unknown, God. The understanding is thus called in. (2) With a submissive will. Where the will is in rebellion, God cannot be worshipped. (3) With the affections. (*a*) Desire. (*b*) Faith or trust. (*c*) Gratitude. (*R. Watson.*) *Christian worship a necessity:*—When Felix, the youthful martyr of Abitina, having confessed himself a Christian, was asked whether he had attended meetings, he replied, with an explosion of scorn, "As if a Christian could live without the Lord's ordinance." (*Rendall.*) *True worship is spontaneous:*—A little girl went out to pray in the fresh snow. When she came in she said, "Mamma, I couldn't help praying when I was out at play." "What did you pray, my dear?" "I prayed the snow-prayer, mamma, that I once learned at the Sunday School: 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'" "What a beautiful prayer! And here is a sweet promise to go with it: 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.'" And what can wash them white, clean from every stain of sin? The Bible answers, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (*R. A. Bertram.*) *God is a Spirit:*—God is a Spirit, as man is a spirit. There is no difference as to what may be termed the popular characters of spirit, between the spirit of man, and God, considered as a Spirit; for God made man in His own image. But there is one great and radical difference. Human and angelic spirits are finite; God, whom we worship, is infinite. (*R. Watson.*) *Spiritual worship essential:*—We cannot be truly said to worship God if we want sincerity; a statue upon a tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good and as true a service—nay, it is better, it represents all that it can be framed to, but for us to worship without our spirits is a presenting God with a picture, an echo, voice, and nothing else, a complement; a mere lie, "a compassing Him about with lies." (*S. Charnock.*) *What is spiritual worship:*—Our worship is spiritual when the door of the heart is shut against all

intruders, as our Saviour commands in closet-duties. It was not His meaning to command the shutting of the closet door, and leaving the heart door open for every thought that would be apt to haunt us. (*Ibid.*) *God's spirituality a necessity:* —If God were an infinite body, He could not fill heaven and earth, but with the exclusion of all creatures. Two bodies cannot be in the same space; they may be near one another, but not in any of the same points together. A body bounded He hath not, for that would destroy His immensity; He could not then fill heaven and earth, because a body cannot be at one and the same time in two different spaces; but God doth not fill heaven at one time, and the earth at another, but both at the same time. Besides, a limited body cannot be said to fill the whole earth, but one particular space in the earth at a time. A body may fill the earth with its virtue, as the sun, but not with its substance. Nothing can be everywhere with a corporeal weight and mass; but God, being infinite, is not tied to any part of the world, but penetrates all, and equally act, by His infinite power in all. (*Ibid.*) *The spirituality of God:*—The knowledge of God is the foundation of all true religion. I. GOD IS A SPIRIT. In proportion as we are able to subject objects to the process of analysis and combination, we ascertain their true properties. Hence, the material world is more known than the immaterial. 1. We learn, that the spiritual mode of existence attributed to the Deity is essentially different from any sensible or material mode. When our Lord, therefore, said, that God was a Spirit, He asserted there was an infinite difference in all the essential properties of His nature from matter in any of its possible modifications. 2. The vast superiority of a spiritual over a material or compound nature. Mind is universally esteemed more valuable than matter in its most beautiful forms. But the superiority of spirit is not only apparent over matter, but over a nature compounded of matter and spirit. Once more; this compound nature is inferior to the spiritual, inasmuch as it is necessarily liable to change: it has an inherent tendency to dissolution. Again, spirituality of essence appears to be the condition of infinite perfection. It is that alone in which infinite perfection can inhere. We have already seen that mind is the test of power, wisdom, intelligence; and that none of the moral perfections of Jehovah can be predicated of simple matter. Justice, goodness, love, and compassion, are principles that belong exclusively to spirit. But we cannot infer, from the possession of these moral excellences, that God is simply spirit; for these qualities may attach to a complex nature, as they sometimes do in man. It is the infinity of His perfections that indicates the exclusive character of His essence. II. DRAW SOME PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS. The first is suggested by the context. "They that worship Him." The construction of the sentence denotes the necessary connection that subsists between acceptable worship, and the nature of the object worshipped. If God is a Spirit, then we must worship Him with our spirits. 2. The spirituality of the Divine essence is the foundation of an intimate union between God and His intelligent creation, and should encourage our approach to Him. It forms a union of nature which could not subsist were He mere matter, and which cannot be with regard to substances that are exclusively material. 3. The spirituality of the Divine nature constitutes God an inexhaustible source of blessedness. We are conversant in the present world with material objects; they are the occasion of a great portion of our pleasures. But we are all conscious that they are an unsatisfying portion. To conclude: What a character of condescension and mercy does our subject give to the gospel of Jesus Christ: that economy of grace which makes God known in the Person of His Son. (*S. Summers.*) *The nature of acceptable worship:*—I. LET US OFFER SOME GENERAL REMARKS ON PUBLIC WORSHIP. 1. All places are alike acceptable with God. 2. Public worship should be conducted according to the Word of God. 3. Public worship is the duty and privilege of all believers. 4. Public worship requires due preparation, and right feelings in entering upon it. 5. Public worship should be constant and regular. 6. Public worship should be followed by reflection and prayer. II. THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DIRECTIONS CONTAINED IN THE TEXT. "God is a Spirit," &c. That is, He is not a corporeal being, therefore not confined to any locality, &c. 1. God is a Spirit, therefore He requires the worship of the mind. 2. God is an invisible Spirit, and therefore He must be worshipped in the spirit of faith. 3. God is a great and glorious Spirit, and therefore we must worship Him in the spirit of reverence and fear. 4. God is a holy Spirit, therefore we must worship Him with contrition and prayer. 5. God is a merciful and gracious Spirit, and therefore we should worship Him in the spirit of confidence and hope. 6. God is a Spirit of infinite benevolence and love, and therefore we should worship Him in

the spirit of affection and delight. 7. God is an omniscient Spirit, and therefore we must worship Him in sincerity and truth. Application: 1. Remember your constant unworthiness and need. 2. Christ's preciousness and merit. 3. And the Spirit's willingness to aid you, if you seek His influences. (*Jabez Burns, D.D.*) *Christian worship*:—The spirit of adoration is as old as the records of humanity. Adam heard the voice of God in the garden. Abel offered sacrifice to an unseen power; and the guilty Cain bowed with his gift, though it was not accepted. From the border line of light, where authentic history fails us, we feel our way back towards the birth of man by the ruins of temples and the fragments of solemn tradition. Of early races and nations that have perished, we know, in many instances, nothing more than this—they worshipped. The disposition to worship belongs to the structure of the human soul. Religious ideas are changed by the progress and diffusion of knowledge. Forms and theories of worship are shattered and left behind by the enlargement and march of the intellect. Is it probable that worship itself will be outgrown? Sometimes we hear of fears that it may be so—that the advance of science will yet eradicate the tendency to prayer and homage. The answer is this: "Is it likely that the progress of science will degrade human nature and extinguish one of the deepest elements of human nobleness?" With the gain of knowledge we instinctively associate the advance of our race. Think, for a moment, of this globe filled with inhabitants, and no spire or dome of praise on it, no pulse or throb of adoration in all its millions! Think of this globe simply in its physical aspect, "a crust of fossils and a core of fire," spinning in the bleak immensity, and bearing myriads on myriads of intelligent creatures yearly around the sun, without wonder, without awe, without any cry from brain or heart into the surrounding mystery! Suppose that the minds of these multitudes shall be cultured far beyond the average of even the most favoured classes now, would you account it an advance of human nature, if all this knowledge was gained at the cost of the sense of a vast, incomprehensible power, within whose sweep the world and all its interests is bound? Worship will cease when wonder dies in the heart of man, and when the sense of the infinite is expunged from his soul. Is the progress of knowledge likely to produce either of these results? How can all the light we can collect and concentrate from finite facts release us from the conception of the infinite, or help us to enclose it within the tiny measure of our thought? And when has science so explained anything as to banish wonder from the mind that appreciates the explanation? Ah! against what folly are we arguing thus? Our knowledge in this universe to dry up the springs of awe, and deliver us from the weakness of adoration! Let the man come forward who is ready to say, under the starry arch of night, "I know so much of nature that I blow as a bubble from me the thought of God, and count it childish to entertain the thought of a Sovereign Mind!" Did Newton feel like saying that? Would Herschel say that in his observatory? If they had said it, should we think of them as greater men than now? It will not be the progress of knowledge, but the decay of the noble elements in human nature, that will ever banish worship from the world. Indeed the glory of knowledge is in fellowship with the devout sentiment. There are three purposes for which we may study truth—to obtain power over nature, to cultivate and enlarge our minds, and to discern and acknowledge a revelation from a boundless and invisible thought. I say nothing in disparagement of the first two. They are essential to civilization. The last is not inconsistent with devotion to the others. But if men stop with the first two, do they not miss the highest relations of truth? It is to refresh men with this noblest relation of truth and knowledge that churches are built. Worship is the exercise which the Church is to sustain. And all the aspects of truth which will bend the mind of man in humility, and exalt it in adoration, are legitimately within the range of the pulpit, and are, indeed, a portion of its trust. I have said that the glory of knowledge lies in the acceptance of truth as a manifestation of an Infinite mind. And this is a conception that cannot be outgrown. It is ultimate. We can grow in the acknowledgment of it, in the power and blessedness which acquaintance with it brings; but the wisest man that will ever live will never go beyond it. Civilization depends on the continuance of faith in the personality and holiness of God. It is only through that faith that the consciences of men will be illumined, the will of man curbed, the devotion and sacrifice of heroes in the cause of truth inspired and confirmed. But there is still a higher conception connected with the personality and purity of God—the word "Father." God is one, God is holy, God is the Father—the Infinite is love; then the attraction is complete in the heavens for all the faculties of man, and for all human

faculties in every race, in every age, and in all stages of progress and attainment. We owe this final revelation to Jesus Christ. The sense of mystery, the sense of beauty, the will, the conscience, the affections—all are drawn upward to that name with which, through Him, the Infinite has clothed Himself. Adoration of the Father is the distinctively Christian worship. (*T. Starr King.*) *The nature and worship of God*:—I. THE NATURE OF GOD. 1. Being a Spirit, He is a living substance; for though all living things be not spirits, every spirit is a living thing. The soul and angels are spirits, therefore live, but not in themselves (Acts xvii. 28). God lives in and of Himself (John v. 26; Psa. xxxvi. 9). 2. He is incorporeal, or without body (Luke xxiv. 39). The Anthropomorphites and Audiarii of old, and so some new heretics, have asserted that God has a body, contrary to Rom. i. 23; Isa. xl. 18. Objection: God is said to have (1) a head (Dan. vii. 9); (2) a face (Psa. xxvii. 8, xxxiv. 6); (3) eyes (Psa. xxxiv. 15); (4) hands (Psa. xxxviii. 2; Acts iv. 28); (5) a mouth (Matt. iv. 4); (6) ears (Psa. xxxi. 2); (7) arms (Exod. vi. 6; Isa. liii. 1); (8) fingers (Exod. xxxi. 18); (9) Bowels (Isa. lxiii. 15). Answer: (1) God speaks after the manner of men and to our capacity. We see by the eye: by that, therefore, God signifies to us His omniscience, &c. 3. He cannot be felt, because no body. Objection, Acts xvii. 27. Answer: We cannot feel God Himself, but by His creatures (Rom. i. 19, 20). 4. He is invisible and cannot be seen (Job ix. 11; 1 John iv. 12). No man can see Him (Exod. xxxiii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 16). Reason: God has no body, shape, nor colour, and we cannot see our souls. Objection: God appeared to Abraham (Gen. xviii. 1), and to Israel (Deut. v. 24), and others. Answer: Only by special manifestations of His glory. Objection: We shall see God (1 John iii. 2; 1 Cor. xiii. 12). Answer: With our soul, not with our bodily eyes. II. THE WORSHIP HE DESIRES. Not as if no external rites were to be used. Christ Himself lifted up His eyes (John xvii. 1); knelt (Luke xxii. 41); fell on His face (Matt. xxvi. 39); and instituted the sacrament (see also Eph. iii. 14; Acts xxi. 5). We are to worship in spirit and in truth. 1. Not with the types and shadows of the Old Testament, but according to the truth of them as exhibited in the New (John i. 17, xvii. 17). 2. Not under any bodily shape, because He is a Spirit. The Samaritans worshipped Him under the representation of a dove on Mount Gerizim; hence their worship was called "strange worship" by the Jews. This was not to worship in truth (Rom. i. 23–25). But we are to worship God only as a Spirit, and so truly, not entertaining our gross conceits, or making any picture of Him (Deut. iv. 14–16). 3. Not only with external, but with internal worship. (1) By performing all our devotions with our minds (1 Cor. xiv. 15). (2) By preferring Him in our judgments before all else (Psa. lxxiii. 25). (3) By submitting our wills to His (Luke xxii. 42). 4. By putting our trust and confidence in Him (Psa. xxxvii. 3–6). 5. By devoting ourselves wholly to His service and obedient to His commands (1 Sam. xv. 22). Application: 1. This is the only worship acceptable to Him (Isa. i. 11–12). 2. This is agreeable to His nature; He is a spirit and knows the heart (Ezek. xxxiii. 31). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Spiritual religion*:—Our religion is true, deep, high, and broad in proportion as it grasps the fact that God is a Spirit, and as it recognizes that that which gives life and force to natural and historical religion is spirituality. I. This aspect of the Divine nature CLEARS AWAY MANY PERPLEXITIES AND DIFFICULTIES WHICH GATHER ROUND THE DOCTRINE OF GOD. The same is true regarding man considered as a spirit. 1. The forms of expression borrowed from nature which describe God—rock, fortress, shield, &c.—will mislead us if taken literally. 2. The same is true with regard to the anthropomorphic expressions of the ancient covenant—hands, feet, husband, king, father. 3. And yet again with reference to the metaphysical words of a later time—procession, generation, substance, person. Each of these taken literally leads us away from the spiritual, essential nature of God. But—4. There are three supreme Biblical definitions which are all of a spiritual character: God is "Spirit," "Light," "Love." Let us hold fast to these; they express the moral nature of God and the very essence of the Christian faith. II. This same aspect tells us how GOD WILLS THAT THE WORLD SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO HIM. 1. Not by compulsion. 2. Not by the external decrees of authority. 3. Not by reproaches and curses. 4. Not by mere miracles and signs of outward power, which, although secondary means of persuasion, are not the main instruments. 5. But by the internal evidence of the spirit of Christianity, which was the earliest method. III. IT IS THROUGH THE INWARD SPIRIT OF THINGS, AND NOT THROUGH THE OUTWARD FORM, THAT GOD IS APPROACHED. 1. It is not the letter of any creed or ordinance, or even of the Bible, but the meaning and inner spirit which vivifies and

explains everything. "The letter killeth, the Spirit giveth life." 2. The signs and ordinances of religion derive all their force from the directness with which they address our reason, conscience, and affections. The outward form may vary, but if the inward meaning is the same the essential grace is there. 3. God can be worshipped on heath or mountain side or upper room as well as in the most splendid cathedral; but also in the cathedral as well as on the heath, &c. And that is the more spiritual aspect of religion which recognizes the possibility of both; which comprehends the highest manifestations of the human spirit in architecture, music, painting, poetry, and yet steadily subordinates them to the moral purposes of truth, justice, and purity. 4. It is not the sublime and the grand, but the mean, ugly, and barbarous which binds itself to idolatrous usages; not the vast aisles of a venerable abbey, but the narrow cell; not the awe-inspiring figures wrought by Raphael or Michael Angelo, but the hideous block picture. Luther said, "Do not listen to those who open their mouths and call out 'Spirit, Spirit, Spirit!' and then break down all the bridges by which the Spirit can enter." No! Make the best of all the gifts of God. They are all bridges, but only bridges. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The simplicity of Christ's sublime disclosures*:—Pythagoras taught the maxim to his disciples and scrupulously observed it himself, "Never wear the types of the gods upon your rings." That is to say, do not publish your highest and most sacred truths to the ignorant and uninitiated. Jesus Christ acts here, however, on a totally different principle; in the fulness of His heart He makes to this poor sinful woman some of His sublimest revelations. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *God like the wind*:—This disclosure doubtless is of infinite depth; but that exquisite saying of Gregory the Great's that Scripture has depths for an elephant to swim in and shallows in which a lamb can wade, is capable of being pushed a little further. Oftentimes the same Scripture is at once a depth for one and a shallow for another, and thus it is here. We shall do little honour to our Lord's skill in teaching, His adaptation of His words to the needs of His hearers, if, in seeking high things, we failed to find in these words some simple truth, such as that poor ignorant woman was capable of grasping, and such as at that moment she needed. "God is a Spirit"; we must not miss, assuredly she did not miss, the significant image on which this word reposes; like the wind therefore, to which He is likened, breathing and blowing where He will, penetrating everywhere, owning no circumscriptions, tied to no place, neither to Mount Zion nor to Mount Gerizim; but rather filling all space with His presence (Psa. cxxxix. 7; 1 Kings viii. 27; Isa. lxvi. 1), in His essence and, as involved in this very title, free. On this it follows that "they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (*Abp. Trench.*) *The worship God desires*:—The best, the purest, the holiest and most pious worship of the gods is to worship them with a heart and tongue always pure, upright, and untainted. (*Cicero.*)

Vers. 25–26. **I know that Messias cometh . . I . . . am He.**—*Second evasion and reply*:—The stricken deer tries once more to wrench the arrow from the wound; the wanderer thus caught amid the entangling thorns makes yet one other effort to escape the pursuing shepherd; the bold transgressor, unable to discuss these high spiritual themes, tries to stifle her convictions by the new plea of procrastination, wishing to break off the conversation in the spirit of conscious-stricken Felix. I. POSTPONING THE QUESTION OF SALVATION TO AN INDEFINITE CONVENIENT SEASON, THE CRY OF THE CONVICTED SOUL IS "GIVE ME THIS WATER!"—BUT NOT YET. 1. "Give me this water!" is the cry of youth—but not yet. Disturb not my bright sunny morning; wait till I reach the threshold of manhood. 2. "Give me this water!" is the cry of ripening manhood—but not yet. Disturb me not in the burden and heat of the day; wait till I have leisure and breathing-time; wait till the eventide sets in, and the shadows are lengthening, and the drawers of water stand with their pitchers around life's fountains. 3. "Give me this water!" is the cry of old age—but not yet. Though far advanced in the pilgrimage journey, my strength is yet firm. I have a long evening ere the sunset hour. I may linger yet a while amid these olive-glades ere the flagon be let down for a draught. 4. "Give me this water!" is the cry of the dying. But postponement cannot be pled now; procrastination merges into despair. "Give me this water!" but it is too late. II. IN HER ATTEMPTS AT EVASION THE WOMAN HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SHAKE OFF HER CONVICTIONS THAT SHE STOOD BEFORE A SUPERIOR BEING. 1. She had called Him prophet. The Jews looked for a kingly Messiah, the Samaritans for a prophetic. As she listened to His wondrous disclosures did the thought flash across her mind,

"Can this be He?" The world was then expecting a Divine advent. Besides the prediction of Moses, her own Pentateuch had told her of the prophet who fifteen hundred years before had lifted up his voice on the hills on which she could now gaze. Caravans passing daily Jacob's well must have brought tidings of John's testimony. 2. The crisis of her life had come. Will the Saviour abandon her to her procrastination and say, as was said of her tribe, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone?" or will He disclose His Divine Person? Such a disclosure may be fraught with peril. But the destiny of a human soul depends upon it; He will save others, but not Himself. III. WHAT A REJOINDER TO HER QUESTION—"Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?" Yes, I am the Shiloh of whom he spake, the ladder he beheld, the angel with whom he wrestled. The Baptist's words have their first echo and fulfilment, "He will gather His wheat into the garner." She understands all now—the penetrating revelations, the living water, salvation. The Giver of all stands by her and offers them to her. She requires no miracles. IV. THE IMMEDIATE SEQUEL IS UNRECORDED. Her feelings are left to our imagination. She may have been dumb with silence or tears. But angels rejoiced over this returning sinner as she starts on an errand of mercy to her native town. Lessons: 1. Christ stands at the door of every heart. 2. None need despair; the first may be last and the last first; for Samaritan as well as Jerusalem sinners may find mercy. 3. Christ speaks in many ways—in the mercies He bestows, in the blessings He withholds; in life's storms and sunshine. 4. Christ speaks at every season. (1) Early in the morning to His disciples on the lake shore—to youth in life's early morning. (2) At midday as here—in the hot noon of day to manhood and womanhood. (3) At eventide on the way to Emmaus—in life's evening to the aged. (4) At night to Nicodemus—to the dying. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) **Messias.**—*Messiah*:—The Hebrew, Messias in the Syriac, and Christ in the Greek, means "the Anointed One." Anointing with oil was the ancient form of consecration. Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost. I. THE PROOFS OF CHRIST'S MESSIAHSHIP. 1. He was generally expected. (1) Among the Jews. (2) Among the Gentiles, as attested by the visit of the Magi and the testimony of classical writers. This is due to the settlement of the Jews among the heathen. 2. The miracles of Christ were the proof to which He always referred. These were—(1) Performed in public. (2) Wrought in different places. (3) Many in number. (4) Not denied by His enemies. 3. The prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Him and in no one else. (1) These were too jealously guarded for the evangelists to tamper with them. (2) An impostor could not have fulfilled them. A man cannot arrange the place of his birth and his family, and would not have been diligent to fulfil prophecies which related to persecution and death. 4. The character of our Lord. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Some have thought that if Virtue were to walk on earth all men would immediately worship her. Plato knew better. He says the good man "would be tortured, spit upon, have his eyes put out, and be crucified." II. THE NATURE AND BLESSINGS OF CHRIST'S MESSIAHSHIP. 1. He is the true prophet. (1) Note the characteristics of His teaching. (*a*) How weighty His lessons—life and immortality, faith, self-denial, prayer, humility, love. (*b*) How beautiful His illustrations—cornfields, lilies, leaven, fishing. (*c*) How kind His manner—what tenderness to young and afflicted, what encouragement to the timid. (*d*) How faithful His warnings. "Never man spake like this man." (2) He taught by example as well as precept. (3) What is the testimony of believers to His teaching? (*a*) When He spoke to our hearts it was with power. (*b*) We learned more from Him in five minutes than in all our lives from others. 2. Christ is High Priest. (1) The priests were washed in water and anointed with oil. Christ was baptized and imbued with the Spirit. (2) The priestly functions were sacrifice, intercession, benediction. Christ "offered Himself"; "ever liveth to make intercession for us"; "gives the Spirit." 3. Christ is King. (1) By personal right. (2) By donation from the Father. (3) By purchase. (4) By conquest. (5) By voluntary surrender. (*J. M. Randall.*) *The woman of Samaria*:—And in bringing a man to this state, we may observe that, commonly, some one particular sin, gross in its nature, and to which he has been addicted, is charged home upon the conscience. But a broad surface is not likely to penetrate; it must be pointed to enter. The indictment which arraigns this criminal, like every other, exhibits some specific charge; and the man exclaims, "O my swearing, my lying, my Sabbath-breaking, my prayerless life!" "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither." But she exclaims, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Two reasons may be assigned for her proposing this question so instantly and abruptly. It has been supposed—1. That it was by way of diversion. But it has also been supposed—2. That her aim was to seize the present moment to gain information as to what was deemed important, and which she concluded this knowing one might afford. Herein two things are observable—(1) That it should cool us, in many of our contests, to remember that the things we are contending about are of short duration; and that while we are disputing, they are vanishing away. There are "things which cannot be shaken, but must remain." (2) The best way to make up differences in little things is to be zealous about great ones. To these, therefore, the Scripture always directs our regards, knowing that if these supremely occupy the mind, we shall have neither time nor inclination for comparative trifling. 1. Observe the omniscience of our Lord, and bring it home to yourselves. 2. Let us worship the Lord, "in the beauties of holiness"; and in order to this, never forget the information which our Saviour has given us. 3. Let us inquire whether He has manifested Himself to us. (*W. Jay.*) *Why this revelation of Messiahship was made to the woman and not to the Pharisees:*—The eagle has to strive hard and swoop round a great deal before he soars above the clouds, the weight of his body being a disadvantage to him to ascend. The lark, however, though smaller of stature and feebler of wing, soars up with rapidity and ease, the slightness of her body greatly facilitating her ascent. Thus minds of powerful calibre, heavily equipped with native and educational endowments, find it difficult to make their way up to the calm presence of God, their very ability being an impediment to them. Seeing every difficulty and feeling the force of every objection, they have to turn round and round and ascend laboriously in spiral columns. But many souls, small as larks, shoot up easily and gracefully, almost in a straight line, carolling all the way as they go, to the pure serene blue of the Divine Presence. To the Samaritan woman, and not to the learned Pharisees, did Christ openly avow His Messiahship, and present Himself in the majestic nakedness of His Divine mission. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *The Samaritan view of the Messiah:*—The Samaritans still expect a Messiah to whom they give the name of Assaïef (from שׁוּב, to return), which means "he who brings back" or converts, or else, "he who returns"; because the waiting of the Samaritans being founded on Deut. xviii. 18, the Messiah is in their view a Moses who returns. At the present day they call him *El-Muhdy*. There is a remarkable contrast between this woman's notion and that of the worldly and political Jews. The Samaritan idea was incomplete; the Messiah was a prophet, not a king. But it did not contain anything else; and hence Jesus can appropriate itself to Himself, and here declare Himself the Christ, which He never did in Israel till the last moment (chap. xvii. 3; Matt. xxvi. 64). (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ earnestly desired is quickly found:*—No sooner do we think of Christ with the least true desire after Him, but He is presently with us. He invited Himself to Zaccheus' table. (*J. Trapp.*)

Vers. 27–42. **And upon this.**—*Sowing and reaping:*—I. WITH A SOLITARY PUPIL. 1. Face-to-face work (ver. 27, chap. i. 42, 43, 47, xxi. 16; Acts iii. 4, ix. 5). 2. The convert's message (ver. 29; Matt. ix. 31; Mark v. 20, vii. 36; John i. 41, 45, ix. 25). 3. The dawning conviction (ver. 29; Matt. xiv. 33, xxvii. 54; Mark ix. 24; John vi. 69, xx. 28; Acts ix. 20). II. WITH A GROUP OF DISCIPLES. 1. Correcting misapprehensions (ver. 34; Matt. v. 17, xxii. 29; Mark xii. 27; Luke xiii. 2, 3; John ix. 3; Gal. vi. 7). 2. Indicating labour (ver. 35; Eccles. ix. 10; Matt. x. 6, xx. 4, xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; 1 Cor. i. 17). 3. Extending inducements (ver. 36; Dan. xii. 3; Matt. x. 22, xxiv. 46; Mark ix. 41; Rev. ii. 7, 10). III. WITH A CITY'S POPULATION. 1. Commended in the city (ver. 39; Acts viii. 5, 40, ix. 27, xi. 19, xiv. 6, 7; Rom. i. 15). 2. Honoured by the city (ver. 40; Jonah iii. 5; Matt. viii. 34, xxi. 10; Mark i. 33, vi. 56; Acts xiv. 13). 3. Accepted by a city (ver. 42; Matt. ix. 35; Acts ii. 43, viii. 8, xiii. 44, xviii. 10; Rev. xxi. 23). (*Sunday School Times.*) *Sowing and reaping:*—I. CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST (vers. 27–30). 1. On the part of the apostles, who kept silence at the strange communion. They witnessed the power of Christ to awaken new life within the soul. Further on they knew better, but as yet they were caste-bound Jews. In view of their ancient prejudices, their silence is much to their credit. The Master may be always trusted to do right. Let us not question. 2. On the part of the woman. Not simply that she felt that her water-pot would be safe, but in her Saviour. The ground of this trust was Christ's knowledge of the secret life (Dan. ii. 28–30, 47). History is full of such proofs of Christ's Divinity. He who

looks within the Gospel sees his own heart mirrored. Truly this is the book of God. II. THE SOUL'S TRUE NURTURE (vers. 31–34). 1. "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Matt. iii. 4). 2. Noble souls are fed by the simple consciousness of doing good. The patriot, mother, wife, student, missionary have forgotten hunger. 3. The best way to lift a soul above temptation is to fill it with a worthy aspiration. An empty soul is a standing invitation to the roving spirits of evil. The music of Orpheus is a surer guard than the wax of Ulysses in the ears. 4. The noblest purpose that can occupy a soul is to do God's will and finish His work. III. THE CO-PARTNERSHIP OF THE HARVEST (vers. 35–38). 1. There is always an interval between seed-time and harvest. (1) In nature. With some plants the time is less, with some more. Life, events, great thoughts, deeds, characters, are growths. A great man is the product of centuries. The present is born of the past. Impatience to reap ere the seed has matured has wrought many a barren harvest. No amount of fretting or driving will force a harvest. (2) In the spiritual world. Here the harvest is always ripe. The foregoing ages have prepared for their successors. 2. There is a fellowship in toil and fruitage between the dead and the living. The influence of the dead is continuous. "Their works do follow them." 3. "No man liveth to himself." One supplements another's toil. Joseph needed a Moses; Moses a Joshua; Joshua a Samuel; Samuel on the one hand a David, and on the other Elijah and the prophets. All these were perfected in Christ. How this should sweep away bigotry and encourage charity! 4. Our responsibility to the past and the future. (1) The past has claims upon us. If we would reap the good seed our fathers sowed we must nurture the crop that has sprung therefrom. Creeds, &c., are not to be dealt with ruthlessly. (2) The future has claims upon us. "Posterity never did anything for me," says the sneerer. But it can do much by giving you a noble purpose. Supposing your predecessors had thus argued! In sowing, let us think that we are sowing for ever, and not for present use alone. 5. The community of sower and reaper in wages. (1) The dark side. If the sowing be evil, so will be the wages. What a harvest of woe Israel reaped, and Babylon, Egypt, and Rome, and France. (2) The bright side—in both worlds. IV. TESTIMONY AND EXPERIENCE (vers. 39–42). 1. How readily the woman became a missionary! (1) Home, in that she carried the gospel to her own people. (2) Foreign, because those people were outside the pale of the true Israel. 2. The genuineness of the faith and grace of the Samaritan believers is seen in that their belief on good testimony led them to believe on good experience. (*H. C. McCook, D.D.*) *Sowing and reaping*:—I. THE GREAT TEACHER, AS HE AVAILS HIMSELF OF AN INSIGNIFICANT AND UNPROMISING OPPORTUNITY. The disciples marvelled at His doing what was beneath a Rabbi's dignity. The same spirit interposed between Christ and little children. The woman, moreover, was a despised, hated, and ignorant Samaritan. 1. This was unpromising ground, but Jesus did not consider it beneath His notice. 2. In this unpromising soil He sows the best seed. An audience of one was not too small to call forth His richest treasures of truth. 3. Here is an example for every teacher. Wesley remembered his father saying to his mother, "How could you have the patience to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?" "Because if I had only told him nineteen times I should have lost all my labour." 4. Never mind if your seed falls by the wayside: a bird may carry it elsewhere. II. THE DELIGHT OF THE TEACHER IN HIS WORK. He has sources of refreshment unknown to the disciples. He would rather work than eat. 1. No one can do his work well until he has learned to enjoy it, 2. The delight of labour is not only in that part of it which is interesting and agreeable. A teacher of imbecile children had one boy of five who had never spoken or given an intelligent look. He lay beside the child for half an hour every day, reading aloud, and watching eagerly for any volition. At length, being utterly weary, he did not read. The child began to be uneasy, and then, after repeated efforts, the child placed his fingers on the teacher's lips, as much as to say, "Make that sound again." After a time the boy was taught to walk, and speak, and think. III. THE GREAT SOWER EXPECTING A SPEEDY HARVEST. Men are too prone not to look for an early reaping, and so sometimes miss the harvest. We sow with too little hope. "Four months," said the disciples. "Now," said the Master. Expectancy is needful for courage and patience. Always look for near results. Do not pull up the stalk to see if it has taken root, but watch, and wait, and believe. IV. THE DISPROPORTIONATENESS OF THE HARVEST. The audience and time were seemingly unfavourable—the result was that many believed. 1. The woman heard and heeded. Then she ran, as did the woman from the empty tomb, to tell those nearest. 2. All barriers were broken down. They believed not

only because He spoke as never man spoke, but because He spoke the truth they needed. 3. God alone gives the increase, but He does so to the feeblest efforts. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *A fourfold theme:*—I. PREJUDICE CREATING WONDER. The disciples had never examined the question as to the inferiority of women for themselves. II. REVERENCE LIMITING INQUIRY. Though not understanding or deeming it improper, they did not dare to question. Genuine reverence will not allow the intellect to interrogate the Almighty, but recognizes the infinite disparity between the thoughts and ways of God and those of men. It becomes us to be humble listeners rather than busy critics. III. CHRISTIANITY WORKING IN LIFE. Mark how faith worked in the woman. 1. Emotionally. The more Divine our feeling the less our care for worldly things. 2. Proselytingly. Her strong desire made her a blessed missionary. 3. Religiously. She knew that Christ had sounded the depths of her history. 4. Influentially. Real earnestness wields a magic wand. IV. MAN FEASTING ON THE INVISIBLE. 1. A common natural fact—the influence of the emotions on the physical appetite. 2. The rare moral fact—the consciousness of acting in harmony with the Divine will, creating forgetfulness to bodily need. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The Samaritan woman and her mission:*—1. Christ, with divinely skilful art, seeks after a single soul. We must have large congregations or we are disinclined for soul winning. 2. See the skill which compassion taught Him. Souls yield not to force, but to gentleness and wisdom. 3. The disciples marvel because Christ talked with a woman, a Samaritan, a sinner. 4. How could they do so after Christ had chosen them? It is sad when saved ones affect superfine spirituality and turn away from such as Jesus would have welcomed. 5. In consequence of their interruption one of the sweetest conferences ever held was broken up. No breakers of communion are more blameable or frequent than Christ's disciples when out of sympathy with their Master. 6. Although the conference was broken up it was over-ruled for good. Since the woman cannot contemplate Christ nor hear Him, she will give herself to holy activity. Driven away from sitting like Mary at the Master's feet, let us rise to play the worker. When you are taken out of your usual course by a jerk, the Lord has special work for you to do. 7. The woman now becomes a messenger for Christ. From conference to testimony. 8. She leaves her waterpot—(1) For speed. (2) Perhaps her errand has made her forgetful; just as our Lord forgot His hunger in seeking her soul. (3) Without thought she hit upon as good an action as thought would have suggested. The waterpot may have been useful to Christ. (4) It was a pledge of her return. 9. Observe particularly her mode of address. (1) Her one aim was to bring the people to Christ. She said nothing about their sins, nor did she try to reform them. She called them to one who could set them right. (2) She was very earnest. (3) She was self-forgetful. If you have been a great sinner be ashamed of it, but do not be ashamed of the love which saved you. Never mind what people think—testify, and only look to what they will think of Jesus for having forgiven you. (4) She was brief. If women preached just as long as she did no one could find fault with them. (5) She was vivacious—almost as laconic as Cæsar. "I came, I saw," &c. (6) She was sensible. She did not say that Jesus was the Christ, but suggested it with great modesty for the men to examine. (7) Her argument was exceedingly strong—drawn from herself and adapted to the men. Let us look at the woman's whole message. I. THE INVITATION. 1. It was a clever, as well as a genuine and hearty invitation. "Come, see," was putting it most fairly, and men like a fair proposal. This is Christ's own word to His first disciples, and they used it when pleading with others. 2. It threw the responsibility on them. I may preach the gospel to you, but I cannot go to Christ in your stead. 3. It was pleasantly put, so as to prove the sympathy of the speaker—not "go," but "come." A sister's heart spoke in that word. 4. What a blessed vanishing of the speaker there is! Preaching is spoiled by self-consciousness. The fish knows little about the angler, but he knows when he has swallowed the hook. II. THE ARGUMENT. 1. The argument lies concealed. The woman does not argue the point. "If Jesus be the Christ, then you should come with me and see Him," because she is persuaded that the people have agreed to it. You are not so practical as these people. You believe that Jesus is the Christ; why then don't you believe in Him as your Saviour? 2. What she did argue was this—this man, is He not the Christ? because—(1) He has revealed me unto myself. Were you ever out in a black night when a single lightning flash has come? It has only smitten one oak, but it has revealed the landscape. So when the Lord showed one point in the woman's history He showed all. No one proves himself truly anointed unless he begins by showing you your sins. (2) He

has revealed Himself to me. (3) She seemed to say—"This is more to me than it can be to you, for He has dealt personally with me; therefore I abide in my assurance that He is the Christ; but go and learn for yourselves. (4) "You may come, I know, for He received me. I was at home with Him in a moment." Conclusion: *If you do not come to Christ for salvation, you will have to come to Him for judgment.* (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The mission of the woman*:—I. How MARVELLOUS IN THE EYES OF MEN ARE CHRIST'S DEALINGS WITH SOULS. 1. The feeling of the disciples does not stand alone in the Bible (Luke xv. 2; Acts ix. 26, xii. 16). 2. This feeling is common now. 3. If there was more real faith there would be less surprise at conversions (Matt. xi. 25; Mark vi. 6). II. How ABSORBING IS THE INFLUENCE OF GRACE WHEN IT FIRST COMES INTO A SINNER'S HEART (ver. 28). 1. We see the expulsive power of the grace of the Holy Ghost, driving out old tastes and interests (Matt. ix. 9; Mark i. 19; Acts ix. 20). 2. This conduct is uncommon in the present day. Why? Because so few really feel their sins and flee to Christ. III. How ZEALOUS A TRULY CONVERTED PERSON IS TO DO GOOD TO OTHERS (vers. 28, 29). 1. She employed no abstruse argument in favour of our Lord's claims. 2. Out of the abundance of her heart her mouth spoke—(1) Urgently. (2) Simply. (3) Experimentally. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Gospel work in Sychar*:—I. THE GLORY OF ALL TRUE USEFULNESS BELONGS TO CHRIST (ver. 27). The woman is nameless, and nothing else is known of her. II. COMMONPLACE SELF-DENIAL AN EVIDENCE OF GRACE (ver. 28). To leave a waterpot for a thirsty disciple better sometimes than the bequest of a fortune. Simon made a feast for Jesus, but the woman with the alabaster box showed more generosity. III. THE NEAREST FIELD OF USEFULNESS IS OFTEN THE BEST (ver. 28). She knew the prejudices of the city and the great shock they would receive. But this was the field closest to hand. Many people spend half a lifetime in looking for their vocation, whereas God is always saying, "Begin at home" (Mark v. 19). IV. WOMEN ARE SOMETIMES MORE USEFUL THAN MEN. They have more tact, fervency, fortitude. V. THE PRIVILEGE OF "HIM THAT HEARETH" IS THAT HE MAY SAY "COME" (ver. 29). The Greek is an adverb of beckoning, a gesture of language, "Hither." Let no one hesitate for addresses or acts. He who temporizes will be like Demas; he who calculates like Ananias; he who covets like Achan; but he who gives himself wholly to Christ's service will say, "Come and see." VI. REVELATION OF ONE'S SINS THE CLEAREST EVIDENCE OF JESUS' NEARNESS. VII. NO GREAT TALENT NEEDED IN ORDER TO DO GOOD (ver. 30). It is piety, not education, spirituality and experience, not culture or learning which God uses in the conversion of souls. VIII. THE SUREST MEANS OF PERSONAL GROWTH IS PATIENT LABOUR FOR THE GROWTH OF OTHERS (vers. 31–36). IX. DIVISION OF LABOUR ESSENTIAL FOR THE WORK OF THE GOSPEL (ver. 37). Some cannot preach like Whitefield; who can write letters like Harlan Page. Ingatherings are the result, often, not of preaching but prayers. X. THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL COME TO US BETTER BY EXPERIENCE THAN TESTIMONY (vers. 39–41). "If any man will do His will," &c. XI. THE BEST MEMORIAL OF ANY ONE IS FOUND IN THE SOULS HE HAS WON (ver. 42). The Empress Helena's church has perished, the memory of the woman and her work has made the well immortal. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) **Upon this came His disciples and marvelled . . . yet no man said, What seekest Thou?**—*Moments of silence*:—I. Sacred story records many CRISIS-HOURS OF THRILLING INTEREST. Eli trembling for the ark; David trembling for the fate of Absalom. II. WHO OF US HAS NOT KNOWN SIMILAR SEASONS? 1. When the telegraph has flashed the message of a distant bereavement; when we have watched an approaching dissolution. 2. Or to take the converse of these, a birth; a return; the first success in business; the triumph of an honourable ambition. These are like the *illi dies* of the old Roman, days marked with white or black chalk, symbols of joy or sorrow. 3. But what season can be compared to the crisis-hour of a soul's conversion; what day so worthy to be marked with the white chalk of gladness? III. SUCH SEASONS THRILL THE SPIRIT INTO SILENCE. 1. Is it a time of overpowering sorrow? The word expresses our meaning; the lips refuse to tell out the secrets of the dumb-stricken heart. 2. Is it some joyful occasion? Joy has its stunning moment, and holds fast the flood-gates of speech. 3. Such is the picture before us. The disciples have just come up. They hear the last most momentous words. And now not a word is uttered. All three parties are spell bound; the woman a moment before so garrulous; the disciples with all their curiosity; the Master more than all. IV. The great lesson of the incident is THE DUTY OF SILENCE UNDER THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS. 1. Often, like the disciples, we have reason to marvel at the Lord's doings. Providence often seems a dark enigma. God's name is "Secret," and

blind unbelief is prone to ask, "What seekest Thou?" in the sudden ruin of business prospects; the pillaging of dearer household treasure; the breaking of the strong staff. 2. But the duty, the prerogative, the triumph of faith is to be silent, owning the faithfulness of God as David, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it"; as Aaron who, under a deeper trial, "held his peace"; as our Lord who, "was oppressed, afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth." 3. This duty is often inculcated (Psa. xxxvii. 7 (marg.), lxii. 1; Zech. ii. 13; Hab. ii. 1–3). 4. Blessed it will be for us if, amid "frowning providences" instead of questioning, we are ready to hear the voice of the invisible saying, "Hold thee still and know that I am God." The dutiful servant asks no reason of his master; nor the loyal soldier of his commander; the faithful workman asks no reason for those rude gashes in the quarry; he is content to wait till its sculptor fashions the unshapely block into symmetry. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *The seclusion of Oriental women*:—The privilege of free speech with a woman is only accorded, in the East, to the most intimate friends of the family, who are privileged to see her face unveiled. Niebuhr, travelling in Arabia, and meeting a woman by the way, saluted her with the customary formula of Arabian politeness: *Salâmu 'alaykum*, "Peace be upon you"; but, to his astonishment, he received no response, the woman turning her back at once upon him. The reason of this proceeding became clear to Niebuhr when his Arabian companions expressed displeasure, and informed him that to address a woman by the way was a grievous insult to her. When Burton retails his piquant conversations with the Abyssinian slave-girls in Egypt, it is to be borne in mind that he is speaking of the slave-market, where men and women are treated like oxen; and that slave-girls, though they have not the rights of the free woman, are also free from many of the restrictions imposed upon her. In general, it may be said that the old rule of the Rabbins is still in force in the East; speech with a woman on the street is a grievous scandal. (*S. S. Times.*) *Jewish prejudice against women*:—A Rabbinical prejudice prevailed to the effect that woman is not capable of profound religious instruction: "Do not prolong conversation with a woman; let no one converse with a woman in the street, not even with his own wife; rather burn the sayings of the law than teach them to women. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The test of friendship*:—Even those whom we love and honour, and with whom our relations are peculiarly intimate, are likely to do things which we cannot at the time fully understand or account for. Then it is that our friendship is tested, and that it can show itself at its truest and best. A friend can be trusted even when he cannot be understood. A real friend will trust even when he does not understand. Nor does a friend always want to ask what or why when he is in doubt as to a loved one's conduct—which does not bear on his possible duty to that loved one. Peculiarly is it true that our Saviour's course, even in His dealings with ourselves, is not always understood by us. We must trust Him because we know Him, even while we do not know just what He is doing, and why, in His loving control of our interests and of His own. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *The reticence of the disciples*:—Although the hesitancy of the disciples to ask Jesus why He spoke with the woman, was due to their reverence for His character, and their trust in Him, rather than their fear of Him as their Master, yet it is to be noted that their silence was eminently Oriental. Let a high official do anything, however foolish or however unjust, and his servants will stand by impassively, giving no sign that they notice that anything unusual is taking place. After the Indian mutiny, it was remarked by many of the English officers that their body servants, who must have been aware of what was about to happen, not only gave no sign of their knowledge, but bore supercilious, and in some instances unjust, treatment from their masters without changing their attitude of impassive docility, or giving other evidence that their day of vengeance was about to dawn. Of course, when this impassive obsequiousness gets a chance to avenge itself, it does so with an excess of Oriental vindictiveness which an Occidental can hardly understand. Let the balance of power be suddenly changed, and the slavish inferiors who before cringed in the presence of their tyrant, will tread him in the dust with savage joy. (*S. S. Times.*) *Christ's treatment of the waifs and strays*:—A certain painter was once employed to adorn a window in one of our national cathedrals, a work which he did with credit and skill. The artist, however, had an ingenious inventive apprentice, who picked up and preserved all the bits of glass that were nipped off and thrown away as useless. But out of these rejected pieces—so runs the story—he constructed a window of such exquisite beauty as to command greater attention and win heartier applause than that designed by the master artist.

Thus the Scribes and Pharisees of Judaism, the poets and philosophers of Gentilism, the renowned builders of social fabric, had been constructing their imposing temples out of the best men and chastest women of their respective ages and countries; the slaves, the harlots, the publicans, had been contemptuously rejected, and trampled upon as worthless refuse. At last Jesus Christ appeared; He fixed His kind, compassionate eyes on the huge heap of human rubbish; He associated with the offscouring of society; and lo! He built a grander temple and made more beautiful windows than the world had ever beheld before, out of the soiled characters rejected by the architects and builders of states and churches as vile, noxious offal. The woman of Samaria, the "woman who was a sinner," Mary Magdalene, how attractively the light of Divine grace streams down upon our world through their variegated histories. (*J. Cynddylan Jones.*)

Vers. 28-30. **The woman left her waterpot, and went her way into the city.**—*A woman's zeal*:—I. THE ENGROSSING NATURE OF CONVERSION. 1. To meet Christ causes ordinary events to shrink into insignificance. Paul for three days did "neither eat nor drink." Bunyan "ran about the streets distracted." Fuller was "so moved that he was unable to pursue his customary avocations." These were extraordinary cases, but it is impossible to be turned from darkness to light and remain impassive. The adjusting of eternal relationships and attending to immortal interests may well make a man distracted. 2. It were better to renounce all work than to attend to the demands of the soul. To neglect the latter for the former is neither reason nor duty. 3. Religion will afterwards not impede but assist the performance of duty. The woman no doubt regained her waterpot, and cheerfully resumed her domestic toil. 4. All our instruments may become useful illustrations of God's spiritual work. The waterpot must have been a continual reminder. II. THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT EVOKED. 1. Religious joy seeks to make others share in it. Every Christian should be a centre of light and usefulness. 2. She wisely acted on the spur of the moment. Had she waited courage might have failed or excuses suggested. Nothing quenches fire like delay. 3. She hasted lest Christ should depart. The waterpot would impede her. Any time would do for water. There are times when Jesus is at the door; if these are neglected He may not return. III. THE FORCIBLE APPEAL. 1. Attention called to an object of acknowledged importance. 2. An inference suggested from a fact of personal history. 3. An invitation given (chap. i. 46, 39). IV. THE HEARTY RESPONSE. (*S. R. Aldridge, LL.B.*) *The Woman of Samaria*:—In the conversion of the woman of Samaria, we have an example of this grace; an example—1. Its freeness: in selecting for its object a profligate creature, not only without her desert, but without her desire. 2. Its sweetness: in having no recourse to violence or terror, but in adopting the most suitable, gentle, and insinuating means to convince and soften her. 3. Its power: in changing her heart and sanctifying her life. 4. Its effects: for here we see grace in its triumph, grace in its glory. No sooner is she enlightened, than she is inflamed; no sooner is she a convert, than she becomes a preacher. However this may be, the character of the persons to whom our Saviour reveals Himself has always scandalized flesh and blood. If the disciples were astonished at our Saviour's conversation with the woman, their behaviour was dutiful and submissive; they said nothing, but acquiesced in the rectitude of His procedure. And hence I would remark two things. The first regards the advice of Solomon, "If thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth." Honour our Lord with our reverence and implicit confidence when we meet with anything in His conduct that seems inexplicable. Short as the interview was, our Saviour had effectually gained her heart. 1. Perhaps it was from kindness to our Lord and His disciples. 2. Perhaps she left her waterpot from indifference. Wholly occupied now about greater things, she forgot her errand. The feelings of young converts are often very lively. 3. Perhaps, finally, she left it as an impediment to her haste, willing to lose no time in bearing home the welcome intelligence. No sooner is her opportunity of getting good over, than she seizes an opportunity of doing good. Five things may be remarked. 1. I admire her benevolence. 2. I admire her zeal. See how urgent she is. She even begins with a pressing invitation, "Come." 3. I admire her wisdom. "Come, see a man who told me all things that I did: is not this the Christ?" "You all acknowledge that Messiah cometh, and that when He is come He will tell us all things." 4. I admire her honesty. She does not say, He has told me everything pertaining to the worship of God; but "all things that ever I did." Now, if a person knew your faults, you would wish to have him shunned.

5. I admire her courage. It was no small trial for a plain and wicked woman to go openly and address the inhabitants of the place where she lived, and was perhaps well known, upon a religious subject. We now conclude, with observing—1. What a real and wonderful change does conversion always accomplish. 2. Divine grace is not an inoperative principle. As the sun no sooner rises than it shines, and as fire is no sooner kindled than it burns, so grace acts as soon as it exists. 3. Behold an apology for what some would deem officiousness. How often do you hear, as soon as any attempt is made to bring people to seriousness, "Pray do not intermeddle with us. Go to heaven your own way, and leave us to go ours." Is not charity to the soul, the soul of charity? 4. Be persuaded to resemble this woman. Endeavour to diffuse the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge, and to bring souls to Christ. It is absurd to complain of a want of opportunities and means. Much is in your power, much more than you are willing to allow. (*W. Jay.*) *The home missionary* :—1. The impulse is natural to communicate to others whatever may have been imparted to ourselves. The successful son sends word quickly home; the soldier of the forlorn hope hastens to communicate intelligence of his safety and success. The shepherd calls his neighbours to rejoice with him, and the father of the prodigal throws open his banqueting halls; Mary Magdalene "departed quickly from the sepulchre" to the disciples to communicate her joy. So with the woman of Samaria. 2. This is ever the result of saving conversion. Christianity must be expansive. The work of the Spirit is a life ever giving. 3. How unlike the selfish, grasping spirit of the world! 4. Christian influence is not confined to the active. The sick Christian may speak with a speechless eloquence. Notice—I. THE WOMAN'S CREDENTIALS. 1. Honesty and outspoken candour. In ordinary circumstances she would have shrunk from such a self-revelation. We should have expected efforts to keep them from Christ lest He should disclose more. But her honest avowal could not but have its weight with her fellow-townsmen. 2. Her earnestness; perhaps at first derided as fanatical, or hypocritical to serve her own ends. But her pleadings are irresistible. Earnestness is the power of the ministry, not charm of intellect or subtlety of reasoning, or sorcery of eloquence, but living words welling up from experience. 3. Her happiness. She had what they all wanted. II. THE SUBJECT OF HER MESSAGE. She tells what we should have expected her to withhold. 2. She omits what we should have expected her to proclaim—the well, everlasting life. 3. The effective and influential characteristic of the gospel message is not figurative descriptions and metaphysical disputes, but the direct commending of the truth to the conscience, awakening the sense of sin, and thus preparing it for the remedy. In conclusion, notice the power of feeble influences. Never undervalue weak instrumentality. (*J. R. Macduff.*) *The forgotten waterpot* :—She came to draw water, and when she had lighted upon the true Well, she after that despised the material one; teaching us even by this trifling instance when we are listening to spiritual matters to overlook the things of this life, and make no account of them. For what the apostles did, that, after her ability, did this woman also. They, when they were called, left their nets: she of her own accord, without the command of any, leaves her waterpot, and winged by joy performs the office of evangelists. And she calls not one or two, as did Andrew and Philip, but having aroused a whole city and so brought them to Him. (*Chrysostom.*) With her waterpot on her shoulder she had hitherto been listening to the Lord's discourse. She was the forerunner of those Bechuan women who would stand for hours together, with their milking-pails in their hands, as if rooted to the ground, whilst Moffat was preaching to them the gospel of the living water. (*R. Berser, D.D.*) *Sudden conversion* :—Here was a genuine case. This woman came a prejudiced Samaritan, and left a believing Christian; she came a confirmed sinner, and left a contrite and believing penitent; she came absorbed in the temporalities of life, and left engrossed with eternal solemnities. In the New Testament there are twenty-four cases, including this, of sudden conversion. Let us then never call in question the possibility of a sinner being led to Christ in the course of a few hours. (*J. H. Hitchens, D.D.*) *The expansive power of Christianity* :—The work of the Spirit of God in the heart is not a fiction, not a form, but a life. To use the simile of this narrative, it is a fountain not only "springing up" (bubbling up), but overflowing its cistern, and the superfluous supply going forth to gladden other waste places. Not the mass of stagnant water without outlet, but the clear, sparkling lake, discharging its rush of living streams which sing their joyous way along the contiguous valleys, and make their course known by the thread of green, beautifying and fertilizing as they flow. Or, if we may employ another

figure, let it be the stone thrown into the same still lake. The ripples formed are deepest in the centre. Christianity is deepest in the heart in which its truths have sunk; but its influence expands in ever-widening concentric circles, till the wavelets touch the shore. Religion, intensest in a man's own soul and life, should embrace family, household, kindred, neighbourhood, country, until it knows no circumference but the world! Christianity breaks down all walls of narrow isolation, and proclaims the true brotherhood of the race. Selfishness closes the heart, shuts out from it the rains and dews and summer sunshine; but Christianity, or rather the great Sun of light, shines;—the closed petals gradually unfold in the genial beams: and they keep not their fragrance to themselves, but waft it all around. Every such flower—the smallest that blushes unseen to the world—becomes a little censer swinging its incense-perfume in the silent air, or sending it far and wide by the passing breeze. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *God will honour zeal:*—While I was in London there was a man away off in India—a godly father—who had a son in London, and the father obtained a furlough and came right from India to England to see after his boy's spiritual welfare. Do you think God let that man come thus far without honouring that faith? No. He converted that son. (*D. L. Moody.*)

Vers. 29, 30. **Come see a Man which told me all things whatever I did: is not this the Christ?**—*Christ and modern scepticism:*—This judgment on the claims of Christ is the verdict of common sense in contrast to that of Nicodemus, which was the verdict of scholarship. It is for learned men to study for us the question of miracles, which are the foundation of intellectual belief; but that which secures for Jesus the faith and heart of the common people is the Word of Jesus. Christ's teaching was at first a riddle to the woman, but an unexpected fact startled her into seriousness and conviction. There was another who was in the secret of her life, and this revelation by one who, humanly speaking, knew nothing of the rumours in circulation about her, prepared her for the revelation that He was the Christ. I. CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE IS A SUFFICIENT WARRANT FOR OUR BELIEF IN HIS DIVINE MISSION. The teachers to whom we give the highest rank are those who teach us how to live. They stand higher than the mere scientist or philosopher. In the present day the scientist is more popular than the preacher. But that is because the question which inspires all his labours is "What is man?" and this question derives all its significance from two others—"What is man appointed to do?" "What is man destined to be?" People are therefore looking to him to evolve a new theory of life, and to become a moralist at some time. Some have already become preachers—of another gospel, which is not another. Taking one age with another, the foremost teachers have been those who have dealt with morals and character. II. WHATEVER VIEW MAY BE TAKEN OF CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF MAN, NO SUBSEQUENT TEACHER HAS MADE ANY ADDITION TO IT. We know nothing that helps us to understand man's position upon earth, and the reasons that have made it what it is, which cannot be traced to Matt. v.–vii. There were illustrious teachers before Christ, but there is a great gulf between the obscurities and uncertain foundations of their teaching on man and the clear, authoritative teaching of Jesus Christ. Pagan teachers—1. Were ignorant of the origin of man. 2. Were at a loss to account for moral evil. These problems defied their reason, and therefore they remitted them to the imagination of the poets, and with the poets they found very eloquent expression in the mythologies. III. THERE ARE MEN WHO REJECT THE WORDS OF CHRIST ON THESE SUBJECTS, BUT WHO EXPRESS THE HIGHEST ADMIRATION OF HIS CHARACTER AND WISDOM. Now it is essentially unscientific to affirm arbitrarily that while Christ was right on one subject, He was wrong in another. He was right in every doctrine, and the very men who object to receive all He said, by the pre-eminence which they give to Christ say He is above their criticism. Bring to the examination of His life and teaching every new method of analysis and research; bring the latest discovery on the antiquity of man, and the last speculation of the evolutionist and the metaphysician, and you leave the Redeemer where the Jews, and where you found Him. There He is, and you cannot touch Him. IV. THERE ARE TWO MODERN MOVEMENTS RESPECTING CHRIST equally vigorous and conspicuous. 1. An anti-Christian scepticism. This is undeniable, but its power may be exaggerated. The ungodliness of our age happens to assume a sceptical guise, but it will assume another by and by. It must not be imagined that it represents the intelligence and judgment of society. There is a religion in the heart of the masses of the people waiting to be evoked. 2. A growing belief in Jesus, not so much fostered by the literature of the Church as by the words of Jesus. Thousands are studying the New Testament

outside all churches. The Stranger that met the woman is sitting on other wells all over the world, and looking for thirsty souls. Conclusion: It is the duty and vocation of churches to plant themselves upon the highways of thought and life and look out for thirsty travellers and offer them the water of life freely. (*E. E. Jenkins, M.A.*) *The self-revealer*:—I. THE WOMAN'S FAITH AND HOW IT WAS TO BE TESTED. 1. She was a most unlikely subject. A Samaritan scorning the Jews, having her own notion of the Messiah. 2. Christ was most unlikely to strike her as the Messiah. A Jew; a suppliant for water. 3. Yet she was thoroughly convinced, for she leaves her water-pot and carries with enthusiasm the joyful news into the city. 4. This is what has happened ever since. It is not those who are in a most favourable position for believing who are readiest to believe. There are thousands of young people who have been trained in Christianity who never dream of loving Christ, whilst there are thousands for many years utterly untouched by Christian influences who find in themselves a strange power to lay hold of Christ. Beware of the subtle influence of familiarity with Divine things. II. How THIS WOMAN GOT HER FAITH. 1. Not by miracles. A miracle suggests omnipotence, but does not prove it. 2. There is a much higher thing than power—knowledge. She felt herself in the presence of omniscience. 3. Upon this knowledge of her secret life she based her belief in the Messiah (ver. 25, *cf.* ver. 29). III. WHAT THIS WOMAN DID WITH HER FAITH. She put it into her proclamation of Jesus. (*G. W. Conder.*) *The duty of spreading the Gospel*:—Huber, the great naturalist, tells us, that if a single wasp discovers a deposit of honey or other food, he will return to his nest, and impart the good news to his companions, who will sally forth in great numbers to partake of the fare which has been discovered for them. Shall we who have found honey in the rock Christ Jesus, be less considerate of our fellow-men than wasps are of their fellow-insects? Ought we not rather like the Samaritan woman to hasten to tell the good news? Common humanity should prevent one of us from concealing the great discovery which grace has enabled us to make. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Every Christian must be a missionary*:—According to Christ's law, every Christian is to be active in spreading the faith, which was delivered, not to the ministers, but to the saints, to every one of them, that they might maintain it, and spread it according to the gift which the Spirit has given them. Shall I venture a parable? A certain band of warlike knights had been exceedingly victorious in all their conflicts. They were men of valour and of indomitable courage; they had carried everything before them, and subdued province after province for their king. But on a sudden they said in the council-chamber, "We have at our head a most valiant warrior, one whose arm is stout enough to smite down fifty of his adversaries; would it not be better if, leaving a few such as he to go out to the fight, the mere men-at-arms, who make up the ordinary ranks, were to rest at home? We should be much more at our ease; our horses would not so often be covered with foam, nor our armour be bruised, the many would enjoy abundant leisure, and great things would be done by the valiant few." Now, the foremost champions, with fear and trembling, undertook the task and went to the conflict, and they fought well, as the rolls of fame can testify; to the best of their ability they unhorsed their foes and performed great exploits. But still, from the very hour in which that scheme was planned and carried out no city was taken, no province was conquered. If we are to subdue the earth, every one of us must join in the fight. We must not exempt a single soldier of the Cross, neither man nor woman, rich or poor. We shall see great things when we all agree to this, and put it in practice. (*Ibid.*) *The joy of having found Christ*:—No sooner do you pass the brow of the St. Gothard pass, on your way to Italy, than you perceive that, beyond all question, you are on the sunny side of the Alps. The snow lying there is nothing in comparison to the vast accumulation upon the Swiss side of the summit, the wind ceases to be sharp and cutting, and a very few minutes' ride brings you into a balmy air which makes you forget that you are so greatly elevated above the sea level. There is a very manifest difference between the southern side and the bleak northern aspect. He who climbs above the cares of the world, and turns his face to his God, has found the sunny side of life. The world's side of the hill is chill and freezing to a spiritual mind, but the Lord's presence gives a warmth of joy which turns winter into summer. Some pilgrims to heaven appear never to have passed the summit of religious difficulty; they are still toiling over the Devil's Bridge, or loitering at Andermatt, or plunging into the deep snowdrifts of their own personal unworthiness, ever learning, but never coming to a full knowledge of the truth; they have not attained to a

comfortable perception of the glory, preciousness, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, and therefore abide amid the winter of their doubts and fears. If they had but faith to surmount their spiritual impediments, how changed would everything become! It is fair travelling with a sunny land smiling before your eyes, especially when you retain a grateful remembrance of the bleak and wintry road which you have traversed; but it is sorry work to be always stopping on the Swiss side of the mountain. How is it that so many do this? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Weak instruments useful*:—Weak means may, by God's blessing, work great matters. He can make the words of Naaman's servant greater in operation than the words of great Elisha, and by a poor captive girl bring him to the prophet. (*J. Trapp.*) *How souls are won*:—No address is so powerful as that which comes in private from heart to heart, with all the living power of a lip warm with love. God is more likely to bless this form of address than any other. There is no escaping from the directness of such an appeal, and it is hard to resist its pleading power. "Come, George, and walk down the road with me!" was the call of an earnest preacher to one of his hearers. In the course of that walk the preacher's private word had by God's blessing accomplished in George what all his former teachings had failed to do. George yielded himself to Christ, and declared that the personal talking while going along the street was the means of his decision. It is a great delight to the pastor of the Tabernacle frequently to see certain elders in the corners of the building after service conversing with individuals. Are we backward in such labours? Do we altogether neglect them? How shall we answer for it at the last great day? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Tell the news*:—At the first invitation to penitents to come forward, only half a dozen responded to the call; but as soon as these stood up rejoicing in God, another company came forward. No sooner was the joy of pardon received into the mourners' hearts, than they hastened to seek after others. One young man, about twenty years of age, was overheard praying, immediately after he felt relieved of his guilty load, "Please, Lord, let me tell somebody, or I shall die." Upon receiving permission he gladly stood up, and related what God had just done for his soul. (*W. Booth.*) *Come*:—In travelling across the arid desert, scouts upon camels and dromedaries are sent off in every direction to scour the country and look for springs of water. When these are discovered the finder immediately calls aloud to the nearest, "Come!" and this one repeats the word "Come!" to the next, and so this word passes from one to another until all hear and are gathered at the well. Now those of us who are Christians must do the same. We have heard the good news that Jesus Christ bore our sins in His own body on the tree. We have found the well of living waters, and we must raise the cry, "Come!" *Christ the Saviour of great sinners*:—A woman came to a minister one day, carrying a bundle of wet sand. "Do you see what this is, sir?" said she. "Yes," was the reply, "it is wet sand." "But do you know what it means?" "I do not know exactly what you mean by it; what is it?" "Ah, sir," she said, "that's me, and the number of my sins they cannot be counted." And then she exclaimed, "Oh wretched creature that I am! how can a wretch as I ever be saved?" "Where did you get the sand?" asked the minister. "At the Beacon." "Go back then to the Beacon; take a spade with you; dig, dig, and raise a great mound; shovel it up as high as ever you can, then leave it there; take your stand by the sea-shore, and watch the effect of the waves upon the heap of sand." "Ah, sir," she exclaimed, "I see what you mean—the blood, the blood, the blood of Christ; it would wash it all away." (*New Cyclopædia.*) **Master eat . . . I have meat to eat that ye know not of.**—*The two forgettings*:—I. CHRIST forgets HIS EARTHLY FOOD. II. THE WOMAN forgets HER EARTHLY PITCHERS. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The zeal and food of Christ*:—I. HIS ZEAL. 1. For His Father's house (chap. ii. 17), purity of worship. 2. For His Father's will (chap. ix. 4), the salvation of men. 3. For His Father's children (chap. xvii. 9), the sanctification of His Church. II. HIS FOOD. 1. Heavenly in origin. 2. Spiritual in character. 3. Sustaining in quality. 4. Sufficient in supply. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The Lord's meat*:—I. It was a roadside conversation, an "accidental" interview. And yet in less time than an ordinary religious service HE HAS TOLD MANKIND THREE SECRETS. 1. What rest or peace is for every unsatisfied heart. 2. Who it is that knows these hearts through and through. 3. What God is, and how He may be found. 4. These are secrets, because for four thousand years the loftiest intellects had been striving to find them out. Prophets and kings, Solomons and Platos, desired to see these things, and did not. II. WHERE SHOULD WE SAY THIS REVELATION WOULD BE MADE. 1. In some crowded church, advertised beforehand, with thousands of people and a popular orator? 2. In some

lecture-hall with sharp-witted students stimulated by some master brain? 3. Notice that the occasion was commonplace. The teacher sat on the stones of a wayside well. The audience was one woman, not respectable. Men of the world that day were about their business. Fortunes were building and wasting. Rome was ruling. Athens was carving and painting and making orations. Jerusalem was garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, and devouring widows' houses. But in one still spot two people were talking together of things which have helped to revolutionize the world. III. WHILE THUS ENGAGED THE TEACHER'S ATTENTION WAS DISTRACTED. The disciples came and asked Him to eat. Then were repeated instances when, at the moment He needed sympathy most, those around Him went on chattering about superficial trifles, misunderstanding His teaching and His life. But Christ's patience always triumphed. He simply announces—1. The fact that He had meat they knew not of. (1) He does not mean that He was not in natural wants and exactly like ourselves. Honest hunger is no more disgraceful than honest riches. He knew that some of the most beneficent and beautiful impulses are associated with eating and drinking. He made both sacramental signs. Christianity is not the killing out or mutilating of any faculty; it is to use everything purely, unselfishly, faithfully, and in the name of the Lord Jesus. 2. While Christ would not sunder what God hath joined together, the hungering body and the immaterial soul, yet His mission is to bring the two into their right relation, and set the one over the other as its master. Eating and drinking are well enough in their place and time, but man shall not live by bread only. It is something higher that makes life worth living—the life and work of Christ. 3. Why should this be called meat? Food does two things. (1) It satisfies uneasy desire: so Christ satisfies a desire which is the hunger of the soul. You say many do not feel it, or they would give up their selfish way and turn to God. But (*a*) although many people have lost the longing for a purer life by indulgence, they had it once. (*b*) The desire for better things is stronger in finer natures than in coarse. (*c*) Do we not all want something deeply, and are miserable when we cannot get relief. (*d*) The restless heart needs to be shown the secret of its discontent, and Christ comes into the world to show it. (*e*) Ask yourselves if you do not sometimes feel it. (2) Besides the craving filled and the sense of relish, there is actual nourishment. At first it seems as if Christian service were all giving and spending. But as you go on you take more than you give. A good life is continually strengthened by living it. All we give away for a good object enriches us. 4. Christ further tells us that the life of love and duty is the carrying out of God's plan. 5. Christ uplifts the ideal of a "finished" life and work. "Finished," because to the last stroke spent and the last breath drawn Christ gives it power and grace. No matter how long life is or how short if it is faithful. No matter where death is, if within us is the life of Him who liveth evermore. (*Bp. Huntington.*)

Mysterious meat:—The disciples had gone to buy meat: and for this they cannot be censured. Do not say that they were carnal or unspiritual, for most spiritual people must eat to live. And then I admire their care for their Master. It is right for the spiritual man to forget his hunger, but it is equally right for his true friends to remind him that he ought to eat for his health's sake. Jesus has now gone, but His mystical body remains. If you know of any of His people in poverty, ask them to partake of your abundance, lest haply your Lord should say "I was an hungered," &c. Having done this justice to the twelve, let us do honour to Christ. His mind was absorbed in spiritual objects, and He wished to lead them to that higher field. I. THERE ARE REFRESHMENTS THAT ARE LITTLE KNOWN. "Man shall not live by bread alone." Our Lord found refreshments that were not known to His disciples, and the reason for this was—1. That this nourishment was enjoyed on a higher plan than they had yet reached. 2. It implied a greater sinking of self than they as yet knew. In being a servant obeying the will of another, He feels Himself so much at home, that it revives Him to think of it. Not in self but in self-surrender is there fulness for the heart. 3. Christ was in fuller harmony with God than His disciples. 4. Christ was sustained because He understood the art of seeing much in little. As a wise man sees a forest in an acorn so our Lord saw the vast results of this little incident. II. THESE SECRET REFRESHMENTS SATISFIED OUR LORD. 1. He had so long hungered to be at His work. 2. When He got at His work He gave Himself wholly to it. 3. He found great joy in the work itself. 4. He forgot to eat bread because of the enthusiasm which filled Him in the pursuit of that soul. 5. He was moved greatly by the sympathy of pity. 6. He felt great joy in present success. 7. He saw the prospect of better things. III. LET US AT ONCE SEEK THIS REFRESHMENT. 1. Let us remember that we are sent of God.

2. Let us find joy at once in God's work and will. 3. Let us get to work and leap into our place at once. 4. We may also anticipate the wages. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The hidden support of life:*—1. In the case of human creatures life is a higher thing than existence. The soul is superior to the body. The body has its wants, but the supply of these is only the means of doing the will of God by the soul. When the means are elevated into the end manhood is sunk into animalism. How often is a young man tempted into sensuality by the invitation, "Let us see life." But sensuality is not life *for a man.* 2. In the prosecution of life we must lay our account with privations and conflicts. We do not begin in a paradise of innocence. The very first motions of real life within often take the form of conflict. 3. Under such experiences the strength of the man comes from hidden support. He has meat to eat of which others know not. This hidden meat is the food of heroes and has always nourished those who have "resisted unto blood, striving against sin." 4. When a man has no such secret support his life loses all spiritual importance and becomes a mere grovelling thing of animal enjoyment. The soul is starved and all true nobleness disappears. Now let us particularize some of the forms of this hidden support—I. A GOOD CONSCIENCE. This when rectified by the Holy Spirit is God's representative in the soul. Its approbation therefore being the reflex of the approval of God is a great source of support, even as its condemnation must always be a cause of weakness and pain. A good conscience is a continual feast, and they who have that within can do without the banquets of the world. II. A WORTHY AMBITION. If we are intent on the attainment of some fixed purpose we shall be sustained amid trials which would otherwise have overmastered us. We see that exemplified on a lower level, in the case of Warren Hastings, *e.g.* Let the Christian set his soul on the attainment of some good, not for Himself, but for his fellow men, then that purpose will bear him up. Christ, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, &c. This is the secret of the strength of those who have given their lives for missions, Livingstone, *e.g.* III. FAITH IN THE UNSEEN AND IN THE FUTURE, as in the case of Moses. What the student is doing for his scholarship, and the merchant for his wealth, the Christian is doing for his recompense of eternal reward. Both alike are walking by faith, but the Christian's faith takes in eternity. IV. DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP. "I am not alone because the Father is with Me," said Jesus. "The Lord stood by me and strengthened me," said Paul. God is "a very present help in time of trouble," not only for great emergencies, but for the common weariness of a common day. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Heavenly nourishment:*—I. OUR LORD'S ENTIRE DEVOTEDNESS TO HIS FATHER'S WILL. This is no isolated instance. Turn to any part of His life and you see the same principle. 1. He was profoundly submissive to that will. 2. He manifested His delight in it. 3. He felt the necessity for His work as Saviour, knowing as He did the dreadful power of sin. 4. Love was the foundation of His obedience. II. OUR LORD FOUND NOURISHMENT AND SATISFACTION IN DOING HIS FATHER'S WILL. 1. There may be entire devotion arising out of a sense of obligation. 2. Our Lord's devotion sprang from delight in it. 3. It so absorbed Him that He forgot His hunger, being spiritually fed, "He saw the travail of His soul," &c. III. THE END WHICH OUR LORD KEPT IN VIEW. "To finish His work." So at the close He was able to say "It is finished." His was a perfect life. Every part was filled in as it went on, no imperfect fragments, nothing left out or to be done over again. IV. LESSONS. 1. Every Christian should regard it as his meat to do the Father's will. "As the Father hath sent Me even so send I you." 2. All may learn what a joy it is to save the lost. (*G. W. Humphries, B.A.*) **My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.** *Consider Messiah's ministry of salvation* as—I. A WORK WHICH HE PERFORMED. 1. He speaks here in His capacity of Son and Servant. In His essential nature He is one with the Father, but in the actual execution of the Divine purpose, He stands in a low place charged with a specific mission. 2. The will of the Sender is learned best by looking at the Sent. The Gift reveals the Giver's heart. The Christ sent into the world is fitted to draw men to God, not to drive them from Him. The will of the Father corresponds with the Messenger sent to execute it. God is love and Christ embodies that love. 3. The desire of God could not be carried into effect without Christ sent. 4. This work is not left half done. Creation was completed ere God rested. His next more glorious work will be finished too. The earth was complete as a habitation for man ere the children were brought to it as their home. So will heaven be. II. THE FOOD IN WHICH HE DELIGHTED. 1. It is not enough to learn what Jesus did and suffered, we must look into the secret motives of His heart. 2. Knowing all that redemption would bring

upon Himself, He longed for the work as His daily bread. In this glass we see reflected the nature and intensity of the Saviour's eagerness to save. 3. Jesus is Lord of all. The stars are His, He values them, but they do not satisfy His soul. He does not need to redeem bright worlds and unfallen angels; they cannot, therefore, appease His hunger. To seek the strayed, and save the lost—this is His meat. 4. "Blessed are they that hunger; for this they shall be filled." This He felt; and His joy will be full when all the ransomed shall reign with Him. 5. Over Jerusalem He wept for hunger. His appetite brought Him from heaven to the cradle and the cross. 6. It is difficult to reconcile Christ's desire with His omnipotence. Had he not power to accomplish His desire? Could He not have seized a whole city, as angels seized Lot, and hurried them to heaven? This would not have satisfied Him. Material acquisitions cannot sustain the spirit. Though all power is given to Him He will not satisfy His physical hunger by converting stones into bread, nor His spiritual by lifting multitudes to heaven by omnipotence. 7. With the limits of our capacity and condition the appetite of the Master may be shared by the servants. Our spiritual hunger is first a desire to get and then a desire to give salvation. In the second part of the process the disciple enters into the joy of His Lord. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Jesus about His Father's business:*—It is peculiarly pleasing to observe the interest which God the Father takes in the work of salvation. In our childhood in grace we conceived God as an austere Judge made propitious by Christ. Since then we have learned the Father through the Son. This interest is three times hinted at in the text. (1) Salvation work is called the Father's will. It is His will not only that we should not perish, but be redeemed. (2) Jesus was sent of the Father. (3) Salvation is called God's work. When this world was made God did not make it without reference to the Spirit, for the "Spirit moved on the face of the waters"; nor without the Son (chap. i. 3); yet it was the Father's work. So the Father does not save without the Spirit, for "the Spirit quickeneth." Nor without the Son, for it is through His death that we are forgiven; yet it is the Father's work. This work it was the meat of Christ to do and to finish. Notice—I. HIS SOUL WAS IN ALL HE DID. The task was not irksome. There are men who work with such reserve and coldness that you perceive it is but the shell that acts, not the man's whole soul. But our Lord's whole Being was at work. His Father's service was His element. II. HE WAS GLAD WHEN HE SAW HIS WORK SUCCEEDING. An infallible proof of His devotedness. You know when a man's heart is in his work by the joy he feels in it. True ministers call preaching pleasure, not duty. Let Him see a penitent and the Man of Sorrows wears a smile on His sorrowful face. III. HE WAS ANGRY WHEN HIS WORK WAS OPPOSED. When good men see penitents discouraged or evil rampant they do well to be angry. IV. HE WEPT WHEN HIS WORK WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. Never otherwise. He will weep over unpenitent Jerusalem, but not on the cross. V. HE WAS NOT DISCOURAGED BY OPPOSITION. How often, when our motives are misconstrued and our efforts hampered, are we tempted to give up! But Christ went on His way apologizing for nothing, doing His work whatever men thought of it or acted against it. VI. HE ALWAYS LABOURED; never resting: intruding on sleep for prayer and helpfulness. His three years seemed like three centuries. VII. WHEN IN FULL LABOUR HE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE FELT FATIGUE; as here, and when hungry forgot to eat bread. He seemed to get refreshed in His work, and instead of getting tired renewed His strength. This could not have happened unless His soul had been in it. VIII. OUR LORD NEVER SWERVED FROM HIS ONE OBJECT, although tempted by the devil with the world and by the Galileans with a crown. IX. HE WAS NOT DAUNTED BY THE THOUGHT OF DEATH. This thought was not before Him as a possible prospect of momentary heroism, but a certain prospect all His life through. And to this He hastened as the crowning point of His work. In conclusion—1. Let the timid soul who thinks that Christ is unwilling to save be encouraged by all this. 2. Let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be in all Christian men. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sources of Christ's satisfaction:*—I. IN THE FACT OF SERVICE. It is no mean satisfaction to a servant of God to feel, "I am here of no private choice or purpose of my own; I have been sent hither by a Divine hand." What a freedom from anxiety and discouragement! The humblest task is made glorious by the authority of the Giver. Many think there is no glory but in independence. But we are so made that we are not sufficient to ourselves, and therefore, the selfish man is wretched. True joy is the joy of sympathy, but no human love can satisfy the soul's demands. In God's favour alone is life. This favour is accorded only to His servants. II. IN THE LAW OF THE SERVICE. God's will. Many persons think

there is no joy but in doing their own will, and to walk in the plain path of duty is repulsive to them. And merely walking in the path of duty will not bring joy. There is no acceptable obedience that does not spring from love. But there is all joy in that Christ found it so. And this is not wonderful. The will of God is the outcome of His perfections, and therefore that will must be the perfection of blessedness. Can you choose so well for yourself as that will which measures all things. This holds good both with regard to the suffering and the doing of God's will. III. IN THE FIELD OF SERVICE. Every man has his work Divinely allotted and adjusted. This work is various, and all of it must be accepted as given of God. Then satisfaction will be found in—1. Doing the work may not have been successful, but if it has been done, we have the satisfaction of having fulfilled our task. There are those who will only work when there is human applause and visible results. 2. The effectual accomplishment of the work, and receiving the glad, "Well done." (*J. Riddell.*) *Service should be willing service*:—When the Spartans marched into battle they advanced with cheerful songs, willing to fight; but when the Persians entered the conflict, you could hear, as the regiments came on, the crack of whips by which the officers drove the cowards to the fray. You need not wonder that a few Spartans were more than a match for thousands of Persians, that in fact they were like lions in the midst of sheep. So let it be with the Church; never should she need to be forced to reluctant action, but full of irrepressible life, she should long for conflict against everything which is contrary to God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Joyful service*:—"I wish I could mind God as my little dog minds me," said a little boy, looking thoughtfully on his shaggy friend; "he always looked so pleased to mind, and I don't." What a painful truth did this child speak! Shall the poor little dog thus readily obey his master, and we rebel against God, who is our Creator, our Preserver, our Father, our Saviour, and the bountiful Giver of everything we love. (*Christian Treasury.*) *God's work is our work*:—The other evening I was spending a few hours with a friend, and a lady who happened to be present when we were talking about this missionary work, said, "But, Mr. John, do you not know that we have a great deal of our own work to do?" "Why, madame," said I, "is not the missionary work your work? Is it not the work of the Churches?" That seemed to be a new light to her altogether; and there are a great many people in these days who seem to think that this work is the work of the missionaries and not their own. I go to China to do your work. If I go into the deep well, it is for you to hold the rope you must not leave me there. (*Griffith John.*) *Enthusiasm*:—When George Moore was deputed to the relief of Paris, after the seige, he hastened off to reach the place as quickly as possible. "I think I should have died," he said, "if I had not been the first man in Paris." (*Smiles.*) *The power of concentration*:—In the eighteenth century, an immense burning glass was constructed in France, in which all the heat, falling on a great lens, was then concentrated on a smaller one till at the focus such was the heat that iron, gold, and other metals ran like melted butter. Another one, made in England by Parker, fused the most refractory substances, and diamonds were reduced by it to vapour. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *The satisfying power of a great aspiration*:—It was this prospect that cheered and refreshed Him. When our 33rd regiment was nearing Magdala, they had marched for hours over burning plains, under a scorching sky, without water or rest, and the heat began to tell upon the men—many were ready to fall down from exhaustion—when suddenly the sharp cracking of rifles told our soldiers that the foe was in the front and fighting had begun. Hunger, thirst, exhaustion, were all forgotten in the excitement and desire for the fray. If a desire like this could make soldiers forget weariness, much more a desire to save a sinner could so fill the loving, tender heart of Jesus with such delight and satisfaction. (*R. H. Lovell.*) *Christ's improvement on common things*:—I observe our Saviour applying every accidental occurrence to His holy purposes, as it were, by a kind of chemistry, separating the gross matter, and subliming ordinary affairs to heavenly doctrine; insomuch that there was scarcely any common affair of life, . . . but He spiritualized it, and applied it to His designs. Now, if we would learn of Him, we might with great ease, and without all violence, surprise men into religion, and not only at every turn introduce pious discourse, but render the subject of it intelligible to the meanest capacities; and withal by those sensible resemblances give such lively touches upon the minds of men, as that what we delivered upon those occasions would stick and remain with them. . . . As, for instance, when we visit a sick friend or neighbour, what a fair opportunity have we to discourse of the immorality of the soul! And what an easy transition is it from a physician to a

Saviour! Or, why may we not as well cheer up our afflicted friend with the comforts of religion, as well as amuse or divert him with impertinent stories? Or, suppose friends to be together and disposed to be merry, why may not some word come in seasonably of the everlasting friendship in heaven, or the continual feast of a good conscience? Why may not the common chat about news be elevated to the consideration of the good tidings of the Gospel? What hinders but our dishes of meat may be seasoned with a gracious word or two about the food of our souls? When men are talking of old age, it would be no great strain, if thence our thoughts rise up to eternal life; nor is any great flight of fancy requisite to improve all the accidents of our lives to the contemplation of Divine Providence, which orders and governs them. In a word, everything is capable of improvement, if we be not wanting; we shall never want opportunity, if we embrace it; anything will serve an intent mind and a devout heart to these purposes (Prov. xv. 23; Luke viii. 1, 5). (*Dr. Goodman.*) *The superlative value of food:*—A traveller lost his way in an Eastern desert. His provisions were exhausted, and he had already wandered about for several days without food, when he descried under a palm tree on his track the marks of a recent encampment. He approached the spot tremulous with hope. He found a bag which the travellers had left behind, filled with something that appeared to be dates. He opened it eagerly, expecting to satisfy his hunger, when lo! it contained only pearls! He sat down and wept. What are pearls to a man who is dying for want of bread? (*W. Arnott, D.D.*) *Love the secret of successful work:*—There is absolutely nothing more absorbing on the one hand, or more satisfying on the other, than successful effort in behalf of a cause or of a person loved by us. This is alike true from the lowest plane to the highest. Even a child will forget to be ready for his meals, if he once gets fairly into a game with his playmates outside, before lunch-time or supper-time. Many a hard student is sorry to stop his work in order to eat or to sleep. And when one can hope to finish a piece of work for one whom he loves, by keeping at it a few hours longer—who wouldn't rather do that than have a good dinner? If the work of the Lord drags in our hands, it is not because that work is not worth living for, and dying for; but it is because we fail of a fitting interest to its doing. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *True work:*—We should aim to be too active to stagnate, too busy to freeze. We should be like Cromwell, who not only struck when 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." (*Family Churchman.*) *Soul food:*—Many who have gathered crowds about them, who have produced a marked impression on those crowds, have said truly that such success was meat and drink to them. If it did not feed their vanity, but sustained them because it showed them that they were doing God's will and finishing His work, they may have understood something of Christ's meaning. But the secret food He partook of certainly came from no sudden success that followed His words. First, He met with a woman who had in general answered Him with levity; then a few people of her own rank came at her call. How little would such honours satisfy the ambition of some eloquent disciple of Christ, who has the power of influencing thousands! Could it satisfy Him who came to found a kingdom of which there was to be no end? Yes; for in their first sheaves He could see certain pledges of a world's ingathering. The corn-fields would not be reaped for four months; these men whom He saw coming showed Him that the other harvest was nearer still. (*F. D. Maurice.*) *The ruling passion:*—When a man dies his friends often say of him, in praise of his diligence, energy, and concentration, "He lived simply to carry through that important line of railway"; or, "His only object was to extort from the Government a more scientific education for the people"; or, "He devoted himself to the cause of Free Trade"; or, "He was a martyr to his exertions in favour of Protection." It was his one idea; it grew with his growth; he could think of nothing else; he spared neither time nor money to it; it was his monomania. He did his work in his day, and did it well, because he was heart and soul in it; and the world is in debt to him for it. Now, why should it not be said of us, "Well, he is gone, he was a man of one idea, he cared for nothing but that God's will be done on earth as in heaven. He was eaten up with this; he made it his hobby; it was meat and drink to him. And whereas the other men left behind the railway or the cheap bread, our friend has left behind him a better world." (*Family Churchman.*)

Vers. 35–38. **Say not ye there are yet four months and then cometh harvest.**—*The spiritual culture of the world:*—Not unfrequently does the Bible represent the

great work of the moral reformation of the world by that of husbandry. I. THE SERVANTS OF GOD SHOULD EARNESTLY SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF MAN. Don't think the work distant, to be waited for, it is present and must be attended to at once. 1. Moral seasons are not like material ones, beyond our agency. We cannot hasten the months of harvest. Years come and go irrespective of our choice or effort. But in the moral domain you can change temperature, create seasons, turn foul weather into fair, and make a moral November as bright and genial as June. "Say ye not then." Make no excuses. 2. The feeblest honest effort to improve the world will develop encouraging symptoms to persevere. Christ's conversation with the woman stirred the heart of the whole city. True thoughts increase the soul's appetites and supplies. The more you give the more you need. II. A LONG SUCCESSION OF AGENTS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF MANKIND. "One soweth, another reapeth." "Paul plants, Apollo waters." John sowed seeds for Polycarp, he for Athanasius, he for Augustine, he for Anselm; Bernard for Tauler, Luther for Calvin, he for Chemitz; Wickliffe for Tyndale, and he for Coverdale, &c. This suggests—1. The moral connection of the race. Man transmits his principles as well as his nature. 2. The slow progress of moral principles. Humanity requires ages for the full appreciation of great truths. 3. The humble part which individuals play in the history of the world. What we sow may not appear till we are gone. We pluck a few ripe ears, drop a seed or two and then pass on. 4. Results are not the right rules for conduct. We see more the effects of other men's labours than our own. We have to do with work, consequences must be left to God. III. THERE IS A VITAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALL TRUE WORKERS IN THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF THE WORLD. 1. In working out one grand purpose. Whether they reap or sow. 2. In participating in the same rewards. In the universal rejoicing there will be no under-rating of the humblest, and the greatest will not glory in himself. Each will rejoice in another's labours rather than his own, all ascribing their achievement to all inspiring love. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The gospel harvest:*—I. THE GREAT HARVEST REMAINS YET TO BE GATHERED IN. The purposes of grace have as yet received a very partial accomplishment. This is seen if we will consider—1. God's gracious intentions as announced to us by the ancient seers. 2. The means which God has employed to fulfil His purposes. The incarnation, death, resurrection, and glorification of His Son, and the creation of a Church to proclaim these saving facts to the whole world. Nothing short of the salvation of mankind can indemnify the Redeemer and enable him to see the travail of his soul. 3. The preparatory processes. (1) Before the Advent. (*a*) Among the Jews the progress of redemptive disclosures. (*b*) Among the Gentiles the progress of a civilization which should help to carry the Gospel to every creature. (2) Since the advent. (*a*) In early Christian times. (*b*) Subsequent to the Reformation. 4. If such has been the length of time over which the preparations have extended, if such the grandeur of the means employed, if such the extent of the plan announced—what must be the harvest that is before us? II. HAVE WE REASON TO HOPE THAT THE HARVEST IS NEAR? The expectation of seeing it burst on the world in full or hid splendour by stupendous miracle is not to be encouraged. There is no reason to expect it through any other agency than that which God has already employed. As for the signs, observe—1. That the whole world has become accessible to the gospel to a degree altogether unprecedented. 2. The commanding and influential position of those portions of the globe, where Christianity exists in its purest and most active forms. 3. The general spread of knowledge and extension of education. 4. The success already achieved. III. THE SENTIMENTS AND CONDUCT WITH WHICH THIS STATE OF THINGS SHOULD BE MET BY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. 1. Attention. 2. Thankfulness, "Blessed are our eyes, for they see." 3. Zealous efforts. 4. Steady perseverance. (*B. Godwin.*) *The gospel harvest:*—I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING CONDITION OF THE WORLD. The "fields" are the world; they were "white unto harvest," ready for the accomplishment of the work of mercy. 1. It was the time which had been appointed in the predetermination of the Divine counsels for introducing the economy of grace. It was "the fulness of time." 2. The fields were "white" because of the spiritual necessities which then actually pressed upon the circumstances of man. No time could have been more apt. Jews and Gentiles were alike at the furthest limit to which want could possibly impel. 3. The time of the Saviour's advent was one of great expectancy. Among the Jews were many like Simeon; among the Gentiles many like the Magi. The state of the world since has always to some extent admitted the application of the words "white unto harvest," and some periods more particularly than others.

(1) When the gloom of the Middle Ages was about to pass away. (2) Now, as seen in the state and relationships of human governments; the influence of our own country in every continent; the feeling of sympathy and the acknowledgment of duty on the part of professing Christians; the wealth and talent of the Church; the actual wants of heathendom, and their readiness to receive the Word of God. The disciples of the Saviour are summoned themselves to contemplate the state of the world. "Lift up your eyes and see." II. A STATEMENT OF THE DIFFERENT OFFICES OF LABOUR APPOINTED AND HELD IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONDITION DESCRIBED. 1. As to the origin of the offices to be contemplated they are of Divine appointment. "The Lord of the harvest" alone sends forth labourers; and here the Redeemer asserts His own prerogative, "I sent you." 2. The nature of the offices thus exhibited. He that sows has not the immediate tokens of success; he that reaps gathers at once the ripened corn. So the office of some has been to prepare the mind, to settle preliminaries, to lay foundations; of others to follow and to garner the result. The labour of the prophets, and the success of the apostles, is typical of much modern Christian labour. The reformers laboured, ministers now reap. And while we reap from generations past, we sow for generations to come. 3. The spirit in which these offices should be sustained. There should be—(1) Contentedness. (2) Diligence. (3) Patience. (4) Supplication for the Divine blessing. III. THE PROMISE OF THE BLESSING BY THE BESTOWMENT OF WHICH THOSE OFFICES SHALL BE CONSUMMATED. 1. There is a recompense granted to the faithful exercise of the duties which the offices comprehend. "He that reapeth," &c. 2. There will be a final meeting of all the labourers for mutual communion and joy, "together." (*J. Parsons.*) *Earnestness essential to success*:—Duncan Matheson, the Scottish evangelist, when in the Crimea, was not slow in seeking out men of his own spirit in the army. His first acquaintance was Hector Macpherson, drum-major 93rd Highlanders, a soldier both of his country and of the Cross, of whom the missionary used to tell the following story:—"One day, a chaplain, newly arrived, called on the sergeant and asked his advice as to the best method of conducting his work. 'Come with me,' said Hector, 'to the hill-top. Now look around you. See yonder the pickets of Liprandi's army. See yon batteries on the right, and the men at the guns. Mark yon trains of ammunition. Hear the roar of that cannon. Look where you may, it is all earnest here. There is not a man but feels it is a death struggle. If we don't conquer the Russians, the Russians will conquer us. We are all in earnest, sir; we are not playing at soldiers here. If you would do good you must be in earnest too. An earnest man will always win his way.'" (*New Cyclopædia.*) *The fields are white*:—Leonard Keyser, who was burned at Scherding, in 1527, as a Protestant, when he came near to the stake, exclaimed, as he looked at the crowd, "Behold the harvest! O Master, send forth Thy labourers." (*Bowes.*) *The heathen are waiting for the gospel*:—Rev. J. Hudson Taylor related, in *China's Millions*, the bitter hardships he, with Rev. W. C. Burns, experienced during his early days in China. The sketch closes with an account of a remarkable incident. After they had spoken one day in the city of Ningpo one of the listening crowd said: "I have long sought for the truth; I and my father before me. I have found no rest in Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism; but I do find rest in what I have heard here. Henceforth I believe in Jesus." Afterwards he asked Mr. Taylor how long the glad tidings had been known in England. When he was told, "Some hundreds of years," he looked amazed. "What!" he exclaimed, "is it possible, and yet you have only now come to preach them to us? My father sought after the truth for more than twenty years, and died without finding it. Why did you not come sooner?" *The woman of Samaria*:—After expressing His own regard to the work that was given Him to do, our Saviour stimulates His disciples to similar zeal. For this purpose He employs three arguments, all borrowed from husbandry. 1. The first is taken from the necessity for their exertions. When the grain is ripe, the sickle must be thrust in. 2. The second is taken from the profitableness of their exertion. The reaper is well paid. 3. The third is taken from the facility of their exertion; the work being prepared to their hands. "They besought Him that He would tarry with them." How natural was this! 1. They were eager to give Him entertainment. 2. They wished to be instructed by him more perfectly. It is the nature of grace to wish its increase. 3. They hoped that He would be useful to those of their families and of their neighbours, who had been either unable or unwilling to come. What a work of God was here! Let me conclude by calling upon you to observe, who were the subjects of this work, and who was the instrument. 1. The subjects were Samaritans, not Jews: and we may exclaim with our

Lord, on another occasion, we "have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." 2. The instrument was, not a philosopher, not an apostle armed with tongues and miracles, but a poor, wicked, but converted woman. (*W. Jay.*) *Zeal for soul-gathering*:—In Switzerland, where land is very precious because rock abounds and the rugged soil is chary in its yieldings, you see the husbandman looking after a little tuft of grass growing on one of the edges of a lofty cliff. From the valley he had caught a sight of it and thought of clambering up to where it grew, but the rock was all too steep. From a ledge nearer the top of the precipitous wall he looked down, but could see no pathway to the coveted morsel of green. That armful of grass would feed his goat, or help to fill the cottage loft with winter fodder for the cow. Every armful is an item, and he cannot forego that tempting clump. He looks, and looks, and looks again, but looks in vain. By-and-by, he fetches his bold boy who can follow wherever a chamois can climb, but the boy after a hard scramble comes back with the tidings, "Father, it cannot be done." Father's answer is, "Boy, it must be done." It is only an armful, and would not be worth a farthing to us, but to the poor mountaineer even a farthing or a farthing's worth is precious. The grass waves its flowers in the breeze and scorns the daring climbers from below; but where there is a will, there is a way; and what cannot be reached from below may be gained from above. With a rope slung round him, or firmly grasped in his accustomed hand, with a stout stake or tree to hold it up above, the Switzer is let down till he gets to the jutting crag, there he stands with his sickle, reaps the grass, ties it into a bundle, puts it under his arm, and climbing back again, joyfully returns with his little harvest. Poor pay, you think, for such dangerous toil; but, fellow-worker for Jesus, I wish we were as venturesome for souls, and as careful of them, as these poor peasants are concerning miserable bundles of grass. I wish that we sometimes looked up or down upon apparently inaccessible spots, and resolved to reach immortal souls who are to be found there, and pined to bring them to Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Love to souls*:—An old man in Watton, whom Mr. Thornton had in vain urged to come to church, was taken ill and confined to his bed. Mr. Thornton went to the cottage, and asked to see him. The old man, hearing his voice below, answered, in no very courteous tone, "I don't want you here; you may go away." The following day the curate was again at the foot of the stairs. "Well, my friend, may I come up to-day and sit beside you?" Again he received the same reply, "I don't want you here." Twenty-one days successively Mr. Thornton paid his visit to the cottage, and on the twenty-second his perseverance was rewarded. He was permitted to enter the room of the aged sufferer, to read the Bible, and pray by his bedside. The poor man recovered, and became one of the most regular attendants at the house of God. (*Life of Rev. S. Thornton.*) *The wages of doing good—joy*:—A person was once asked what had been the happiest moment she had ever known. She was one who had had more than a common share of the good things of this world. She had a bright home and many friends. She had achieved success in a brilliant society, and won literary fame, and had drunk deep of intellectual pleasures in the course of a life which was far spent. Yet she said the happiest moment she had ever known was that in which a withered old woman tottered into the room, held out her shaking hands towards her, and wept for joy as she claimed, "I said I'd come and thank you for saving my boy, though I dropped on the road." Her boy was a poacher, who, in a midnight affray, inadvertently, as he said—wilfully, as others declared—shot a gamekeeper. He was tried for his life, and almost to the last moment he had no counsel, as neither he nor his miserable old mother had the means of securing one. The lady, knowing nothing of him, heard incidentally that if he remained undefended it would go hard with him, and she engaged a first-rate counsel on his behalf. The result was that although his sentence was death, it was accompanied by a recommendation to mercy. A petition, which was afterwards drawn up by his defender, procured a commutation of the extreme penalty; and so it was that the joys of happy love, and fame, and pleasure, paled before the grateful light in the poor old mother's eyes as she spoke her homely thanks, and then dropped back to her obscurity and was no more seen, (*Good Words.*) *Fruit after many days*:—I was called, in Philadelphia, to visit a sick girl in a very worldly and irreligious household, with whom I had but little acquaintance, and went anticipating only a painful visit of warning to a careless soul. To my astonishment, I found a gentle child of grace, perhaps eighteen years of age, sinking in a consumption, but perfectly clear in mind, and happy in hope. "How," I asked, "have you learned all this in your condition here?" Her answer

was most precious. "I had a faithful Sunday-school teacher; and though I left her some years ago, and never gave her much satisfaction, yet when I was taken sick, I took my little Bible, and went over the lessons she used to teach me, and God has taught me here alone." She then showed me her little Bible, turned down and marked with many Sunday-school lessons, her constant and loved companion. Dear child, she had no other religious companion. But she departed in sweet peace and hope, and my visits to her while she lived were full of satisfaction and delight. Similar incidents of actual conversion under Sunday-school instruction have occurred in such numbers, that I might fill many sheets of paper with them. (*S. H. Tyng, D.D.*) *The wages of doing good*:—Occasionally a benevolent action wrought in faith brings with it an instantaneous recompense in kind; therein Providence is seen as smiling upon the deed. The late John Andrew Jones, a poor Baptist minister, whilst walking in Cheapside, was appealed to by some one he knew for help. He had but a shilling in the world, and poised it in his mind, to give or not to give? The greater distress of his acquaintance prevailed, and he gave his all, walking away with a sweet remembrance of the promise, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will He pay him again." He had not gone a hundred yards further before he met a gentleman who said, "Ah, Mr. Jones, I am glad to see you. I have had this sovereign in my waistcoat pocket this week past for some poor minister, and you may as well have it." Mr. Jones was wont to add, when telling the story, "If I had not stopped to give relief I should have missed the gentleman and the sovereign too." *The reaper's joy*:—One Sunday, in the house of God, the minister noticed the restlessness and anxiety of a little girl during the morning service. After the service, he addressed the teacher thus:—"You have had a very unquiet class to-day, and one of the children I observed was particularly restless; why did you not keep her quiet?" "Oh, sir, you mean Sarah ——. She has for these three months past set her heart upon bringing her father here, and this morning he had promised to come, and she was so anxious to see if she could find him among the congregation, until at length she came to me, and throwing her arms round my neck, sobbed out, 'Oh, teacher, teacher, there's my father!'" How often I have had my hand grasped by loving persons who have said, "I wanted to tell you that you led me to the Saviour!" They wanted to say it to me; and often have they written to me, and cheered my heart, because they felt a personal gratitude which wanted a personal expression. A poor woman once forced me with tears to receive a small sum of money for myself. I declined it till I saw that it would hurt her feelings, for she had evidently longed for this opportunity for expressing her thankfulness for the sermons she had read. If we feel thus towards an earthly friend, how much more shall we feel it towards Him who has saved us by His blood! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The harvest and the labourers* (in conjunction with Matt. ix. 37, 38):—On the occasion mentioned by Matthew there were fields of ripe corn within sight (Luke vi. 1, 12, 13). The words reported by St. John were spoken four months earlier when the fields were comparatively bare. The one, therefore, was a similitude, the other a contrast. 1. In Samaria, Jesus bade His disciples recognize fields white to harvest. The people were ready to hear if only the gospel were delivered unto them. 2. But there was a risk of letting the favourable opportunity slip for want of preachers. What can be more vexatious to a farmer than to see his crop spoil for lack of hands? So grievous was it to Christ to see the leaders of the nation indifferent or hostile to His heavenly message. 3. The fields of opportunity are constantly widening, but the difficulty is to get an adequate supply of labourers. (1) Home fields are scrambled over, and while there are too many labourers in some corners, others are neglected. (2) In foreign fields labourers are too far apart, and their strength overtaxed. 4. It is easy enough to multiply ecclesiastics, but workmen who need not to be ashamed have always been too few. And field work needs labouring men. Time is precious, and reapers must not spare themselves. 5. Labourers are all the better for a training. In every kind of activity training tells. Much more so here, as shown by Christ's careful training of the twelve. 6. But the first requisite is that the labourers be sent by the Lord of the harvest. 7. The Church must pray for such labourers. (1) Christ so prayed. (2) Now that Christ has ascended, and is Lord of the Church, we must pray for His gift of labourers (Eph. iv. 11). 8. Why should we thus pray? The fields are His. He knows the value of the opportunity and the need of labourers; surely He will provide them of His own accord. But prayer is not enjoined to tell Christ what He does not know, or to persuade Him to do what He would otherwise neglect, but

to bring His followers into harmony with His will. (*D. Fraser, D.D.*) *The great harvest;* or, Christian enterprise (in conjunction with Matt. ix. 36–38; Luke x. 2):—I. THE ORIGINAL MOTIVE OF ALL CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE. "He was moved with compassion." 1. Christian enterprise should be irrespective of class, creed, or character. "The multitudes" were a mixed assembly, a fair picture of the world. Friends and foes. Christ confined His benevolence to none. Christians should do good to all. 2. Christian enterprise should have special reference to the spiritual state of man. "Sheep without shepherd." Our Lord did not overlook temporal and intellectual needs, but made them subservient to the spiritual. 3. Christian enterprise should be the result of feeling, deep and genuine. II. THE PRESSING CLAIM OF ALL CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE UPON ALL CHRISTIAN MEN (Luke x. 2). 1. The state of the harvest—(1) There is sufficient scope for all Christian labour. No one can complain of lack of material. Work when and wherever you can. (2) There is a sufficient motive. The harvest is great. (*a*) In point of difficulty. The conversion of one soul is a work of no ordinary magnitude; how much greater that of a world! The difficulty arises from human depravity. (*b*) In consequence of its responsibilities. To control the parliament of a mighty nation far less responsible than changing the eternal destiny of myriads. (*c*) In the glory connected with its final triumph. (3) There is sufficient maturity. "White unto harvest." God's time is the present. History is what men, under God, make it. Mere time will never bring a millennium. That will result from work, not waiting. 2. The paucity of the workmen. "Labourers are few"—(1) In comparison with the work to be done. (2) In comparison with the idle. In every church a few do all the work. III. THE SPECIAL PROVIDENCE WHICH SHOULD BE EVER RECOGNIZED BY ALL CHRISTIANS IN CARRYING ON EVERY CHRISTIAN ENTERPRISE. "Pray ye therefore," &c. There is here a recognition—1. Of the divinity of our work. 2. Of the necessity of human agents. 3. Of the importance of prayer. 4. Of final triumph. "Gathered fruit unto life eternal." (*Evan Lewis, B.A.*) *On reaping:*—I. WHEN DOES THE REAPING COME (ver. 35)? 1. The law of nature is that there should be delay between the sowing and the reaping. It is not always so in grace. It was not so at Pentecost, nor with Philip and the eunuch, with Peter and Cornelius. Both sometimes coincide—(1) To convince us that the power is of God, not of man. (2) To encourage us to be instant in season and out of season. But commonly there is delay. This should not discourage. God knows best. II. WHAT DOES THE REAPING BRING? 1. Reward (ver. 36). Wages—the work itself. To be workers with God is a great reward. But fruit is also gathered. No Christian labours in vain. Sow the seed and expect the harvest. 2. Joy and mutual rejoicing. (*R. V. Pryce, LL.B.*) *The soul harvest:*—The garments worn in those days were white, and as Christ and His disciples were seated on a slight elevation, they could observe the coming of the crowds of people thus arrayed. There are times, seasons, for the natural world, but all seasons are harvest time in the moral world. Why, you ask, has Christianity been so long conquering the world? Will it speedily triumph? I answer, God is working in His wisdom and power most earnestly. He has done everything on His part; the delay is caused by our neglect. The harvest is ready; God is ready; the Church is not ready. Let us look at some of the evidence for the world's ripeness. I. THE CIVILIZED NATIONS HAVE PIERCED TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD. A century ago how much of the world was unknown, what an impulse has seized the heart of men to find out every foot of land! The destruction of one expedition gives no discouragement; others are pushed forward. Why this impulse? That we may send the gospel everywhere. Observe how geography is being taught in the schools. How different was it when we were children! Providence is thus acquainting the rising generation with the condition of the different nations. II. THE WONDERFUL FACILITIES FOR ACCESS TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD. Wherever commerce can go the Bible and missionary can go. III. THE CHURCH IS NOW ABLE TO GAIN INTELLIGENCE FROM ALMOST EVERY REGION HOURLY. If a missionary is in danger or needs assistance, help can be sent to him on the wings of lightning. IV. ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD ARE BEING BROUGHT INTO NEIGHBOURHOOD. The realization of unity amongst nations is marvellously helping the Church. V. THE BIBLE HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO ALL THE PRINCIPAL LANGUAGES. The foundation of Christian work in Mexico was laid during the European invasion by the soldiers dropping fragments of Bibles which were picked up by the natives. VI. THE SAFETY OF THE MISSIONARY IS EVERYWHERE SECURED. God has given power over the earth into the hands of the great Protestant nations. The Cross is above the flag. The greatest earthly power to-day is the Cross of Jesus Christ. VII. THE WEALTH OF THE WORLD IS IN THE HANDS OF THE

NATIONS THAT ARE SPREADING THE GOSPEL—England, Germany, America. (*Bp. M. Simpson.*) *Autumn: a season for national instruction:*—Autumn, or the "feast of harvest," is not only a season for national gratitude, rejoicing, philanthropy, but also instruction. Look at the fields and mark—I. The RESUSCITATING principle of the Divine government. What you see ripened was a few months ago buried and apparently dead, but the dormant germ has been quickened by God. This principle is seen at work—1. In the mind of mankind, calling up buried thoughts and impressions. 2. In the conversion of souls, quickening the conscience, and imparting spiritual vitality. 3. On a grand scale in the general resurrection. II. The RETRIBUTIVE principle in the Divine government. Nature gives back what she has received—1. In kind. Wheat for wheat. 2. In amount. The more she receives the more she gives. "Be not deceived," &c. III. The MULTIPLYING principle in the Divine government. For one grain many are returned—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundredfold. So in morals. One thought may run into thousands, one noble deed may become the parent of millions. Nothing true is lost; everything true is multiplied. IV. The MATURING principle: the Divine government. Through slow stages of growth. The blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear. Character ripens. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **Lift up your eyes, and look.**—I. THE STANDPOINT. In calling the disciples' attention to the Samaritans who were ready to believe without the help of miracle, our Lord is calling upon them to take a larger, higher, and more spiritual view of things; to labour for that which is more enduring than the grass, the bread without which man cannot live. He is looking down upon us. 1. What does He see? He sees us eager, busy, absorbed, not in things unlawful, but in things below the supreme worth. Harvests, markets, eating, drinking. (1) The poor struggling for a maintenance. (2) The middle class striving for wealth, comfort, culture. (3) The rich absorbed in society and ambitious projects. (4) The student. (5) The philanthropist. 2. These are not to be condemned, but are commendable in their way. But the wrong lies in the fact that we are buried in these things. 3. Christ summons us to rise above these things to His own standpoint. II. THE VISIONS. 1. Of the world's great spiritual need. There was something in these Samaritans not so obvious as pain, or physical hunger, and that did not seem to be of such importance as the growing corn, or the meat the disciples had brought. Look at the people around you, not with the superficial eye, but with the eye of faith, and you will see in them the children of God, wanting God. This want is not to be satisfied by better houses, sufficient bread, present comfort. There is need in man's heart for a peace, a joy, a liberty, a life, not otherwise to be obtained but by fellowship with the Father. 2. Of the Son of man who can supply this need? This was His revelation to the woman. Every page of the Gospels shows that Christ was not indifferent to man's physical woes. But it was for their spiritual wants that He cared most. And to become food for this He died, as a grain of wheat sinks into the ground to die, in order to bring man back to God, and become the food of the world. 3. Of the future. (1) The remote future. That which is near is apt to hide that which is at a great distance, and so that which is near in time is apt to hide that which is of infinite importance in the far future. To-morrow with its cares and engagements is big enough to hide from us the eternal. How are we to qualify ourselves for looking on the Lamb slain for us? Only by doing His work and carrying His burden. (2) The near future. Max Müller tells us that "there are no people more ripe for Christianity than the Hindoos," and the same holds good all over the world. But we can only see it with the eye of faith and the spirit of sacrifice. (*H. Arnold Thomas, M.A.*) **White already.**—Our Lord teaches the ripeness of the world for the highest blessing. 1. Men everywhere have a certain religiousness of nature: religious ideas, capacities, instincts, aspirations; in some instances starved, degraded, dulled, but still there—the sense of infinity, dependence, duty, accountability, futurity. So far, then, they are ready for the gospel—able to comprehend its works, to receive its grace, to realize its blessings. 2. Not only so, but there is in all men a felt need for the truth, grace, hope of the gospel. They are feeling after God. Not equally vivid, understood and expressed, are their longings, but they are everywhere existent. 3. But whilst we believe all this we do not believe in the immediate readiness of mankind. We feel that much must be done first There must be a sowing and ripening before the reaping. It is this spirit of doubtfulness and postponement that our Lord rebukes. "The sowing and ripening has taken place; put in your sickles." Let us observe the cases in which our Lord's rebuke applies. I. Take the conversion of the YOUNG. 1. You do not expect this. The children must wait. "First

the blade," &c. So we instruct, encourage, discipline them, but should be much surprised by anything like a religious experience, and should look upon it as on premature bloomings and blossomings in garden and orchard. But what is that doctrine of yours of prevenient grace? That God gives a secret light, light, strength, bias to the soul, and as soon as we awake to consciousness we find within us the sense of law and grace. 2. Have we not been astonished at the spiritual capacity of children? They cannot understand theology, but they can religion. They cannot understand entomology, botany, optics, but they admire a butterfly, love the flowers, leap with joy at the rainbow. Go to them at once with a spiritual appeal and expect the effect. Don't talk about their wanting experience. If a chrysalis be placed in an ice-house, its development may be retarded for years, but take it into a hothouse, and it flutters a thing of beauty in a few days. So with our children. II. Take the conversion of the MASSES. (1) Such as are ignorant. What do they want? Education, say many. But on trial it comes out that they discover a spiritual faculty most acute. It was on this ground that the Royal Reaper gathered many noble sheaves. So it was when Wycliffe appealed to the serfs of Leicestershire, Luther to the peasantry of Germany, Wesley to the colliers of Kingswood. Without knowing arithmetic they feel the worth of the soul; without skill in languages they know the voice of God; without æsthetics they admire the beauty of holiness. (2) Such as are worldly. They appear immersed in the material, but under that thick clay the Spirit of God is at work. There seems no life in a garden in early spring; but under the surface the seeds are swelling, the roots full of ferment. All that is wanted is rain and sunshine. (3) Such as are vicious. What do these want? Reformation, say the wise of this world. No; with crimson sins they are white unto harvest. How readily Christ found the missing chord in publican and harlot! In this very Samaritan Christ wished His Church to learn that the guiltiest are able to apprehend the sublimest truths, truths which convict and save. III. Take the conversion of the SCEPTICAL. What do they want? Argumentation, say many. No; men cannot get rid of their religion so easily as some think. The atheist has eyes to see this wondrous universe, spiritual longings, thoughts, arguments within himself not to be suppressed, and is compelled to doubt his doubts. Go to him, and speak not so much to the sceptic as to the man. IV. Take the conversion of the SAVAGE portion of our race. What do they want? Civilization — nature never leaps. Indeed! Is there not a leap from the caterpillar through the pupa into the butterfly? "No," says the man of science, "it only seems a leap." Very good; we won't argue. There is the penitent thief; it was not a real leap—the Spirit of God had worked the intermediate stages in silence and darkness—it only seemed a leap. Fiji, fifty years ago, was cannibal, to-day it is Christian. God is in all other dark places. "The isles wait for His law." V. The conversion of THE WORLD AT LARGE. This seems a long way off to the carnal eye. But it is only waiting. The sowing is done. 1. Christ is the Sower. He moves with His Spirit among the million. 2. His ripening forces have long been at work (chap. i. 4, 9). The Light of the World acts when He does not manifestly shine. Go and expect fruit. You are not waiting for God; He is waiting for you. (*W. L. Walkinson.*) *The grain ripe*:—I. THE SICKLES. 1. Preaching the gospel. The sickle may have a handle of rosewood, and be adorned with precious stones, but it is worth nothing if it does not bring down the grain. We might preach the sciences from our pulpits, but Agassiz would beat us at that. We might philosophize, but Emerson would beat us at that. But he who with faith and prayer takes hold of the gospel sickle, however weak his natural arm, shall gather deep swarths of golden grain. 2. Singing the gospel. This scythe has been long neglected, much abused, but has been sharpened anew. 3. Prayer. By this John Knox reaped Scotland. II. The REAPERS. 1. Tract distributors. 2. Sunday-school teachers, ministers. III. THOSE READY TO BE REAPED. 1. Those who feel too bad to be saved. You are ripe because you feel that. Christ came to save the worst. 2. The religiously educated. (*T. De Witt Talmage.*) *Harvest*:—I. The RIPENING principle of the Divine government is at work—1. In the inorganic realm. Our system is travelling to a crisis. 2. In the vegetable realm. The oak moves from century to century from an acorn to a point when its perfection is reached. 3. In the human realm. (1) In the body. From infancy to old age our bodies are ripening for the grave. (2) In the character, which is ripening for bliss or woe. (3) In institutions, which, whether good or evil, reach their culmination. (4) Individuals are ripening. (5) Nations. (6) The world—the harvest is the end of the world. II. The COMPEN-

SATORY principle in the Divine government. This principle rewards the labourer—1. According to the kind of his work. What was sown is reaped in species and quality. The same holds good in morals. 2. According to the amount. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly." There are degrees in glory which are regulated according to degrees in goodness. III. The CO-OPERATIVE principle. In the harvest-field you have the result of a vast combination of agencies, animate and inanimate, human and Divine. The harvest demonstrates that man is a co-worker with God. Paul plants, &c. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The fields white to harvest*:—I. WE MUST LOOK AT THE ASPECT OF THE FIELDS. 1. That in most places there is evidently a preparation in the minds of both Pagans and Mohammedans for receiving the servants of Christ. 2. What are the peculiar advantages which pious and zealous Christians in Britain enjoy for extending the gospel. 3. But the disposition among the heathen to receive the gospel, and the facilities which we possess for diffusing it, would be insufficient, unless the activity of the spiritual Church were awake to improve the occasion. II. ENCOURAGEMENTS HELD OUT TO THE REAPERS. 1. The important good, which the Christian missionary effects, is, that he gathers fruit to life eternal. 2. The abundant reward which awaits him, when the toil is finished, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (1) This common joy began when the holy apostles, having finished their labours, were taken to receive their reward. (2) This joy has been increasing, as the several sowers and reapers, in different ages of the New Testament Church, have been taken to their eternal rest. (3) It will be completed when all the Church shall meet before the throne; when the mystery of Christ shall be finished; when God shall have accomplished the number of His elect, and have hastened His kingdom. (*Bp. Daniel Wilson.*) *Fields white for harvest*:—Many Christians have a large stock of reasons for not expecting many conversions. They are for ever dwelling on the past or in the future, but never look for God's arm being made bare now. The common reason is, "There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest. This is not the time or the man; we must wait"; and in the meantime death doth not cease to slay, and multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge. Patience is a virtue, but sometimes decision is a greater one. Four months!—have there not been many months? That was the cry in the days of our forefathers, in the days of our fathers, and it is four months still. Oh, to learn the Saviour's words, "The fields are white already"! Expect a present blessing. I. SIGNS OF HARVEST. 1. The Saviour had preached a sermon, and the whole of His congregation had been converted. He had only one hearer, it is true. But the conversion of one soul is a sign that God is going to convert others. The cholera is raging. A physician has been studying the disease. Many methods have failed. At last he hits upon the drug which cures one. "Now," he says, "I shall have a harvest of men, for what cures one will cure all." When Napoleon landed from Elba one man offered to serve the emperor. "Here," said Napoleon, "is one recruit at least." If some have found the Saviour, why not more? 2. This one was at that moment engaged in making more. It was Christ's strategy to bless the men of Samaria through this woman. When this country was asleep half a dozen young men at Oxford felt the inspiration of God, and soon the same inspiration was felt from one end of the country to the other. There is not a plant that grows by the hedge side that does not scatter all adown the bank seeds of succeeding generations. 3. The others were coming to hear. When the fish get round the net surely some will be taken. 4. The persons who were coming to hear were those who seemed least likely to listen. When the giddy multitude crowd together to listen to the gospel it is a good sign of the coming harvest. 5. Recollect the men who have laboured before us. Has all this labour been for nothing? The days that are past have been preparing the population of England. 6. It is a sign of good when there is a stir among the people. The worst thing is stagnation. When people are not thoughtful about other things it is seldom you can get them to be thoughtful about religion. A farm overgrown with thistles is better than a barren one. 7. Old priestcrafts do not now hinder men from hearing the gospel. We can get at the people. If Luther, Bunyan, Baxter, and Alleine could have lived now, how they would have rejoiced! II. HARVEST WANTS. 1. Many labourers. There is no machine that can do this work of soul-reaping. 2. Sharp sickles; such cutting truths as justification by faith, the total ruin of mankind, the Cross, the energy of the Holy Ghost. 3. Close binders. Those who cannot use the sickle can gather up the wheat. Invite people to the house of God. 4. Some to take the sheaves home, and assist to bring people into the Church. 5. Others to bring refreshment

to the reapers. Encourage them. III. THE FEARS OF HARVEST. The husbandman sometimes fears that—1. Through lack of labourers his harvest may be damaged. After a certain time the wheat spears out, and birds will feast upon it. Every hour that men are not saved there are capacities of usefulness that are falling out, and Satan is running away with them. 2. Some wheat may remain unreaped, and so be destroyed. If the Christian does not work, there are others who will. 3. Whether we gather in the harvest or not, there is a reaper who is silently gathering it every hour—Death. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Fields white already unto harvest:*—I. THE LIKENESS BETWEEN NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL HUSBANDRY. 1. The first coming of Christ was the seedtime, and His second will be the harvest. From the seed which was then dropped will spring ripened fruit. 2. Generally the seed is the Word, and the sowers are the ministers of the gospel. 3. In all cases sowing is a means to an end. No man ever cast seed into the ground for the sake of the sowing. Even when we have preached well our end is not attained. 4. The only aim that will animate a ministry is to save souls from death. 5. When anxious inquirers come and close with Christ the joy is the joy of harvest. II. THE DISSIMILARITY. Whereas in nature an uniform period intervenes between sowing and reaping, in grace the fruits may be gathered at any season or length of time—longer or shorter. 1. Do not wait four months, for the harvest may come at an earlier period. The seed sown to-day may be ripe to-night, as at Jacob's well and on the day of Pentecost. Ministers, therefore, should look for immediate results. 2. Do not despond although four months, four or forty years, should pass. If the cultivator of grain does not see his harvest whitening in four months, he abandons hope. Not so the Christian seed-sower. To know that some of the seed ripens early keeps his hopes active from the first; and to know that some of it ripens late prevents his hopes from sinking even to the last. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) **One soweth, and another reapeth.**—*The reaper and the wages:*—A double reward is promised the garnerer of souls. It is a reward which flows back to the garnerers, and it is a reward which flows out to the souls garnered. 1. He that reapeth receiveth wages; something comes to him. (1) He has the wage of being linked into the highest fellowship. (2) He makes the best possible investment of his toil. (3) He has the wage of the supremest joy. (4) He has the wage of richer reward in heaven. 2. The garnerer of souls has wage also toward others; He gathereth fruit until life eternal. 3. Consider the place where the reaper is to reap. "Lift up your eyes and look"—you need not travel far to find a place for reaping. Your own local church, your own special Sunday-schools, your own neighbourhood—put in at once your sickle there. (*W. Hoyt, D.D.*) *Sowing and reaping:*—In Palestine neither all the sowing nor all the reaping of the fields is done at one and the same season. As soon as one crop is out of the ground another is prepared for. Ploughing and sowing follow close upon reaping and gleaning. Different crops require different lengths of time for their maturing; and, as a consequence, the planting for one crop will sometimes be going on while another crop near it is not yet ready for the harvest. As soon as the fields are cleared, in the midsummer or in the early autumn, the ground is ploughed, and the winter wheat or some other grain is sowed, in advance of the rainy season. Again, between the early and the latter rains of the springtime, there will be ploughing, and the sowing of barley or oats or lentils for a later crop. In the second week in April I saw on the Plain of the Cornfields, not far from Jacob's well, the grain already well ripened toward the harvest, while just southward of that region, and again, two days later, just northward of it, I saw ploughing and planting going on; so that I might have been in doubt, from my own observations, whether that were the time of seed-sowing or of harvest; and so it is likely to have been in the days of Jesus. Whether this were the springtime or the early winter, whether it were at noonday or at eventide, are points which have been much discussed in connection with the gospel narration of the visit of Jesus. It would seem most natural, from the story as it stands, to suppose that the season was the springtime, and that the hour was noonday; but, however that may be, it is obvious that there were within the eye-sweep of Jesus and His disciples the signs of seed-sowing on the one hand and of ripening harvest on the other; and that it was by calling attention to these two processes of nature in so close proximity of time and space that Jesus taught the lesson His disciples were shown that even while seed-sowing for one crop was going on in the natural world there might be also a making ready for an ingathering of former crops; so that sowing and reaping should go on together. Then came our Lord's application of

this fact in nature's sphere. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *Sowing and reaping:*—The proverb, "One soweth, and another reapeth," as generally used, suggests that the rewards of labour often fall into hands that have not earned them. The profits of an invention are frequently made by others than the inventor. In diplomacy, as Leicester says, "The hap of some is that all they do is nothing, and others that do nothing have all the thanks." Job could wish himself nothing worse than "Let me sow, and let another eat." But Christ widens our view; He corrects the selfishness of the individual by fixing his thoughts on humanity, and brings the rewards of eternity to counterbalance the apparent anomalies of time. Consider—I. OUR RELATION TO THE PAST. Every man is born into an inheritance which he had no hand in earning. This distinguishes him from the brute. Instinct makes no progress. Through long millenniums the earth was preparing for man. One species of vegetation after another came and left its deposit. One kind of animals after another left their bones to petrify. Thus stratum after stratum arose. 1. Thus the child of to-day is richer than our own childhood. Take the matter of school-books. The discoveries of one age are confined to the few; in the next they are the creed of the learned; in the third they become the elementary principles of education. What strides have been made in science since Galileo, Newton, and Watt! No child can begin where his father began. 2. The same holds good in religious matters. (1) The Church is richer to-day than she was a hundred years ago by the whole missionary enterprise, by which she has added a new volume to Christian evidences, acquired new property in noble lives, raised the standard of home piety and augmented her joy. (2) The same is true in hymnology and (3) in Christian literature. All this has come about largely without our own exertions. No man is self-made: he is what he is because of others' labours. II. OUR DUTY TO THE PRESENT. Not to rest in our inherited advantages, but to so add to them as to leave a richer inheritance. The danger of the youth to whom a large fortune has been left—1. In the direction of indolence or prodigality. It is a common remark that the children of wealthy men often come to grief. 2. In the direction of conservatism. The young heir is apt to think that he must be simply a repetition of his father. The same perils attend us in receiving the heritage of the past. We must, therefore, set ourselves to such work as is in harmony with our generation. 1. In science Franklin went a certain length in the investigation of electricity; but his successors did not rest there. Hence we have through Henry, Morse, Wheatstone, Bell, and Edison, the telephone. 2. The literature of the present is not a reproduction of the past, but an outgrowth. 3. The theology and Church life of to-day are distinctive of to-day. Each age has to meet its own problems, and without drifting from central truths must solve them in its own way. Thus it happens that the leaders of a former generation fail to secure a hearing in the next. III. OUR JOY IN THE FUTURE. Jesus takes in eternity and gives all workers alike a share in the reward—the reaper for his reaping, the sower for his ploughing. Conclusion: 1. How much there is in this to cheer the despondent labourer. Livingstone seemingly accomplished little in missioning Africa, but he stimulated others to evangelize. Though a man bring only one soul to Christ, he has an interest in all the successes of that soul. 2. This truth is well calculated to keep us humble. The credit is due to God. He gives the increase. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *One soweth, and another reapeth:*—I. HOW THIS PROVERB WAS VERIFIED IN THE CASE OF THE APOSTLES. The general view is that they went into a moral wilderness, and that planting and sowing were simultaneous. This was not the case. 1. As regards the Jews, the prophets, &c., John and our Lord had sown the seed. The harvest at Pentecost was the result of centuries of seed-sowing, and in preaching Peter was merely putting in the sickle. 2. As regards the heathen the seed had been sown—(1) By the teaching of nature and conscience. (2) By priests and prophets such as Melchizedek, Jethro, Job, Balaam, by whom the tradition of a purer age had been preserved. (3) By the dissemination of truth through the dispersion of the Jews. 3. Thus the fields were now white unto harvest, and the apostles reaped where others had sown. II. HOW IT MAY BE CONTINUALLY VERIFIED AMONGST OURSELVES. 1. Sudden conversions produced by preacher or friend are only the outcome, it may be, of a long series of impressions. 2. An apparently unfruitful ministry may be a preparation for a rich harvest under some successor. III. THE GRACIOUS ASSURANCE THAT BOTH SOWER AND REAPER SHALL REJOICE TOGETHER. It may make a difference to a man as far as his present comfort is concerned whether he be a sower or a reaper, but none as far as his future is concerned. If he has done his work faithfully he shall have his reward. Moses and the prophets and

the Gentile teachers will rejoice with apostles and Christian missionaries; apparently unsuccessful parents and missionaries with those who have spoken effectively. Lesson: Be not weary in well-doing—parents, teachers, preachers—you may see no fruit, but you are sowing good seed. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Sowing the gospel seed:*—I. THE SOWERS—men, not angels. 1. This seems strange when we consider the grandeur and breadth of the gospel. Who is equal to summarizing the truths of the gospel, much less to expounding them? 2. Yet men have ever been entrusted with the gospel—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek. On a human body was placed the priestly robe, and he who entered the Holy of Holies was a man. When another order of teachers arose neither Gabriel nor Michael were summoned, but Samuel, Elijah, and Isaiah. And when Christ came He entrusted the gospel not to the heavenly host, but to Galilean fishermen. 3. There is a fitness, however, in this. The fields are those of earth, the harvest is of men, therefore the sowers and reapers must be not angelic, but human. Knowing their weakness and fallibility, ministers may well shrink; but if they forsake the plough angels will not direct it along the furrow. And with all their fallibility they being men can weep with men's sorrows and partake of their joys, which angels cannot. The appeal of an angel would be more powerful, that of man more pathetic. No angel could speak of human sympathies and call to remembrance the pathos of a mother's prayers. II. THE MAGNITUDE OF THEIR WORK. 1. The seed—the Word of God. 2. The field. (1) The apathetic. (2) The infidel. (3) The depraved. 3. The personal feebleness of the instruments. II. THE GREATNESS OF THEIR REWARD. 1. God-given help to do what they have to do. 2. The sympathy of those who are benefited by their labours. 3. The present benediction of the great Master. 4. Eternity of blessedness in heaven. (*R. B. East, M.D.*) *Spiritual harvest:*—I. THE SALVATION OF SINNERS IS THE WILL OF GOD AND THE DELIGHT OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. This is manifest from—1. The provision He has made for effecting it. 2. The place it has borne in the eternal counsels. 3. The preparation of infinite wisdom and almighty power in overruling the affairs of the world. 4. The succession of great men inspired to foreannounce it. 5. The manner in which it was carried into execution by the incarnation and cross of Christ. II. THOUGH THE GOSPEL IS AT ALL TIMES NECESSARY FOR SALVATION, CERTAIN PERIODS ARE PECULIARLY FAVOURABLE TO IT. 1. Always necessary because—(1) It is the means appointed by Christ. (2) Because of its proved fitness. (3) Because God is to have all the glory. 2. Sometimes specially seasonable. (1) As here. The providence of God had over-ruled the envy of the Jews to the driving of the Saviour into Galilee and His going to Galilee to lead Him through Samaria; when He meets with the woman, who, saved herself, summons her fellow citizens to Christ. (2) As in the case of modern missions. What doors have been opened by the abolition of slavery, the progress of commerce, &c. III. WHEN SUCH A PERIOD ARRIVES CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED UPON TO EMBRACE IT AS A HARVEST TIME. Such a season—1. Must be immediately embraced. Its duties cannot be put off to a more convenient season. It is now or never. Men are crying for the words of life. If we refuse, the curse of Meroz will be ours. 2. Must be diligently pursued: from various considerations. (1) The shortness of the season. (2) The precariousness of the weather. (3) The ripeness of the crops. Idleness, amusements, in harvest time! 3. Should be joyfully performed. Harvesting is hard work, but there is much pleasure in it, and it is generally performed with cheerfulness. IV. BOTH SUCCESS AND REWARD WILL CROWN THE FAITHFUL LABOURER. 1. One of the greatest stimulants to labour is the probability of success, but here success is certain. 2. The almighty influence of the Holy Spirit is behind it. 3. It is assured by the pledged word of the Lord of the harvest. (*J. Gwyther, B.A.*) *The harvest of heathen souls:*—I. THE PRINCIPLE OF MISSIONARY EFFORT IMPLIED. 1. This principle combines two apparent opposites: it necessitates the agency of man and preserves the supremacy of God. By the one it precludes man from yielding to the bent of his natural indolence and attaining nothing; by the other it annihilates the unseemly arrogance which would vaunt the arm of flesh as though it could accomplish everything. 2. It furnishes a reply to scepticism which asks, "Why, if God be a perfect agent, does He need man; and why, if man be an imperfect agent, does God employ him?" Lift up your eyes! Though the husbandman has to sow, on God depends the fruitful seasons. Man works for God, God works by man. It is for us to employ, it is for Him to bless the means. II. THE DUTY ENJOINED. In the natural world we do not expect a harvest without labour, nor without God's blessing. So Paul must plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the increase. Duty is irrespective of results. III. THE BENEFIT TO BE CONFERRED.

Labourers do not depend for their hire on the upspringing of the seed, nor for its quantity or quality. Under all circumstances he is worthy of his hire. But in spiritual husbandry He who employs the sowers can also command the elemental influences. He who engages the reapers can ensure the crop, He therefore who sows not only receives present wages, but "gathereth fruit," &c. (*T. Dale, M.A.*) *Missions* :—I. THE DUTY OF ALL WHO POSSESS THE PRECIOUS SEED TO SOW IT. 1. Our obligation to sow must be in proportion to our estimate of the value of the seed. 2. This obligation affects the Church collectively and individually. (1) It is the execution of a trust with which all Christians are put in charge. (2) It is the acceptance of a benefit to which all are permitted to aspire. 3. It is the accredited indispensable token of union with Christ and of membership in His Church. II. THE CERTAINTY THAT THEY WHO SOW SHALL REAP. 1. "The liberal soul shall be enriched." "He that watereth others shall himself be watered." The exercise of grace under one aspect leads to the communication of grace under another. 2. The preciousness of the future reward may be gathered from the excellence of the present. 3. Both are sure. They may be long delayed, but the seed shall spring fresh and vigorous even as Jesus rose triumphant from the grave. III. OVER WHAT FIELD THE SEED IS TO BE SCATTERED. "The field is the world." 1. In its widest extent. 2. In its varieties of guilt. 3. In its diversities of promise and prospect. IV. WHAT HARVEST WE MAY HOPE TO SOW FOR OTHERS, AND WHAT WE MAY CALCULATE ON REAPING FOR OURSELVES. 1. Remember the promise. 2. Remember its fulfilment. (1) In England under previous missions. (2) Abroad under existing missions. V. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE CAN PROFITABLY PERFORM THE DUTY AND EFFECTUALLY ENSURE THE BENEFIT. Let each do what he can, where he can. 1. Prayerfully. 2. Earnestly. 3. Patiently. 4. Believingly. (*Ibid.*) *The passion for immediate results* :—Men read what the *Missionary Herald* tells them of the progress of the gospel among the heathen; and there are those that take out their pencils and say: "The whole missionary world numbers so many millions, and there have been about so many hundred people converted by the influence of this amount of capital. That is about ten thousand dollars for one soul. It is rather dear work, ain't it?" There are such moral arithmeticians that sum up the fruit of moral seed-sowing under arithmetical proportions. But the whole world has been stirred up by the mission cause. I am what I am because Henry Obookiah, from the Sandwich Islands, was taught at the Cornwall School in Connecticut, and in my boyhood came down to my father's house, and produced an impression on me which has undulated, and propagated, and gone on influencing me. Some of the enthusiasm which I have felt for moral conditions came to me from seeing him. Who can tell what the retroaction of foreign missions is? Who can tell what benefit may be received here from our Western missions? Who can tell what is the effect of sending our abundance to the waste places of our own land, and to the torrid and frigid zones? It stirs up that which is not reportable. Ten thousand more leaves are born every year than the botanist ever sees. Ten thousand times more storms blow on every sea than are ever registered on charts or log-books. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) *Reaping* :—Once a vessel bound to a distant part of the world happened to be detained by contrary winds at the Isle of Wight. A minister who was on board went on shore to preach. His text was "Be clothed with humility." Among his hearers was a thoughtless girl, who had come to display her finery rather than to be instructed. The sermon was the means of her conversion. Her name was Elizabeth Wallbridge, the celebrated "Dairyman's Daughter," whose interesting history by Legh Richmond has been the means amongst nearly all peoples of bringing thousands to Christ. (*Family Churchman.*) *Receiving wages* :—What wages? Christ had already told them that His own wages were to do the will of God, and to finish His work. Did they want better? They would gather in fruit—the fruit of all His work and travail, of all God's revelations of Himself from age to age, of all the toil of patriarchs, kings, prophets. These had laboured—they were entering into their labours. They were come in at the end of a period when all things were hastening to their consummation. They would have the reward which all these men had longed for; the reward of seeing God's full revelation of Himself, of opening the spring of eternal life, of which all might drink together. The divisions of time had nothing to do with an eternal blessing. The sower and reaper would rejoice together. Why might not Jacob, who had given the well, and the newest Samaritan convert who drank of it, share in those pleasures which are at the right hand of Him who is, and was, and is to come? (*F. D. Maurice, M.A.*) *Large results from humble beginnings* :—A small bit of

rock feels something or other tickling it behind; and through a seam, at last, there trickle out some drops of water, as if the rock itself were shedding tears; and the drops increase; and a rill is formed; and it runs quietly, finding its way, down the declivity. Soon another little rill is met on the road, and they join forces; and a little further down a third is added; and then a fourth, and then a fifth, and so on, till by-and-by they make a plunge through the gorge with spray and thunder; and out comes below the stream, voluble and violent; and down in the meadows it quiets itself, and runs between flowery banks, until a mill catches it and makes it work for its way; and passing through industries it still deepens; other streams break into it here and there towards its mouth; and there the city dwells upon, and navies ride upon it; and in its pride of strength and depth and width and accomplishments, it says, "Who but I?" But that great voluminous river is itself the child of those drops, those trickling rills, those mountain springs. If it had not been for them it would not have existed nor have been nourished. We need not despise, therefore, in any direction, small things. Who can tell what that poor old nurse wrought who cared for the orphan child of her mistress that was gone, crooning songs to the child, telling her fairy stories, and making an empyrean above her? Setting loose in that little child all the germs of poetry, she fashioned its mind; and her humble, unconscious work will never be washed out; nor will the colour be taken from it; it will go on and be part and parcel of the child, if it lives to be fifty or a hundred years old. When the child has come to mature womanhood they will say: "Well, were you not brought up in your babyhood by that old nurse?" "Yes; she was a nice old creature," and that is all you say about it; but you are very largely what you are from what she did for you. If the throbbing of her heart sets yours to throbbing more, if the outlook of her imagination threw open the windows of yours, she, I might almost say, was your creator; and though she was so humble and powerless, without learning or genius, nevertheless you were so plastic that her influence moulded you. (*H. Ward Beecher.*) *The penalties of neglect*:—To what will the wilful neglect of seed-time on the part of the whole community be equivalent but to an act of national suicide? If, again, a distant colony were dependent on the surplus produce of the land that sent it forth, and yet enough were purposely sown only for home consumption, what would such conduct be but an act of national fratricide? It would be to exhibit the maliciousness of Cain, and to bring the curse of a brother's blood upon that guilty nation. Like the first—like an act of national suicide—would be the crime of the Church, which is bound to "love the Lord her God with all her heart," did she not take care to provide sufficient ministration of God's Word throughout the circumference of her immediate domestic responsibility; and, like the second—like an act of national fratricide—would her crime be, if, forgetful of the second principle of action, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," she made no proportionate effort and application to extend similar ministrations in those her missionary stations, which are her colonies, planted in heathen lands, and all around which there is a famine and a perishing, not for want of the natural sustenance, but of "the bread that cometh down from heaven," and which alone "giveth life unto the world." (*T. Dale, M.A.*) **Herein is that saying true.**—The frequent use of proverbial sayings in the New Testament deserves notice. It shows the value of proverbs, and the importance of teaching them to children and young people. A pointed proverb is often remembered when a long moral lesson is forgotten. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Sowing and reaping*:—A ragged school teacher was telling a friend in Philadelphia that he was afraid he would have to discontinue the school, as he had seen no fruit whatsoever of his labours. At the moment a little ragged boy came up and asked him if he would come and see his brother who was very ill. He went with the boy into one of the lowest streets in the city. On entering the room he was struck with the supreme misery of it. Going up to the suffering boy, the teacher said, "My poor boy, what can I do for you? Shall I get you a doctor?" "Oh, no, captain," said the boy, "but tell me, tell me, did you say that Jesus died for everybody, that He gave Himself for me?" "Yes, I did." "And that He will receive any one who comes to Him?" "Yes, indeed I did, dear boy." "Well, I know that since He gave Himself for me, that He will receive me." And then the boy dropped back on his bundle of rags—dead. *Sowing and reaping*:—From the labours of ministers that are dead and gone much good fruit may be reaped by the people that survive them, and by the ministers that succeed them. John the Baptist and those that assisted him had laboured, and the disciples of Christ entered into their labours. (*Matthew Henry.*)

Sowing and reaping—missions:—A seaman, on returning home to Scotland after a cruise in the Pacific, was asked: "Do you think the missionaries have done any good in the South Sea Islands?" "I will tell you a fact which speaks for itself," said the sailor. "Last year I was wrecked on one of those islands, where I knew that, eight years before, a ship was wrecked and the crew murdered; and you may judge how I felt at the prospect before me—if not dashed to pieces on the rocks, to survive for only a more cruel death. When day broke we saw a number of canoes pulling for our ship, and were prepared for the worst. Think of our joy and wonder when we saw the natives in English dress, and heard some of them speak in the English language. On that very island the next Sunday we heard the gospel preached. I do not know what you think of missions, but I know what I do." *Sowing and reaping*:—Mr. M—— was for many years a pious and indefatigable Sunday-school teacher. It pleased God to call him to suffer severe affliction and to an early death. During his long affliction, though it was painful even to see him walk, he went to his class; nor would he resign as long as he could possibly reach the school. "It was my happiness," says a writer in the *Teacher's Magazine*, "to visit him during his trying illness, and the calmness of his mind under affliction, and his triumphant departure, I never shall forget; nor shall I cease to remember another circumstance. Turning to me, and with something like despondency, he said, 'Well, I believe I never was useful as a Sunday-school teacher.' Some short time after his death, I visited a Sunday School in a small town some distance from that in which Mr. M—— had lived. I soon recognized among the teachers one who had been a Sunday scholar; I conversed with him, and found he was a professor of religion, and a member of a Christian Church in that town. I congratulated him upon his employment, and inquired by what means he had been led to love the Lord Jesus Christ. He replied, 'The advice which my teacher again and again gave me, led me to reflection and to prayer, and I hope was the means of leading me to Christ.' 'And who was that teacher?' He replied, 'Mr. M——.' Yes, that same dear friend who, upon a dying bed, said he believed he had never been useful as a Sunday-school teacher." (*New Cyclopædia.*) *Sowing and reaping—tracts*:—A clergyman some time since, as he was riding, passed some young females near a school-house, and dropped from his carriage two tracts, which he had previously marked. Some time afterwards he was conversing with a young woman with reference to her spiritual state, and found her rejoicing in the hope of pardoned sin. He inquired the history of her religious feelings, and she traced them to a tract dropped by a traveller, which was manifestly one of the two above referred to. He was afterwards called to visit another young woman on a sick-bed, whose mind was calm and composed in view of death, which the event proved was near at hand. She traced her first serious impressions to the circumstance of two tracts being dropped by a traveller, one of which, she said, was taken up by her cousin, and the other by herself; "and now," said she, "we are hoping both in Christ." She had retained the tract as a precious treasure, and, putting her hand under her pillow, showed it to the clergyman, who immediately recognized the marks he had written upon it. (*New Cyclopædia.*) **Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.**—I. TRACE THE STREAM OF PROVIDENTIAL EVENTS FROM THE BEGINNING SO FAR AS THEY BEAR ON THE SPIRITUAL CULTURE OF THE WORLD. The fall, the first promise, animal sacrifice, Enoch, the deluge, the colonization of the world through the confusion of tongues, the call of Abraham, and the preparation of the Jews in Egypt for their inheritance, idolatry exposed and punished by the plagues, the establishment and mission of the Jewish nation, the captivity, restoration and dispersion, the function of Persia, Greece, and Rome, the fulness of time, the papal apostacy, Luther, the Puritans, Methodism, missions, Sunday Schools, Bible Society, education. II. NOTICE SOME OF THOSE EXISTING EVENTS WHICH HARMONIZE WITH THOSE OF PAST TIMES, AND ARE CONNECTED WITH THE HAPPINESS OF MANKIND. 1. Consider what is doing within the Church. It has awakened out of sleep. All denominations have their missionary society. All are talking about the coming of Christ. 2. Consider what is doing without the boundaries of the Church. Many, without thinking or meaning it, are contributing to the spread of the knowledge of Christ. (1) Think on the increase of knowledge—Bacon, Newton, and their successors. (2) The rapid progress of colonization. (3) The extension of the British empire. Why has God given us India? Not to add a new gem to the crown of our monarch, nor to give us an increase of power, not to augment our luxuries, but to extend the gospel. III. STATE THE

DUTIES WHICH THE YOUNG OWE TO THIS GREAT CAUSE, AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY MAY FURTHER IT. 1. You may do this by your own personal religion. Give yourselves first to the Lord, then to His Church. 2. Maintain a deep conviction of the importance of man's spiritual interests, and of the necessity of religion to promote them. Knowledge will not save the world, only Christ can do that. 3. Maintain right views of the importance of truth in the conversion of the world. The divinity of Christ, His atonement, regeneration by the Holy Ghost. 4. Let all your efforts be carried on in the spirit of religion. (1) Beware of the secular spirit in religion. (2) Do everything in a spirit of prayer. Resolutions, sermons, speeches are vain without this. IV. PRESENT SOME MOTIVES TO URGE THE YOUNG TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES FULLY TO THIS CAUSE. 1. Think of the nature of the cause itself. (1) Its first attribute is religion. It is to proclaim salvation to the sinner, and immortality to those who have no prospect beyond the grave. (2) It is intellectual. The heathen world is a vast wilderness of mind. (3) It is characterized by compassion. (4) By comprehension. The missionary society is a Bible society, a school society, a home missionary society, a mechanic's institute, a peace society, an anti-slavery society, a civilization society. 2. Think of the advantages you possess. 3. Remember that it remains with you whether the missionary cause shall be transmitted to posterity. (*J. A. James.*) *Personal effort must be encouraged:*—A little maid directed a great prince to Elisha. Our Saviour, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Philip preached the gospel to a single gentleman, in his chariot upon the road; and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his own country and propagated it there. This woman could say but little of Christ, but what she did say she spoke feelingly. "He told me all that ever I did." Those are most likely to do good that can tell what God has done for their souls. (*Matthew Henry.*) *Mutual dependence:*—We enter upon life weak, unconscious infants, depending every moment on other eyes to watch for us, and other hands to minister to us, while we kindle in their hearts the most powerful emotions. But not less dependent are we on our fellow-creatures for our continuance in life from the cradle to the grave. There is not a thread of clothing which covers our body, not a luxury that is placed on our table, not an article which supplies the means of labour, not one thing which is required of us as civilized beings, but involves the labours of others on our behalf; while by the same law we cannot but contribute to their well-being. The cotton which the artizan weaves or wears has been cultivated by brothers beneath a tropical sun and possibly beneath a tyrant's lash. The tea he drinks has been gathered for him by brothers in distant China. A mother writes a letter to her son in some distant spot in India, and conveys it in silence to the post-office, perhaps thinking only when she may receive a reply. But how much is done before that letter reaches its destination! The hands of unknown brethren will receive and transmit it; rapid trains will convey it over leagues of railways; splendid steamships will sail with it. It is watched day and night, through calm and hurricane; and precious lives are risked to keep it in security until, in safety, after months of travel, it is delivered from the mother's hand into that of her boy. (*Family Churchman.*) **And many of the Samaritans of that city believed.**—*The first female missionary:*—I. HER PREVIOUS CHARACTER. 1. Of dissolute morals. Antecedent wickedness no barrier to grace, given repentance and faith (Isa. i. 18, lv. 7–9; Micah vii. 18; Matt. xii. 31; 1 John i. 7–9). Examples: Manasseh (2 Kings xxxi. 16; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12–15); Saul of Tarsus (Acts ix. 1–18); Philippian jailer (Acts xvi. 34), and no disqualification for after service. 2. Of lively understanding. The success of the gospel not dependent on the intelligence of its preachers, but high mental endowments no misfortune. Paul and Luke have their place as well as Andrew and Peter. 3. Of religious inclinations. Divine grace often keeps alive in souls seemingly going downwards to perdition—a spark of goodness that only waits the Spirit's breath to fan it into flame. II. HER INSPIRING MOTIVE. 1. Not mere excitement. Her love and novelty an unsatisfactory hypothesis, since she grounds her invitation on a moral basis (ver. 29). 2. Not conscious peace. She was scarcely yet rejoicing in the assurance of salvation. But—3. Simple faith. She believed Christ to be the Messiah. It was impossible, therefore, for her to be silent. She acted like David (Psa. lxvi. 16, cxvi. 10), the apostles (Acts iv. 20), Paul (2 Cor. iv. 13), the leper (Mark i. 45). III. HER GLOWING ZEAL (ver. 28). 1. The trivial action. 2. The important revelation. (1) An intention to return. (2) The forgetfulness of her errand in her eagerness to proclaim her new-found joy (ver. 34). (3) The importance she attached to one who could answer

all questions and satisfy all aspirations (Matt. xiii. 44–46). (4) The estimate in which she held Divine things in comparison with earthly. (5) The desire she felt that others should hear the good news. IV. HER GLADSOME MESSAGE (ver. 29). 1. The startling announcement. The language of exaggeration contained a truth. Christ had not only shown His acquaintance with details of personal history, as in the case of Nathanael (chap. i. 48), and with the quality of her spirit, as with Peter's (chap. i. 42), but had discovered her to herself so as to enable her to realize her guiltiness before God (*cf.* Luke v. 8), and her need of that living water of which she afterwards drank. 2. The joyous question. An interrogation not of doubt, but of faith. She spoke as if she believed not for joy (Luke xxiv. 41). Her adroitness is worthy of all imitation. 3. The eager invitation. Compare Christ's address to Andrew and John (chap. i. 39; *cf.* Psa. xxxiv. 8; John vii. 17). V. HER WONDERFUL SUCCESS (vers. 30, 39, 41). 1. The extent of it. (1) She produced a commotion in the city—as the gospel usually does in strange places (Acts viii. 8, xiii. 44, xvii. 5). (2) She enkindled faith in the hearts of many citizens. 2. The reason of it. (1) A persuasion of the woman's sincerity and accuracy guaranteed by her humiliating confession. (2) A feeling of the self-evidencing power of the truth even when repeated at second-hand (2 Cor. iv. 2; 1 Thess. i. 5, ii. 13). Lessons: 1. The duty of those who know the truth to publish it (chap. xvii. 18, xx. 21; Matt. v. 16, x. 8; Acts v. 20; Rom. x. 14, 15). 2. The place and power of female agency in the Church, *e.g.*, Mary (Luke i. 26–38), Elizabeth (Luke i. 6), Anna (Luke ii. 37), Dorcas (Acts ix. 36), Lydia (Acts xvi. 14), Priscilla (Acts xviii. 26), &c. 3. The adaptation of the gospel to the highest needs of man (Isa. lii. 7; Ezek. xlvii. 8; Luke i. 78, 79; John viii. 32, xii. 50; Rom. i. 16). 4. The certainty that all nations will yet be obedient unto the faith (Psa. ii. 8, lxxii. 8; Isa. xi. 9; Dan. ii. 35; Matt. xxviii. 18; Rom. i. 5; Phil. ii. 11; Rev. xi. 15). (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Faith*:—I. IN ITS NATURE. 1. Testimony. (1) Credit or assent (ver. 39; 1 Cor. xi. 18). Hearsay faith: that of a child who accepts, on the word of his teacher, facts about Egypt, Palestine, &c., or as a child receives at his mother's knees what she says about God, and Jesus, and heaven. (2) Confidence and trust (ver. 40). This differs from assent in that it leads men to act. In this sense all men live by faith. (3) The Samaritans' first faith. What a contrast between them and the Jews! They received Him on the word of a woman when they saw the change wrought in her. She was a living epistle. (4) Faith in the testimony of God (chap. i. 33). 2. Conviction (ver. 41). Their faith advanced beyond trust in the woman's word. 3. Experience. "Know." II. IN ITS OBJECTS. 1. The word of Christ (see vers. 47–53). 2. The promise of God (Matt. viii. 7). Faith in the promises makes the future present, and the heirship possession. 3. The work of Christ (ver. 42). 4. The Person of Christ. III. IN ITS RESULTS. 1. Its effects on this occasion. (1) In the woman. She showed it by proclaiming Christ. (2) In the Samaritans. They came to Christ, confessed Him, invited Him to tarry with them, believed His word, and knew Him to be the Saviour. 2. How it grew: by stages. 3. Its issues (see Acts viii. 6–25). (*J. Gill.*) *Testimony and experience*:—I. HUMAN TESTIMONY IS FREQUENTLY MADE THE MEANS OF PRODUCING FAITH IN MEN'S HEARTS. A large number owe their conversion to the personal and practical testimony of others. To encourage others to testify note that this was that of—1. A woman. A woman was the founder of the Church in Samaria; a woman was the first convert in Europe. Let none of our sisters, therefore, refrain from giving their testimony. 2. A sinful woman. Now the very life which had else been so just a cause for silence became an impelling motive for witness-bearing. The more mischief we have done, the more good we should try to do. The chief of sinners became the chief of apostles. 3. Her testimony was personal, and that was the secret of her power. She did not discuss or quote the opinion of others, as some preachers do. If we wish to win souls there is nothing like telling them what the Lord hath done for our souls. 4. Her testimony was delivered very earnestly. If our sermons are icicles they are not likely to melt the ice in your minds. If in speaking to a man you treat your conversion as commonplace, or aim at his conversion as though it was a matter that didn't much signify, you might as well be silent. 5. Notice the judiciousness of her testimony. She did not say, "I am sure He is the Christ." If you positively assert a thing, it is very likely some one will deny it, although they would draw the same inference if left alone. In fishing for souls you need as much judgment as in angling. We must be wise to win souls. 6. Observe the result. Many believed because of the woman's speech. Her heart was in it, and therefore God blessed her. 7. Your not believing in Jesus does not arise from want of testi-

mony. You have had the best testimony—of a mother, a wife, a minister. II. FAITH MAY ARISE APART FROM THE TESTIMONY OF MEN. When you have borne testimony to a man, and he doesn't yield to it, don't despair of him. God has other ways of working besides the testimony of His servants. 1. Some of the Samaritans who had not received the testimony of the woman believed because of His own word. We have God's Word amongst us now, and it will work in hearts quickened by the Spirit to remember what they learned in the Sabbath school. 2. Sickness, poverty, and other ills are God's servants, and sin itself has led men to the Saviour. III. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ECLIPSES HUMAN TESTIMONY. 1. It is far more convincing. 2. More essential. A doctor's medicine may have overwhelming testimonials, but that will do no good unless you take it. 3. More complete. Testimony may tell you something about Christ, but not much compared with what you may learn by going to Him yourself. The Queen of Sheba did not learn half of what she saw. 4. More enduring. What you receive from others you may give up, but only experience can make you faithful unto death. 5. More persuasive to others. This woman had first of all a personal experience herself. In conclusion. It is a serious thing to reject the personal witness of others, but it is false not to try for yourself whether Jesus is what He professes to be. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The world's redemptive faith*:—I. ITS OBJECT. Christ. 1. He thoroughly knows all pertaining to human life (vers. 29, 39). 2. He is susceptible to human appeals (ver. 40). 3. He is the Restorer of mankind (ver. 42). II. ITS GROUNDS. 1. The initiatory faith. This is built on testimony (ver. 39). In their initial faith they accepted two things—(1) Omniscience as a proof of Divinity. (2) The credibility of the woman's testimony. This is the faith of all mere nominal Christians. 2. The consummating faith (ver. 41). This faith was—(1) Intuitive. (2) Direct (ver. 42). (3) Certain (ver. 42). (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Closing incidents*:—1. THE TWOFOLD BASIS OF ALL RELIGIOUS BELIEF. 1. The evidence of faith illustrated in the message of the woman, which elicited an unhesitating assent to the trustworthiness of the tale. 2. The evidence of sight obtained by personal converse. Of these two the first alone remains; but it is well to remember that the faith of many was kindled not by the irresistible testimony, but by that which we deem the less satisfactory. II. MEN CRAVE FOR THE FAITH WHICH COMES THROUGH SIGHT, like Thomas, forgetting Christ's benediction on those who have not seen and have believed. That higher blessedness is ours. III. THE SUPERIOR EFFICACY OF PREACHING TO MIRACLE. In Judæa Christ did many miracles, yet no man received His testimony. Here He did no miracles, He simply spoke the living word, and multitudes believed. It was the same at Pentecost; and now while the temporary and miraculous agency has ceased the truly efficacious still remains. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," &c. IV. THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST'S WORDS LEADS TO THE WELCOME OF CHRIST'S PERSON (ver. 40). It was a blessed and transient visit. Those who forfeited the opportunity of the hearing Him forfeited it for ever. There are tarry days of Christ in the soul; when sickness, bereavement, trial brings Him within the Shechem gates. Have we made the most of the season? V. THE TESTIMONY OF FAITH CONFIRMED BY EXPERIENCE. This inward, subjective evidence is more convincing than that of the schools. It is the soul testing the remedies of the Great Physician. VI. THE FUTURE OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AND CHURCH. Cornelius à Lapide tells us that the woman's name was Photina, that she journeyed to Carthage, proclaiming in that vast city salvation through Christ; and that after an honoured martyrdom her head was conveyed to Rome, where it is still preserved as a holy relic in the Basilica of St. Paul's: moreover, that the 20th of March, the day of her death, is still held in reverence in the Roman martyrology. As for the Church (see Acts viii. 14–25, ix. 31), founded under circumstances of such interest by this wayside fountain, it was not suffered to languish or decay. A Christian bishop, Germanus, has his name appended among the subscriptions to the councils of Ancyra and Nice, and so late as the middle of the fifth century his successor signs in the Synod of Jerusalem. Alas, however, subsequently to this, the old intolerance and hatred of the Samaritan towards the Jew was transferred to the Christian. During the reign of the Emperor Zeno savage atrocities were perpetrated by fire and sword. The Church at Shechem, now called Neapolis, was invaded during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; the consecrated emblems, torn from the bishop's hands, were subjected to shameful indignity, and he himself frightfully wounded in his effort to prevent the sacrilege. The emperor espousing the cause of the injured, drove the aggressors from their sacred mountain, and a church in honour of the Virgin Mary crowned

the heights of Gerizim. Under the succeeding reign of Justinian, the turbulent Samaritan tribes made an ineffectual attempt to recover their lost sanctuary. They destroyed by fire five Christian temples within Neapolis, subjecting many to torture and death; but they were overpowered by the Roman troops. The brick walls which surrounded the Church on Gerizim were further strengthened; and, indeed, it is conjectured that it is a portion of this second wall or outer fortress, whose ruins survive at the present day. Shechem once more emerges from obscurity in the time of the Crusades. An appanage to the Latin bishopric of Samaria, its revenues reverted to the abbot and canons of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. But unable to escape being involved in these fierce wars, it was sacked and plundered twice by the infuriated army of Saladin, and after a varied alternation of fortune, it finally fell into the hands of the Mohammedans, where it continues at this day. (*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*) *Success in unexpected quarters*:—The historian seems to put an emphasis upon their being Samaritans. These had not that reputation for religion that the Jews had: yet the Jews, who saw Christ's miracles draw Him from them, while the Samaritans, who saw not His miracles nor shared in His favours, invited Him to them. The proof of the Gospel's message is not always according to the probability. (*Matthew Henry.*) **For the saying of the woman.** *Woman as a Christianizer*:—I. WHEREIN IS WOMAN NOT DIFFERENT FROM MAN. 1. Certainly not as a sinner, nor as a sinner saved. Not in the plane which her averaged powers give her. 2. To her as to man belong the superiorities of the intellect, the aspirations of the Holy Ghost, the sublimities of faith or genius, the openings into the realms of prayer. 3. But all these require the human activities as their occasions. 4. Hence it must be that now as once Jesus is best pleased with Mary's, whose activities take higher regions and aim at the better part, than with Martha's, who lose all in the wearying round of petty cares and fitful fashions. 5. Spiritual service being the requirement of growth, and woman having an open sea to those elevations upon the condition of toil, spiritual service is her high privilege. II. WHEREIN DOES WOMEN DIFFER FROM MAN? There is an unlikeness radical and essential. Man excels in outerness. He is stronger persistently than woman, although in a spasm woman is endowed with greater strength. Man is moral, woman emotional; the one rational, the other affectionate; the one is fibre, flax, and tow, the other silken. Man in method is decisive, woman incisive; what one would do by force the other would do by tact. From man as from Rome, we deduce principles and bring laws; from woman as from Greece we derive nice adaptations and graces; and so from both blending their contributions to the Redeemer's cause we look for a many-sided evangelism. Difference is the law of life. III. Let us now turn to THE WORK TO BE DONE and ask—1. What ideals of character does Christianity seek to establish? It seeks to bring into human character faith, liberty, heart purity, heart power, to bring about a reconciliation on the basis of love. Christianity would not break into hearts by mere force. 2. What has Christianity done already? The John the Baptist and purely masculine part of the work. The law of love has been from the beginning, but because of the hardness of heart, the bill of divorcement has seemed to show Christianity with the Christ out. 3. What is the character of the work to be done? After war and its chaos, peace, order, gentleness, conciliation. Lights have been carried by masculine sacrifice and heroism into forty centres of India, it remains for feminine affection and tact to carry them into 10,000,000 Zenanas around each centre. IV. WOMAN IS PECULIARLY ADAPTED TO THIS PART OF THE WORK OF CHRISTIANIZING THE EARTH. The kind of work on hand calls for those elements which distinguish her. The old question, "would it not be unfeminine to meet mocking crowds and bear severe travel?" lose all their force by the absence of former obstacles. V. WOMAN'S SPHERES. She does not have to seek them; they come to her. 1. All civil and ecclesiastical organizations grow out of the family. In all the earth mothers hold none but Christ's own. The Millennium is suspended on two hooks. (1) Keeping the children. (2) Using the spiritual power that is offered us. Woman has marvellous power and privilege in both. 2. Woman pioneered Sunday-school work. Hannah Ball was in the field before Robert Raikes, and now of the teachers in the United States, 84,000 are women, 42,000 men. 3. In the charities of life woman can do more than man, or than Government as a Christianizer: witness Florence Nightingale and the Red Cross sisters, and Grace Darling. What does the Scripture say of their predecessors? That they "were well reported of," "received strangers," "washed the disciples' feet," "aged women as mothers," "diligently followed good works," "laboured much in the Lord." 4. It was women who led

the Holy Crusade against the liquor traffic in America, and it is women who are doing the most effective Home Mission work among the poor and depraved. 5. As to foreign missions, the testimony is strong that "nothing but the hand of infinite love through the agency of Christian women can work out the full and final redemption of India." 6. But shall women preach? Let the hearers decide. Perhaps woman is needed now in the pulpit to call ministers back to telling "the old, old story." 7. Let but Christ's light fall upon woman's heart and intuition and her "mission"—she will find it—anywhere. (*N. H. Axtell.*) *The ministry of woman.* I. WOMAN IS EVER FOREMOST IN ALL GOOD. This is but fitting since she was first in transgression; but it is a fact, as witnessed by all historians and travellers, charity has been her vocation from the days of Dorcas to those of Elizabeth Fry. "The Sisters of Mercy" were the stars that relieved the darkness of the Middle Ages. Paul put Priscilla before Aquila. The most faithful friends of Christ were women. A woman watched by His cradle; woman stood weeping by His cross; a woman was first at the sepulchre; and from that time to this woman has most firmly laid hold upon the crown of martyrdom, and been amongst the most devoted and dauntless missionaries for Christ. II. WOMAN HAS ALWAYS MOST FAITH. "Oh woman, great is thy faith," the Saviour is saying still. If man be confident, woman is confiding. This is her weakness and her strength. By this she fell and by this she rises to newness of life. All churches prove this. Christ's mother was His first disciple. Few are the Christian women that dishonour their profession or deny their faith. III. WOMAN DOES NOT SPEAK OFFICIALLY. Had one of the apostle's said, "Come, see a man," &c., he would not have had such success as this unofficial woman. IV. WOMAN DOES SPEAK MORE TENDERLY. In her tone of voice there is the key to unlock the human heart. It is not fit for strife or controversy, but for persuasion and consolation. And wherefore has she the larger share of sorrow? To kindle sympathy. Her's also is a mother's love not for her children only, but for mankind. The congregation wants a son of thunder, society a daughter of consolation. V. WOMAN HAS SPECIAL INFLUENCE OVER MAN, whether for good or for evil. Her moral force is greater than all the physical force of government. VI. WOMAN OWES MUCH TO CHRIST. To her the Gospel brought the promise and possession of the life that now is. In every country in proportion to its Christianity she has her rights and the pure joys of life. Owing so much her love to Christ should be deep, and her work for Christ energetic. But what can she do? 1. Are you a wife? If your husband be not a Christian you have to make him in love with religion, or if he be one build him up in the faith; and knowing that he has many temptations from home, see that he has none at home. 2. Are you a mother? No one but God has such power over your infant as you, and if your children are grown up, and are beyond a mother's authority, you may yet reach them by a mother's love. 3. Are you a sister? Your love is second in power to a mother's. 4. Are you a mistress? A woman's kindness will have double weight from you. Your servants have souls for whom you are responsible. 5. Are you a servant? "Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things." If you cannot speak about religion to your employers you can live it. (*J. De Kewer Williams.*) *Great results from small causes.* How often will a small cause set in motion a train of events that will issue in universal good. May I be allowed to recapitulate what, I have no doubt, some of you have either heard or read before? About two hundred years ago a travelling pedlar with his bundle on his back entered a Shropsbire village. He called at a farm-house and offered for sale a copy of the "Bruised Reed" by Richard Sibbes. The farmer bought the book, and the farmer's son read it, and through it found salvation in Christ. That farmer's son was none other than Richard Baxter. Baxter wrote a book called the "Everlasting Rest of the Saints," which was read by a young man, who was led by it to consecrate himself to the service of God. That young man was Dr. Doddridge. Doddridge in his turn wrote a book called "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." That book was diligently perused by another young man, who was led by it to a life of holiness and widespread influence. That young man was William Wilberforce, the liberator of the slave. In his turn he wrote a book entitled "A Practical View of Christianity," the study of which was blessed to the conversion of Legh Richmond. Again, Legh Richmond wrote a book called "The Dairyman's Daughter," a book blessed to the salvation of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Englishmen all over the world. Let us therefore take encouragement, and labour in season and out of season, for we know not which will prosper, this or hat. (*J. C. Jones, D.D.*) *Conviction:*—Conviction lies at the root of all consistent action. A

mechanical genius conceives an idea. It is as clear as noon-day in his mind, but that idea is embodied, he must believe in the possibility of its embodiment; and just in proportion to the strength of his conviction as to its practicability and success, will he be consistent and earnest in working it out. Columbus conceived the existence of a continent; the conception grew into a conviction; the conviction was followed by consistent action, and that action was crowned with success by the discovery of America. A man believes that an observance of certain physical laws is conducive to health, and he acts accordingly. Another believes that obedience to certain moral laws is necessary to a good character, self-respect and peace, and he obeys those laws. Christianity, then, by making man's pardon and happiness hinge on faith acts in accordance with the laws of his mental and moral being. A man, *e.g.*, must believe in God or he will never serve Him; in sin or He will never see the necessity of a Mediator. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Convictions are the springs of actions, and actions make the man. (*H. Tozer.*) **He abode there two days.**—According to the unwritten law of hospitality in the East, the stranger who enters your house or your tent, and touches any part of your property in claim of protection, is entitled to protection as your guest for three days and a part of the fourth day, sufficient to permit him to get safely off your territory. If a Bed'wy enters a strange camp, and touches the tent-ropes, he becomes by that act a protected guest, for the same period, of the Arab whose tent-ropes he has touched. This unwritten law of hospitality is honourably observed. Our Lord, as the protected guest of the Samaritans, could have remained in the house of His host, according to custom, for three days. If He had desired to stay longer among the Samaritans, He could then have changed His lodging to the next house, where He would have been entitled to stay for three days longer; and He could have gone on changing from house to house, until He wished to go away. The three days' limit, however, does not bind the host not to give more than three days' hospitality. On the contrary, a host may press a guest to stay for weeks and months; and if the guest is too polite to leave without the host's permission, he can generally get that permission by calling for things which he knows the host does not possess. (*S. S. Times.*)

Vers. 41–42. **Many more believed, because of His word, and said . . . . This is indeed the Christ.** *Christianity adapted to man's moral constitution:*—The counterpart of this narrative at a missionary station may easily be imagined. The Missionary says, "Come, learn the missionary doctrine which has made me happy. I know it to be Divine." The natives are induced to listen. As they grow familiar with evangelical doctrine it gains their heart. Although they cannot estimate the evidence, they believe because they have tasted and handled of the word of God. I. UNLESS THE MISSIONARY CAN CONFIDE IN THE INHERENT POWER OF THE GOSPEL HE IS HELPLESS. 1. The heathen can neither appreciate your facts, nor understand your mode of reasoning upon them. To the contemplative Brahmin, or cunning Chinese, your inductive reasoning is as unintelligible as is the subtle arguments of the Plantonic philosopher or the mediæval schoolman to you. 2. But if you had crossed that chasm and learned to think as they think you would be destitute of the materials of demonstration. Upon the knowledge they possess to establish the authenticity and transmission of your sacred books appears a hopeless task. 3. And even if you had satisfied them of this the appeal must be made to miracles, and it would fail where they are, as the heathen suppose, so common; and the idea of a miracle authenticating a doctrine would be unintelligible to an Hindoo whose presumption is that the splendour of Deity shines more in good doctrine than in wonderful power. 4. Of the roll of prophecy we cannot read a word to a people whose history is confined to their own legendary tales. 5. As to the internal evidence this requires a more careful examination than you can expect, unless you can present an object of surpassing value which shall prepossess the mind in its favour. 6. The only serviceable instrument, therefore, is the Cross in its saving, all-conquering power. 7. We may be reminded of the virtues of Christians, but we cannot, alas! use that when crime has been perpetrated by professing Christians. II. THE GOSPEL ITSELF IS SO APPROPRIATE TO THE MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN—APPEARS SO LIKE TRUTH—AS TO CONCILIATE A FAVOURABLE RECEPTION, AND PRODUCE CONVICTION, WHERE IT DOES NOT OFFER DEMONSTRATION. This is extremely probable on noticing the purpose it is intended to accomplish. It is intended for all men; it is an ample provision of mercy for our fallen world. It is intended only for man; angels are above, demons below its reach. But, leaving presumptive evidence, consider

a few of the more important doctrines in their relation to the wants of men. 1. The Gospel is proposed as a revelation from God. Against the notion of a revelation there is no prejudice whatever; it is the favourite doctrine of mankind. Men have never been content with so much knowledge of God as may be derived from His works, but have always yearned for some more direct communication of His will. Hence, astrology, dreams, divination, sacred books. As the voice of God was the first he ever heard (in Eden) man still turns towards it a most attentive and listening ear. Revelation was the language of His infancy, and its tones after the lapse of ages and in the far country still come sweet as music to his heart. The prepossessions of these millions, therefore, are in your favour; they are anxiously seeking revelations, but alas! like Saul at Endor. And at Endor will you let them die? Say to these wretched devotees prostrate at the altar of "an unknown God."—"Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare we unto you." 2. By the Gospel "life and immortality are brought to light." There is no doctrine that the mind of man is so ready to receive. The search after God is a germ of it which only requires to be sanctified in order to its development. Virtue by its hope, and guilt by its terrors, attest it. Love of posthumous fame and the longing for immortality are its harbingers. Preach, then, this favourite doctrine, and as you tell the sinner he is immortal, you may hear a full, quick response from his heart. 3. If the doctrine of immortality flatter the complacency of man, the doctrine of his inherent corruption mortifies his pride, and unless the heart be girt closely round with self-righteousness, this doctrine is yet armed with the mighty power of conviction. Under the ministry of Jesus, publicans and sinners, rather than Pharisees, pressed into the kingdom. So now, the appeal to the moral law will suffice; it requires no demonstration. The inevitable consequence is the conviction of sin. Then, go speak with a friendly voice of sin, and they will understand every word; of pardon, and their voice will brighten at the prospect; as Jesus when He said, "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c. 4. Closely connected with this doctrine is that of the general judgment. It corresponds with many presentiments of the sinner's heart. Unless the religious feeling be extirpated, in every man's bosom is a tribunal before which his thoughts and actions are arranged, and acquitted or condemned. What is this but a premonition of the final assize! These presentiments may not induce the sinner to accept the Christian doctrine, but they will ensure attention, prepare the mind, and the probability, or possibility of judgment may be quite as effective as the certainty. 5. We must now pass on to the doctrine of salvation by Christ. Man is disturbed and perplexed by sin and is afraid to approach a Holy God. Hence, in order to avert His displeasure, man has indulged in sacrifice. The stern maxim is deeply inscribed in the heart of man as expounded by his history, "without the shedding of blood," &c. To such your missionaries preach "Christ crucified." They address hearers prepossessed in favour of the doctrine of propitiation. To the guilty conscience there is in "Behold the Lamb of God" something more cheering and consolating than all the sanguinary rites of heathenism. Man's own religion makes exorbitant demands; yours offers an abundant supply; his god demands a sacrifice; yours presents one. Conclusion: Such, then, is Christianity; it rises in solitary grandeur above all the religions of the earth. It has no affinity with any local association or national peculiarity, but is equally adapted to man, civilized or savage, in the pole or the tropics. It speaks a language which all can understand, in tones which all must feel. 1. Confide in its powers. It cannot fail. It carries with it the Spirit of the living God. 2. Argue from its past achievement its future and final triumphs. (*R. Halley, D.D.*) *Three more saved:*—A few days after the wreck of the ill-fated steamer *Central America*, which sent hundreds to a watery grave, and plunged the American nation in grief, a pilot-boat was seen, on a fair breezy morning, standing up the bay of New York. The very appearance of the vessel gave token that she was freighted with tidings of no common interest. With every sail set, and streamers flying, she leaped along the waters as if buoyant with some great joy, while the glad winds that swelled her canvas, and the sparkling waves that kissed her sides and urged her on her way, seemed to laugh with conscious delight As she drew nearer, an unusual excitement was visible on her deck, and her captain, running out to the extreme point of the bowsprit, and swinging his cap, appeared to be shouting something with intense earnestness and animation. At first the distance prevented his being distinctly understood. But soon, as the vessel came farther into the harbour, the words, "Three more saved! Three more saved!" reached the nearest listeners. They were caught up by the crews of the multitudinous ships that lay anchored around, and sailors sprang

wildly into the rigging and shouted, "Three more saved!" They were heard on the wharfs, and the porter threw down his load, and the drayman stopped his noisy cart, and shouted, "Three more saved!" The tidings ran along the streets, and the news-boys left off crying the latest intelligence, and shouted, "Three more saved!" Busy salesmen dropped their goods, book-keepers their pens, bankers their discounts, tellers their gold, and merchants, hurrying on the stroke of the last hour of grace to pay their notes, paused in their headlong haste, and shouted, "Three more saved!" (*New Cyclopædia of Illustrated Anecdotes.*)

Ver. 42. **Now we believe not because of thy saying: we have heard Him ourselves.**—*The Samaritan's confession of faith*:—I. THE PERSONS FROM WHOM IT CAME. Samaritans out of the covenant, with imperfect notions of God and the Spirit of His worship, yet they were so captivated by Christ's teachings that they felt He could be no other than the world's Saviour. II. THE JUST NOTIONS THEY EXPRESSED OF THE OFFICE OF CHRIST. 1. That He was to effect the salvation of the world, not of their race merely. 2. That He was to save by teaching the true religion. "I know," said the woman, "He will tell all things"—*i.e.*, concerning the worship of God, the topic of discussion. 3. Thus they must have placed the salvation itself in such a deliverance as these means were fitted to accomplish, viz., in deliverance from ignorance, hypocrisy, and superstition. 4. They were aware that the time was actually come for this Deliverer's appearance: Jesus said, "The hour cometh and now is." The woman responded, "I know that the Messiah (*lit.*) *is now coming.*" Learn then—(1) How little benefit the external means of grace may prove to those whose minds, like those of the Jews, are occupied with adverse prejudices, so as to be negligent of their own improvement. (2) What a proficiency may be made, by God's blessing, on the diligent use of scanty talents. The Samaritans had no light but what came obliquely from the Jews, but they so far improved under their imperfect discipline as to attain views of the promised redemption which the Jews missed in spite of Moses and the Prophets. III THE WARMTH AND ENERGY OF THEIR CONVICTION. "We know." Conclusion—1. Let every one take encouragement and learn the necessary assiduity in self-improvement. 2. Let no sinner despair of salvation. (*Bp. Horsley.*) *The progress of faith*:—I. ITS AWAKENING. Through indirect testimony concerning Christ. In this case by speaking of the woman; in other cases through the witness born of and to Christ—1. By parents to children. 2. Ministers to congregations. 3. Teachers to scholars. 4. Believers generally to the world. 5. The scriptures to readers. II. ITS CONFIRMATION. By the direct testimony of Christ Himself. In this case through Christ's conversation with the Samaritans; in others, by the word of Christ carried home to the individual heart by the Spirit of Christ. III. ITS ILLUMINATION. In the attainment of a true knowledge of Christ's person and work. As here, learning led to believing, and believing to knowing; so will all in whom the ear and eye of faith are opened, the taking up of Christ's word, and through that of Christ Himself, into the heart leads to that higher knowledge of Christ in which consists eternal life (chap. xvii. 2). Lessons: 1. The value of Christian instruction. 2. The indispensableness of Christ's own teaching. 3. The insight of faith. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Christ the Saviour of the world*:—I. THE STATE OF THE WORLD REQUIRED A SAVIOUR. II. CHRIST BECAME THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. 1. He was Divinely appointed (John vi. 27; Isa. lxi. 1–3). 2. He voluntarily assumed the office (1 Tim. i. 15). III. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST AS A SAVIOUR. 1. A willing Saviour. 2. A free Saviour. 3. An all-sufficient Saviour. He can save—(1) From the guilt and condemnation of sin (Rom. iii. 24). (2) From the dominion of sin and its polluting power (Titus ii. 12; iii. 5). (3) From the tormenting power, and the destructive consequences of sin (Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 18). (4) From the wrath of God, and the vengeance of everlasting fire (1 Thess. i. 10; Rom. v. 9). IV. THE EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST WAS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. "This is indeed the Christ," &c. Those who are saved by Christ can give the same testimony, for—1. They have the witness in themselves. They have proved the "gospel to be the power of God to their salvation." 2. Believers are well assured that Christ was the Saviour of the world, by regarding the internal evidence of the Scriptures. 3. Christianity has survived all the attempts of its enemies to destroy it. 4. It is proved that Christ was the Saviour by a reference to the pages of history. Application: 1. Let Christians examine and be satisfied with the truth of the gospel. 2. Be thankful for such a Saviour. 3. The rejector of Christ has cause for alarm. (*Helps for the Pulpit.*)

VERS. 43-45. **And after two days He departed thence, and went into Galilee.**—*Moral usefulness* :—I. MAN MAY DO MUCH GOOD WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD. Two days Jesus spent in Samaria, and what did He accomplish? 1. He broke up religious monotony. 2. Set minds thinking. 3. Won many to His cause. 4. Sowed truth that has yielded glorious harvests in all subsequent ages. Every man can and ought to accomplish great spiritual good in two days—not only by preaching and writing for the press, but by indoctrinating his family with Christly sentiments, and distributing through the neighbourhood the "Bread of Life." No man will be able to plead the brevity of life for moral uselessness. II. MAN'S EFFORTS TO DO GOOD ARE OFTEN OBSTRUCTED BY A STUPID PREJUDICE. 1. Christ here states a fact. Of course there are exceptions. Home teachers are not so valued as foreign. 2. There is no good reason for it. The doctrines of a teacher should be independent of his country. 3. There are bad reasons for it. The prejudice springs from jealousy, envy, pride. 4. The prejudice Christ felt was against His usefulness. Prejudices are fetters that enslave the intellect, clouds that obscure the vision, bolts that shut out the truth. III. MAN'S DESIRE FOR DOING GOOD SHOULD BE THE INSPIRATION OF HIS LIFE. Christ leaves Samaria, confronts a powerful prejudice, and enters Galilee. "What for?" To do good. Such should be the great aim of all men, for two reasons 1. It is the greatest work, enlightening the intellect, liberating the will, purifying the heart, transforming the man into the image of God's son. 2. It is a most soul recompensing work. It covers a multitude of sins, wins the sympathies of immortal spirits, and secures the approbation of conscience and God. The fruits of all other fields we leave behind at death, but from this field we shall gather sheaves to all eternity. IV. MAN'S POWER TO DO GOOD INCREASES AS HIS PAST USEFULNESS GETS RECOGNIZED (ver. 45, see chap. ii. 23). The Galileans had witnessed His wonders in Jerusalem. What they knew of Him disposed them to accept Him. Man's power of usefulness is cumulative; the more good he does the more his capacity for usefulness increases. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) **A prophet hath no honour in his own country.**—*A twice verified proverb* :—I. NEGATIVELY (ver. 44). 1. Regarded. Christ had an eye to this maxim when He avoided settling in Nazareth; which showed—(1) Christ's intimate acquaintance with human nature. (2) His ability to read the signs of the times. (3) His wisdom in selecting the most advantageous fields of labour—all of which qualities are essential to the preacher or teacher (1 Chron. xii. 32; Matt. xvi. 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 9). 2. Exemplified (Luke iv. 29; Matt. xiii. 58). So Christ's servants find the circles most difficult to impress are those of one's household and city (Luke vi. 40; Matt. x. 25). 3. Explained. (1) Envy. His fellow-townsmen were amazed at His superior wisdom and manifest supernatural gifts (Matt. xiii. 54). (2) Pride. (3) Familiarity. A prophet must be something of a mystery man if he would make his way in the world (chap. vii. 27). Familiarity breeds contempt. II. POSITIVELY (Matt. xiii. 57). 1. Illustrated, as in Judæa (chap. ii. 23; iv. 1) and Samaria (vers. 39-41), so now in Galilee, the inhabitants accorded Him a joyous welcome. The judgments of strangers are more to be relied on than those of friends. So with the apostles (Acts xiii. 46; xv. 3, 7, 12; xviii. 6). 2. Justified. The behaviour of the Galileans was not an unreasoning enthusiasm. They had witnessed Christ's miracles at Jerusalem nine months before (chap. ii. 23), and had apparently then arrived at Nicodemus's conclusion (chap. iii. 2). It was, therefore, becoming and right that they should meet Him with acclamation. So already has the Gospel effected such marvels that it has a right to a cordial reception. Lessons: 1. The power of prejudice. 2. The advantage derived by the Gospel from publicity. 3. The ultimate triumph of Christ's kingdom. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Vers. 46-54. **There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum.**—*The second miracle at Cana* :—Who shall persuade us that we have not here a true story? I. Notice SOME OF ITS LESS OBVIOUS POINTS. 1. Mark the word "for" in ver. 44. He went into His own country because there was no honour for Him there. 2. Mark the setting of the text. A father pleads for the life of his son. Who would not have thought that the kind Saviour would instantly say, "I will?" Yet He treats the application as a great error. "Except ye see." He disregards the man and treats him as the mouthpiece of a mistaken multitude, whose prevalent fallacy was to make miracles the condition of belief. No ordinary man would have thought of that answer. 3. This apparent rebuff, however, was only a trial of his constancy. "Like the rest of your nation you set aside Divine holiness, wisdom, and love and fasten on power. You forget how many works of power there are which are not

God's, and not until you have marked the adjuncts—holiness, wisdom, love—can you pronounce them Divine." The nobleman responded, "Come down, ere my child die," as though he had said, "I am not thirsting for evidences." It is the voice of nature, and the God of nature hears it. The trial is ended and the victory is won. II. NOTICE THE WONDERFUL INTERTWINING OF NATURE AND GRACE IN THE GOSPEL. The Gospel adapts itself to all that is best and beautiful in man's heart. 1. It has been found in some hour of mortal peril that persons of no religion will invoke the mercy of that Being who, up to that moment, they had denied. Sceptics, no doubt, can account for this in the survival of old prejudices. Christians naturally account for it by supposing that a belief in God is a primary principle in man's nature. 2. As in individuals so in families. (1) Fathers who have made shipwreck of faith for themselves want Christ for their children. The immoral man would fence his child from vice; the sceptic refuses to rear his child on negatives and chooses, therefore, a Christian school. (2) And if the father sees his child stretched on a couch of pain from which he may never rise, is there not a voice in his heart crying, "Sir, come down, ere my child die." I know the case is not rare in which the doubting or disbelieving father has desired, has sought, for his son the spiritual healing, has called in some man of God whose repute was highest for communication with the invisible, has encouraged his visits, has even knelt in the corner while he prayed, and has joined with strong cries and tears in the "Rock of ages, cleft for me," sung or said in the chamber where the staying pray with the going; and has gone off from the experience and trial strong in the Son of God, to say at last, "Let me die the death of the righteous; let my last end be like His." Christ is marching to complete the sum of happiness and to round the circle of being. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The nobleman of Capernaum*:—Notice—I. THE PROMPTITUDE WITH WHICH HE APPLIED TO CHRIST AS SOON AS HE HEARD WHERE HE WAS. Would that we all were as anxious for the welfare of our own and other's souls as this man was for the health of his son's body. Your souls may be in like danger—at the point of death. Lose not another day. II. THE ADVANTAGE WE HAVE IN KNOWING THAT WHEN WE DESIRE TO SEEK THE GREAT PHYSICIAN HE IS EVER AT HAND. The nobleman had to travel from Capernaum. III. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE NOBLEMAN EVINCED HIS BELIEF IN CHRIST'S POWER, AND YET THE IMPERFECT IDEA HE HAD OF THAT POWER. He felt that Christ could heal, but only on the spot. So we are tempted to prescribe to God the place and manner of His blessing, but God is the only judge of what is wise and best. Christ's rebuke had its due effect and in sending him away He required him to manifest the faith for the feebleness of which he had been rebuked. IV. THE MANNER IN WHICH JESUS SHOWS MERCY TO SUCH AS CALL UPON HIM. 1. Pity in distress. 2. Firmness in demanding the proof of confidence which it becomes us to show. Christ would not decline because of weak faith, but He would not go to Capernaum. V. WHAT IS THE DISPOSITION HE REQUIRES US TO SHOW TOWARDS HIM? Simple and implicit reliance on His word and belief in His power. "Go thy way. . . . And the man believed and went," without a token. 1. This disposition is the grace of the Holy Spirit imparted to the heart. 2. This disposition honours Christ. VI. THE REWARD WHICH FAITH SHALL RECEIVE. "Thy son liveth." A cure. 1. Instantaneous. 2. Complete. (*J. Harding.*) *The nobleman of Capernaum*:—I. EVEN THE NOBLE HAVE THEIR TROUBLE. 1. No earthly dignity lifts above the reach of trouble. In the eye of God and in the operations of His laws all are alike. We need, therefore, never to expect to reach an estate free from trial. 2. But troubles are not always calamities. To the true hearted they are instruments of good. Nobility must suffer that it may become more noble. The fruitful branch must be purged that it may become more fruitful. II. EVEN THE BELIEVING NEED UNDECEIVING. 1. The nouleman was a believer. 2. There was strength and substance in his faith. It was not mere sentiment. Knowledge, however accurate, opinion, however orthodox, is not faith. But this man's faith had an active quality; it moved him to Jesus and to make every effort to obtain His help. True faith can never be idle (James ii. 20). 3. But even with this living faith the nobleman laboured under misconceptions and infirmities. He located the Saviour's power too much in the outward. It was bent on signs and wonders. And just here believers have their greatest troubles. They go honestly and humbly to Christ, but unless they see signs they doubt whether all is right. Some change must be felt ere they can fully rest. But the requirement is to undoubtingly embrace Christ and leave Him to make all other things right in His own time and way (Rom. viii. 24, 25). 4. Here is the true consolation of faith; not that the sick child is healed, but that we have a competent Saviour, and in the meantime patience is the proper exercise of faith. III. WHEN

MAN DESPAIRS THE LORD REPAIRS. 1. The manner in which he was received distressed the nobleman. He looked for Christ to accompany him, and when no signs of compliance appeared his heart sunk within him. 2. And yet this last flicker of perishing expectation was the signal of the greatest triumph. It was not according to Christ's method that His healing should come "with observation." His restorative energy is in His word, which is independent of distance or signs. Even His "Go thy way" is a benediction. While we are being wrung with disappointment grace is invisibly entering our house. IV. AS WE BELIEVE SO WE RECEIVE. A mere word had gone out. He went his way clinging to that word, and as he believed it was done unto him. He came believing Christ to be a wonder worker and he found Him one. He trusted in what the Saviour had said, and he came back to find the Saviour's word potent. What then if society, the Church, ourselves, our whole house are sick; if our movements are Christwards, His seeming repulse is but a preparation for a sublimer triumph. No honest attempt at faith is ever a mistake. (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *The fame of Christ*:—The distance of Capernaum from Cana was from twenty to twenty-five miles. The report of Christ's return to Galilee had spread, then, over this wide area. (*H. W. Watkins, D.D.*) *The nobleman's son*:—I. JESUS BEHOLDING THE WOES OF MEN. 1. Jesus and His countrymen (ver. 45) (Matt. xiii. 54, xxi. 11; Mark vi. 1; Luke iv. 44; John iv. 3, vii. 41). 2. Jesus and the sorrowing (ver. 47) (Isa. liii. 3; Mark v. 39; Luke vii. 13, viii. 52, xxiii. 28; John xiv. 1). 3. Jesus and the sick (ver. 47) (Matt. iv. 24, viii. 17, x. 1, xiv. 14; Mark vi. 56; John xi. 3). II. BESTOWING THE HELP OF GOD. 1. Importunate pleading (ver. 49) (Psa. cxxx. 1; Matt. xiv. 30, xv. 22; Luke xi. 8, xxii. 44; Heb. v. 7). 2. Generous responding (ver. 50) (Matt. viii. 2, 3, 13, ix. 29; Luke, vii. 50, xviii. 42; John xiv. 13). 3. Confident believing (ver 50) (Psa. xxvii. 13, cvi. 12; John iv. 53; Acts xvi. 34; Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 8). III. RELIEVING THE WOES OF MEN. 1. Good news (ver. 51) (Gen. xlv. 26; Num. xxi. 8; 2 Kings xx. 5; Luke ii. 10, x. 17; John xiv. 3). 2. Convincing coincidence (ver. 53) (Exod. xiv. 27; Josh. iii. 15, 16; Dan. v. 5; Matt. viii. 13, ix. 22, xv. 28). 3. Believing household (ver. 53) (Acts x. 2, xvi. 15, 34, xviii. 8; Phil. iv. 22; Heb: xi. 7). (*Sunday School Times.*) *The nobleman's son*:—A spiritual miracle is greater than a physical one. This was of both kinds—the healing of the boy's body, the conversion of the father's soul. The nobleman is a representative man. I. HE IS DRIVEN TO CHRIST BY AN OUTSIDE NEED. He takes his case to Christ as a last resort. In his selfish thought, the Saviour of souls is overshadowed by the Healer of bodies. But such is the love of Christ, that those seeking a lesser good are sent away with a spiritual gift. II. HIS FAITH RUNS PARALLEL WITH HIS MOTIVE. It began as a belief that Christ could work a physical miracle by contact; it was consummated in a faith which trusted Christ for both physical and spiritual blessing at a distance. The father's faith secured the health of his child; the personal faith of the man secured his own salvation. III. THE DIVINE METHODS FOR CULTIVATING FAITH IN MEN. 1. Directness and conscious superiority characterize Christ's meeting with the nobleman. Christ rebukes his carnal mindedness and his low thought that Christ's mission was merely to play the doctor—a rebuke which caused him to look up into the Master's face and feel the subtle power of His spiritual presence. 2. Having thus made a spiritual roadway into his heart, Christ grants his request. 3. The answer carries a test of humility and faith with it. Christ not going with him touched his pride; but it strengthened his faith by exercising it. IV. THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH AND ITS REWARD. This faith is shown by his leisurely procedure. The twenty miles' walk could not have been accomplished that night. The reward was bestowed not only on the sick child, but on the whole household. Learn—1. A lesson of hope. 2. That all the roads of human experience lead to Christ—our needs, sorrows, joys. 3. Once in Christ's presence, all is well. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *The nobleman's faith*:—1. Trouble led this courtly personage to Jesus. Had he lived without trial, he might have been forgetful of his God and Saviour; but sorrow came as an angel in disguise. 2. The particular trial was the sickness of his child. No doubt he had tried all remedies, and now he turns to Jesus in desperate hope. How often does it happen that children are employed to do what angels cannot! I. THE SPARK OF FAITH. 1. The faith of the nobleman rested at first entirely on the report of others. Evangelical faith often begins with the testimony of others that Christ receiveth sinners. 2. This faith only concerned the healing of the sick child. The father did not know that he wanted healing for his own heart, nor of Christ's spiritual power. Can you believe that Christ can help you in your present trial? Then use the faith you have; if not of heavenly things, then earthly. 3. He

limited the power of Jesus to His local presence. Limitation of the Holy One of Israel in children of God is sinful; but weakness of faith in seekers will be excused. Better to have a weak faith than none at all. 4. This faith, although it was but a spark, influenced the nobleman. It led him to take a considerable journey to Christ. This is the more remarkable that he was a man of position, and did not send his servants. If you have faith enough to drive you personally to Christ, it is of an acceptable order. 5. This man's faith taught him to pray in the right style. Notice his argument—the misery of his case. Not that the boy was of noble birth, or lovely. When you pray aright, you will urge those facts which reveal your danger and distress. This is the key which opens the door of mercy. II. THE FIRE OF FAITH struggling to maintain itself. 1. It was true, as far as it went. He stood before the Saviour, resolved not to go away. He does not get the answer at first, but he stays. So it was a real persuasion of the power of Jesus to heal. 2. It was hindered by a desire for signs and wonders, and was therefore gently chided. So some of you want to be converted in the extraordinary way recorded in some religious biographies, and expect, like Naaman, Christ to do some great thing. Do not lay down a programme and demand that the free Spirit should pay attention to it. Let Him save you as He wills. 3. It could endure a rebuff. He answered our Lord with still greater importunity. 4. How passionately this man pleaded, "Lord, do not question me just now about faith; heal my child, or he will be dead." If his faith failed in breadth, it excelled in force. III. THE FLAME OF FAITH. 1. He believed the word of Jesus over the head of his former prejudices. He had thought that Christ could only heal by personal contact; now he believes that Jesus can heal with a word. Will you believe Jesus on His bare word? 2. He at once obeyed Christ. If he had not believed, he would have remained looking for favourable signs. When told to believe in Christ, do not say, "We will continue in prayer, read the Bible, attend the means of grace." Believe and go your way. 3. Still, it fell somewhat short of what it might have been. He expected a gradual restoration. How little we know of Christ or believe in Him. 4. He travelled with the leisure of confidence. Anxious minds, even when they believe, are in a hurry to see; but the nobleman's servants met him the next day. "He that believeth shall not make haste." IV. THE CONFLAGRATION OF FAITH. 1. His faith was confirmed by the answer to his prayers. 2. After inquiry, his faith was confirmed by each detail. 3. Strengthened by faith and experience, he believes in Jesus in the fullest sense. 4. What follows is natural; his family also believe. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The nobleman's faith*:—I. WITH REGARD TO THIS FAITH, we must observe—1. That it was real, or he would never have sought Christ. This realness was not inconsistent with ignorance of Christ's nature and spiritual power. 2. Though real, imperfect and weak. He knew nothing of Jesus as the Healer of the soul. There was shortcoming in both the quantity and quality of his faith. In this he presents a strong contrast to the centurian. 3. Apply the case to ourselves. What is our faith? Is it only a name, a theory, a confession, we have been taught to utter? If we have acknowledged Him as Saviour in one specific point, that is real faith as far as it goes; but it must go farther. "He will not break the bruised reed." II. HIS TREATMENT BY CHRIST. 1. His unbelief was rebuked, and that of others standing around. 2. No doubt many regarded this as ill-timed. But Christ saw that spiritual admonition was the thing that was most needed. 3. We need not be surprised if the first answer to our petitions is some revelation of secret sin. 4. But delay is not denial. In bestowing one blessing he does not refuse another. 5. There is often as much love in Christ's method of bestowal as in His gift. The petition is granted in the spirit, if not in the letter. Jesus did not go down, but sent His blessing down. III. THE ULTIMATE RESULT OF THE INTERVIEW. 1. The request was granted (1) sooner than was expected, and (2) more fully. Christ's way is the shortest and best, after all, although we think differently. 2. His faith was increased. He who could not brook a moment's delay, goes away satisfied with a simple word, leisurely proceeds home, and becomes a full believer. 3. He and his family were converted. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *A lesson for little faith*:—I. THE PARTICULARS OF THE MIRACLE. Note—1. The rapid reversals of feeling which all efforts in doing good demand. His former visit to Cana was to a festival; He came now to a scene of anxiety and affliction. Human experience is very fitful and uncertain. Now the circumstances are joyous, now gloomy; and he who wants to do good must be prepared for both. 2. Pain and trouble are common to all ranks. Capernaum's great dignitary is harrowed by anxiety; his money, influence, friends, cannot save his boy. "Grief is a black camel that kneels at every man's door." 3. The value

of Christianity. Sceptics say Christianity is a religion for the sorrowful only. We reply, There is surely room for one such religion in a world like this. 4. In His first reply Christ—(1) Rebuked a faith which rested on external evidences. (2) Showed that he cared very little for miracles as proofs of His Divine commission. 5. The nobleman's response teaches us directness in prayer. How much time is wasted in the formalities of devotion. 6. Such petitions as this the Lord always hears and answers. The last word of God's Son affords ground for implicit trust. The nobleman knew that nothing more was needed. 7. How much men owe to the unseen Providences of God. II. THE PARABLE OF FAITH. 1. There was intelligence. The nobleman—(1) Reasoned. (2) Inquired. (3) Agreed. 2. Next came assent. Sometimes this element of saving faith is called submission, sometimes surrender. 3. There came trust. Without a word he rested on the promise. He believed—(1) In Christ's evidences. (2) In Christ's willingness. (3) In Christ Himself. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *The faith of a nobleman:*—I. ITS IMPERFECT CHARACTER. 1. Not settled on the best foundation. Excited by a report of Christ's miracles which Christ recognized as right (chap. v. 36, x. 37–38, xiv. 11), but not faith's highest form. 2. Not free from ignorance and superstition, Christ's presence was regarded as essential. II. ITS GRACIOUS EDUCATION. 1. Its radical defect was pointed out (ver. 48). The modern counterpart is the belief that is born of excitement and rests on feeling. 2. Its inward sincerity was tried (ver. 48). In a similar way Christ dealt with the Syro-Phœnician woman. 3. Its formal request was denied. Had Christ gone it might have confirmed the belief that His presence was indispensable, and that His power was of no avail beyond death. So He sometimes denies His peoples' entreaties, because they know not what they ask, or because the answer would be injurious. 4. Its essential petition was granted (ver. 50). Not in the way expected, but in one larger and better (Eph. iii. 29). III. ITS COMPLETE DEVELOPMENT. The nobleman believed—1. Without a miracle. At first he only had Christ's word; then his servants' testimony; lastly, the assurance of sight. 2. Without delay—"Go thy way." Prompt obedience one of the most reliable marks of faith—Noah (Gen. vi. 9, 22; Heb. xi. 7), Abraham (Gen. xii. 1; Heb. xi. 8), Peter (Luke v. 5); Paul (Acts xxvi. 19). 3. Without after regrets. None will have occasion to repent who enter on a life of faith. Nor did he act as many do after having been delivered from affliction. 4. Without being left to stand alone. Faith became contagious. Learn—1. The ability and willingness of Christ to save diseased and dying souls. 2. The eagerness Christian parents should display in bringing the cases of their children to Christ. 3. The nature of faith which is taking Christ at His word. 4. The value and efficacy of prayer. 5. The increasing evidence faith obtains the longer it continues. 6. The beauty and advantage of household religion. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The courtier's son:*—I. THE PROGRESS OF FAITH. Faith, at first slender and tentative, becomes firm and influential. The process is worthy of notice. At first it rested on external testimony, but was backed by such anxiety to attain the object that the man came so far to seek it. Then its tenacity is proved and strengthened by a seeming rebuff. Another and great step is taken when Christ's word for the cure is accepted instead of His personal coming down. Next, it is crowned and perfected by the incontestable proof of the miracle. What most of us need in our Christianity is not more evidence—the lamp can be choked with oil, if the oil is not used—it is to follow with entire cordiality the light that has shone so fully on us already. II. CHRIST'S EVIDENTIAL METHOD. How He connects sign and spirit, miracle and faith. He deprecates the purely external connection—the believing only what is seen. Such demands for seen evidence ends usually in downright unbelief. His method is to lead His disciples to such inward, spiritual acquaintance with and confidence in Himself that they trust His word, and so by and by behold His work. When His trusting ones believe, then in due time they also see (chap. xi. 40). Jesus accepts the loving earnestness and tenacity of a faith otherwise slender. He will lead this man into His kingdom by the heart-strings, for He avails Himself of every access to the souls of men. This courtier would have Jesus go down and heal his son. Jesus healed his son and did not go down. Thus He suited His method to the case—was the helper of the father's faith as well as the healer of his son's malady. (*J. Laidlaw, D.D.*) *Restoration of nobleman's dying son:*—I. THE MIRACLE. 1. The petitioner. A person of distinction; perhaps Chuza, Herod's steward. Now in affliction. Seeks Jesus, the Divine Physician. 2. The application. Shows affection for child, and respect to our Lord; also great earnestness. A sense of need inspires utterance. 3. The reply. The first part of

it evidently conveyed rebuke. Jesus said unto him, "Except ye"—not only you individually, but all who resemble you—"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." You are one of those who will not admit who and what I am, unless you see Me work a miracle. II. ITS EFFECTS. 1. See them, in the first place, on the nobleman: He "believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way," convinced that his application had not been made in vain, and that his son would live. 2. The narrative relates the effect of the miracle, not only on the nobleman himself, but also on his household, "his whole house believed." Their hearts were gained to the Lord Christ as well as his. Application: 1. What are we doing for our children? Many are the anxieties and pains which parents endure on account of their children. Can it be said of us, as of King Asa, that in our affliction we seek not to the Lord but to the physicians. Alas! we are prone to look to second causes, and to neglect the first Great Cause of life and health and everything! 2. What are we doing in our affliction? It should make us serious. It should lead us to Christ. It should subdue prejudice. It should show us the value of Christ's power and grace. 3. How have we requited the Lord's mercies? We have influence. Have we exerted it to bring others to believe in Christ, and to worship and serve Him? (*M. Gibbs.*) *The second miracle in Cana—the purifying and training of faith*:—The evangelist evidently intends us to connect together the two miracles in Cana. His object may, possibly, mainly be chronological, and to mark the epochs in our Lord's ministry. But we cannot fail to see how remarkably these two miracles are contrasted. The one takes place at a wedding, a homely scene of rural festivity and gladness. But life has deeper things in it than gladness, and a Saviour who preferred the house of feasting to the house of mourning would be no Saviour for us. The second miracle, then, turns to the darker side of human experience. It was fitting that the first miracle should deal with gladness, for that is God's purpose for His creatures, and that the second should deal with sicknesses and sorrows, which are additions to that purpose made needful by sin. Again, the first miracle was wrought without intercession, as the outcome of Christ's own determination that His hour for working it was come. The second miracle was drawn from Him by the imperfect faith and the agonising pleading of the father. But the great peculiarity of this second miracle in Cana is that it is moulded throughout so as to develop and perfect a weak faith. Notice how there are three words in the narrative, each of which indicates a stage in the history. "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." . . . "The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." . . . "Himself believed and his whole house." We have here, then, Christ manifested as the Discerner, the Rebuker, the Answerer, and therefore the strengthener of a very insufficient and ignorant faith. I. First, we have here, our Lord LAMENTING OVER AN IGNORANT AND SENSUOUS FAITH. At first sight His words, in response to the hurried eager appeal of the father, seem to be strangely unfeeling, far away from the matter in hand. "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." "What has that to do with me and my dying boy, and my impatient agony of petition?" "It has everything to do with you." It is the revelation, first of all, of Christ's singular calmness and majestic leisure, which befitted Him who needed not to hurry because He was conscious of absolute power. It is also an indication of what He thought of most importance in His dealing with man. It was worthy of His care to heal the boy; it was far more needful that He should train and lead the father to faith. The one can wait much better than the other. And there is in the words, too, something like a sigh of profound sorrow. Christ is not so much rebuking as lamenting. Why? Because to their own impoverishing, the nobleman and his fellows were blind to all the beauty of His character. The graciousness of His nature was nothing to them. They had no eyes for His tenderness, and no ears for His wisdom; but if some vulgar sign had been wrought before them, then they would have run after Him with their worthless faith. And that struck a painful chord in Christ's heart when He thought of how all the lavishing of His love, all the grace and truth which shone radiant and lambent in His life, fell upon blind eyes, incapable of beholding His beauty; and of how the manifest revelation of a Godlike character had no power to do what would be done by a mere outward wonder. Are there not plenty of us to whom sense is the only certitude? We think that the only knowledge is the knowledge that comes to us from that which we can see and touch and handle, and the inferences that we draw from these; and to whom all that world of thought and beauty, all that Divine manifestation of tenderness and grace is but mist and cloudland. Intellectually, though in a somewhat modified

sense, this generation has to take the rebuke: "Except ye see, ye will not believe." And practically, do not the great mass of men regard the material world as all-important, and work done, or progress achieved there as alone deserving the name of "work" or "progress," while all the glories of a loving Christ are dim and unreal to their sense-bound eyes? And on the other side, is it not sadly true about those of us who have the purest and the loftiest faith that we feel often as if it was very hard, almost impossible, to keep firm our grasp of One who never is manifested to our sense? Do we not often feel, "Oh! that I could for once, for once only, hear a voice that would speak to my outward ear, or see some movement of a Divine hand." The loftiest faith still leans towards, and has an hankering after, some external and visible manifestation, and we need to subject ourselves to the illuminating rebuke of the Master, Who says: "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." II. And so we have here, as the next stage of the narrative, our Lord TESTING, AND THUS STRENGTHENING, A GROWING FAITH. The nobleman's answer to our Lord's strange words sounds, at first sight, as if these had passed over him, producing no effect at all. "Sir, come down ere my child die." Almost as if he had said: "Do not talk to me about these things at present. Come and heal my boy. That is what I want; and we will talk about the rest some other time." But it is not exactly that. Clearly enough, at all events, he did not read in Christ's words a reluctance to yield to his request, still less a refusal of it. Clearly, he did not misunderstand the sad rebuke which they conveyed, else he would not have ventured to reiterate his petition. He does not pretend to anything more than he has, he does not seek to disclaim the condemnation that Christ brings against him, nor to assume that he has a loftier degree, or a purer kind, of faith than he possesses. He holds fast by so much of Christ's character as he can apprehend; and that is the beginning of all progress. What he knows he knows. He has sore need; that is something. He has come to the Master; that is more. Ah! any true man who has ever truly gone to Christ with a sense even of some outward and temporal need, and has ever really prayed at all, has often to pass through this experience, that the first result of his agonising cry shall be only the revelation to him of the unworthiness and imperfection of his own faith, and that there shall seem to be strange delay in the coming of the blessing so longed for. And the true attitude for a man to take when there is unveiled before him, in his consciousness, in answer to his cry for help the startling revelation of his own unworthiness and imperfection, the true answer to such dealing is simply reiterate your cry. And then the Master bends to his petition and because he sees that the second prayer has in it less of sensuousness than the first; and that some little germ of a higher faith is beginning to open, He yields, and yet He does not yield. "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus saith unto him, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Why did He not go with the man? Why, in the act of granting, does He refuse? For the man's sake. The whole force and beauty of the story comes out yet more vividly if we take the contrast between it and the other narrative, which presents some points of similarity with it—that of the healing of the centurion's servant at Capernaum. There the centurion prays that Christ would but speak, and Christ says, "I will come." There the centurion does not feel that His presence is necessary, but that His word is enough. Here the man says, "Come!" because it has never entered his mind that Christ can do anything unless He stands like a doctor by the boy's bed. And he says, too, "Come, ere my child die." Because it has never entered his mind that Christ can do anything if his boy once has passed the dark threshold. And because his faith is thus feeble, Christ refuses its request, because He knows that so to refuse is to strengthen. Asked but to "speak" by a strong faith, He rewards it by more than it prays, and offers to "come." Asked to "come" by a weak faith, He rewards it by less, which yet is more than it had requested; and refuses to come, that He may heal at a distance; and thus manifests still more wondrously His power and His grace. "Go thy way; thy son liveth." What a test! Suppose the man had not gone his way; would his son have lived? No! The son's life and the father's reception from Christ of what he asked, were all suspended upon that one moment. Will he trust Him, or will he not? Will he linger or will he depart? He departs, and in the act of trusting he gets the blessing, and his boy is saved. And look how the narrative hints to us of the perfect confidence of the father now. Cana was only a few miles from Capernaum. The road from the little city upon the hill down to where the waters of the lake flashed in the sunshine by the quays of Capernaum, was a matter of only a few hours; but it was the next day, and well on into the next day, before he met the

servants that came to him with the news of his boy's recovery. So sure was he that his petition was answered that he did not hurry to return home, but leisurely and quietly went on the next day to his child. Think of the difference between the breathless rush up to Cana, and the quiet return from it. "He that believeth shall not make haste." III. And so, lastly, we have here the absent Christ CROWNING AND REWARDING THE FAITH WHICH HAD BEEN TESTED. We have the picture of the man's return. The servants meet him. Their message, which they deliver before he has time to speak, is singularly a verbal repetition of the promise of the Master, "Thy son liveth." His faith, though it be strong, has not yet reached to the whole height of the blessing, for he inquires "at what hour he began to amend," expecting some slow and gradual recovery; and he is told "that at the seventh hour," the hour when the master spoke, "the fever left him." And all at once and completely was he cured. So, more than his faith had expected is given to him; and Christ, when He lays His hand upon a man, does His work thoroughly, though not always at once. Why was the miracle wrought in that strange fashion? Why did our Lord fling out His power as from a distance rather than go and stand at the boy's bedside? We have already seen the reasou in the peculiar condition of the man's mind; but now notice what it was that he had learned by such a method of healing, not only the fact of Christ's healing power, but also the fact that the bare utterance of His will, whether He were present or absent, had power. And so a loftier conception of Christ would begin to dawn on him. A partial faith brings experience which confirms and enlarges faith; and they who dimly apprehend Him, and yet humbly love Him, and imperfectly trust Him, will receive into their bosoms such large gifts of His love and gracious Spirit that their faith will be strengthened, and they will grow into the full stature of peaceful confidence. The way to increase faith is to exercise faith. And the true parent of perfect faith is the experience of the blessings that come from the crudest, rudest, narrowest, blindest, feeblest faith that a man can exercise. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The testing of faith which the nobleman stands:*—I. HOW HE IS TESTED. 1. In his humility by a stern word which might wound the pride of a nobleman. 2. In his faith by being required to trust a word. II. HOW HE STANDS THE TEST. 1. In his persistent prayer be the test of the humility of his faith. 2. In his confident departure at the word of Jesus he proves the power of His faith. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Domestic affliction:*—I. THE RICH HAVE AFFLICTIONS AS WELL AS THE POOR. There is no more mischievous error than to suppose that the rich have no cares. The dwellers in palaces often sleep more uneasily than dwellers in cottages. Gold may shut out debt and rags, but not disease and death. Let the servant of God beware of desiring riches. They are certain cares and uncertain comforts. II. SICKNESS AND DEATH COME TO THE YOUNG AS WELL AS TO THE OLD. In spite of the testimony of grave stones we are apt to speak and act as if young people never died when young. The first grave was that of a young man. He is wise that will never confidently reckon on a long life. The only true wisdom is to be always prepared to meet God. So living it matters little whether we die young or old. III. WHAT BENEFITS AFFLICTION CAN CONFER ON THE SOUL. Anxiety about a son led this nobleman to Christ, and eventually his whole house. By affliction God often teaches lessons that can be learned in no other way. By it He often draws souls away from sin who would otherwise have perished (Psa. cxix. 71). Let us beware of murmuring (Heb. xii. 11). IV. CHRIST'S WORD IS AS GOOD AS CHRIST'S PRESENCE. This fact gives enormous value to the promises. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Domestic affliction a messenger of God:*—No one is spared this. Not even the nobility. I. HEAR (ver. 47). Up to this time the courtier had not heard; very likely did not care to hear. But now his child lies at death's door he hears that Jesus was come. Thy domestic affliction calls out to thee that thou hast a Saviour who has come for thee. II. Go (ver. 47). The noble had gone no doubt to this and to that one, but there was no help. Now he goes to One who can help. Go thou in a right way at once to Jesus, who always says "Come." III. BESEECH (ver. 47). The man of rank becomes unwontedly humble. Nothing offends him, not even the seemingly negative answer of ver. 48. IV. BELIEVE (vers. 50–54). He believes (ver. 50) and finds everything fulfilled (vers. 51–53), and his whole household believe (ver. 54). Believe Him, thou and thy family, and ye shall be blessed. (*G. Hermann.*) **He went to Him and besought Him.**—*The uses of trouble:*—I. IT HUMBLES PRIDE—"He (the nobleman) went." II. IT GIVES FAITH—"He went." III. IT TEACHES PRAYER—"Besought." IV. IT STIMULATES FAITH—"That he would heal," &c. *Physicians in the East:*—No one is more sought after in the East than the *hakeem* or physician. Let it be known that one of a travelling

party of Europeans is a doctor, and all the sick persons in the neighbourhood make their way to his tent for free treatment. A European doctor in the East may have to complain of lack of fees, but he certainly will not have to complain of lack of patients. The invalids, or those who have persuaded themselves that they are invalids, will troop to his tent in the early morning, and squat there until evening, or until they are treated; and well persons will pretend that they are sick for the purpose of getting possession of the magicial powders which they value so highly. The European doctor who knows what is before him generally supplies himself, ere he starts for the East, with a plentiful supply of bread-pills, ingeniously coloured with tincture of iodine or similar chemicals, so that he may be able to keep his real remedies for real diseases. The lack of adequate medical facilities in the East is noted by every traveller; and it would hardly be possible to overestimate the amount of suffering caused by this lack. That is the reason why the Frankish *hakeem* can go safely where no other Frank dare go; and it may be said reverently that it is also one of the reasons why our Lord took upon Himself the character of a *hakeem* or healer. Those whom no other appeal would bring flocked to Him because they believed Him to be a powerful *hakeem*. It is also one of the reasons for the success of medical missions. The men and women who would curse the ordinary missionary as "a dog and the son of a female dog," will come humbly to the medical mission for healing, and will listen to the message which they would not listen to under any other circumstances. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) **Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.**—*Signs and wonders*:—I. OUR LORD DID NOT PUT FORWARD THE MERE POWER OF HIS MIRACLES AS THE CHIEF SIGN OF HIS DIVINE SONSHIP. He declared His Almighty power chiefly by showing mercy and pity. He used His miraculous power—1. Sparingly, almost entirely in curing the diseases of poor people. 2. Secretly, for it was almost entirely in remote places. For even Jerusalem was remote compared with the great cities of the Roman Empire. Had He intended to convert the world by miracles He would have gone to Rome, the centre of the world. But as He wished for the obedience not of men's lips but of their hearts, that they might love Him and be loyal to Him for His goodness; and not fear and tremble because of His power. II. BECAUSE CHRIST WAS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH HE INTERFERED AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE WITH THE LAWS OF NATURE. He did not offer, as the magicians did, to change the courses of the elements, to bring down tempests and thunderbolts. Why should He? All the physical forces were fulfilling His will already, and He had no need to disturb them. Rather He loved to tell men to look at them, and see how they went well because His Father cared for them. III. BUT MEN WOULD NOT BELIEVE. They craved after signs and wonders. They saw God's hand, not in the common sights of this beautiful world, but only in strange portents, absurd and lying miracles, and so built up a literature of unreason which remains till this day a doleful monument of human folly and superstition. 1. This is true of some now. They regard whatever is strange and inexplicable as coming immediately from God; but whatever they are accustomed to as coming in the course of nature. If a man drops down dead he died "by the visitation of God"; as if any created thing could die or live either save by the will and presence of God. If an earthquake were to swallow up half London it would be a Divine visitation, yet they will not see the true visitation in every drop of rain. 2. Contrast this with the sentiments of the men who wrote psas. CXXXIX., XIX., CIV. Let us all pray for the spirit which inspired these men. IV. WHEN ALL THINGS GO ON IN A COMMONPLACE WAY WITH US, HOW APT WE ARE TO FORGET GOD; but when sorrow comes how changed we are all of a sudden! How we cry to God and feel the need of prayer! If He will do this thing for us we will believe. And if He treated us in adversity as we have treated Him in prosperity, what could we say? But He will not, because He is pitiful. So we can have hope. (*C. Kingsley, M.A.*) *The universal passion for miracles*:—I. Desire for special EXTRAORDINARY FORTUNE to befall us, while we do not exert ourselves to obtain that which satisfies. II. Waiting for EXTRAORDINARY HELP in exigency, when we will not earnestly use the right means. III. Yearning for EXTRAORDINARY FRUITS OF OUR LABOUR, when we will not sow, hoping in faith. IV. Desire of EXTRAORDINARY VIOLENT ASSISTANCE when we wish to get rid of faults, while we ourselves do not lift a hand. V. Expectation of HONOUR, &c., while yet we have done or sacrificed nothing for the glory of God. (*Heubner.*) *Characteristics of faith*:—I. FAITH IN THREE OF ITS STAGES. 1. When faith begins in a soul it is but as a grain of mustard seed. God's people are babes at first. The first stage of faith is a seeking faith. This faith—(1) Excites activity. There is no more idleness in religion. The

means of grace are used and the Bible read, &c. (2) Although weak in some things it gives great power in prayer. How earnest was the nobleman. "Come down," &c. In this stage a man has not power to say, "My sins are forgiven;" to that, Christ can forgive. A thousand difficulties will be surmounted. (3) It gives importunity in prayer. It will not give over at an apparent rebuff. (4) This faith can do much, but it makes mistakes. It knows too little. It knows not that Christ can work a miracle without coming down, and expects that Christ will work in its way. 2. In the second stage faith takes Christ at His word, and the believer realizes the happiness of believing. He is saved. (1) It dares to believe without sensible evidence. (2) It brings quietness and peace of mind. The nobleman was satisfied and was in no violent hurry to return. 3. Faith blossoms in assurance and usefulness. (1) Doubts are dispelled. (2) His household believes. When the Father believes He ought not to rest satisfied until his children are saved. II. Diseases to which faith is subject. 1. With regard to seeking faith. We are very likely when we are seeking to begin to suspend prayerfulness. 2. Those who are trusting implicitly are in danger of wanting to see signs and wonders. Do not place reliance on anything you have dreamed, or seen, or heard, but on Christ. So many Christians want the signs of a revival in noisy demonstrations and not in God's way. 3. The disease which lies in the way of our attaining full assurance is want of observation. The nobleman made careful inquiries. He that looks for providences will never lack a providence to look at. III. THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH. 1. Thou sayest "I have faith." Be it so. Many a man says he has gold, but has it not. Does thy faith make thee pray? 2. Does that faith make thee obedient? 3. Has it led thee to bless thy household? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*:—Let us dismiss the idea that these words had any special reference to the courtier, and let us regard them as an exclamation wrung from Jesus by a deep feeling in His own mind, in which He apostrophized the whole multitude of His countrymen. The courtier's urgent request was not the cause, but the occasion, of the exclamation—I. No doubt OUR LORD MEANT TO COMPLAIN OF SOMETHING WHICH SADDENED AND VEXED HIM; and that something was the necessity of doing miracles in order to attract the children of men, and to keep them when attracted. If we ask why He disliked the necessity of doing signs and wonders, the answer is twofold. 1. Because the character which He gained by such means was in great measure hateful to Him. He was looked upon by very many as a very successful magician or conjurer. Was it not odious to have everybody talking about Him, running after Him, asking Him to do a miracle to gratify their curiosity, saying that He did miracles by the power of Satan? 2. Signs and wonders are in themselves useless, if not objectionable. All interferences with the course of nature are undesirable in themselves. God has made the outward order of things to suit the general character and needs given. The sorrows of life are just as needful for us as its joys; its poverty is as wholesome as its wealth; death is quite as good a friend as life. Nothing could be more disastrous than that the common balance of joy and grief, of life and death, should be seriously disarranged. Christ did not come to do "miracles"; He did not come to thwart and undo the work of suffering, disease, and death; He came to bless and sanctify their work; not to change the ordinary conditions of human life, but to help us to live better, holier, happier, under those conditions. It was a mistake then, but not His mistake. It was the mistake of the people. They *would* come to Him, and beg Him to do this or that outward thing for them, and pray Him so earnestly, so humbly, so trustfully, that He could not help Himself—having the power, He had not the heart to refuse. II. I can only see one valid objection to this position, viz., THAT GOD WOULD NOT HAVE GIVEN HIS SERVANT THESE GIFTS HAD THEY BEEN SO LITTLE GOOD IN THEMSELVES. But God has ever, in the whole process of revelation, accommodated Himself to the moral and spiritual condition of His people at the time being. That Christ should do signs and wonders in the age and in the land in which He appeared was inevitable because it was necessary to place Him in strict harmony with His spiritual surroundings. Miracles have practically ceased long ago, not because the Lord's arm is shortened, but because the faith and piety of Christians have outgrown the craving for miracles, while a larger knowledge has led men to doubt their usefulness. Did not our Lord possess that larger knowledge? Did He not desire to find that higher faith and piety? (*R. Winterbotham, M.A.*) *Signs and wonders*:—These words (*τέρας, σημεῖον, δύναμις, ἔνδοξον, παράδοξον, θαυμάσιον*) have this in common, that they are all used to characterize the supernatural works wrought by Christ in the days

of His flesh: thus *σημῖον* (John ii. 11; Acts ii. 19), *τέρας* (Acts ii. 22; John iv. 48), *δύναμις* (Mark vi. 2; Acts ii. 22), *ἔνδοξον* (Luke xiii. 17), *παράδοξον* (Luke v. 26), *θαυμάσιον* (Mark xxi. 15); while the first three, which are far the most usual, are in like manner employed of the same supernatural works wrought in the power of Christ by His apostles (2 Cor. xii. 12). They will be found, on examination, not so much to represent different kinds of miracles, as miracles contemplated under different aspects and from different points of view. Τέρας and *σημῖον* are often linked together in the New Testament (John iv. 48; Acts ii. 22, iv. 30; 2 Cor. xii. 12), and times out of number in the Septuagint. The same miracle is upon one side a *τέρας*, on another a *σήμειον*, and the words must often refer, not to different classes of miracles, but to different qualities in the same miracles. Origen long ago called attention to the fact that the name *τέρατα* is never in the New Testament applied to these works of wonder except in association with some other name. They are often called *σημῖα*, often *δυναμῖς*, often *τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα*, more than once *τέρατα, σημεῖα, καὶ δυναμεῖς*, but never *τέρατα* alone. The observation was well worth making; for the fact which we are thus bidden to note is indeed eminently characteristic of the miracles of the New Testament, viz., that a title by which more than any other these might seem to hold on to the prodigies and portents of the heathen world, and to have something akin to them, should thus never be permitted to appear except in company of some other necessarily suggesting higher thoughts about them. But miracles are also *σημῖα*, which name brings out their ethical end with the greatest, as *τέρας* with the least distinctness. It is declared in the very word that the prime object and end of the miracle is to lead to something out of and beyond itself: that, so to speak, it is a kind of finger-post of God; valuable not so much for what it is as for what it indicates of the grace and power of the doer, or of the connection with a higher world in which he stands (Mark xvi. 20; Acts xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 4; Exod. vii. 9, 10; 1 Kings iii. 3). It is to be regretted that *σημῖον* is not always rendered "sign" in our version; that in St. John it too often gives place to the vaguer "miracle"; and sometimes not without serious loss; thus see John iii. 2; vii. 31; x. 41; and above all, John vi. 26. (*Abp. Trench.*) *The human tendency to make a difficulty of believing:*—Charles Wesley had been for years groping in spiritual darkness,

"Without one cheering beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day."

On a bright morning in May, 1738, he awoke, wearied and sick at heart, but in high expectation of the coming blessing. He lay on his bed "full of tossings to and fro," crying out, "O Jesus, Thou hast said, 'I will come unto you'; Thou hast said, 'I will send the Comforter unto you'; Thou hast said, 'My Father and I will come unto you, and make Our abode with you.' Thou art God who canst not lie. I wholly rely upon Thy promise. Accomplish it in Thy time and manner." A poor woman, Mrs. Turner, heard his groaning, and, constrained by an impulse never felt before, put her head into his room and gently said, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities." He listened, and then exclaimed, "Oh that Christ would but thus speak to me!" He inquired who it was that had whispered in his ear these life-giving words. A great struggle agitated his whole man, and in another moment he exclaimed, "I believe! I believe!" He then found redemption in the blood of the Lamb, experiencing the forgiveness of sins, and could look up and

"Behold, without a cloud between,
The Godhead reconciled."

The hymn he wrote to commemorate the anniversary of his spiritual birth shows the mighty change that had taken place, and is best expressed in his own language—

"Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing!"

(*New Cyclopædia of Anecdote.*) **Sir, come down ere my child die.**—*The Christian calls his Saviour to his sick:*—I. HE CALLS HIM. II. IN DUE TIME. III. IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT. IV. WITH THE MOST BLESSED RESULT. (*Bachmann.*) *Prayer:*—I. ITS OBJECT. Christ as—1. Human—sympathizing. 2. Divine—helpful. II. ITS MODE OF ADDRESS. 1. Respectful. "Sir." All true prayer should begin with

adoration. The urgency of our case sometimes leads us to forget this. 2. Entreating as inspired by consciousness of real need. 3. Importunate as evidencing earnestness. III. ITS SUBJECT MATTER. "My child." The first object of a parent's desire is his child's—1. Life. 2. Support. 3. Salvation. IV. ITS MOTIVE. 1. Unselfish. It seeks the good of others. 2. And yet selfish, for the father's happiness was wrapped up in his child. So the well-being of others will re-act upon us. To give is unselfish, but it re-acts on self because it is more blessed than to receive. V. ITS NECESSITY. See this in family trials. *Directness in prayer*:—A Scotchman's wife besought him to pray that the life of their dying baby might be spared. True to his old instincts, the good man kneeled down devoutly, and went out on the well-worn track, as he was wont to do in the prayer-meetings at the kirk. Through and through the routine petitions he wandered along helplessly, until he reached at last the honoured quotation: "Lord, remember Thine ancient people, and turn again the captivity of Zion!" A mother's heart could hold its patience no longer. "Eh, man!" the woman broke forth impetuously; "you are aye drawn out for the Jews, but it's our bairn that's a-deein'." Then, clasping her hands, she cried: "Oh! help us, Lord, and give our darling back to us if it be Thy holy will; but if he is to be taken away from us, make us know Thou wilt have him to Thyself!" That wife knew what it was to pray a real prayer; and to the throne of grace she went, asking directly what she wanted most. (*James Hamilton, D.D.*) *Prayers of a father*:—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 any time and in any 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. Spener lived to see his son a respectable man, in public office, and happily married. Such was the change of his life after his conversion. (*N. E. Puritan.*) *Jesus the Saviour of the children*:—General H—— used to take his little son into his arms and talk with him about Jesus. The little boy never grew tired of that "sweet story." It was always new to him. One day, while sitting in his father's lap, his papa said to him, "Would my little son like to go to heaven?" "Yes, papa," he answered. "But," said the father, "how can you go to heaven? Your little heart is full of sin. How can you expect to go where God is?" "But all are sinners, papa," the little fellow answered. "That is true," replied the father; "and yet God has said that only the pure in heart shall see Him. How, then, can my little boy expect to go there?" The dear little fellow's face grew very sad. His heart seemed full, and, bursting into tears, he laid his head on his father's bosom and sobbed out, "Papa, Jesus can save me." (*New Cyclopædia.*) **The man believed the word that Jesus spake.**—*From faith to faith*:—I. Faith PROMPTED HIM TO COME TO CHRIST. He felt his need and knew Jesus could help. A lesser form of faith—elementary. II. Faith PROMPTED HIS PRAYER TO CHRIST. III. Faith IMPLICITLY ACCEPTED THE WORD OF CHRIST. IV. Faith WAS CONSUMMATED BY THE FULFILMENT OF THE WORD OF CHRIST. (*Family Churchman.*) *Taking God at His Word*:—This appears to be the easiest of rules. But practically none is harder; certainly none is so little kept. I. Between man and man THE SOCIAL LAW OF FAITH IS SO STRICT THAT IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE WHAT A MAN SAYS YOU ARE HELD TO COMMIT THE GREATEST WRONG YOU CAN INFLICT UPON HIM. And God has the same sense of jealousy for His own truthfulness, and the same indignant feeling of wrong and outrage when His Word is questioned. Unbelief is giving God the lie. It is no light thing to treat any word of God as an unreality; it is an insult thrown in His face. II. WHO DOES TAKE GOD AT HIS WORD? The timid man? the unhappy man? the loiterer? the man who has no peace? the man who doubts his interest? the man who puts away the promises? Can any one of these escape the condemnation? III. ARE WE TAKING GOD AT HIS WORD? 1. God says, "All have sinned." Do you realize yourself a helpless sinner? 2. Jesus said, "It is finished." Have you accepted your salvation as a finished thing, or are you thinking "I must do something to secure my salvation?" 3. He says, "He that cometh unto Me," &c. Do you say, "I fear He will not receive me." 4. He says "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." But you say, "No, not quite all." 5. He says to penitents, "You are forgiven now;" but you read it, "I shall be forgiven by and by." 6. He says,

"Take no thought—I will provide." But you are anxious. Is all this taking God at His word? IV. THE MEANS OF CULTIVATING THE BLESSED ART. 1. You must go back to the simplicities of childhood. If its confidence has not been abused a little child takes everybody at his word, and never suspects anybody. 2. You must take honouring views of what God's Word is. The Spirit of God Himself is in that Word. 3. You must acquaint yourself with the Speaker. How shall we trust the Word if we do not trust the Speaker? (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *The obedience of faith*:—It is an incident of the life of Napoleon that one day, while reviewing his troops in Paris, he let fall the bridle reins upon his horse's neck, when the spirited animal at once dashed down the line. Before Napoleon could recover his seat and check the horse, a common soldier sprang from the ranks, caught the reins, stopped the excited horse, and placed the bridle in the hands of the emperor, who took it and said, "Much obliged to you, captain." The soldier immediately answered, "Of what regiment, sire?" Napoleon, delighted with his quick perception and ready faith, replied, "Of my guards," and rode away. The soldier laid down his musket, saying, "He may take it who will," and started at once for the officers' tent, where he was duly installed as captain of the guard. With an obedience and a faith equally prompt the Jewish nobleman went his way. (*Sermons by the Monday Club.*) *Benefits of a pious parentage*:—"Thy son liveth." So the son was restored by his father's faith. It is a benefit to be born of good parents. Personal goodness is profitable to posterity. (*J. Trapp.*) *True faith*:—A father was once amusing his children with an electric machine, and after one or two had received the shock they drew back from the apparatus with evident dread. The father presently held out the jar uncharged, and consequently harmless, and said, "If you touch it now, you will feel nothing. Will you try?" The children drew back with their hands behind them. "Don't you believe me?" asked he. "Yes, sir," and the hands were held out to prove their faith, but were quickly withdrawn before they reached the dangerous knob. One alone, a timid little girl, had that kind of confidence which really led her to trust her father. The rest believed, but had not heartfelt faith. Even the little believer's faith was not unwavering. You could see on her face, when the little knuckle approached the harmless brass ball, a slight expression of anxiety, showing she had some doubts and fears after all; and there was an evident feeling of relief when, from actual trial, she experienced the case to be as her father represented it. **The fever left him.**—In Palestine, as in all other Oriental countries, fevers are very prevalent; but the fatality varies greatly according to the locality. The commonest form is a low kind of intermittent fever, malarial in character, and accompanied by a dangerous flux. This leads to a great nervous weakness and exhaustion; and the fever has a tendency to hang on for an indefinite period of time. Among the Arabs of the Sinaitic peninsula this intermittent fever is very prevalent, but a fatal termination is comparatively rare. It is specially interesting, in connection with this lesson, in which the nobleman's son lies sick at Capernaum, to remember that the site of Capernaum is famous to this day for the number and the malignancy of its fevers. The country lies low, and the land round about is marshy; so that during the hot season the conditions are favourable for producing fevers of the worst sort. There was a natural reason, therefore, why the nobleman's son should lie sick at Capernaum. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) Here is a clear and beautiful illustration of the apostle's words, that "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20). The nobleman expected an amendment, or beginning to amend. Christ bestowed at once perfect health: "The fever left him." Numberless are the instances of God's overflowing grace in this respect, as we have before noted (*Ill.* Mark viii. 23, x. 13, 16; Luke i. 67, xviii. 14, xix. 4, xxiii. 43). (*J. Ford, M.A.*) **Himself believed and his whole house.**—The house of the Christian when God visits it with trouble. The trouble—I. UNITES THE MEMBERS IN TENDERER LOVE. II. DIRECTS THEIR HEARTS MORE TRUSTFULLY TO THE LORD. III. AWAKENS THEM TO IMPORTUNATE PRAYER AND INTERCESSION. IV. PRODUCES AT LAST A JOYFUL AND THANKFUL FAITH. (*Lisco.*) *Family religion*:—In a family where religion is known and God devoutly worshipped there is a conscientious tie on every one to discharge the duties that belong to his station; a tie strengthened by eternal rewards and punishments, and laid on the very soul. The parent and master consider themselves as accountable for the principles and, in a great measure, for the salvation of their children and their servants. The children and servants consider that they are to honour their parents as the representatives of God, and not to render only an eye-service, but so to obey and serve as those who in even

the most secret thought and action lie open to the eyes of God. This produces a mutual discharge of duty on both sides; and that gives peace, order, and happiness to the whole family (Psa. ci; cxviii. 15). (*P. Skelton.*) **The same hour.**—We also sometimes meet with voices on our way which come to us as an echo of our faith. I have heard of a Colonel von M—— who on account of treason to his king and country was sentenced to a long imprisonment, and who, in his solitary cell at Galatz, in Silesia, began at last to seek the living God whose image had been for so long almost obliterated within him. He was allowed to have no book except his Bible, and though at first in reading it his only feeling was inward rage and gnashing of teeth, yet by degrees he felt the soothing of God's tender hand on his desolate and comfortless heart. During a sleepless night he suddenly feels for the first time since his childhood as if he could pray. He opens the Bible, and reads these words: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psa. l. 15). Wherefore he calls upon God: "Lord, reveal Thyself to me, and deliver me from the misery of my unbelief." And it was granted to him to believe the word which God was speaking to him; the tender and unspeakably indulgent Lord who despises not the faintest movement of faith, had seen and rewarded the coming to Him of this miserable man. He rises from his knees comforted, convinced in his conscience that a contact had taken place between his soul and the living God, and that, further, he should get to be able to glorify God. In that same night, the king of this colonel lay on his bed tormented with pain. He prayed God for an hour of quiet sleep; he slept, and when he awoke again refreshed, he said to his wife: "God has looked upon me very graciously, and I would fain be thankful to Him for it. Who is the man in my dominions who has the most deeply injured me?—this day I will forgive that man." He considered a moment, and then he exclaimed, "Colonel M——. Let him be pardoned!" When the news of his release reached the prisoner, and the doubly-pardoned man inquired the hour in which God had softened the king's heart, it was found that the same God still lives as of old, and that He still performs through His outstretched right arm what we read in. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) **The second miracle.**—*We should count our mercies:*—God keeps count of what He doth for us, and will call for a reckoning. Should not we keep a register? write up the noble acts of the Lord? make a catalogue of them, such an one as was that in Judges x. 11, 12. According to this term, and many the like in sacred Scripture, we should polish and garnish, embroider and embellish, the great works of God, or else we undervalue them, which He will not bear with. (*J. Trapp.*)

CHAPTER V.

VERS. 1–18. **After this there was a feast of the Jews.**—*The Pool of Bethesda, a type of favoured localities in a religious community in which the highest miraculous aid has not yet appeared:*—The miraculous aid is—I. ENIGMATICAL: An angel troubling the water. II. OCCASIONAL: At a certain season. III. EXTREMELY LIMITED: To the one who steps in first. IV. TO MANY UNAVAILABLE: The impotent. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The working of God in the medicinal spring an emblem of the saving work of God in general:*—I. IN ITS FORMS. 1. The saving operation of the Father in the kingdom of nature. 2. That of the Son in the kingdom of grace. II. IN ITS STAGES. 1. Christ's miraculous healing and raising of dead in general. 2. The spiritual awakening and the organic unfolding of salvation in the New Testament dispensation. 3. The finished work of salvation in the general resurrection. (*Ibid.*) *The sins of summer watering-places:*—Outside Jerusalem there was a watering-place, the popular resort for invalids. At a certain season an angel troubled the water. That angel has his counterpart in the angel of healing, that in our day steps into the mineral springs or into the salt sea, where multitudes who are worn out with commercial or professional anxieties, as well as those who are affected with disease, go and are cured. These Bethesda's are scattered all up and down our country, thank God. Let not the merchant begrudge the employé, or the patient the physician, or the Church its pastor, a season of inoccupation. But I have to declare the truth that our fashionable watering-places are the temporal and eternal destruction of thousands. I. The first temptation that hovers in this

direction is TO LEAVE YOUR PIETY AT HOME. Elders and deacons and ministers, who are entirely consistent at home sometimes when the Sabbath dawns, take it all to themselves. On the other days the air is bewitched with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and the toughest thing is to keep religion. II. Another temptation is the HORSE RACING BUSINESS. I never knew a man who could give himself to the pleasures of the turf and not be battered in morals. And the betting, drunkenness, and financial ruin associated with it everywhere cluster round it under a pleasant pseudonym at the watering-place. III. The temptation to SACRIFICE PHYSICAL STRENGTH. Instead of recuperating their health many lose it. Families accustomed to retire early gossip until one or two in the morning, and dyspeptics take strange liberties with viands they would be afraid to touch at home. IV. THE FORMATION OF HASTY AND UNDESIRABLE ALLIANCES. Watering-places are responsible for more of the domestic infelicities of this country than all other things combined. You might as well go among the gaily-painted yachts of a summer regatta to find war vessels, as to go among the light spray of the summer watering-place to find character that can stand the test of the great struggle of human life. Ah! in the battle of life you want a stronger weapon than a lace fan or a croquet mallet! The load of life is so heavy that in order to draw it you want a team stronger than one made up of a masculine grasshopper and a feminine butterfly. V. The temptation to BANEFUL LITERATURE. There is more pestiferous waste read by the intelligent classes in July and August than in the other ten months of the year. Men and women, who at home would not be satisfied with a book that was not really sensible, read those which ought to make them blush. "Oh, you must have intellectual recreation." Yes, there is no need to take books on metaphysics. But you might as well say, "I propose now to give a little rest to my digestive organs, and instead of eating heavy meat and vegetables, I will, for a little while, take lighter food—a little strychnine and a few grains of ratsbane." Literary poison in August is as bad as literary poison in December. VI. The temptation to INTOXICATING BEVERAGE. The watering-place is full of this temptation; after the bath, the game, the dinner, in the morning and at night the custom is to tipple. VII. CONCLUSION: 1. The grace of God is the only safe shelter. 2. There are spiritual watering-places accessible to all. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *The house of mercy*:—Bethesda means house of mercy, and we have such a House and such a pool in the Church of God and the water of salvation. The pool was a crowded spot, and the poor crippled man had been all these years without finding a place in it. I. But THERE IS ROOM IN CHRIST'S HOUSE OF MERCY, AND IT IS THE BEST PLACE FOR ALL. 1. For little children. 2. For young men and maidens. 3. For the old. II. God's House is the best place for all WHO HAVE SINNED AND REPENTED. Very often people who have gone wrong cease to come to Church. They feel unfit. But let them repent and come home like the prodigal. Then they will find pardon and peace. III. God's House is the best place for those WHO CAME TO JESUS, BUT HAVE GONE BACK AGAIN. Can that companion of drunkards and bad women be the same who used to say, "Our Father" with innocent lips, and was ashamed to tell a lie? Are you happier for going back from Jesus? Well, there is room for even you in the House of Mercy, and cleansing for you in the Blood of Jesus. IV. HOW MANY OF US ARE LYING LIKE THESE MEN AT BETHESDA? 1. Some of us are paralyzed by sin, evil habits, worldliness. 2. Some are dumb who babble in the world but never speak to God. 3. Some are deaf who hear the offers of the market, yet cannot hear the offers of God. 4. Here in God's House of mercy there is a hospital for all manner of disease. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Waiting in mercy's house*:—1. Who wonders that a place which had such a history as that described in this chapter should be called mercy's house? We should not have been surprised if we had heard of it as being near the Temple; but, as if God would teach us that His mercy is to be got wherever sought, the house of mercy is close by the place where money is made. 2. How came the five porches to be built? Had some of those which had found health built them for the comfort of seekers for mercy, and thus shown their appreciation of what they had received? Let those who find grace to help in the means provided see that others have the chance of getting the same privileges. Let us write on the walls of these porches—I. IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND. It is evident this man thought so. Thirty-eight years hoping for a cure. How often he had been disappointed! One can see him as he smiles a sickly smile, and whispers, "Better luck next time." Some need to be encouraged to hope that it is not too late to be cured of the malady which threatens their soul. Do not despair. Satan could not wish for anything better than that your hopes should die, and your prayers cease.

II. On the second porch, write, WAITING ON THE LORD IS TRUE WISDOM. If you don't wish to grow worse, keep in mercy's house. Do not be persuaded to give up going to Church. How pleased the enemy of your soul would be if he could but persuade you to spend the whole of your life away from God. "Faith cometh by hearing." Some convinced of sin, never able to rejoice in God our Saviour, are tempted to give up. People might have said to this man, "Why keep going to the pool?" "If I die without salvation, I will die at the feet of the Saviour." III. On the third porch, write, CHRIST IS THE SHORT WAY TO COMFORT. The pool was called the house of mercy, but Christ was mercy itself. All mere human instrumentalities are to Jesus what the house is to the Master. We have an indication of Christ's plan of saving men. The poor man did not ask Jesus to heal him. It was mercy who took the initiative. Christ gave a command as well as asked a question. "Take up thy bed and walk." This was something that was a physical impossibility; yet the man made the effort, and was helped of God, and so was made whole. Jesus says to you, who are willing to be saved, "Believe on Me." Why say you cannot believe? God's commandments are promises. He never commands what He will not help us to do. IV. In the next of the porches we will write up, THE NEWLY SAVED MAY EXPECT A CHECK. The man was met as he was going down the street by those who objected to his carrying his bed. Do not be surprised if some one tries to rob you of your new-found joy. Let not any one stop you from joy in the Lord, it is your strength. V. There is yet one porch on which we will write, SIN WILL HURT YOU MORE THAN DISEASE. "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (*T. Champness.*) *Scripture a record of human sorrow*:—What a scene of misery Bethesda must have presented. I. THE BIBLE IS FULL OF SUCH DESCRIPTIONS OF HUMAN MISERY. It begins with the history of the curse, and ends with predictions of judgments. II. And, further, IT SEEMS TO DROP WHAT MIGHT BE SAID IN FAVOUR OF THIS LIFE, and enlarges on the unpleasant side of it. Little does it say on the pleasures of life. But then human tales and poems make things better than they are. Scripture tells the truth, "Man is born to trouble." III. THIS VIEW IS THE ULTIMATE AND TRUE VIEW OF HUMAN LIFE, AND A VIEW WHICH IT CONCERNS US MUCH TO KNOW, else we shall be obliged to learn it by sad experience; whereas if we are forewarned we shall unlearn false notions of its excellence and be saved from disappointment, and learn to bear a sober and calm heart under a smiling cheerful countenance. IV. CONSIDER WHAT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF IGNORANCE OR DISTRUST OF GOD'S WARNING VOICE. For a while all will be enjoyment: health is good, spirit high, troubles easily mastered; but as years roll on it is discovered that substantial good is wanting. Then a man will get restless and discontented, for he does not know how to amuse himself. He has made no effort to change his heart, strengthen his faith, or subdue his passions. Now their day is come, and they begin to domineer. He had no habitual thought of God in the former time, and now he dreads Him. Where shall he look for succour? To those around him he is a burden. And so he will lie year after year by Bethesda no one helping him, and unable from long habits of sin to advance towards a cure. V. THERE IS A MORE SOLEMN CONSIDERATION STILL—THAT TAUGHT BY LAZARUS AND DIVES. Suppose the world to remain a faithful friend till the last, its vanity will be disclosed after death. These disclosures of Scripture, then, are intended to save us pain by preventing the unreserved enjoyment of the world. Let this not seem to make life melancholy. The true Christian rejoices in those earthly things which give joy, but in such a way as not to care for them when they go. VI. OUR SAVIOUR GIVES US A PATTERN WHICH WE ARE BOUND TO FOLLOW. True, such self-command composure and inward faith are not to be learned in a day; if they were why should this life be given us? It is given us as a preparation time for obtaining them. Its sights and sorrows are to calm you, and its pleasant sights to try you. Learn to be as the angel who could descend among the miseries of Bethesda without losing his purity or happiness. Gain healing from troubled waters. Be light-hearted and contented because you are a member of Christ's pilgrim Church. (*J. H. Newman, D.D.*) *An old Jerusalem infirmary*:—I. THE HOSPITAL (vers. 2, 3). 1. Its site. Where God has a temple His worshippers should found a hospital (Isa. lvii. 7; Matt. xxv. 35–40). 2. Its form. It was not the five porches of man's construction, but the water of God's providing that healed; but the former enabled patients to take advantage of the latter. In nature and grace man is permitted to be God's fellow-worker (Deut. viii. 3, viii. 18; Psa. xxiii. 1, lxvii. 6; Hosea ii. 21; 2 Cor. xi. 1; Phil. ii. 13), but in both He is "Jehovah Rophi" (Exod. xv. 26; Deut. xxxii. 39; Psa. ciii. 3). 3. Its name: House of Grace, than which none could be more

appropiate for an institution whose origin was love and whose end was healing, and to which Christ came. 4. Its inmates: specimens of the poor creatures who still crowd the world's infirmaries, and emblems of spiritual invalids. II. THE PATIENT (ver. 5). 1. A great sufferer for half a lifetime. 2. A friendless outcast, touching the lowest deep of human wretchedness (Psa. cxlii. 4). Many such in the lazar house of humanity. 3. A disappointed seeker. One wonders that his heart was not broken by his endless disappointments (Prov. xiii. 12, xviii. 14). But "hope springs eternal in the human breast" (Rom. viii. 24). What a comfort there are no such disappointed seekers after spiritual health (Isa. xlv. 19; Matt. vii. 7, 8; Zech. xiii. 1; Tit. iii. 5). III. THE PHYSICIAN (ver. 6). 1. His quick observation. Christ's people should cultivate the "seeing eye," for there is no lack of opportunities (Eccl. ix. 10; Heb. xiii. 6). 2. His perfect diagnosis. Christ apprehends both the man and his malady in every instance (Psa. vii. 9, cxix. 168, cxxxix. 1–4; Prov. xv. 11; John i. 48, ii. 24, 25, iv. 29; Rev. ii. 23). 3. His tender compassion, implied if not expressed. He distinguished between the sinner and his sin (ver. 14). So in imitation of Matt. v. 45 Christian philanthropy should embrace the criminal classes within its care (Gal. vi. 10). 4. His hopeful inquiry. 5. His extraordinary prescription equivalent to Eph. v. 14; Mark i. 15. Christian duty transcends natural ability, but what Christ commands He is willing to supply (chap. i. 12). IV. THE CURE. 1. Instantaneous, like all His cures physical and spiritual. 2. Complete. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A hospital sermon*:—I. CHRIST ALWAYS HONOURED THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES OF HIS DAY. He shows us—1. The advantage of church institutions. 2. The relative value of religious ritual. 3. The duty of public worship. II. NEAR THE TEMPLE WAS A HOSPITAL. The connection between the Church and benevolent institutions (and between the philanthropist and the Christian) is vital. Show one and you will find—1. That Christian love has started it. 2. That Christian liberality has supported it. 3. That Christian charity has been its daily guardian. III. WHAT HAVE THE SYSTEMS OF INFIDELITY DONE FOR THE POOR AND SICK OF OUR LAND? Did Voltaire ever endow an almshouse? What have Tom Paine, Rousseau, Hume, Gibbon, &c., done for the amelioration of the race? What building stands to commemorate the sympathy, heroism, and liberality of the secularism of our day? It was the Christian in Howard that made him a religious reformer; in Wilberforce that made him a slave emancipator; that inspired Florence Nightingale, &c. The Church is the poor man's refuge; the Bible the sorrowing man's hope; Christ the world's great need; heaven the weary man's rest. (*G. Minkle.*) *Bethesda*:—I. THE POOL. 1. In Jerusalem, typical of the Church into which you have been introduced by baptism. 2. The pool itself is emblematical of that "Fountain opened in the house of David," &c. It is full, not of water, but of Spirit, and His baptism is life to the soul and healing and power to its injured and enfeebled faculties. 3. The five porches set forth the five springs in the Rock of Ages, hands, feet, side, each yielding its separate stream of blessing. II. THOSE WHO LAY ROUND THE POOL. 1. Representatives of the unconverted citizens of the Spiritual Jerusalem. (1) The blind, unable to discern the right hand from the left, nay, incapable of seeing any hand to the soul at all. (2) The halt, divested of faculty for every motion. (3) The withered, incompetent "as paralytics are" to move the limbs or organs of the soul. Why, if the powers of the congregation were suddenly let loose, the results would arouse the whole world: there would not be a house in the district, however poor and sinful; however rich and worldly, that would not be beset, as it were, by a host of inspired apostles. Attempt to move men in their ordinary state to Sunday-school teaching, missionary exertion, or hearty contribution towards religious objects: some will say, We cannot see the matter as you do; others will say, We approve of the object, but cannot move in it; we are bound by such special bonds that we cannot stir in the case, or if we went and followed your advice, we should be helpless as the dead. What is this but being blind, halt, withered? 2. Take the case of an actual believer. He may feel himself providentially impeded; his way may be hidden, his powers confined, fast bound with bonds invisible. The thought of what a neighbour, or a newspaper, or an enemy, or a dignitary may say, ties him as within gates of brass. He would speak, but invisible ligatures fasten his tongue. He will say, "For that I should have a higher position, a larger fortune, more vigorous powers." Well, this may be true; yet an energetic grasp of the Hand that moves the universe might remove all these restrictions. III. THE TROUBLING OF THE POOL. 1. The day: the Sabbath. The pool is always troubled, but the Lord's day is the day for finding it out. Abolish Sunday and not only would the pool be neglected, but it would become dry. 2. The place:

God's House, not exclusively of course, for it is everywhere accessible But here are unusual facilities. 3. The troublers: God's ministers as His agents. (1) By prayer. (2) By preaching. (3) By sacraments. (*T. D. Gregg, D.D.*) *Bethesda:*—I. HOW EAGER WERE THESE FOLK TO BE CURED! Would that there were the same earnestness for the healing of the soul. II. GOD CAUSED THE TROUBLING OF THE WATERS, BUT LEFT THE SICK TO GET THEMSELVES IN. As Matthew Henry says, "God has put virtue into Scripture and ordinances, and if we do not make a due improvement of them, it is our own fault. III. THIS MAN'S INFIRMITY WAS OF THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS' STANDING; SHALL WE COMPLAIN OF ONE WEARISOME NIGHT. We should visit hospitals sometimes that we may learn to be thankful for our own blessings and to pity the sufferings of others. IV. HE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD NO FRIEND. Some day troubles may come upon us which no earthly friend can alleviate or understand. But Jesus knows, He can sympathize and heal. V. LEARN PATIENCE AND HOPE FROM THE PERSEVERANCE OF THIS MAN (Heb. ii. 3; Luke xviii. 1). (*G. J. Brown, M.A.*) *Bethesda:*—The porches were once places of luxurious indulgence for the rich. In the process of time they became hospitals for the poor. I. THE WORLD'S PAIN IS SCATTERED OVER A VAST SURFACE, BUT THERE ARE GATHERING PLACES, FOCUSSES OF SUFFERING. It will do us good to go into the back street or infirmary where it hides itself. II. THE PEOPLE WERE A GREAT MULTITUDE. 1. Sorrow has always been in a majority. 2. The great multitude represented a great variety of diseases. There are some thousands to which the human frame is subject. Think of a thousand ways of taking a man to pieces; of God having a thousand scourges by which He can lay His hand of punishment and trial on the sinner. I can run away from fire and water; but who can escape God? 3. The man who is, popularly speaking, in the robustest health to-day may be smitten before the setting of the sun with a fatal disease. In the midst of life we are in death. Therefore, "Whatsoever thy hand," &c. 4. All the people were waiting. We are all doing the same. "Man never is, but always to be blest." There are two methods of waiting. (1) The method which means patience, hope, assurance that God will in His own time redeem His promises; (2) the method of impatience and distrust and complaining that wears the soul out. III. EVERY LIFE HAS SOME OPPORTUNITY GIVEN IT. "There is a tide in the affairs of man," &c. Every one has had a door opened. The angel is present to-day. 1. You may heal the disease of selfishness by timely generosity. 2. You may heal the disease of indolence by Christian work. IV. TROUBLED WATERS ARE OFTEN HEALING WATERS. Not the little puddles you make with your own foot; but the troubles that God makes by His angels and a thousand ministries by which He interposes. You may take hold of trouble by the wrong end and abuse it, or you may make it a place for thought and vow. V. IN ALL CLASSES THERE IS A SPECIAL MAN. I am groaning over something I have had for ten years, and there is a man that has had something for five and twenty and never made half the noise about it. I have only one loaf; another man says he has not tasted for three days. There is always someone worse off than you are. VI. WE CANNOT GET USED TO PAIN, BUT WE GET ACCUSTOMED TO THE SIN THAT MAKES IT. VII. THE PHYSICIAN IS SENT NOT TO THE WHOLE BUT TO THE SICK. The very asking of His question has healing in it. Some people ask about our sickness but make us worse; others ask us how we are and the kind inquiry makes us feel better. VIII. THE SELFISHNESS OF PAIN. Here again we come on the subtle working of sin. Does any one say to the man who has been lying in pain for thirty-eight years, "You are worse than I, I shall give you a turn this time." Great numbers of people had been healed, but no one offered help. Blessing unsanctified may increase our selfishness. IX. CHRIST'S POWER IS NOT SECONDARY BUT PRIMARY. He speaks and it stands fast. X. LET US APPLY THE WHOLE THING TO THE MATTER OF SALVATION. 1. It was an angel who troubled the water; it is the Son of God who opens the fountain for sin. 2. The water was moved at a certain time only; the atonement of the Son of God is open to our approaches night and day. 3. Whosoever first stepped in was cured at Bethesda; here the whole world may all go in at once. 4. Go to the fountain and one thing you will never find there — one dead man. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Bethesda:*—Christ was eminently a public man. Wherever most people were congregated, there was He; not induced by curiosity, pleasure, or desire for admiration, but to fulfil His mission. Here we find Him after a fifty-six miles' walk. The prospect of usefulness made it worth the trouble. I. THE NARRATIVE. 1. The hospital and its bath. The cloisters were designed for ordinary bathers, but since it had become medicinal, they were filled with the diseased. 2. The patients and their diseases. (1) The blind with all manner of ophthalmic complaints. (2) Halt,

persons lame from accident, disease, or eruptions. (3) Withered, those whose sinews had shrunk, and power of movement had become impossible. 3. The angel and his operations. 4. The impotent man and his special infirmity. He was deprived of the power of rapid motion, and laid expecting help; but helpful friends are only found at feasts, not in hospitals. 5. The Physician and His cure. (1) What a question He asked! The doctor generally says, "Tell me your disease, its symptoms; let me feel your pulse." This Physician knew more than the patient. (2) Power came with the healing word, and the man instantly became vigorous. 6. The objectors and their cavils. 7. The restored man and his lesson. (1) The miracle had a beneficial effect, for he went into the Temple to express his gratitude. (2) Christ gave him a caution. A worse evil might accrue through sin than thirty-eight years' affliction. And so now: a guilty conscience, loss of God's friendship, hell. 8. The communication and its effects. Who can blame the man for his effusive testimony to his benefactor? Yet it was scarcely prudent, a fact that should be borne in mind by the over-zealous, for "the Jews sought to kill Jesus." II. THE INSTRUCTION. 1. Sickness is often God's discipline to prepare the mind to welcome Christ. "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest." The Thessalonians "received the Word in much affliction." 2. If we would be healed of our spiritual maladies we must be found where that healing is ordinarily bestowed. (1) This may be a work of difficulty, as in the case before us. (2) There are special seasons in which God vouchsafes signal blessings to the Church. 3. The most desperate and lengthened cases are not beyond the reach of Christ's powers. (1) Those who have reached the age of this man and whose sin seems inveterate. (2) Backsliders. 4. Copy the sympathy of Christ to the afflicted. We cannot help them as He did, but we can help and comfort them. Visit the fatherless and widows, the sick, &c. (*J. Sherman.*) *The pool of Bethesda:*—This is a picture in miniature of the world. I. The world is GREATLY AFFLICTED. 1. Effects of sin. 2. Often the means of salvation. II. The world has ALLEVIATING ELEMENTS. 1. Medicinal properties of the earth. 2. Soothing influences of nature. 3. Offices of social love. 4. The Gospel of Christ. III. The world is SADLY SELFISH. 1. The injustice of selfishness. 2. Its impiety. 3. Its misery. IV. The world has a GLORIOUS SAVIOUR. 1. He cures the greatest of sufferers. 2. By His own Word. 3. At the earnest desire of the patient. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The pool of Bethesda:*—I. SOME PROBABLE ACCOUNT OF WHAT IS MYSTERIOUS HERE. This pool is placed near the sheep market or gate. You read of this sheep gate in Nehemiah. Josephus tells us that near one of the gates which corresponds with this was Solomon's pool, which we may conclude to be Bethesda. But the pool of Solomon derived its waters from the fountain of Siloam or Shiloh, which also fed the pool of Siloam. Isaiah uses the waters of Siloam "that go softly" to represent the kingdom of David, which is emblematic of the kingdom of Christ. Accordingly, the Jews attached a sacred character to them, applying to them during the feast of Tabernacles the words, "With joy shall ye draw water," &c. May we not think, therefore, that as those waters foreshadowed the kingdom of Christ, God was pleased when that kingdom was near to endue those waters with a healing power, as though to give notice of the restorative virtue that Christ would exert? A long and dreary season, without prophecy and miracles, had elapsed since Malachi; but when the time of Christ was at hand prodigies began again, and prophecy recommenced. Why not add to other attestions that one furnished by the text? Here an angel descended in token of the return of intercourse between earth and heaven. The cripple had lain for thirty-eight years, and attendance probably commenced when the waters became healing. This would place the first advent of the angel about 7 B.C., just when the heraldy of approach was likely to begin. II. CONSIDER THE NARRATIVE AS SIGNIFICATIVE. 1. It was only at certain seasons that the angel descended, and only he who was instantly upon the alert became healed. The fountain opened for sin is ever equally efficacious, but there are precious opportunities in every man's life, on the taking advantage of which may depend his final salvation. There is too much ground to believe that Sunday assemblings are seasons to many of the troubling of the waters, and nevertheless not seasons of the restoration of health, because the agitation is allowed to subside. 2. The condition of cure was personal willingness. The man might have found it profitable to be maimed. Many a cripple prefers begging with one arm to working with two. (1) Wilt thou be made whole, oh young man, who art the slave of thy passions, and whose god is pleasure? Think what it is to be made whole, to mortify thy passions, to deny thyself, "to live soberly," &c. (2) Wilt thou, oh man of am-

bition? (3) Wilt thou, oh woman of frivolous tastes? There is a secret unwillingness which frustrates the ordinances of grace, and keeps Bethesda still crowded. Men dread the stirring of the waters, and whenever they find them agitated pour upon them the oil of flattering deceit. 3. The man was not wearied out by repeated disappointments. Men now wait upon the means week after week without apparent benefit, and are tempted to give up. But you may be giving up at the very moment when God, having duly exercised your patience, is about to interpose. The greatest promises are to those who wait upon the Lord. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Jesus at Bethesda*:—I. THE DIVINE HELPER. 1. He saw him. It is something for a man to look on wretchedness. Men's eyes, as a rule, are turned the other way. The Christian rule is, "Look not every man on his own things," &c. 2. He knew the circumstances of this patient, and He knows ours. 3. He pitied this poor man. "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." But Jesus is a high priest that "can be touched." 4. He addressed him. He made the first advances, and awoke new hope within him. 5. He healed him. But not until the arm of flesh had failed. "Sir, I have no man," &c. II. THE FAULTFINDERS. Surely a life so beneficent should have been left alone. But the faultfinders are everywhere, and are never at a loss for a text or pretext. They are dogs in the manger. They sneer at foreign missions, protesting that "Charity begins at home," but when beggars pass by mutter, "This is a fine sight in a Christian country." How shall we behave towards such people? Let them alone, and go on with our own business as Jesus did. III. THE NEW CONVERT. 1. He was obedient. 2. He was found in the Temple, doubtless to give praise to God. But "thanksliving is better than thanksgiving"; therefore our Lord says, "Sin no more" (Job xx. 11). The ruin of the soul is worse than thirty-eight years of palsy (Heb. vi. 4–9). 3. He testified of Jesus. Witness-bearing is the best preaching. (*D. J. Burrell, D.D.*) *Jesus at Bethesda*:—I. THE PATIENT. 1. He was fully aware of his sickness, and owned it. He was not like those who are lost by nature, who do not know it or will not confess it. 2. He waited by the pool expecting some sign and wonder. This, too, is how many wait, persevering in ordinances and unbelief, expecting some great thing, that on a sudden they will experience strange emotions and remarkable impressions, or see a vision or hear a supernatural voice. No one will deny that a few have been thus favoured—Col. Gardiner, *e.g.*—but such interpositions are not to be looked for. Jesus Himself is the greatest of wonders. In regard to this matter of waiting remark—(1) That it is not the way which God has bidden His servants preach. The gospel of our salvation is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." (2) This ungospel-like gospel of waiting is immensely popular. Why? Because it administers laudanum to the conscience. When the minister preaches with power and men's hearts are touched, the devil says "Wait." (3) Is not this waiting a very hopeless business? Of those who waited how few were healed? What right have you to expect that if you wait another thirty years you will be different? (4) There lies our poor friend. I do not blame him for waiting, for Jesus had not been there before. (5) Having been so often disappointed he was growing in deep despair. Moreover he was getting old; and life is wearing away with you. You have waited all this while in vain, sinfully waited. You have seen others saved, your child, your wife; but you are not. II. THE PHYSICIAN. 1. He made an election. This man was possibly selected because his was the worst case and had waited longest of all. 2. Jesus said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" not for information, but to arouse attention. 3. He gave the word of command. 4. There is nothing said in the text about faith, but the whole incident shows that the man must have had faith. 5. The cure which Christ wrought was—(1) Perfect. The man could carry his bed. (2) Immediate. The man was not carried home by friends and gradually nursed into vital energy. III. APPLY THE INSTANCE TO THE PRESENT OCCASION. Why should we not on this very spot have instantaneous cures of sick souls? Man fell in a moment; why should not Christ restore in a moment? 1. Look at the Biblical illustrations of what salvation is. Noah built an ark, the type of salvation. When was Noah saved? After he had been in the ark a week or two? No; the moment Noah went through the door and the Lord shut him in he was safe. Take the case of the Passover; the moment the blood was sprinkled the house was secured. When the brazen serpent was lifted up were the wounded told to wait till it was pushed in their faces, or until the venom showed certain symptoms? No, they were commanded to look. Were they healed in six months' time? 2. Take Biblical instances. The dying thief, the 3,000 at Pentecost, the Philippian jailer. 3. The work of salva-

tion is all done. You want washing, but the fountain does not need filling. You want clothing, but the robe is ready. 4. Regeneration cannot be a work of a long time. There must be a line, we cannot always see it but God must, between life and death. 5. For God to say, "I forgive thee," takes not a century or a year. The Judge pronounces the sentence and the criminal is acquitted. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The miracle at Bethesda*:—I. THE PORCHES WERE FULL OF SICK FOLK. The world is full of the spiritually sick—thieves, drunkards, harlots, proud, covetous, &c. II. THESE SICK FOLK WERE FULL OF EXPECTANCY ALL THE TIME. So are many now, but their expectancy is misdirected. "As soon as I get out of my present business I will reform"; "I am going to church oftener"; "Next week is my birthday; I will then turn over a new leaf"; "I will repent on my death-bed"; "I expect to be healed in the next revival." III. THE SICK MAN'S HEALING DEPENDED ON HIS TURNING FROM THE POOL TO JESUS. IV. HEALED THE MAN WAS; NOW JESUS BIDS HIM BE HOLY. *Christ our physician*:—I. WE ARE ALL LABOURING UNDER THE MALADY OF SIN. This malady is—1. Universal. 2. It pervades our whole nature. 3. It is attended by—(1) Degradation; (2) suffering; (3) loss of power. 4. It will issue if not arrested in eternal death. II. NO MAN CAN CURE HIMSELF. This is proved—1. By consciousness. 2. By experience. All efforts at self-cure result in failure or self-deception, or, at best, in mitigation of the symptoms. III. NO MAN OR SET OF MEN CAN CURE OTHERS. This has been attempted—1. By educators. 2. By philosophers. 3. By ascetics. 4. By ritualists. The world is filled by spiritual charlatans. IV. CHRIST IS THE ONLY PHYSICIAN. 1. He secures the right of applying the only effectual remedy by propitiating the justice of God, and securing liberty of access to the soul for the Holy Spirit. 2. He sends that Spirit as the Spirit of life and strength. As the constitution is radically affected, a radical cure is necessary, which can only be effected by a life-giving Spirit. 3. The cure is certain and permanent. It results in immortal vigour, beauty, and strength. 4. This Physician is accessible to every one at all times. He requires no preparation, and will receive no recompense. Inferences: 1. The duty of every one to apply to Him for cure. 2. The reason why any are not cured must be in them, not in Him. 3. The duty of making this Physician known to others. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Conversion as illustrated by the miracle*:—1. The utterly lost, hopeless state of every sinner sitting by the waters of salvation (ver. 5). 2. The offer of help addressed to each man's free will for his personal acceptance (ver. 6). 3. The first phase of conflict that pride is apt to make in blaming others and excusing self (ver. 7). 4. The peremptoriness of the gospel demand: Do something, and God will help (vers. 8, 9). 5. The next phase of conflict which external opposition makes discouraging the soul with mere cavils (ver. 10). 6. The full and honest justification of conduct: The One that healed me told me what to do (ver. 11). 7. The salutary experience of solicitude against old besetting sin (ver. 14). 8. The happy obedience of active confession of Christ before others; say openly and everywhere, "It was Jesus that made me whole!" (ver. 15) (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) **Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**—Jesus never, as a rule, let a feast go by without visiting Jerusalem. 1. To fulfil the duty of an Israelite. 2. To use the opportunity of preaching to the largest multitudes. 3. To testify the truths then to the leaders at a time when He might appear before them without their venturing to lay hands upon Him. Evangelical clergymen should use the high Christian festivals with conscientious fidelity. 1. Because then larger congregations are attracted, and many are present then who come at no other time. 2. Because souls are then in a more solemn mood than at other times. (*Heubner.*) **Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool.**—*The water supply of Jerusalem* was one of the most wonderful things in that wonderful city. The cisterns, in what is now called the Sanctuary, appear to have been connected by a system of channels cut out of the rock, so that when one was full the surplus water ran into the next, and so on until the final overflow was carried off by a channel into the Kedron. One of the cisterns, that known as the Great Sea, would contain two million gallons; and the total number of gallons which could be stored probably exceeded ten millions. This supply of water appears to have been obtained from springs, wells, the collection of rain in pools and cisterns, and water brought from a distance by aqueducts. The extensive remains of cisterns, pools, and aqueducts show that little dependence was placed on any natural springs existing in or near the city; and, indeed, from the formation of the ground it is doubtful whether any existed besides the Fountain of the Virgin in the Kedron Valley. There may have been a source in the Tyropœon Valley, but it could only have been a small and not

very lasting one. Water was brought into the city by two aqueducts, the "low level" and the "high level"; but the course of the former can alone be traced within the walls of the city. (*Recovery of Jerusalem.*) **Bethesda.**—The most natural etymology of the word is "House of Mercy." Whether the name alludes to the munificence of some pious Jew who had constructed the porches as a shelter for the sick, or whether it relates to the goodness of God, from whom this healing spring proceeded is uncertain. Delitsch supposes that the etymology was Beth-estâw, peristyle. Others have taken it from Beth Aschada, place of out-pouring (perhaps of the blood of victims). It might be supposed that the porches were five isolated buildings arranged in a circle round the pool. But it is more natural to consider it one single edifice, forming a peritagonal peristyle, in the centre of which was the reservoir. Some springs of mineral water are known at the present day at the east of the city; among others the baths of Aïn-es-Schefa. Tobler has proved that this spring is fed by the large chamber of water situated under the mosque which has replaced the Temple. Another better known spring is found at the foot of the south-eastern slope of Moriah, called the Virgin Spring. It is very intermittent. The basin is quite dry; then the water is seen springing up among the stones. On one occasion Tobler saw it rise four and a half inches with a gentle undulation; on another it rose for more than twenty-two minutes to a height of six or seven inches, and came down again in two minutes to its previous level. Robinson saw it rise a foot in five minutes. He was assured that this movement is repeated at certain times twice or thrice a day, but that in summer it is seldom observed more than once in two or three days. These phenomena present a certain analogy to what is related of the Bethesda spring. Eusebius speaks also of springs in this locality, the water of which was reddish, evidently due to mineral elements, but, according to him, to the filtering of the blood of victims into it. Tradition places Bethesda in a great square hollow, surrounded by walls, at the north of the Haram, south from the street which leads from the St. Stephen's Gate. It is called Birket-Israïl, and is about twenty-three yards deep, forty-four yards broad, and more than double in length. The bottom is dry, filled with grass and shrubs. Bethesda must have been in this vicinity, for here the sheep-gate was situated. As it is impossible to identify the pool, it may have been covered with *débris* or have disappeared, as so often happens in the case of intermittent springs. Those which are found at the present day prove only how favourable the soil is to this sort of phenomena. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) The identity with Bethesda of the deep reservoir in Jerusalem, which to-day bears its name, Robinson regards as improbable, and is more inclined to find it in the intermittent fountain of the virgin on the south-east slope of the Temple Mount. From ver. 7 and the close of ver. 8, it appears that this spring probably was gaseous, and bubbled at intervals. There is a spring of this kind at Kissengen, which, after a rushing sound about the same time every day, commences to bubble, and is most efficacious at the very time the gas is making its escape. This spring is especially used in diseases of the eye. (*Tholuck.*) **For an angel went down at a certain season.**—*Textual criticism:*—This verse has undoubtedly no right to a place in the text. That fourth verse the most important Greek and Latin copies are without, and most of the early versions. In other MSS. which retain this verse, the obelus which hints suspicion, or the asterisk which marks rejection, is attached to it; while those in which it appears unquestioned belong mostly, as Griesbach shows, to a later recension of the text. And this fourth verse spreads the suspicion of its own spuriousness over the last clause of the verse preceding, which, though it has not so great a body of evidence against it, has yet, in a less degree, the same notes of suspicion about it. Doubtless whatever here is addition, whether only the fourth verse, or the last clause also of the third, found very early its way into the text; we have it as early as Tertullian, the first witness for its presence. . . . At first probably a marginal note, expressing the popular notion of the Jewish Christians concerning the origin of the healing power which from time to time these waters possessed, by degrees it assumed the shape in which now we have it: for there are marks of growth about it, betraying themselves in a great variety of readings—some copies omitting one part, and some another, of the verse—all which is generally the sign of a later addition: thus, little by little, it procured admission into the text, probably at Alexandria at first, the birthplace of other similar additions. . . . The statement rests upon that religious view of the world, which in all nature sees something beyond nature, which does not believe that it has discovered causes, when, in fact, it has only traced the sequence of phenomena, and which everywhere recognizes a going forth of the

immediate power of God, invisible agencies of His, whether personal or otherwise, accomplishing His will. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *The other side:*—The verse is not found in "Sin," B.C. D, nor in a few cursive MSS., nor in the Cureton Syriac, but they were in copies of this Gospel in the time of Tertullian, and are quoted by Chrysostum, Cyril, Augustine, and others, and they exist in important MSS. As to the question why it is inserted, the reply is to assign a cause for the phenomenon. But, on the other hand, reasons no less valid may account for its omission. Who had seen the angel? What Jewish writer had recorded his appearance and operation? These are questions which might have been urged by sceptics of old as now, and the easiest way of removing objections might seem to be to omit the words. We know that this feeling operated so strongly with critics of old as to lead them to omit, not only a few words, but entire books. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Jewish legends about healing waters:*—The Jews themselves had several legends of the healing waters. Thus the "Fount of Miriam," from which the Israelites drank in the desert, was said to flow, after the conquest of Canaan, into the lake of Galilee; and it was believed that, at the end of every Sabbath, its waters flowed out and mingled with the waters of all fountains. Whoever had the good fortune to draw from a fountain at the moment when the waters of the "Fount of Miriam" mingled with it, and bathed himself with that water, would be cured of all his diseases—even if these were of the most loathsome description. Lightfoot cites an instance of a man suffering from a grievous disease who went down to the lake of Galilee to swim. Now, it happened to be the time when the Fount of Miriam was flowing, so that, when he came out of the water, he found that he was healed. The same author instances a case from the rabbins, of a fountain that was inhabited by two spirits—one evil and one good. When Abba Joses sat at this fountain, there "appeared to him the spirit that resided there, and said, 'You know well enough how many years I have dwelt in this place, and how yourselves and your wives have come and returned without any damage done to you. But now you must know that an evil spirit endeavours to supply my room, who would prove very mischievous to you.' He saith to him, 'What must we do then?' He answered him and said, 'Go and tell the townspeople that whoever hath a hammer and an iron pin or bolt, let him come hither to-morrow morning, and have his eye intent upon the waters, and when you see the waters troubled, then let them knock with the iron, and say, "The victory is ours"; and so let them not go back till they see thick drops of blood upon the face of the waters.'" To which the gloss adds, "By this sign it will appear that the spirit was conquered and killed." The reader who is concerned about the result of this stratagem may be glad to know that it proved quite successful. In connection with this general subject it is interesting to note the belief, among primitive peoples all over the world, in the waters of life. In a legend found among the Modern Greeks the water of life flows within a hollow rock, and is inaccessible except to a favoured few; in another case where the waters are concealed in the same way, the rock opens at noon, and discloses several springs, each of which calls out, "Come, draw from me," but only one is the spring of the water of life; and this true spring is pointed out by a bee which flies directly to it. Whoever draws this water of life can sprinkle a few drops of it upon any dead animal or man, and immediately the dead will spring to life. Even when the dead have been hacked to pieces, the water of life sprinkled over the parts will bring them together, and unite them into a new and youthful life. In some cases, two springs are said to flow side by side, one giving forth the water of life, the other giving forth the water of death. If the water of death is taken instead of the water of life, the opposite effect is produced. A drop or two will kill a living man at once. There are also legends throughout the whole world concerning the waters of strength. These are generally fabled to be guarded by some mythical monster—snake or dragon—but whoever eludes the vigilance of these guardians, and possesses himself of the water, has the means of endowing himself with superhuman strength. To swallow a few drops is to make one's self, according to the legend, more than a match for any mortal foe. *The significance of the angel's action:*—What St. John affirms is that a certain invisible angel or minister was the instrument of making the water beneficial to the persons who went down into it. He accounts in this way for its operation being more useful at one time than another. That assertion, you say, interferes with the doctrine that there were certain properties in the water itself which affected the condition of human beings. How does it interfere? You hold that the vaccine matter has in itself the property of counteracting the virus of the small-

pox. But you hold also that the intelligence of Jenner had something to do with making this vaccine matter available for actual cure; you hold that the intelligence of different medical men has something to do with bringing the preventive power to bear on particular cases. You know this for a fact, but physical science tells you nothing of the way in which the intelligence co-operates with the natural agent. The notion that it does is a fallacy. In no instance whatever can the mere study of physics help you to determine anything respecting moral or intellectual forces, though at every turn the study of physics compels you to the acknowledgment of such forces. It will save us from innumerable confusions if we take this proposition in the length and breadth of it. Through neglect of it the physician and the metaphysician are perpetually stumbling against each other when they might be the greatest helpers of each other. (*F. D. Maurice, D.D.*) It seems a worthy exercise of Divine revelation to lead human philosophy to regard what are called physical phenomena as being not produced by natural laws, though they may be regulated according to them, but as effected by Divine agency; in a word, to elevate the human mind from the lower level of material mechanics to the higher region of spiritual dynamics. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) **The troubling of the water.**—In every excited fear of the vengeance of God, in every impulse which would send you to your knees, in every brief aspiration after holiness and heaven, you have tokens that the angel has been with you, summoning you to be heedful, and not to lose the opportunity which may, perhaps, be the last. And if you take not advantage of the troubling of the waters, if, that is, when you feel prompted to pray you omit to pray; when made conscious of the evil of a practice, you do not forthwith set yourselves to correct that practice; and when moved to the study of the Scriptures, you defer that study to a more convenient season, why, there is more than a probability that you will not soon again be visited with the desire after salvation, and that, even when so visited, it will be in less measure; for the Spirit of God, who is the actual agent, whatever the instrumentality employed in troubling the waters, is grieved and provoked by resistance to His influences, and may be tempted altogether to withdraw, when He has striven with you, and agitated you in vain. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) **An infirmity thirty and eight years.**—*The gospel equal to the most inveterate cases:*—There is a city missionary traversing this district, who finds in a room a woman ninety-eight years of age, and begins to tell her about Christ and salvation; and the poor old woman receives it, and comes to this table, at ninety-eight years of age, for the first time, avowing her faith in Christ, and linking in her hand a little girl fourteen years old, who was received into the Church with herself. Aged and young can be cured by Christ's power. There sat in a country village a poor old diseased woman, who with the greatest difficulty got into the kitchen of a butcher, in whose house some itinerants used to go and preach, to listen to the Word; and she is seventy-two years of age; but the Word goes into her mind, she receives it, and not only becomes a devoted follower of Christ, but one of the most useful women in the village. There is hope for you! When I was at Bath I heard of a gentleman who had retired from business, surrounded with the bounties of Providence, but had not sought Christ. His wife was very anxious, good woman! about him. One day she prevailed upon him to come with her to God's house; and as she went she prayed that God would give the minister some text that would be likely to impress her poor thoughtless, witty, indifferent husband's mind; and when the minister gave out his text, it was this, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." "I thought," she said, "I should sink in the pew; I knew what fun he would be likely to make of the passage." However, the Word went home to him, and his thought was this—"I know my wife can say that Christ is her Beloved, and that she is His beloved, but He is not mine"; and from that moment he became a devoted follower of the Lamb, used his property for the service of Christ, and went to heaven rejoicing in His favour. (*J. Sherman.*) **Wilt thou be made whole?**—*The Physician's inquiry:*—I. A MARK OF AFFECTIONATE SOLICITUDE. II. AN INSTANCE OF GRACIOUS INVITATION. III. THE EXPRESSION OF CONSCIOUS POWER. The question is still asked—How many refuse the offer! (*Preacher's Analyst.*) *The Good Physician's question:*—I. ASSUMES THAT THEY TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED ARE NOT WHOLE. II. SUGGESTS THAT NEVERTHELESS THEY MAY BE MADE WHOLE. III. IMPLIES THAT IT DEPENDS UPON THEIR OWN WILLS WHETHER OR NOT THEY SHALL BE MADE WHOLE. IV. PROFFERS THE NEEDED WHOLENESS TO ALL WHO ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE IT. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *A singular but needful question:*—It seems a strange question. Who would not be made whole? Would the poor man have been lying at the pool had he not been anxious

for healing? Yet, as our Lord spake no superfluous words, it may be perceived that the paralysis was mental as well as physical. He had waited until despondency had dried up his spirits, and he scarcely cared whether he was made whole or not. The Saviour touched a chord that needed to vibrate; He aroused a dormant faculty whose exercise was essential to cure. Are there not those here who, through having waited so long, are beginning to get paralyzed in their once earnest desires to come to occupy this seat as a mere matter of custom. I. This question is needful, because IT IS NOT ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD. 1. It is not the same as "Wilt thou be saved from going to hell?"—every one answers "Aye" to that; but "Wilt thou be saved from sin?" 2. To help you, let me remind you that there never were but two men perfectly whole. (1) The first Adam. We should all be willing to be in paradise with him; but are we willing to walk with God as he did? (2) The second Adam. "Holy, harmless, undefiled," &c. Whole towards God, man, holiness. Do you wish to be like Him? 3. When a man is whole there are certain evil propensities which are expelled, and certain moral qualities which he is sure to possess—(1) Honesty; (2) sobriety; (3) truthfulness; (4) generosity in giving and forgiving. 4. He will have spiritual graces also—(1) Humility; (2) prayerfulness; (3) consecration. II. THIS QUESTION IS CAPABLE OF A GOOD MANY REPLIES, and therefore it is the more necessary that it should be asked and answered. 1. There are some whose only reply is no answer at all. They don't want to consider anything of the sort. (1) "We are young, and have plenty of time." (2) "We are business people, and have something else to do." (3) "We are wealthy and cultured, and must not be expected to look at these things as coarse-minded people do." (4) "We are too ill to trouble about it." But there is another class, who once had a religious concern, whose answer is not very earnest. They have become habituated to unbelieving misery, and persist in carrying a burden of which their Saviour wants to relieve them. 2. Too many give evasive replies to the question—(1) "How am I to know whether I am God's elect or not?" That is not the question at this stage. It will be answered by and by. (2) "I have not the power to cease from sin." God will give the power in proportion as He gives the will. (3) "I have been so guilty in the past." The question is not, "How sick art thou?" but "Wilt thou be made whole?" 3. There are a good many persons who practically say "No." (1) One says, "I would be made whole," and yet when Divine service is over he goes back to his sin. (2) Those say "No" who neglect the house of God. (3) So do those who hear the Word inattentively; and (4) those who fear lest their being made whole would involve the loss of social position, gains, or companions. III. WHEREVER AN HONEST AFFIRMATIVE ANSWER IS GIVEN TO THIS QUESTION WE MAY CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS A WORK OF GRACE COMMENCED IN THE SOUL. IV. WHERE THIS QUESTION IS ANSWERED IN THE NEGATIVE IT INVOLVES MOST FEARFUL SIN. You prefer yourself to God, sin to holiness. This is your deliberate choice. When you come to die, and when you live in another state, you will curse yourself for having made such a choice as this. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The cure of spiritual disease*:—I. WHAT IS SUPPOSED IN THE CONDITION OF THE PERSON ADDRESSED. A state of disorder and disease, or the question would be absurd. You often hear of the dignity of human nature. 1. Physically and intellectually it is dignified when we see man, in his capacity for boundless improvement, "a little lower than the angels." 2. But how lamentable it is to find his fine powers misapplied and abused! What is man morally and religiously? (1) His body has become mortal and subject to every calamity. (2) His soul is alienated from the life of God. (3) He has no spiritual health. II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE QUESTION? 1. That the disease is curable. But not by man; (1) not by government; (2) philosophy; (3) the law; (4) morality; (5) but only by the Cross of Jesus Christ, the efficacy of whose cure is attested by millions. 2. That willingness to be cured is essential to recovery. The cure is not forced upon you, nor is it accomplished by an insensible process, nor by a charm, nor by chance. A Divine influence makes us sensible of our need, and of the importance of the blessing; then we have to choose the good part. III. HOW ARE YOU TO RETURN AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION? 1. By inquiring after the way and the means. 2. By applying to the Physician. 3. By submission to the prescription without murmuring or complaint. Not like Naaman, but like the blind man who went to the pool of Siloam. 4. By the eagerness with which you look after convalescence. IV. WHAT SHOULD URGE YOU TO AVAIL YOURSELVES OF THIS PROPOSAL? 1. The nature of the complaint, than which nothing is more dreadful. 2. The Physician who addresses you. He has everything to recommend Him. He is able; willing. He demands no fee. 3. The brevity and

uncertainty of the time in which the cure must be effected. 4. The fact that rejection will be the greatest aggravation of the misery by which it will be ended. V. WHAT IS THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN ENABLED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. 1. To avoid the sins which led to the injury. 2. Gratitude. 3. Consecration of renewed spiritual health to the Physician. 4. To recommend the cure to others. (*W. Jay.*) *Hindrances to Christian development*:—I. Many are hindered by A VAGUE SENSE WORKING THROUGH VENERATION AND THE IMAGINATION OF THE MAGNITUDE AND IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION. They have the impression that they are to carry the world on their shoulders. They are cautious, timid, conscientious, and feel that their strength and resolution are not adequate to so great a thing as the amplitude of religious life. This would be valid if religion called men at first to take the service of Jesus Christ in its perfected form. But it is not so. The Master bids us become as little children, and go on step by step. The question is whether you are willing to take the child's step towards the consummation. II. There are others who are caught IN MORBID INTELLECTUALISM, AND ARE STUCK UPON THE SPIRES AND THORNS OF SOME DOCTRINAL SYSTEM. They fail to separate between religion and its doctrines. With one it is election, with another reprobation. They have not learned to let such things alone. They are insoluble, most of them. Christ says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His"—not catechism, confession of faith, doctrine, but "righteousness." Let life, practice, experience, precede, and they will shape theory and philosophy. III. Others are hindered by THE FRAGMENTS AND RUINS OF PAST ATTEMPTS. 1. There are many who have entered on a religious life under such misconceptions we have been buffeted by such influences that sentiment, honour, conscience, taste, or pride, has been almost fatally wounded. 2. Others become torpid or dead. In youth, while enthusiasm was strong, they felt that there was a reality in religion; but it having proved a mockery to them they come to have the impression that there is nothing in it. 3. But there are a great many who do not fall so far. They hoped to be saved, but are without any definite purposes. But the mistakes that have been made are no reason why you should not with better light and ampler experience regain the lost ground. No man can afford to throw himself away because he has made a mistake in attempting to be healed. The woman with the issue of blood did not do so. Forget, then, the things that are behind. If you would be made whole, remember that failure is no reason for not striving again. IV. Many are hindered by THE INSPECTION OF THE LIVES OF CHRISTIAN MEN. This is ignoble, and has nothing to do with your own case. However others may be cowardly and false, that is no reason why you should not be courageous and true. This is no excuse, it is the plea of a man who is in search of one. V. THE DEBILITATING EFFECT OF SCEPTICAL DOUBTS UPON THE MORAL SENSE. Such is the nature of things that we live by faith and not by sight in respect to the whole realm of the invisible from which the power is to be derived, by which the soul is to be rectified. Once let a man doubt, and it will break the power of his believing. And many people are so moved that their moral root is impaired. Is not this so? To you, then, Christ comes and asks this question. There is healing in Him for those who are impotent from doubt. VI. THERE ARE THOSE THE HABIT OF WHOSE MIND CONVERTS MORAL IMPRESSIONS INTO IDEAS RATHER THAN INTO ACTIONS. 1. Some are so familiar with their Bible that it is worn smooth. Their wheels slip on the track. 2. Others never break into flame. They are compacted of thoughts and feelings which are so covered up and smothered that they never have disclosure. They are given to revive. The work of the world is not accomplished in this way, nor is that of Christianity. Don't, then, think about the poetry of religion, but brace yourself for its activities. Conclusion: 1. Every man, whatever his hindrances, should be faithful to the inward yearning to be made whole. If that lives there is hope. 2. To such Christ will come. There is a way when there is a will. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *God's pool and man's porches*:—All the healing work of the pool was God's work, and His alone; but in our text we have man's work side by side with God's. There were five porches. In all probability these porches were built by some charitable people in the city of Jerusalem, who had argued something after this sort—"We have no power to heal the sick, but we can at all events build a shelter for them when they come seeking a cure. It is not in us to move the water into an all-healing pool, but we can build a place so near the water that when the sufferers come after many a weary mile, they will be able to rest there, secured from the sun, and sheltered from the tempest, and wait in comfort until the angel of mercy stirs it with his wing." Thus, I think, you will see we have in our text the union of God's

work and human agency. God digs the pool and man builds the porches. I. LET US LOOK AT BETHESDA, WITH ITS PORCHES, AS ILLUSTRATING SPIRITUAL WORK. It is a high honour, beloved, to be a co-worker with God, no matter in how humble a capacity. God can do without us. The pool could do without the porches, and do as well without them. It had none of its healing qualities from them. No poor sufferer was ever eased of his pain because of the influence of the porches upon the pool. It was the pool alone that did the work and had all the glory of the cure. But remember, on the other hand, that God so ordered it that the porches should be built by man. God digging the pool does not exonerate man from building the porches. Let us for a moment look and see how this may be applied in many ways. This blessed book is all of Him. No human hand dug its deep well of truth. From Genesis to Revelations it makes one glorious Bethesda. It is a house of mercy, and in its chapters and verses there is latent healing power, that needs but the moving of the Spirit to heal any. To write this book, and make it a power of healing unto souls, is God's work, and His work alone. But you and I can place this book into the hands of different people, and that is our work. God writes the book, but it is for us to print it, and scatter it on every hand. He makes this pool of Bethesda; but you and I, perhaps through the agency of a Bible Society, have to help build the five porches. Man can neither give himself nor anyone else faith; but man can build the sanctuaries for the gospel to be preached in. Therefore God does not build any chapels by miracles. If men want to have houses to worship in, God says, "that is your work: you must toil, and you must collect, and you must give, and you must pay for it. You can build the brick porch, but it is for Me to make it a Bethesda, a house of mercy unto thousands." It has occurred to me that in many ways Bethesda makes a very beautiful illustration of what a sanctuary ought to be. I will briefly notice one or two points. 1. The first thing we observe is—that those porches were only built for the sake of the pool. You cannot imagine any gentleman in Jerusalem having built them merely for the sake of an architectural display. Most certainly they were not built for lounges and as equally certain is it they were not built for people to sleep in. They were simply built to help men to get to the water that could heal them. Every sanctuary that is built aright is built from the same motive. It is built simply to lead men unto Christ. 2. But observe, secondly, that the porches were only of value as they led to the pool. In other words, the porch was no good to any man except he went beyond it. Do you observe, too, that those who filled the porches were just the very ones we want to see filling our sanctuaries? They were not only sick ones in those porches. They were something better. They were those who knew themselves to be sick. They came there with a special purpose, and that purpose was to be healed. That preacher has delightful work who preaches to a congregation drawn by the same desire. And then you observe that they were poor people that were there, people that could not any way afford to have a doctor. I would that we could see more of the poor and penniless helping to fill our sanctuaries. And observe, lastly here, that there were plenty of them. It is said, "In these lay a great multitude." There is nothing easier than to sneer at numbers when they come to hear the preaching of the Word, though I never heard them despised when the meeting is of a political or secular nature. May God make every porch in this great east end of London too straight for the throngs of the poor and the sick and the spiritually diseased that shall crowd into them. II. And now, lastly, I desire to use this text as illustrating THE WORK WE MAY DO IN CONJUNCTION WITH GOD FOR THE ALLEVIATION AND HEALING OF BODILY SICKNESS. Alas, that group at Bethesda is but a very small sample of a great multitude—a multitude seeking health. Mark you the means are nothing of themselves. The water was nothing until the angel touched it. The medicine is nothing until God blesses it. The physician of himself is powerless, let him be never so clever in his profession. What is it then that is needed? It is the blessing of the angel of the covenant resting on the means that are used—it is God commanding health through their instrumentality. But you and I may say, "Brother, we cannot make you whole, we wish we could, but there is a Bethesda which, by the Lord's blessing, may, and we can build a porch to help you get and stay there. We know you are poor and cannot afford to have a long doctor's bill come in, and your poverty only deepens our sympathy, so we will build you a porch which shall be free of all expense. We will build you a place where you can obtain just the care, and just the nursing, and just the medicine that you need, without it costing you a penny. (*A. G. Brown.*) "*Wilt thou be made whole?*"—Do you think it a strange question? Do you take it for granted

that a man must long to be freed from the tyranny of sin. Ah! I would to God it were so. But it is not. 1. One desires to be saved only from the consequences of sin, and from the eternal death which is the bitter wages of sin; but not—not to "be made whole!" No! To be made whole would mean giving up some practice which has become second nature. It would mean making new rules of life which would stand in the way of present prosperity. 2. If this one were to say straight out what is in his heart, he would answer the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?"—thus, "Ah, Lord Jesus, leave me as I am! Only—in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver me!" 3. Another, does desire to be released from his sin. But this one is so slothful that he cannot rouse himself and look that sin in the face, like a man, and close with it, determined to overcome it once and for all. And so he gets into a way of taking his state for granted. He uses prayer, and the means of grace, in a limp, perfunctory manner, hoping for nothing, expecting nothing, in fact believing nothing, and so getting nothing. His answer would be something like this—"It is no use now. It might have been once. I am too far gone." My brethren, if we do not desire it, then our blood be on our own heads. God does not save men against their wills, and in spite of their wills. But if we are in earnest, let us arise at Christ's bidding and do His commands. (*I. B. C. Murphy, B.A.*) *The force of the question:*—Jesus says to the man not "Dost thou desire?" but "Art thou really determined?" For the desire is not doubtful, but energy of will seems wanting. It can only be restored by means of faith. On the one hand Jesus draws the sufferer from the dark despondency into which his long and useless waiting had plunged him, and revives his hopes; on the other, he withdraws his mind from the source of cure to which it was exclusively attached, and puts him in moral connection with the true Bethesda. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Wilt thou be made whole?*—A superfluous question, it might seem, for who would not be made whole if he might? But the question has its purpose. This poor man had been so often defeated of a cure, that hope was dead, or well-nigh dead, within him, and the question is asked to awaken in him anew a yearning after the benefit, which the Saviour, pitying his hopeless case, was about to impart. (*Archbishop Trench.*) **Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me into the pool.**—*Supplementary ministries:*—This child of pain suffered a double martyrdom—that of being incapable of reaching the pool, and that of seeing others less needy snatch the boon from before his very eyes. A multitude of various crippled people wait for chances of social, intellectual, and moral improvement, who for the want of a helping hand have the mortification of seeing less encumbered folks step into the opening. I. THE WORLD IS FULL OF THOSE THAT WAIT FOR THE TROUBLING OF THE WATER BY THE ANGELS OF LIFE. 1. These are paralysed by the lack of friends, funds, or facilities. 2. In gracious response to this expectancy angels of life frequently stir the water. In our day the spirit of change is abroad. 3. The ever-recurring changes of life contribute to the good of mankind. Stagnation is the curse of life; revolution is its salvation. II. WHEN THE POOL IS STIRRED THE ABSENCE OF A FRIEND IS OFTEN FATAL TO SUCCESS. 1. The Bible may fall into the hands of an illiterate person, and thus the fountain of all good may be sealed. Self-help is a note frequently sounded, but a great section of the race have little power of self-help. No doubt they are cognizant of chances, but are constitutionally or circumstantially incapable of seizing them. 2. With an energetic helper a fair proportion might rear themselves. Artists, preachers, &c., long for fame, but having no helper, live and die in obscurity. 3. All through life supplementary ministries are in requisition. Wanted: (1) In the scientific world the missing link! (2) In the political world the man for the hour! (3) In the Christian world souls not too absorbed to care for others! III. WHEN THE WATER IS STIRRED THE SELF-SUFFICIENT ARE OFT FOUND TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THE PRECIOUS OPPORTUNITY. 1. The world comprises that class who attain by sheer audacity, and are deterred by no modesty or charity. Many, however, collapse, which saves us much bitterness of soul. 2. God is our law and pattern. Let us be merciful as He is. We require to be careful, lest in the race of life we grow callous and unsympathetic. Turner, when the hanging committee could find no place for an obscure painter's picture, took down one of his own magnificent productions and hung the stranger's there in the very forefront of publicity. That was compassion like a man. IV. THE ONLY RESOURCE OF NEGLECTED MEN IS CHRIST. We hail Him as the One mighty to save in all the provinces of life. 1. He loves to take the world by surprise. The most this unfortunate expected was a promise to assist him to the pool some day. 2. Take up thy bed, &c., suggests to us "strike out for yourself." Christ the Author

of faith communicates to us who will receive it the capacity to think, act, pray, &c., which is infinitely superior to the habit of dependence on the services, modes, doctrines of others. (*W. J. Acomb.*) *The universal cry of humanity* is one of—I. MISERY. II. HELPLESSNESS. III. HOPELESSNESS. (*Van Doren.*) *Irresolution and impotence the worst part of any malady* (in melancholy, hypochondria, &c.):—I. IT IS ITSELF DISEASE. II. IT AGGRAVATES THE OTHER DISEASES. III. IT HINDERS THE CURE. IV. IT CAN MAKE THE CURE UNCERTAIN AGAIN ("lest a worse thing come unto thee"). (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Helpfulness*:—One wintry day Hawthorne, the American author, went home with a heavy heart, having lost his government appointment. He cast himself down, as men generally do under similar circumstances, and assumed the very attitude of despondency. His wife soon discovers the cause of his distress. But instead of indulging in irrational hysterics, she kindles a bright fire, brings pen, ink, and paper, and then, lovingly laying her hand on his shoulder, exclaims, as she gazes cheerfully in his face, "Now you can write your book." The word wrought like a magic spell. He set to work, forgot his loss, wrote his book, made his reputation, and amassed a fortune. God-fearing women, go and do likewise! (*W. J. Acomb.*) *Perseverance*:—It is said of Bruce, that, in prison, and discouraged with the heat of his campaign for the liberties of his country, he in moody thoughts meditated giving up the struggle; but as he lay and thought, a spider, spinning down, caught his web upon some point, and almost fell to the floor. Not daunted, it crept up and back, and started again; and missed again. And again it tried, and fell again. It went through seven trials, and finally, on the eighth, caught and established itself. And then, with a base-line laid, it formed its web. Bruce took heart from that, through rebuke, and determined never to give up the struggle. And at last victory came. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Christ's method of salvation varied*:—He looked that Christ should have done him that good office (of putting him into the pool), and could not think of any other way of cure. How easy it is of us to measure God by our model, to cast Him into our moulds, to think He must needs go our way to work. (*J. Trapp.*) *Help must be opportune*:—I had a friend who stood by the rail-track at Carlisle, Penn., when the ammunition had given out at Antietam, and he saw the train from Harrisburg, freighted with shot and shell, as it went thundering down towards the battlefield. He said that it stopped not for any crossing. They put down the brakes for no grade. They held up for no peril. The wheels were on fire with the speed as they dashed past. If the train did not come up in time with the ammunition, it might as well not come at all. So, my friends, there are times in our lives when we must have help immediately or perish. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *When men are willing to be saved we must help them*:—A poor fellow in Exeter Hall signed the temperance pledge some twenty or thirty years ago. He was a prize-fighter—a miserable, debauched, degraded, ignorant creature. A gentleman stood by his side, a builder in London, employing some hundreds of men, and he said to him—what did he say? "Stick to it?" No! "I hope you will stick to it, my friend?" No! "It will be a good thing for you if you stick to it?" No! He said this—"Where do you sleep to-night?" "Where I slept last night." "And where is that?" "In the streets." "No you won't; you have signed this pledge, and you belong to this society, and you are going home with me." (*J. B. Gough.*) *The value of help to seeking souls*:—Christian was left to tumble in the Slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough which was furthest from his own house, and next to the wicket gate: the which he did, but could not get out by reason of the burden that was upon his back; but I beheld in my dream, that a man came to him whose name was Help. Then said he, "Give me thine hand." So he gave him his hand, and he drew him out and set him upon sound ground, and bid him go on his way. (*J. Bunyan.*) **Take up thy bed and walk.**—*The hospital of waiters visited by the gospel*:—It was the Sabbath day and a feast. Where and how would Jesus spend it? Not in any trifling manner. He would do good; so He spent it amongst the afflicted, and not even among His friends. I. First we will go down to BETHESDA, the hospital of waiters. There was nothing else that they could do before the troubling of the waters. There are enough waiters to-day to fill all the five porches. 1. Some are waiting for a more convenient season—on a sick-bed, possibly, or a dying-bed. How many years have you been waiting? The wise man lives to-day. 2. In the second porch a crowd is waiting for dreams and visions like those with which some ancient prophet was favoured. What is this but insulting unbelief? Is not Christ to be believed until a sign or wonder corroborates his testimony? 3. The third is full of people who are waiting for a sort of compulsion.

They have heard about the drawing of the Spirit of God. But He acts upon the will by enlightening the understanding. The gospel, which says "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" is His, and to reject that is to reject Him. 4. In the fourth are people who are waiting for a revival. But the gospel command is not suspended until revival comes: that says, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice," and if a revival should come it is very unlikely to affect procrastinators. 5. Many are waiting in the porch of expected impression. They want the minister to preach a sermon that touches them. But he has done so, again and again, and yet they are waiting. The people in the narrative were waiting for the moving waters, and not for Jesus, and that is what you are doing; and I want to teach you better. (1) They attach great importance to the place. So do you, but Jesus can save as readily in your place of business on Monday as in your chapel on Sunday. Get ye to Him and not to the Church. (2) They waited for an influence that was intermittent, and you are thinking of special seasons, whereas "Now is the accepted time." (3) They were waiting for an influence that was very limited to certain persons, and so many regard salvation as a privilege of a few, the moral, the well circumstanced, &c. But in the gospel there is room for all. 6. Some like the poor man placed reliance on others, and many now rest on the prayers of others rather than on Christ Himself. II. CHRIST PICKS OUT THE MOST HELPLESS MAN IN THE WHOLE WORLD. He was not only impotent in body, but in mind, for instead of saying "yes" at once, he went on with a rambling story; and when healed he never asked Christ's name. There are people like that now, who scarcely know their own mind, irresolute, unstable. But Christ pities them as He did him. III. How JESUS DEALT WITH HIM. If Christ had belonged to a certain class of ministers He would have said, "Right, my man; you are lying at the pool of ordinances, and there you had better lie," or—"You had better pray." But, on the contrary, 1. He gave him a command. But to rise was impossible. Never mind, there was the command. It was a command which implied faith, and which had to prove itself by practical works. The man did believe, and rose, &c. Now, if you believe in Jesus, you will rise up and walk immediately. 2. The way faith came was very remarkable. He did not know Jesus: but you do, and His atonement for sin. 3. His faith, proved by rising, settled the matter. 4. There is life in a look at the crucified One here and at once. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

The third miracle in John's Gospel—Christ giving power to the powerless:—This third of the miracles recorded in John's Gospel finds a place there, as it would appear, for two reasons—first, because it marks the beginning of the angry unbelief on the part of the Jewish rulers, the development of which it is one part of the purpose of this Gospel to trace; second, because it is the occasion for that great utterance of our Lord's about His Sonship and His Divine working as the Father also works, which occupies the whole of the rest of the chapter, and is the foundation of much which follows in the Gospel. Christ comes to this impotent man, and says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" meaning thereby to say, "I will heal thee if thou wilt." And there comes the weary answer, as if the man had said, "Will I be made whole? What have I been lying here all these years for? I have nobody to put me into the pool." Yes! It is a hopeful prospect to hold out to a man whose disease is inability to walk, that if he will walk to the water he will get cured, and be able to walk afterwards. Why, he could not even roll himself into the pond, and so there he had lain, a type of the hopeless efforts at self-healing which we sick men put forth, a type of the tantalizing gospels which the world preaches to its subjects when it says to a paralyzed man, "Walk that you may be healed; keep the commandments that you may enter into life." I fix upon these words, the actual words in which the cure was conveyed, as communicating to us some very important lessons and thoughts about Christ and our relation to Him. I. CHRIST MANIFESTING HIMSELF AS THE GIVER OF POWER TO THE POWERLESS THAT TRUST HIM. His words may seem at first hearing to partake of the very same almost cruel irony as the condition of cure which had already proved hopelessly impracticable. He, too, says, "Walk that you may be cured"; and he says it to a paralyzed and impotent man. But the two things are very different, for before this cripple could attempt to drag his impotent limbs into an upright position, and take up the little light couch and sling it over his shoulders, he must have had some kind of trust in the person that told him to do so. A very ignorant trust, no doubt, it was; but all that was set before him about Jesus Christ he grasped and rested upon. He only knew Him as a Healer, and he trusted Him as such. So it is no spiritualizing of this story, or reading into it a deeper and more religious meaning than belongs to it, to say that what passed in that man's heart and mind before He

caught up his little bed and walked away with it, was essentially the same action of mind and heart by which a sinful man, who knows that Christ is his Redeemer, grasps His Cross and trust his soul to Him. In the one case, as in the other, there is confidence in the person; only in the one case the person is only known as a Healer, and in the other the person is known as a Saviour. But the faith is the same whatever it apprehends. Christ comes and says to him, "Rise! take up thy bed and walk." There is a movement of confidence in the man's heart; he tries to obey, and in the act of obedience the power comes to him. All Christ's commandments are gifts. When He says to you, "Do this!" He pledges Himself to give you power to do it. II. WE HAVE IN THIS MIRACLE OUR LORD SET FORTH AS THE ABSOLUTE MASTER, BECAUSE HE IS THE HEALER. The Pharisees and their friends had no eyes for the miracle; but if they found a man carrying his light couch on the Sabbath Day, that was a thing that excited their interest, and must be seen to immediately. And so, paying no attention to the fact that it was a paralyzed man that was doing this, with the true, narrow instinct of the formalist, they lay hold only of the fact of the broken rabbinical restrictions, and try to stop him with it. "It is the Sabbath Day! It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." And they got an answer which goes a great deal deeper than the speaker knew, and puts the whole subject of Christian obedience on its right footing. He answered them, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." As if He had said, "He gave me the power, had He not a right to tell me what to do with it? It was His gift that I could lift my bed; was I not bound to walk when and where He that had made me able to walk at all chose to bid me?" And if you generalize that it just comes to this: the only person that has a right to command you is the Christ that saves you. He has the absolute authority to do as He will with your restored spiritual powers, because He has bestowed them all upon you. His dominion is built upon His benefits. He is the King because He is the Saviour. It is joy to know and to do the will of One to Whom the whole heart turns with gratitude and affection. And Christ blesses and privileges us by the communication to us of his pleasure concerning us, that we may have the gladness of yielding to His desires, and so meeting the love which commands with the happy love which obeys. III. WE HAVE HERE OUR LORD SETTING HIMSELF FORTH AS THE DIVINE SON, WHOSE WORKING NEEDS AND KNOWS NO REST. "Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The rest, which the old story in Genesis attributed to the Creator after the Creation, was not to be construed as if it meant the rest of inactivity. But it was the rest of continuous action. God's rest and God's work are one. Throughout all the ages preservation is a continuous creation. The Divine energy is streaming out for evermore; as the bush that burns unconsumed, as the sun that flames undiminished for ever, pouring out from the depth of that Divine nature; and for ever sustaining a universe. So that there is no Sabbath, in the sense of a cessation from action, proper to the Divine nature; because all His action is repose, and "e'en in His very motion there is rest." And this Divine coincidence of activity and of repose belongs to the Divine Son in His Divine human nature. With that arrogance which is the very audacity of blasphemy, if it be not the simplicity of a Divine consciousness, He puts His own work side by side with the Father's work, as the same in principle, the same in method, the same in purpose, the same in its majestic coincidence of repose and of energy—"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore for Me, as for Him, there is no need of a Sabbath of repose." Human activity is dissipated by toil, human energy is exhausted by expenditure. Man works and is weary; man works and is distracted. For the recovery of the serenity of his spirit, and for the renewal of his physical strength, repose of body, and gathering in of mind, such as the Sabbath brought, were needed; but neither is needed for Him who toils unwearied in the heavens; and neither is needed for the Divine nature of Him who labours in labours parallel with the Father's here upon the earth. IV. WE HAVE IN THIS INCIDENT THE HEALER, WHO IS ALSO THE JUDGE, WARNING THE HEALED OF THE POSSIBILITIES OF A RELAPSE (ver. 14). The man's eight-and-thirty years of illness had apparently been brought on by dissipation. It was a sin of flesh, avenged in the flesh, that had given him that miserable life. One would have thought he had got warning enough, but we all know the old proverb about what happened when the devil was ill, and what befell his resolutions when he got better. And so Christ comes to him again with this solemn warning. "There is a worse thing than eight-and-thirty years of paralysis. You fell once, and sore was your punishment. If you fall twice, your punishment will be sorer." Why? "Because

the first one has done you no good." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The rising life*:—I. WHO ARE TO RISE. 1. The sinful. 2. The spiritually depressed. 3. Declining Christians, for (1) Their prayers have got low, (2) their Bible reading, (3) their attendance at Church and Holy Communion. (4) Their intercourse with their family and the world. (5) Their charities and general usefulness. II. ABOVE WHAT ARE THEY TO RISE? 1. Sin. 2. Self. 3. The world. 4. Their retrospects. 5. Their hopes. 6. Their sorrows. III. To WHAT are they to rise? 1. To Christ. 2. To duty. 3. To heaven. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Reasons for rising*:—I. TO PROCLAIM THE CURE. II. TO EXCITE ATTENTION. III. TO PROTEST AGAINST SUPERSTITION. IV. TO PROVE HIS DIVINITY. 1. As a Worker of miracles. 2. As Lord of the Sabbath. V. TO TEST THE FAITH AND OBEDIENCE OF THE HEALED. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The bed* which the man was commanded to take up was neither a walnut bedstead, nor an iron bedstead, nor any other of the bed-structures to which we are accustomed in the West. The bed of a low-class Oriental may consist of anything from a rag to a rug. The poorer classes have often no other bed than the garment which they wear by day, which thus serves for a cloak by day and a bed by night. The bed which the infirm man was commanded to take up was, in all probability, simply the ordinary Oriental mat or rug, which could easily be rolled up and carried under the arm. (*S. S. Times.*) *Faith and works*:—Paul and James seem, to some, to take different views of faith and works. John here combines the views of the two inspired writers. It is faith that is demanded in this miracle; it is works that are called for. The man is to take up his bed and walk, as a proof that he believes that Jesus is able and ready to cure him. The reward is not of works as works, nor yet of faith without works, but of faith that is shown in works, and of works that are a proof of faith. And thus it is in every call on us for faith or for works. Our works must be in evidence of our faith; our faith must be of the sort that shows itself in works. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*) *The significance of the man's act*:—For thirty-eight years had his bed borne the sick man, now the healed man bears his bed of infirmity away: in like manner do converted sinners take the materials of their former conversation, and at the same time with joy and shame bear them as trophies of victory, but as reminders too; thus does the converted miser, for example, say to mammon, "Formerly thou hadst me, but now I have thee;" he takes his possessions and goes away ready to lay out all that he has to God's honour and service. But the bed of sickness, when it is turned into the restored man's trophy of victory, should also preach of the healing work of God. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) **The same day was the Sabbath.** *The Sabbath*:—I. ALL THE OLD TESTAMENT INSTITUTIONS HAD A SPECIAL FOUNDATION. 1. Those which have a foundation in the common necessities of man and the common relation of men to God. These were not peculiar to the Jews, but were incorporated into their system because they were men. To this class belong all moral precepts and the Sabbath. 2. Those which had respect to the peculiar circumstances of the Jews; such as distinction between clean and unclean meats, circumcision, &c. These bound the Jews as Jews and them only. 3. Those which were designed to be typical of the Messiah, His work and Kingdom. These were mostly incorporations of prior institutions with the Mosiac law. II. THAT THE SABBATH BELONGS TO THE CLASS OF UNIVERSAL LAWS, binding all men and ages is evident. 1. Because it was instituted before the Law. 2. Because the ground of its observances was a general ground, one in which all nations were concerned. 3. Because it was predicted that it would be observed under the reign of the Messiah. 4. Because its observance has been, in fact, continued as a Divine injunction by the whole Christian Church. 5. It is incorporated in the decalogue. III. REASONS FOR THE INSTITUTION. 1. Special. (1) The reason why the seventh day was appointed was to commemorate the work of creation. This is the foundation of all religion, and it is of universal importance that it should be remembered. (2) The special reason for the observance of the first day was the commemoration of the Resurrection, on which rested the truth of the gospel. If Christ rose then the gospel is true. If the world was created then there is a personal God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. 2. Reasons why one day in seven should be observed. (1) The necessity of rest for man and beast, for mind and body. (2) To afford time for public worship. (*a*) This is essential for the preservation and diffusion of truth; without it the people would sink into ignorance. (*b*) It is necessary as a means of conversion, as it is by the preaching of the gospel that men are saved. (*c*) As a means of edification when attendance is not possible. A Sabbath-neglecting people are notoriously irreligious. (*d*) As the only opportunity of rendering God that

public worship which is the duty of every community as such, as well as of every individual. (3) To arrest the tide of worldliness; to cause men to stop and remember that this world is not all nor greatest. Without this we should not be aware of our progress toward eternity. IV. THE MODE OF OBSERVANCE IS DETERMINED BY THE OBJECT OF THE DAY. 1. It includes rest from all worldly avocations and amusements. 2. The cultivation of a religious spirit and the discharge of religious duties. The Pharisaic mode is one extreme, the latitudinarian is another. The latter is the tendency now. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Sabbath work*:—Christ healed men on all sorts of days: but Sabbaths were high days of grace. Six special cases are recorded. 1. The evil spirit cast out (Luke iv. 31–35). 2. The withered hand restored (Luke vi. 6–10). 3. The crooked woman made straight (Luke xiii. 10–17). 4. The man with the dropsy cured (Luke xiv. 1–6). 5. The impotent man made whole (text). 6. The blind man's eyes opened (John ix. 1–14). As God rested on the Sabbath and hallowed it; so as God it was rest for Jesus to heal, and thus He hallowed the day. As Man also He rested His heart, exercised a holy ministry, glorified God, and hallowed the day. I. THESE CURES MET MANY CASES. 1. Those under satanic influence. Many are in this case. 2. Those conscious of spiritual inability. 3. Those bowed down with great distress, despondency and despair. This poor woman had been infirm for eighteen years. 4. Those smitten with mortal disease, which typifies the deadly character of sin. 5. Those altogether paralyzed. This man was impotent for thirty-eight years. 6. Those in total darkness as to all spiritual truth. II. THESE CURES REPRESENT USUAL PROCESSES. 1. A word addressed to the devil. Satan feels the power of the Word of God, but cares for nothing else. 2. A word personal to the sufferer. He was unable, and yet he was commanded; and he obeyed. This is the gospel method. 3. A word accepted as done. Faith turns promise into fact, gospel-teaching into actual salvation. 4. Power without a word. 5. A word arousing and commanding. Many are saved by being stirred up from long inactivity and lethargy. 6. A word associated with other means. The whole miracle is deeply instructive on this point. In these varied forms and fashions, Jesus works on the Sabbath. III. THESE CURES WERE BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE SYNAGOGUE. 1. There, and misbehaving. 2. There and singled out from the crowd. 3. There and called to Jesus. 4. After the synagogue service. 5. Too feeble to get there. 6. Too poor to be there. IV. THESE CURES WERE ALL UNSOUGHT. This is one special feature about them all. 1. The possessed man entreated Christ to leave him alone. 2. The man with the withered hand did not think of cure. 3. The infirm woman did not hope for healing. 4. The man with the dropsy did not ask for the blessing. 5. The infirm man was too paralyzed to seek Christ. 6. It was an unheard-of thing that the eyes of a man born blind should be opened, and therefore he did not expect it. This also is the Sabbath; let us look to the Lord of the Sabbath. Will He not this day bless those who are seekers? Will He not bless those whom we bring to Him? Will He not bless those for whom we pray? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The arrest of a (so-called) Sabbath-breaker*:—I. AN ACCUSATION PREFERRED (ver. 10). 1. Certainly strange. Congratulation might have been expected towards the man and gratitude towards Jesus. 2. Seemingly just. The action violated Rabbinical prescription and the letter of Scripture. But an action may contravene the literal sense and yet be in accordance with the Spirit (Matt. xii. 4, 5), and *vice versâ* (Matt. xv. 3–6). 3. Essentially false. Christ repudiated the ordinance which renders criminal a natural and necessary action. II. AN EXPLANATION OFFERED (ver. 11). 1. Transparently simple (Eph. iv. 25; Col. iii. 9; Matt. v. 37; James v. 12). 2. Perfectly natural. To the unsophisticated mind it seemed obvious that One who could heal him should bid him take up his bed. 3. Wholly insufficient. The defence was an aggravation. He had obeyed a Sabbath-breaker. His physician was a greater sinner than himself. So men who from good motives at the outset begin to deviate from the laws of heaven by addition or subtraction, and by confounding moral distinctions, end by turning vice and virtue upside down (Matt. xvii. 12). III. A VINDICATION GIVEN (ver. 17). 1. Startlingly bold. Based on three facts—(1) That the supreme Lawgiver ceased not from Sabbath activity. (2) That He (Christ) stood towards that Supreme Sabbath Worker in the relation of Son. (3) That He, as such, was co-worker with God in all that God did. Hence, whatever He as Father's Son did was that Father's working itself. 2. Completely unanswerable. Hence they accused Him of blasphemy. 3. Fatally decisive. They resolved on His destruction. Learn: 1. To sanctify the Sabbath by doing good to the bodies and souls of men. 2. To

help Christ's cause by telling what great things He hath done. 3. That people do not always know who their best benefactors are. 4. That those whom Christ has healed should be found in the sanctuary. 5. That the best prophylactic against physical disease is to fear God, and keep His commandments. 6. That Christ is perfectly able to vindicate His ways. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **He that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk.**—The principle here is grand and far reaching, it applies to the whole life. He that saves has the right to command. I. SALVATION, HEALING OF SOUL, IS THE FOUNDATION AND STARTING POINT OF THE TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE. We must be before we can do. II. WHY DO I LIVE AS A CHRISTIAN? 1. Is it because it is safe, or prudent, because the evidence seems predominantly in favour of Christianity, because others are Christians? There may be something in these motives, but—2. No Christianity can live and flourish which is not more deeply rooted. 3. What, then, is the root? Gratitude, not fear, custom, or calculation. This animated the apostles—"We love Him because He first loved us;" the glorified "Unto Him that loved us," &c. 4. This motive of gratitude is the deepest, strongest, most constraining and abiding. If this ever dies Christianity dies with it. III. CHRIST'S RIGHT TO RULE IS GROUNDED ON HIS SALVATION. He gives the life; surely, then, it is His to control and direct. He cannot have saved us that we may do as we like with ourselves. That is just what we did before we were saved. When we are saved, we are saved from our self-will. The man took up his bed and walked *because* he had been made whole, and that he might *show* that he was made whole. It was both obedience and evidence, and there is no Christian life that is not the same. IV. HOW DOES OUR LIFE BEAR THIS TEST, that He who is the healer of the soul is also the authority for our life. We are challenged again and again as this man was challenged. The men of custom meet us as they met Him. 1. It is well not wantonly to defy a practice which is not foolish or mischievous. Many established practices should be respected because they exist and do no harm, and render intercourse possible and pleasant. Many of them Christ respected. 2. But the customs which seek to govern us with all the authority of a Divine claim when they have no such claim, eating with unwashed hands, &c., should be resisted as He resisted them. They make men slaves, turn religion into a torture, and quench the light of the sabbath. We are under the law to Christ. V. It is a glorious thing to remember that WHAT CHRIST COMMANDS IS RIGHT, whether we understand His reasons or not. We must grow into the knowledge of them little by little. VI. WHATEVER CHRIST COMMANDS HE GIVES US POWER TO DO. He never separates duty from power. "My grace is sufficient." (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *The work of grace the warrant for obedience:*—I. A JUSTIFICATION. This poor man could not defend his action, for his enemies were learned in the law and he was not, but he did what you and I must always do when we are at all puzzled—he hid himself behind Christ and pleaded, "He that made me whole," &c. I may not find in my own knowledge and ability an authority equal to that of learned unbelievers, but my personal experience of the power of grace will stand me in as good a stead as this man's cure was to him. He argued that the cure made the healer an authority above that of the greatest rabbi. 1. There are certain ordinances about which the world raises a storm of questions. The world does not take notice that a man who was once a drunkard has become sober, &c. It lets that miracle pass by unheeded; but he is going to be baptized and they at once object to the ordinance, or he is going to join the church and straightway they jeer at him as a Presbyterian or a Methodist. Blind creatures to despise the medicine which heals because of the bottle or the label! We seek no justification but this—"He that made us whole" gave us the command. The same with the Lord's supper. 2. The same apology applies to the doctrines of the gospel. Justification by faith is quarrelled with. "They will lead loose lives; they will sin that grace may abound." A complete answer to the calumny may be found in the fact that believers in justification are among the best and purest; but we prefer to remind our adversaries that He who has regenerated us has taught us that "Whosoever believeth in Him shall be saved," &c., that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. 3. The same applies to Christ's precepts. If the Christian is true to his colours he keeps himself aloof from the sinful pleasures, practices, and policies of the world, consequently he is told that he is precise, singular, and self-opinioned. The text is the answer for all Christians. II. AN OBLIGATION. 1. The argument takes this form: If He made me whole He is Divine, or at least must be divinely authorized, and I am therefore bound to obey. Jesus, who has saved us, is our God—shall we not obey Him? 2. There was also goodness

as well as power, and this touched the poor man's heart—"I *must* do what my great Deliverer bids me." 3. If you have been saved you are under an obligation to do what Jesus bids you. (1) Are you redeemed? Then henceforth ye are not your own. (2) Are you forgiven? Does not pardon demand amendment? "Whatsoever He saith unto you do it." Pray, love your brethren; be perfect. III. A CONSTRAINT. It was not an ordinary word, but one with power. Not unwillingly did the restored man carry his bed, yet he did it of constraint, for the same power made him obedient. Do you feel reluctant in duty? Surely you need to draw near to the Lord again and hear His voice anew. "The love of Christ constraineth us." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Willing obedience:*—We do not want to destroy willinghood, but we would have it quickened into entire subservience to the will of the Lord. Like Noah's ark on dry land, the will keeps its place by its own dead weight. Oh! for a flood of grace to move, to lift, to upbear it; to carry it away by a mighty current! We would be borne before the love of Christ as a tiny piece of wood is drifted by the gulf-stream, or as one of the specks which dance in the sunbeam would be carried by a rushing wind. As the impulse, which begins with Jesus, found the poor man passive because utterly unable to be otherwise, and then impelled him on to active movements as with a rush of power, so may it ever be with us throughout life. May we for ever yield to the Divine impulse. To be passive in the Lord's hands is a good desire, but to be what I would call actively passive, to be cheerfully submissive, willingly to give up our will, this is a higher spiritual mood. We must live, and yet not we, but Christ in us. We must act, and yet we must say, He that made me whole bade me do this holy deed, and I do it because His power moves me thereunto. (*Ibid.*) *The highest authority must be obeyed:*—In Michelet's "Joan of Arc" it is related that the two authorities, the paternal and the celestial, enjoined her two opposite commands. The one ordered her to remain obscure, modest and labouring; the other, to set out and save the kingdom. The angel bade her arm herself. Her father, rough and honest peasant as he was, swore that rather than his daughter should go away with men-at-arms he would drown her with his own hands. One or other disobey she must. Beyond a doubt this was the greatest battle she was called upon to fight; those against the English were play in comparison. **What man is that which said unto thee.**—*Tendencies of society:*—I. TO STIR UP AND STRENGTHEN THE IMPULSES OF OUR ANIMAL NATURE. II. TO PRODUCE HABITS OF SUPERFICIAL THOUGHT. III. TO DESTROY THE SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. IV. TO PROMOTE FORGETFULNESS OF GOD. (*H. W. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Winter worship:*—1. If the first power of Christianity was embodied in miracle it was miracle distinctly expressive of its spirit. The gift of tongues and of healing represent the two grand functions of our religion to bear persuasion to the minds and bring mercy to the physical ills of men. When the men of Galilee stood forth to preach the first glad tidings to that multitude of many tongues, what better symbol could there be of that religion whose spirit is intelligible to all because it addresses itself to the universal human heart? And when the crowd of weary sufferers thronged the apostles' steps, how better could be represented the character of that faith which has lessened age after age the stripes wherewith humanity is stricken. In the spirit of these acts of Providence we may participate. 2. But nothing could be more unostentatious than the diffusion of Christ's mercy by the missionaries in the days of old. We feel an idle pride in Paul's conspicuous adventures; but watch him even in Rome. He was not one to pass through its scenes of magnificence with stupid indifference. But his noblest dignity was not that he paced the forum, but that he lingered in the dens of wretchedness, and shed on the darkest lot a light of hope. And the true dignity of our religion is that it has gone about doing good, and so silently that "he that was healed wist not who it was." 3. It can never be unreasonable for those who bear Christ's name to imitate His Spirit, but winter brings with it a peculiar call to mercy, for, however constant the visitations of sickness and bereavement, the fall of the year is most thickly strewn with the fall of human life. How shall we render the fitting service of the season? I. By thinking of human ills in the SPIRIT OF RELIGION; regarding them in their relation to the Great Will, and recognizing their position in a system of universal Providence, and being moved by them to reverence and trust. II. In the SPIRIT OF SELF-APPLICATION. This is difficult, and it is asked, "Why should it be otherwise? Why forestall the inevitable day?" I grant that to think of death in an abject and melancholy spirit is no act of wisdom or duty. Futurity is not to mar but to mend our duty. But it is a fact, and the sense of it breaks up the superficial crust of life and stirs the

deeper affections. III. In the SPIRIT OF HUMANITY. It were selfish to gather round our firesides without a thought or deed of pity for the poor sufferers outside. Oh, could we but see the dead gripe of misery, the only difficulty would be, not to stimulate our generosity, but to persuade it to work wisely. 1. This is indeed a difficulty how to relieve the want and raise the man; how to combine the deed of condescension with the helpful recognition and inspiration of human brotherhood. 2. Another difficulty; we form our good intentions too late. We rarely better ourselves till evils get well ahead, and by no effort can we well be overtaken. We permit a generation to grow up neglected, and then consider how it is to be reclaimed. 3. But, taking facts as they are, you cannot mechanize benevolence, nor put Christian love into an Act of Parliament or a subscription list. However necessary may be the remedial action of laws and institutions, the ties between man and man can be drawn closer, and common ills remedied only by personal agency. (*J. Martineau, D.D.*) *The malignity of the questioners* reveals itself in the very shape which their question assumes. They do not take up the man's words on their more favourable side, which also would have been the more natural: nor ask, "What man is that which made thee whole?" But probably, themselves at least, guessing who his Healer was, they insinuate that He could not be from God, who gave a command which they, the interpreters of God's law, esteemed so grievous an outrage against it. So will they weaken and undermine any influence which Christ must have obtained over this simple man—an influence already manifest in his finding our Lord's authority sufficient to justify him in the transgression of their commandment. (*Abp. Trench.*) **Jesus had conveyed Himself away.**—There is something beautifully significant in this word as here applied to Christ. He emerged, glided, dived forth invisibly from the waves of the crowd, and re-appeared in the quiet harbour of the house of God. Our Lord has now withdrawn His bodily presence from the crowd of this world in order that we may see Him with the eye of faith. He has dived through the clouds of this lower world of sin and sorrow, and has emerged into the pure, crystal, empyrian of heaven. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) A metaphor from swimming; the multitude like water closing behind Him. We have no word in our poor tongue to express the retiring of Deity (Prov. xxv. 2). The secret descent of the nightly dew, and the noiseless movement of the mighty orbs of heaven illustrate this. No one hears the sunlight, or the operation of those laws that bind atoms and worlds. (*H. W. Van Doren, D.D.*) **Thou art made whole: Sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.**—*Sin and Judgment*:—I. WE HAVE ALL SINNED. 1. What is sin? (1) Its Scriptural appellations. Injustice (Heb. viii. 12; Jer. xxxi. 34). Error (Heb. viii. 12; Jer. xxxi. 34; Judg. xx. 16). Unlawfulness (Heb. viii. 12; Exod. xxxiv. 7). (2) Its nature (1 John iii. 4). (*a*) Contrarity to God's law, either habitual or actual. (*b*) Provocation of His anger (Psa. xcv. 8, 10; cvi. 29, 32). (*c*) A separation from God (Isa. lix. 2). (*d*) A loss of innocency or righteousness. (*e*) A staining or defiling of the soul (Titus i. 15). (*f*) Guilt or obligation to the penalty denounced (Gal. iii. 10). Hence all sins are called debts (Matt vi 12). 2. How does it appear that all have sinned? (1) From Scripture (1 Kings viii. 46; Eccles. vii. 20; 1 John i. 8). (2) From reason, because all descend from Adam (Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 22; Psa. li. 5; Eph. ii. 3). (3) From experience. 3. Uses. Hence we may learn—(1) The sad effects of the first sin (Rom. v. 19). (2) That we have no reason to complain of any of God's judgments (Lam. iii. 39). (3) That no salvation can be expected from ourselves (Gal. ii. 10; iii. 10). (4) That it highly concerns us to search our own hearts, and view our lives, and find out our sins, and to condemn ourselves for them. II. SIN IS THE CAUSE OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS 1. What are judgments? The effects of God's anger. 2. How are sins the cause of God's judgments (Ezra ix. 13; Job. xi. 6; Psa. cvii. 17; Lam. i. 5–8; v. 10). 3. How does it appear that sins are thus the cause of judgments? (1) Sin brought misery in general upon mankind at first (Gen. iii. 16–19); for man at first was made as upright, so happy (Gen. i. 26; Eccles. vii. 29); yet he was mutable. Hence God, to awe him to obedience, threatened death if he sinned (Gen. ii. 17). But man, notwithstanding this, sinned, and God therefore could not but in justice inflict the punishment (Gen. xviii. 25). Hence all mankind became liable to all the judgments of God. (2) Sin is the cause also of particular judgments; as appears—(*a*) From Scripture (Psa. cvii. 17; Ezra ix. 13, &c.). (*b*) From reason for all judgments came from an offended God (Lam. i. 12), and nothing offends God but sin. (*c*) From experience: the old world, Sodom, &c. 4. Uses. (1) Therefore, in time of adversity, consider (Eccles. vii. 14) our sinfulness, God's sovereignty and power

(Isa. xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6), and the danger of incurring His displeasure. (2) Rend your hearts and turn to the Lord (Joel ii. 12, 13). III. HOW ARE WE TO BEHAVE WHEN DELIVERED FROM ANY JUDGMENT? 1. Resort to public ordinances—(1) To make public confession of our sins in offending God (2 Chron. vii. 13, 14), and of God's justice in afflicting us (Psa. li. 4). (2) Make public acknowledgment of our thankfulness to God for His power and mercy (Lam. iii. 2). (3) Make our public prayers to God—(*a*) For the pardon of those sins whereby we have deserved His judgments. (*b*) For a blessing upon His judgments. (*c*) For grace to live like those who have been under the rod. 2. It must be our greatest study and endeavour to sin no more. (1) How sin no more. Not with love to sin, nor delight in it (Psa. cxix. 113; Rom. vii. 22), nor with allowance of it; but do our utmost to avoid commission of it. (2) What must we do to keep ourselves from sin. Search the Scriptures; frequent ordinances (Rom. x. 17); avoid occasion of sin, such as vain thoughts, idle words, loose company, &c. IV. GOD HAS YET WORSE judgments in store for us if we still go on sinning (Lev. xxvi. 15, 16). 1. Temporal, and these—(1) National—a worse plague (Numb. xvi. 49; 2 Sam. xxiv. 15); a worse fire (Gen. xix. 24); a worse sword, civil war or invasion (Lev. xxvi. 37; Lam. i. 1-3); a worse famine (2 Kings vi. 25). (2) Or personal, for He can curse our remaining blessings (Mal. ii. 2), or deprive us of them, or send a disease upon us (Acts xii. 23). 2. Spiritual. (1) He can remove His ordinances (Rev. ii. 5). (2) Withdraw His blessings (Matt. xxi. 43). (3) Blind our eyes (Isa. vi. 9, 10). (4) Suffer us to be led into heresies (2 Thess. ii. 11). (5) Withhold His restraining grace (Rom. i. 24–27). (6) Let us alone in our sins without control (Hos. iv. 17; Isa. i. 5). (7) Harden our hearts (Exod. iv. 21; 2 Kings vi. 33). (8) Startle and affright our conscience into despair. 3. Eternal (Matt. xxv. 41). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Sin and suffering*:—This is the parting advice of a physician. It is not ordinary medical advice. It utters no warning against the night air, exposure to infection, irregular habits, or indigestible food. Let us inquire into—I. THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THIS WARNING IS FOUNDED. This; that we are under the moral government of God. 1. Evils are divinely inflicted on men on account of sin. God is holy, which means that He hates sin and seeks to destroy it; that He is good, and delights in the happiness of His subjects; that He is wise, and contemplates the highest ends, and selects the most effectual method to carry them into effect. But there are no purposes higher than those of perfect holiness and infinite love, and there are no means more effectual than to link sin with suffering, and purity with happiness. 2. When one stroke of God's hand is not followed by the end desired, He may inflict a heavier; just as human governments have graduated punishments. God is in no want of resources. All the agencies of nature are at His command, and if His first stroke has been too light, the second will be heavier; and if gentleness has failed, severity will be tried. II. ITS PRACTICAL BEARING ON OURSELVES. What his sin was we are not informed; but possibly it was just what many of you young people are guilty of every day, a general godlessness of heart and life. And so the stroke came as much as to say, "If that is the use you are going to make of your powers, it is well that they should be for a while taken from you." In long weary years he learnt the lesson, and the gifts of God were restored. So some of you have been blessed by a curse; take care that you are not cursed by means of a blessing. 1. It is a shame if we should need a worse thing to come upon us. (1) In the course of our affliction we were made to feel the connection of our suffering with our sin. Then is it not shameful that, having been taught this once, we should need to learn it again in still deeper sorrow? (2) Our souls have also been touched by the lovingkindness of God—then ought not the current of our grateful impulses to carry us in a course of duty? 2. Are we prepared for this worse thing? God has given His people a succession of calamities as an example of what He can do in this way—Amos iv., Pharaoh, &c. 3. There is not only a worse, but a worst thing impending over the impenitent sinner—the final loss of the soul. (*Prof. Charlton.*) *The pardon of sin*:—Pardon is an essential stage in the subjugation of sin. 1. There are those who place it last, but this is counter to Rom. vii. where forgiveness is assumed, and yet the conflict is maintained. 2. Others, again, make pardon to cover all future delinquencies, which contradicts St. John (1 John. i.). But pardon goes a great way to the conquest of sin. I. THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN CANNOT GO WITHOUT SOMETHING OF THE SIN GOING TOO. "The Lamb of God taketh away" not the punishment, but the "sin of the world." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," actual sin. What would it avail us that results were taken away while the first cause remained in its strength? II. THE MAN WHO HAS

TASTED OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS IS IN A MUCH BETTER CONDITION TO OVERCOME THE CORRUPTIONS OF HIS OWN HEART. His weakness is linked on to God's omnipotence. III. A SPRING OF ACTION IS SET AT WORK IN THE HEART WITH WHICH NOTHING ELSE CAN COMPARE. The love of Christ. We can all see what a difference it is to fight in the light of a smile or to fight in the darkness of a frown. The Saviour's method with the impotent man was analogous; pardon was a part of expulsion; and having forgiven him, connected his first calamity with his sin, and his future happiness with his future goodness. This gave him a reason, a capacity for good. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *In the temple:*—Not in the market; and there Jesus met him who had not known Him in the crowd. Jesus escapes from the crowd, but He finds us and is found by us in the temple. God is seen in solitude; the multitude makes a din around us and hides Him from us. The Divine vision demands religious retirement and holy peace in His house, apart from the strife of tongues. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Retribution:*—A worse thing even in this life might befall him. His sickness had found him a youth, and left him an old man; it had withered up all his manhood, and yet a worse thing than this is threatened him, should he sin again. Let no man, however miserable, count that he has exhausted the power of God's wrath. The arrows that have pierced him may have been keen; but there are keener yet, if only he provoke them, in the quiver from whence these were drawn. What the past sin was we do not know, but the man knew, and Christ connected the man's suffering with his sin. As some eagle, pierced with a shaft feathered from its own wing, so many a sufferer, even in this present time, sees, and is compelled to acknowledge, that his own sin fledged the arrow which has pierced him and brought him down. And lest he should miss the connection, oftentimes he is punished, it may be is sinned against by his fellow man in the very kind wherein he has sinned against others (Judg. i. 6, 7; Gen. xlii. 21; Exod. xxxv. 6, 15; Jer. li. 49; Hab. ii. 8; Rev. xvi. 6). The deceiver is deceived as was Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 19, 24; xxix. 23; xxxi. 7; xxxvii. 32): the violater of the sanctities of family life is himself wounded and outraged in his nearest and tenderest relations as was David (2 Sam. xi. 4; xiii. 14; xvi. 22); the troubler is troubled (Josh. vii. 25). He has no choice but to say, like Edmund in "King Lear," "The wheel has come full circle, I am here." And many a sinner who cannot thus read his own doom, for it is a final and fatal one, yet declares in that doom to others that there is indeed a coming back upon men of their sins. The grandson of Ahab is himself treacherously slain in the portion of Naboth (2 Kings ix. 23); William Rufus perishes, himself the third of his family who does so, in the New Forest, a chief scene of the sacrilege and the crimes of his race. (*Abp. Trench.*) *Apostasy dangerous:*—A person who suspected that a minister of his acquaintance was not truly orthodox went to him and said, "Sir, I am told that you are against the perseverance of the saints." "Not I, indeed," answered he: "it is the perseverance of sinners that I oppose." The other replied, "But that is not a satisfactory answer. Do you think that a child of God cannot fall very low, and yet be restored?" The minister answered, "I think it will be very dangerous to make the experiment." (*E. Foster.*) *Penalty of apostasy:*—Richard Denton, an English blacksmith, who apostatized to avoid martyrdom, perished, shortly after, in the flames of his own dwelling. (*Ibid.*) *A warning to the restored:*—We are not told what the effect was of this warning; whether it restrained the man, as it was intended to do, to a moderate enjoyment of his restored health. But, for the sake of illustration, let us suppose that he did not profit by Christ's warning, but that he made the most, as it would be called, of his newly acquired health and strength; that he let himself loose in the enjoyment of everything that came within his reach; that he gave free play to the long pent-up desires of his youth, just like one who has unexpectedly come into the possession of a large fortune which he sees no bounds to, and accordingly determines to enjoy to the uttermost, so that he comes again to the old disease. And now let us compare his second illness with his first. As far as his mere bodily state is concerned, we may imagine him to be in much the same condition as when he lay by the side of the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the stirring of the waters. But what must be the state of his feelings now in this second stage of his infirmity, compared with what they were before? What a use to have made of Jesus Christ's great kindness to him and of His words of warning; what an end to bring himself to after having thus come close to his Deliverer; how bitterly would he repent of ever having been healed; how he would wish with all his heart that he had gone through life the impotent cripple that he was when Jesus Christ first met with him! I may seem to be putting an unlikely case, but, indeed,

it is a far too common one. Some of us have had occasion to thank God for a recovery from a bad accident or dangerous illness; after weeks, or perhaps months, of pain or weakness, we have, by God's blessing, got quite strong and well again, and have gone about our old occupations and amusements as before; we have felt an increased delight in everything, from the very fact of having been for a time deprived of it all. Well, then, on every such occasion Jesus Christ meets us with the same warning which He addressed to this man, "Behold, thou are made whole; sin no more, lest," &c. He has given you your health again, or rather, He has lent it to you again, on certain conditions. And the chief of these is, that you should make a better use of your powers than you did before, that you should spend them more freely and heartily in His service. He sent you your sickness because He saw you making a bad use of your health; He sends you health again, that you may have an opportunity of showing that you have learned the lesson which your sickness was sent to teach you. But if you go on after your recovery just as you did before, if you still go on living to yourself and to your sins, and not to God, then you must expect this worse thing to come to you, of which your Saviour has warned you. And it will be well for you if God, in His mercy, sends you a still severer sickness, or still heavier misfortune, to force you away from your sinful enjoyment of this life, and to make you at least, give the days of your sickness to God, since you will not give Him the days of your health. But there is a worse thing still in store for us, if we neglect to hear Jesus Christ when He calls us. We may go through life with all our powers of body and mind in their full strength; we may enjoy all that this world has to give us, down to the very dregs; we may go down at last to the grave with no sign of the fulfilment of Christ's warning; and then it is reserved for the warning to fulfil itself in all its awfulness in another world than this. Oh, may none of us have to wait for this worst thing of all to happen to us; let us beseech God to visit us with every kind of suffering here, rather than leave us to bear the accumulated weight of our sins in eternity. (*H. Harris, B.D.*) *Christian fear of relapse into sin*:—Consider, first, what awful notions our Saviour would here impress on us concerning the future end and sure punishment of sin. "A worse thing"—worse, that is, than a palsy of thirty and eight years: worse than lying, helpless and weary, day after day in sight of relief, and seeing one after another step down into the pool and be made whole, while he was himself unable to stir, and had no friend to lift him: yet, says Christ, if you fall again into wilful sin, you are to expect worse than this. Here, then, you at once discern one most merciful purpose of Almighty God, in sending upon men pain and calamity. It may serve effectually, as a kind of sample, to teach them, feelingly as it were, somewhat of the wrath and justice of God. It may serve to awaken a wholesome fear of falling into His hands without a Mediator to speak for them. And happy indeed will that man prove, whose severe bodily pains shall have taught him in time to recollect and fear the torments of hell. But where things unhappily turn out otherwise; where the caution of our Lord is slighted, and the evil habit, suspended only by the affliction, returns and grows over the man anew; or he falls into fresh transgressions; that man's case is worse in many respects than if he had never been visited at all. 1. First, his wickedness is greatly aggravated by his ingratitude for God's especial mercies. "The goodness of God," says an Apostle, "leadeth to repentance;" *i.e.*, the very purpose of the Almighty Father in sparing such disobedient children, was to melt them as it were by His mercy, and make them feel pained and ashamed at the thought of displeasing Him any longer. 2. Again, as such a case is very bad in itself, so it has the worst possible effect. It sears and deadens the heart and conscience, rendering it more and more difficult for any good advice, either of God or man, to find its way into our thoughts. If you reflect on such a relapse at all, you must own it to be mere wickedness of heart, settled ingratitude to your best friend; and that is a thought so painful, that impenitent souls, in order to avoid it, shrink from serious reflection altogether. Thus every day their bad habits strengthen, while their chance of repenting grows less and less. 3. Observe by what steps and degrees that wretched decay comes on, which makes the redeemed of the Son of God first unthankful and then unholy; and do you, by the blessing of God, resolve to set yourself against every one of them. Thus, there can be no doubt that the first step in most men's corruption and degeneracy is their wilful neglect of private prayer; of reading and meditating on holy things. Again: it is a perilous step towards relapsing, when a man finds himself content to stand still, and taking no pains to get forward. There are some hills so steep, that he who

would climb them must keep urging himself upwards, else he is sure to fall back: he cannot stop and breathe where he will. (*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times."*) **The man departed and told the Jews.**—*Confession of Christ*:—I. ITS NATURE. "Told." Some think a healed life a sufficient testimony. So it is when the author of the healing is known, but not otherwise. When a man is cured of a dangerous disease his health is a testimony to some one's medical skill; but who's? The restored patient must "tell" to bear testimony to the physician. So the life of a renovated Christian is a witness to some power. But who has exercised the power? Himself: by thought and resolution? His friends: by advice and influence? No, Jesus Himself. Then let the renovated Christian say so. II. ITS SUBSTANCE. "That it was Jesus which had made him whole." 1. It avoids controversial matters. The man declined to say anything about taking up his bed; probably he could not discuss the Sabbath question; anyhow it was irrelevant. Let the confessor of Christ not be tempted into disputes. 2. It keeps to the point. (1) The person of Jesus. (2) The work of Jesus—personal, miraculous, complete. III. ITS BASIS. 1. Experience. As in the case of conversion it was not a fancy, but a felt fact. He knew that he was made whole by the use of his limbs. The Christian knows that he has been made whole by the employment of his regenerated powers. 2. Revelation (ver. 14). It was not a speculation, but a statement grounded on Christ's information. So the Holy Spirit of Christ bears witness with our spirits. IV. ITS INSPIRATION. 1. Certainly not a desire to injure Jesus by revealing Him to His enemies. Such a thought could hardly have entered the man's mind. 2. But gratitude desiring to make widely known the source by which he was healed. What is ours? Personal display or self-abnegating thankfulness? V. ITS OBJECTS. "The Jews." Probably the Sanhedrim, for so the expression seems to mean in John (*cf.* i. 19; vii. 1; ix. 22; xviii. 12. 14). 1. Whoever asks for it. The Jews challenged it, and the man took up the challenge. Be always ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you to every man. 2. The most influential. The Sanhedrim's acknowledgment of Jesus would have carried the nation. How helpful to his Master the Christian in high places, in the court or parliament. Let him not hide his light under a bushel. VI. ITS CHARACTERISTICS. 1. Courage. The poor man bore his testimony before the rich, powerful, learned. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear." 2. Self-abnegation. It was to Jesus alone, not to his co-operation with Jesus, "Made him whole," not "by whom he walked." 3. Beneficent. By this means the sick might know the healer. VII. ITS EFFECTS. 1. Unstudied by the man. How it would be received he knew not. The Christian is to do his duty regardless of consequences, "Whether they will bear or forbear." 2. Apparently disastrous. The Jews sought to slay Jesus. Let the man who fears to bear witness before infidels and scoffers remember this. Augmented antagonism must not discourage duty. 3. Eventually glorious. This was the first act in the drama of redemption. The Jews slew Jesus, but by that He became the Saviour of the world. The preaching of Christ in the early centuries and more recently, *e.g.*, in Madagascar, led to terrible persecution, but eventually to the triumph of the gospel. (*J. W. Burn.*) **Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus.** *The fickleness of popularity*:—On the 25th of July, 1553, Northumberland and Lord Ambrose Dudley were brought in from Cambridge, escorted by Grey and Arundel with four hundred of the Guards. Detachments of troops were posted all along the streets from Bishopsgate, where the Duke would enter, to the Tower to prevent the mob from tearing him to pieces. It was but twelve days since he had ridden out from that gate in the splendour of his power; he was now assailed from all sides with yells and execrations, bareheaded, with cap in hand, he bowed to the crowd as he rode on, as if to win some compassion from them; but so recent a humility could find no favour. His scarlet cloak was plucked from his back; the only sounds which greeted his ears were, "Death to the traitor," and he hid his face, sick at heart, and Lord Ambrose burst into tears. (*J. A. Froude.*) **My Father worketh hitherto and I work.** *The best workers*:—God the Father and God the Son are the best workers, because they work. I. So EXTENSIVELY. To do anything extensively is to do it on a large scale. If you had a flower-garden which covered twenty acres of ground, that would be an extensive garden. If you were a carpenter, or a printer, and giving work to four or five hundred men, then you would be carrying on that business extensively. If I could preach in all the churches of this city at the same time, then I should be preaching extensively. But I can only preach in one place at a time. And so it is with a carpenter, or a mason, or any other human worker. But it is very different

with these heavenly workers. They can work in all places at the same time—in heaven, directing the angels and making them happy; in this world; in this church; in all our homes; on the sea as well as on the land; upon the sky. II. So QUIETLY. It is very pleasant to have things done quietly, but it is very hard for some to do anything in this way. Many children get into a noisy habit of doing things. They are like alarum-clocks, going off all the time. But God works very differently, *e.g.* 1. When the sun rises, it is to give light to thousands and millions of people, and yet how softly, how quietly it rises! Nobody ever heard it. We make more noise in lighting a match. 2. The dew is falling on the grass, the flowers, and trees. Their growth and beauty all depend upon the dew. But no noise attends the falling. 3. The farmer has sowed his wheat; the rains have moistened it; the sun has warmed it. It is just beginning to grow. There are millions of grains all bursting. But did any one ever hear them growing? This is the way in which these heavenly workers carry on most of their works. III. So POWERFULLY. "All things are possible with God." Look at some of the servants they employ. Who can resist them? There is the wind, *e.g.;* the sea; the earthquake; the angels (Isa. xxxvii. 36). IV. So CAREFULLY. When God had finished the work of creating the world, He said it was "very good." When Jesus was on earth, the people who saw Him working so many miracles, cried out in astonishment, "He hath done all things well!" And what was true of the miracles, is true of everything else that He does. Everything which He does is done in the very best way. The works of man were not half as good in old times as they are now. But it is very different with the works of God. The sunshine which the people in old times used to have, was just as good as what we have now. And so it was with the air, and the rain, and the dew. So it was with the seasons, &c. God is just as careful about the least things He has made as He is about the greatest. V. So WISELY. God's wisdom is illustrated in—1. Our bodies. Suppose our hands had been put where the feet are, of what use would either of them have been to us? And suppose the eyes put at the back of the head, and the nose on one side of it, how awkward and inconvenient it would have been! 2. In the colour of the sky and the fields. Suppose the sky had been made white instead of blue, and the fields scarlet instead of green, how trying it would have been to the eye! 3. In the way in which the sun rises and sets. It is done very gradually. 4. In the way in which He provides for the preservation and protection of different animals. (*R. Newton, D.D.*) *The Divine workers:*—He rested on the seventh day from the works of creation. Yet He is still working continually and doing good every day. I. He PRESERVETH all things 1. That He does so appears—(1) From Scripture (Neh. ix. 6; Heb. i. 3; Acts xvii. 25–28). (2) From reason. (*a*) He is the first cause of all things, now as well as at the first, and, therefore, all other causes and things must needs depend on Him. (*b*) As great power is required for preservation as for creation. No finite power can preserve all things for itself, being but a creature needs preservation. An independent creature is a contradiction. (*c*) Hence should not God support us we should fall down to nothing (Job vi.). 2. How doth God preserve all things. Either—(1) Immediately from Himself; as the angels, sun and fixed stars (Rev. iv. 11). (2) Mediately, as all other creatures in heaven and earth, by secondary causes, who with Himself concur; by—(*a*) Propagation whereby all creatures, even of the shortest continuance, successively are preserved to the end of the world (Gen. vii. 3; Psa. xxxvi. 6). (*b*) Continuation and maintaining of individuals in giving them food (Psa. civ. 27–30, cxlv. 15, 16, cxlvii. 8, 9; Matt. vi. 26); giving a blessing to it (Matt. iv. 4; Deut. viii. 3, 4; Dan. i. 12–15). Inspection of—I. All things—the stars (Psa. cxlvii. 4); the number of the sands and weight of mountains (Isa. xl. 12); the hairs of the head (Matt. x. 30; Acts xxvii. 34). II. Of everything that is done by mankind (Psa. xiv. 2; xxxiii. 13–15), particularly of thoughts (Gen. vi. 5; Jer. iv. 14; Psa. cxxxix. 2); hearts and affections (Prov. xxiv. 12, xxi. 2; Ezek. xxxiii. 31; John v. 42); words (Psa. cxxxix. 4; Matt. xii. 36); actions (Rev. ii. 2–9); sins (Psa. lvi. 8; Rev. ii. 14); repentance (Psa. lvi. 8; Jer. viii. 6); good works (Gen. xviii. 19; Matt. xxv. 34). III. He RULES AND GOVERNS all things so that there is nothing falls out without His will effecting or permitting it. 1. Not only the greatest and noblest parts of creation, but the least—(1) The ravens, &c. (Psa. cxlvii. 9; Matt. x. 29, 30). (2) The oxen (1. Cor. ix. 9; Deut. xxv. 4) much more of His ministers. 2. All natural things—(1) Sunrise and sunset (Matt. v. 45); (2) Grass (Psa. cxlvii. 8; clv. 13–15); (3) The elements (Psa. cxlvii. 16, 17; Jer. x. 13; Job xxxvii. 10–12); (4) Fruitfulness (Deut. xi. 12); (5) The senses (Exod. iv. 11); (6) Family increase (Gen. xxx. 2; Deut. x. 22). 3.

All such things as are contingent and accidental. So Achan (Josh. vii. 16–18); Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv. 41, 42), &c.; Hophni and Phineas (1 Sam. iv. 11; ii. 25); the bow drawn at a venture (1 Kings xxii. 34, *cf.* vers. 17, 28). 4. All things that are done by the free will of men which is inclined by God (Prov. xxi. 1; Psa. cxix. 36; 1 Kings viii. 58; Acts xvi. 14; 2 Sam. xvii. 14). 5. Use—(1) Acknowledge God in everything (James iv. 13–14; Prov. iii. 6). (2) Pray to Him for all true grace and virtue and depend on Him alone for it. 6. Question: If God thus governs the world how comes it to pass that there is so much sin in it. (1) God could so have ordered it that no sin should ever have been committed. (2) Though He permits it He is not the cause of it (James i. 13–14). (3) God so orders it that good comes out of it—(*a*) By permitting one sin He sometimes punisheth another (Rom. i. 21–25). (*b*) He so overrules it as to turn it to the good of the righteous (Gen. xlv. 7, 8; Acts ii. 23, iv. 28). (*c*) He makes it redound to either the glory of His mercy in pardoning (Rom. ix. 23); or of His justice in punishing it (Prov. xvi. 4; 2 Thess. i. 7–9). IV. He ORDERS and DISPOSES of all things giving them to whomsoever He pleases. 1. Wealth and riches (Deut. viii. 18; Gen. xxxii. 9, 10; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Job i. 21; Eccles. v. 18, 19, vi. 1, 2). 2. Honour and preferments (1 Chron. xxix. 12; Psa. lxxv. 6, 7; 2 Sam. xii. 8; 1 Kings iii. 13; 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8; Psa. cxiii. 7). 3. Love and favours (Gen. xxxix. 21; Dan. i. 9; Exod. xii. 36, iii. 21). 4. Health and strength of body (2 Sam. xii. 15, 16). 5. Gifts and parts of mind (1 Kings iii. 9–12; Exod. xxxv. 30, 31, xxxvi. 1, 2, xxxi. 1–6; James. i. 5). 6. All true grace and virtue. (1) Faith (Eph. ii. 8). (2) Repentance (Acts xi. 18; v. 31). (3) All other graces (James i. 17, 18; 1 Cor. iv. 7). 7. Heaven and eternal life (Rom. vi. 23). Conclusion: 1. All these works of God are done—(1) With infinite power; for He doth all things without trouble, and only with His word since none can resist Him (2 Chron. xx. 6; Job ix. 2). (2) With infinite wisdom; so that He directs all things to the best and His own glory (Psa. civ. 24; Rom. xi. 33). (3) With infinite justice and righteousness; so that He wrongs none, nor is unjust or unrighteous to any (Psa. cxlv. 17). (4) With infinite goodness and mercy (Psa. cxlv. 9). 2. Use—(1) Learn to think that nothing comes by chance or fortune, but acknowledge God in everything (Prov. iii. 6; Exod. viii. 19). (2) Fear nothing but God. No good can be withholden from us, and no evil can fall upon us without Him (Matt. x. 28–30). (3) Although we ought to make use of means, yet we must put our whole confidence in God without whom the best means are unsuccessful and with whom the least are effectual (Psa. xxxvii. 3–7). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The conjoint working of Christ with the Father*:—The Jews considered Christ as claiming equality with God. But supposing that they mistook His meaning what can be said of His not correcting them? The charge of Sabbath breaking from which He vindicated Himself in the text was insignificant compared to the charge based upon His vindication. Why not defend Himself against such awful blasphemy. On the contrary, He confirms the inference of the Jews in ver. 19. If He were not God He had no right to refer to what God did as His vindication. The practice of the Creator could not be quoted in proof that a mere creature might do what He thought fit on the Sabbath. But were Christ and God equal He could act as God and therefore on all days alike. Notice—I. THE CONTINUED WORKING OF THE FATHER. 1. It would present no satisfactory account of the beautiful arrangements of the visible creation to say that matter was first endowed with certain properties and placed in certain relations and then left to obey the laws originally impressed. Of course God has given laws, and exerts no immediate agency to supersede them; but He is continually working by and through them as instruments. (1) This is the teaching of philosophy which insists that where there are laws there must be an agency and a power of which laws are modes. (2) The Bible teaches not only the production but the preservation of all things by God. There is scarcely a natural production or occurrence which is not referred immediately to His agency. 2. God has also revealed Himself as a moral Governor, and observes every motion of the human will, makes it subservient to His own purposes, registers whatever occurs for judgment, instigates every good action and overrules every bad. No calamity which can befall us, no anxiety disquiet, no joy cheer, no prayer escape which does not proceed either from His permission or appointment. 3. There are worlds upon worlds for which He does practically the same as ours. It were to be God to know what God has to do. II. THE CONTINUED WORKING OF THE SON. 1. We may suppose that Christ partly referred to the perfect union of will and person which there is between the Persons of the Trinity when Paul declared that He was "the brightness of the Father's person," &c. He went on to speak of Him as "upholding all

things by the word of His power." 2. But as Christ wrought the miracle in His mediatorial capacity, it is rather as the Saviour than as the Creator that He here speaks. The truth then is that Christ has all along been redeeming as the Father has been with preserving all mankind. (1) This is true all through the dispensations. As soon as there was sin there was salvation—through Christ, so that every human being added fresh employment to the Mediator as well as to the Creator. (2) We cannot but conclude that Christ in the office of Mediator has done something for unfallen beings, and if so, how immeasurably this widens the sphere of Christ's activity. III. THE EFFECT OF THIS DOCTRINE should be—1. To give us the same confidence in addressing the Mediator as in addressing the Father. Providence, in giving us our daily bread, is not more uniform than that intercession from which we derive daily grace. 2. To console the timid and downcast. "My Father worketh hitherto," and whom will He neglect or fail to sustain? "I work," and whom will I refuse to save? Who shall come to me and be cast out? 3. To encourage an application to that Divine Saviour who in His house provides healing for the impotent on the Sabbath day. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *My Father worketh hitherto:*—I. THE UNIVERSAL PRESENCE OF THE FATHER AT WORK. 1. Men do not imagine God to be near them in actual presence. They acknowledge Him as Creator chiefly because it relieves them of the greater difficulty of otherwise accounting for the existence of things. 2. In addition to this scientific concealment there is a figurative disguise of the Divine presence. The grand creations we invest with personality, and the spaces and elements we people with airy shapes of poetry and romance. These imaginations serve for the Divine Being, and to introduce Him boldly into conversation is considered bad taste or something worse. What a symptom of our universal ungodliness, "God is not in all our thoughts"! 3. But while being enemies to neither science nor imagination, let us open our Bibles and look on the works of God in their light. We let a ray fall on a flower, a structure, a strata, and we exclaim, "The work of Thy fingers." If you ask us about genera, species, and laws of variation, we leave them to scientists. We cannot detect half so many qualities as they can, but we see our Father at work. If you tell me that the instinct of a bird leads it to pick up a grain accidentally scattered, is it less true that our heavenly Father feedeth it? David was no mean naturalist, yet when he speaks of the sustentation of animals, their dissolution, and the renewal of their generations, he passes over the laws of these changes and only sees the Father at work (Psa. cxlv. 15, &c.). This is not mere poetry; it is written in the largest spirit of science. But a higher Authority, when referring to a flower, affirms that the Father clothes it, and when bidding His disciples imitate the trustful and uncareful birds, He adds, "Your heavenly Father feedeth them." II. IF THE FATHER IS WORKING AROUND US WHAT A SECURITY WE ENJOY. Each one of us may say, "My Father worketh for me." "When I consider the heavens," &c. I say, "Can I have a separate place in the Father's heart." He responds, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." It is sometimes hard to realize this; then in my loneliness I hear the expostulation from one who knoweth my frame and remembereth that I am dust, "Why sayest thou, O Jacob?" (Isa. xl.). Thus "He giveth power to the faint." We are not alone, for the Father is with us. III. THE FATHER WORKETH NOT BECAUSE AN INTELLIGENT BEING IS NECESSARILY ACTIVE, BUT FOR SOME GREAT DESIGN WHICH THE TRIUNE GOD IS ADVANCING AND MUST COMPLETE. This work, extending over many generations, may be called the second genesis. After the first creation God did not, as the Jews supposed, enter on a Sabbath of inaction. His primal work was done, but the Sabbath was as full of work as the six days, but work of a nobler kind. The Spirit that moved on formless matter must now move on mind. Evil had come into being, and evil is to mind what chaos is to matter. God spent His Sabbath in making a new heaven and a new earth, not of matter, but of mind. Who shall write the history of God's Sabbath work for man? The Bible is but a chapter of it. Eternity will unroll the volume. But following the Bible, how evident is the progressive design of love—the Father working in counsel; the Son in personal revelation; the Spirit in influence; and looking more closely we observe the Divine Son is the centre of this more glorious genesis. From Adam to John, all revelations pointed to Christ, and the Father is now drawing all men to Him. All men are proceeding Christward. (*E. E. Jenkins, LL.D.*) *Thoughts for the busy*:—I. The DIGNITY of labour. Toil is not incident to man as a fallen creature. There is royality in it, for the greatest worker is God. 1. God has been working in nature. His works are His thoughts, and how beautiful they are is written on every hand. 2. God is working in providence and grace through all the millenniums for a great

purpose of redemption. Patriarchs, lawgivers, prophets, kings, and priests have been His instruments. All the best works have been done because God works. 3. Let these sublime truths point out the dignity of labour. Throw off the delusion that freedom from work is to be sought as an end in itself. By indolence man throws away his crown and rebels against that Divine law of work which finds its highest expression in God. II. The QUALITY of labour. 1. Divine work is always of the highest and most perfect kind. 2. Always faithful and true. 3. Each man therefore should take his work as a sacred charge to do his best at it. To "do the truth" (1 John i. 6) would work a reformation in this country. All bad work is a lie. Men are lying when they build houses that cannot stand, when they supply goods we cannot wear, and when they sell foods that poison us. III. The METHOD of labour. 1. We never see in Christ, though He was always busy, any symptoms of rashness and hurry. There were depths in Him of holy peace which outer storms could not disturb. 2. There are causes for anxiety and haste which are not easy to control. But how many of them we never seek to master; desire for display and to be rich, a neglect of the deeper elements of character which leaves us open to the annoyances of little-minded men. It matters little to us whether God works or not. We have taken our concerns out of His hands. Thus we miss the confidence and restfulness which is our strength. IV. The true MOTIVES of labour. Many work as though they said, "The world worketh hitherto, and I work." The cardinal point is that success must be achieved at all costs. Christ worked, and we must work because the Father works. (*W. Manning.*) *God's Sabbath*:—What would become of the Sabbath unless God worked on the Sabbath (*Bengel.*) The law of the Sabbath is a law of a Being who never rests from doing good (*Theophylact.*) *The Divinity of Christ*:—A citizen of London once became angry with the sunlight, and he vowed that no sun should ever again shine within his home. Closing the door and shutters, and lighting the lamps, he lived and died many years as though there had been no sun. The world justly pronounced him insane. In a similar spirit "liberal" theologians and infidels deny Christ's Godhead. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Work must be constant*:—A few days ago, in the mountains, we went down in a valley to see a wonderful cascade, a marvellous sheet of water precipitating itself from lofty rocks, and there sat our German friends by scores contemplating it, and reverently admiring its sublimity. As I looked at the cascade the thought struck me it was rather too orderly to be altogether what it professed to be, and, looking on, I noticed that the floods which poured down from the rocks had suddenly diminished, as if the supply of the liquid element had become exhausted. We found that this wonderful waterfall was played three or four hours a day, and was an artificial wonder. But there is plenty of religion of that sort; it is played three hours a day or so many hours a week. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Work and joy*:—I do not remember reading in Mr. Wesley's diary a question about his own salvation. He was so busy in the harvest of the Master that it did not occur to him to distrust his God. Some Christians have little faith in consequence of their having never sown the grain of mustard seed which they have received. If you do not sow your faith by using it, how can it grow? When a man lives by faith in Christ Jesus, and his faith exercises itself actively in the service of his Lord, it takes root, grows upward, and becomes strong, till it chokes his doubts. Some have sadly morbid forebodings; they are discontented, fretful, selfish, murmuring, and all because they are idle. These are the weeds that grow in sluggards' gardens. (*Ibid.*) *Royal workers*:—We read in Homer of princesses drawing water from the springs, and washing, with their own hands, the linen of their respective families. Here the sisters of Alexander, that is, the daughters of a powerful prince, are employed in making clothes for their brother. The celebrated Lucretia used to spin in the midst of her female attendants. Augustus, who was sovereign of the world, wore, for years together, no other clothes but what his wife and sister made him. It was a custom in the northern parts of the world, not many years since, for the princes who then sat upon the throne, to prepare several of the dishes at every meal. (*Rollins' "History."*) *God's work is perfect*:—There is not a more necessary and consolatory truth than this—reason allows it, revelation affirms it—"the work of the Lord is perfect." Whatever He does sustains its consistency and answers its end. Neither is there redundance nor defect. The question of degrees, the scale of dimensions, cannot alter the fact; whether the emmet or the leviathan, whether the atom or the world, each bears a stamp of entireness and self-sufficience. The most cautious inspection, the most fertile imagination, can discover no want, can suggest no improvement. You can relieve no difficulty, you

can facilitate no process, you can heighten no result. The system of the individual is as faultless as that of the species, the economy of the particle as that of the universe. The grain imbedded on the shore, the star set among the constellations of the sky, in their differing ranks of constituted nature, exhibit the same matchless adjustment, fitness, and application. (*R. W. Hamilton, D.D.*)

Vers. 19-23. **The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.**—*The unity of the Father and the Son*:—The Jews sought to kill Jesus in obedience to the law (1) because He wrought a miracle on the Sabbath; (2) because He vindicated Himself on the ground of His equality with God, who constantly works such miracles in His providence on the Sabbath. So far from disclaiming the Jewish inference He here confirms it. Note—I. CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE FATHER IN ALL HE DOES (ver. 19). 1. Unity of operation. These words assert that as it is impossible for the Son to do anything of Himself, so it is impossible that the Father can do anything without the Son. The cure of the impotent man, therefore, was by both. 2. Distinction of persons. The Father shows, the Son sees; the Father purposes, the Son executes. 3. Identity of works. They do the same, not similar things. The same Jesus stands in the midst of us and says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" If we despise Him speaking in His word we despise the great God with whom we have to do. II. THE GROUND OF THIS RELATION (ver. 20). 1. Love is the expression of the Father's feeling toward the Son. 2. He communicates Himself to the Son and makes Him His counsellor. 3. This relation Christ made known that they might marvel—admire God's glorious manifestation of Himself and give Him glory. III. INSTANCES OF THE WORKS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THIS RELATION. 1 (ver. 21). Resurrection and quickening, including no doubt the physical, but referring mainly to the spiritual process. (1) Raising up. Sin, as a frightful incubus, rests on the soul exerting its paralysing influence. This spiritual death is chased away. (2) Quickening. New life is imparted. Death implies previous life. A tree cut down and withered is different from a stone. In Adam the soul died; when the Son quickens a new and more glorious life is communicated. (3) There can be no consideration more alarming than our continuance in this death. How dreadful to pass away without having the experience of this raising up and quickening, and to lie for ever in condemnation as self-destroyed. 2 (vers. 22-23). Judgment. (1) To Him is committed the whole administration of the gospel; and when His supreme government is asserted as here, it means that the Father judgeth no man alone—both judge. (2) He will preside at the eternal awards. IV. IMPORTANT INFERENCES DEDUCED FROM THIS RELATION. 1. If Christ is not worshipped God is not (ver. 23). God must be approached according to the revelation He has made of Himself: we cannot do so unless we know Him as the Father who sent the Son. 2. Salvation comes by the word of Christ (ver. 24). (1) This hearing, no doubt, includes listening with the outward ear; a great and necessary duty. But it is also (ver. 25) of a kind which awakens to life, with the mind and spirit. therefore, prompting to action, so that we become not hearers only, but "doers." (2) Salvation is by resting on the true object of faith—in God as sending the Son not as the Creator, &c. (3) This salvation is everlasting life—a great salvation therefore. "How shall we escape if we neglect it." (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The Father's love to the Son*:—I. THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON. What has this to do with us? What have we to do with the Son? The answer to the latter will answer the former. If we are one with Christ the fact that God loves Him—1. Will solve a number of curious and doubtful questions. Satan is always trying to draw believers away from what is simple. The Father loveth the Son. Can Satan deny that? If not, then if I be the Son's, all the outgoings and principles of God concerning me must be of love. Everything must be consistent with that. 2. Will lift us up above a number of depressions. (1) Are we tried? (2) lonely; (3) poor; (4) weary and worn. Whoever was so tried as the beloved Son? II. CHRIST RESTED IN THE FATHER'S LOVE, AND IN THE DEEP CONSCIOUSNESS OF IT PUT FORTH IMMENSE POWER. 1. Wherever love attains its highest form there is rest. It puts away all ifs and speculations, and goes down into the ocean depths of certainties which are beyond the reach of surface storms. 2. This should give us great power (1) in prayer, passing into God's mind through an inlet of love; its answer coming forth through the outlet of love; (2) in faith; (3) in hope. III. CHRIST'S RELATION TO THE FATHER DETERMINES HIS ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUTURE, AND OUR RELATION TO HIM DETERMINES OUR PART IN IT. In present and future resurrection and judgment. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *Christ's reply* resembles Luther's: "I cannot do otherwise"; or,

to take a nearer example, Jesus puts His work under the guarantee of the Father's, as the impotent man had just put his under the shelter of Jesus. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Christ's limitations*:—Neither the man nor the angel exists who could dare to say of himself: "I can do nothing of myself;" because no man's and no angel's self is essentially and inseparably one with the self of God. The creature can tear itself away from its Creator, and place its *I* in opposition to Him; it can seek its life in itself, instead of in Him, and it can act "in its own name" (chap. viii. 44); the Son of God, on the contrary, has nothing of His own, no self, which does not eternally contain the same life which the Father has. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) **The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.**—*The delegation of judicial authority to Christ*:—I. JUDGMENT APPERTAINS TO GOD. It is His in criminal causes (Rom. xii. 19) and in civil things (Psa. lxxxii. 1). No function of God is so often reiterated. And He is the Judge of judges themselves. Judgment is so essential to God that it is co-eternal with Him. 1. He knows, and therefore naturally detests evil. We are blind, and need the assistance of the law to know what is evil. And if a man be a judge what an exact knowledge of the law is required of him—for some things are sins to one nation which are not to another, and some things are sin at one time which are not at another. Only God has a universal knowledge, and therefore detestation of evil. 2. He discerns when thou committest evil. Hence you have to supply defects in laws so that things done in one country may be tried in another. But God has the power of discerning all actions in all places. Earthly judges have their distinctions and so their restrictions; some things they cannot know—what mortal can, and some things they cannot take knowledge of, for they are bound by evidence. But nothing keeps God from discerning and judging everything. 3. He knows how to punish evil. The office of a judge being not to contract or extend the law, but to declare its true meaning. God hath this judgment in perfection, for He made the law by which He judges. Who then can dispute His interpretation? As, then, God is judge in all these three respects, so He is a judge (1) without appeal; (2) without needing any evidence (Prov. xxiv. 12, xvi. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 4); and if so, not only I, but not the most righteous man, nor the Church He hath washed in His own blood, shall appear righteous in His sight. II. How then, seeing that judgment is an inseparable character of God, can it be said that THE FATHER JUDGETH NO MAN? Not certainly because weary. He judges as God, not as Father. In the three great judgments of God the whole Trinity judges. 1. Before all times in our election. 2. Now in separating of servants from enemies. 3. At the last judgment in separating the sheep from the goats. Consider God altogether, and so in all outward works, all the Trinity concurs, because all are one God; but consider God in relation, in distinct persons, and so the several persons do something in which the other persons are not interested. So the Son judgeth, the Father judgeth not, for that judgment He hath committed. III. To THE SON HE HATH COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT, the image of the invisible God, and so more proportional unto us, more apprehensible by us. 1. But doth He judge as Son of God or as Son of Man. Upon this the Fathers and Reformers are divided. But take this rule, God hath given Christ this commission as Man, but Christ had not been capable of it had He not been God too. The ability is in Him eternally, but the power of actual execution was given Him as Man. 2. All judgment—(1) Of our election. If I were under the condemnation of the law, and going to execution, and the king's pardon were presented to me, I should ask no question as to motives and circumstances, but thankfully attribute it to his goodness and accept it; so when I consider myself as under God's consideration, and yet by the working of God's Spirit I find I am delivered from it I inquire not what God did in His cabinet council. I know that He hath elected me in Christ. And, therefore, that I may know whether I do not deceive myself I examine myself whether I can truly tell my conscience that Christ died for me, which I cannot do if I have not a desire to conform myself to Him; and if I do that then I find my predestination. (2) Of our justification, "for there is none other name," &c. Do I then remember what I contracted with Christ when I took His name at baptism? Have I fulfilled those conditions? Do I find a remorse when I have not? Do I feel remission of those sins when I hear the gracious promises of the gospel to repentant sinners? Have I a true and solid consolation when I receive the seal of pardon at the Sacrament? Therefore this judgment is His also. (3) Of our glorification (Rev. i. 7). Then He shall come as Man and give judgment for things done or omitted towards Him as Man, "for not feeding," &c. Conclusion: Such is the goodness of God that He deals with man

by the Son of Man. 1. If you would be tried by the first judgment; are you elected or no? Do you believe in Christ? 2. If by the second, are you justified or no? Do you find comfort in the Word and sacraments of Christ? 3. If by the third, do you expect a glorification? Are you so reconciled to Jesus Christ now that you durst say now, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus"? then you are partakers of all that blessedness which the Father intended for you when, for your sake, He committed all judgment to the Son. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *The Redeemer our Judge*:—That our Saviour was perfect God and perfect man is a truth which cannot be denied and Christianity not fall to the ground. But this very combination will cause apparent inconsistencies in the way in which He is spoken of. And it should be remembered that what holds good of Him in one capacity may be inapplicable to Him in another. As God judgment could not be committed to Him. He had it by Divine necessity and right. But it is as Mediator, a Being in which the two natures combine, that He is entrusted with the authority as Judge. I. HE WILL JUDGE AT THE LAST DAY. What are the qualifications requisite for such an office? 1. Obviously no mere creature can fulfil that function. There must be acquaintance with secrecies of character as well as open actions. Hypocrisy must not pass undetected, nor unobtrusive merit fail of recompense. Angels cannot be judges of human character, nor possess themselves of all the necessary evidence. Omniscience alone will suffice. 2. But if we cannot approach an angelic judge with confidence, how approach omniscient Deity? A created judge is immeasurably nearer than the Creator, though of a different nature. 3. You ask, therefore, for one who shall have a thorough fellow feeling with those brought to his bar, *i.e.*, a man. But how can you hope to have a man who, qualified by sympathy, should yet possess the qualification of omniscience? 4. This combination, however, does exist. A man sits on that "great white throne," "bone of our bone," but God to whom all things are naked and open. II. HE JUDGES NOW, for all judgment is committed to Him. 1. To this we are indebted for that tenderness which characterizes God's present judgments. Afflictions are not allowed to come together; "the rough wind" is restrained till "the east wind" has passed away. Chastisement is very different conceived as inflicted by God and inflicted by the Mediator. 2. If this be so how heavy will be the final judgment! There will be no pleading that our case was not thoroughly understood. All along we have been drawn by the cords of a man; then the impenitent will be judged by the Man who died for them and tried by every possible means to turn them from enemies into friends. His presence itself will condemn, and they will call to the rocks, &c., to hide them from not the thunderbolts of avenging Deity, but from the face of Him who became man for their salvation. Anything might be better borne than the glance of this face so eloquent of rejected mercies. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The judgment*:—Men will have views very different from what they now have. I. THE MISER will see a life spent in gathering gold with terror. II. THE AMBITIOUS will wonder that he could barter his soul for office. III. THE SENSUALIST will dread to review his luxury and lewdness. IV. THE SOPHIST will argue no more against Divine truth. V. THE IMPENITENT will be amazed at his madness in clinging to his sins. VI. THE MOCKER will jest no more about sacred things. VII. THE PROFANE will howl over the folly that insulted God. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The judgment will be searching*:—I will tell you a dream of one of quality, related to myself by the dreamer himself. Said he, "I dreamed the day of judgment was come, and all men appeared before Christ. Some were white, others spotted. Methought," said he, "I was all white, saving that I had one black spot upon my breast, which I covered with my hand. Upon the separation of these two sorts I got among the white on the right hand. Glad was I; but at last a narrow search was made, and one came and plucked away my hand from my breast; then appeared my spot, and I was thrust away among the spotted ones." (*Thomas Larkham.*) **That all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.**—*Equal honour to be paid to the Father and to the Son*:—I. WHY? 1. Because the perfections of the Father are those of the Son (ver. 26). Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Holiness, Love, &c. 2. Because the works of the Father are those of the Son (ver. 19). Creation, Providence, Redemption, Resurrection. 3. Because the administration of the Father is that of the Son (ver. 22). (1) Now over kingdoms, cities, families, individuals. (2) At the great day. 4. Because it is the special desire of both the Father and the Son. (1) Of the Father, because on the honour of the Son the whole blessedness of the universe is centred. (2) Of the Son, because the Father is only honoured through the Son. God was not honoured in Judaism, witness its lapses into

idolatry and its ultimate formalism; nor by Mohammedanism, witness its cruelty and licentiousness; nor in heathenism, where He is not known at all; nor by Deism, as proved by its development into agnosticism and atheism. Only in Christendom is God honoured, because Christ is honoured. II. How? 1. By admiring the perfections of the Divine Son. "The chiefest among ten thousand," &c. 2. By acknowledging the services of the Divine Son. We are His because He made, preserved, and redeemed us; therefore we should glorify Him as our Master, Friend, Saviour. 3. By co-operating with the rule of the Divine Son. (1) By obeying it ourselves. (2) By securing its recognition in others. 4. By making the Supreme desire in the universe the master passion and motive of our souls; doing all things with the one aim of securing the honour of the Son and of the Father through Him. III. WHERE? 1. At home. (1) In secret prayer. This will test the purity and constancy of our motive. (2) In our families, bringing them up to honour Christ by reverencing His name, word, and ordinances. 2. In the sanctuary. (1) By attentively listening to the Word. (2) By regular attendance at His table. (3) By heartiness in His worship. 3. In the world eschewing all business, amusements, &c., likely to bring dishonour on Him. (*J. W. Burn.*) *He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father*:—Amphilochus, Bishop of Iconium, entered the palace of Theodosius, and bowed to the Emperor, but not to Arcadius his son. The Emperor reminding him of his neglect, the good man still refused, and on his showing great displeasure, Amphilochus replied, "O king, how much more will Jehovah abhor those rejecting His Son!" (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Christ's demand of man*:—Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is beyond all others difficult to satisfy. He asks that for which a philosopher may often seek in vain at the hands of his friends, or a father of his children, or a bride of her spouse, or a man of his brother. He asks for the human heart; He will have it entirely to Himself; He demands it unconditionally; and forthwith His demand is granted. (*Napoleon I.*) *Christ claims Divine honours*:—"And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Did they sin in worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ? After their long career of intimacy, did love to such a being, who had exhausted the symbolism of life to express His life-giving relations to them; with every conceivable incitement, reverence, and worship; with love, wonder, joy, and gratitude kindling their imaginations towards Him; without a solitary word of caution lest they should be snared by their enthusiasm, and bestow upon Him the worship that belonged only to God—did they sin in worshipping Him? If they did, was not Christ Himself the tempter? If they did not, may not every living soul worship Him? (*H. W. Beecher.*)

Ver. 24 (in conjunction with vi. 47). **Verily, verily.**—1. These words indicate a subject of special importance. 2. They were used to denote a clear and certain revelation. 3. Notice when this certainty lies solely in "I say unto you." In the matter of our salvation carnal reason never arrives at certainty. Mere argument can never bring a troubled heart to a sure anchorage. The *ipse dixit* of a mere man is not enough. Note—I. TO WHOM THE BLESSING OF OUR TEXT COMES. These favoured persons are—1. Hearers who are also believers. It is not communicated by drops of water; we are to act towards saving truth as towards other information. First, we hear of Jesus, His person, work, office, and blessings; then we accept Jesus as the appointed Saviour for ourselves. 2. Believers who remain hearers, "My sheep hear My voice." 3. Believers in the Lord Jesus (chap. vi. 47). They have personal faith in a personal Saviour. 4. Believers in Jesus because of the witness of the Father. We are sure He can save because He is divinely commissioned, divinely furnished, and the pleasure of the Lord must prosper in His hands. 5. Every such believer, whatever else he has or has not, he has everlasting life. But he is full of fault and imperfection; he makes mistakes in theology; he is afraid he has not attained to everlasting life. No exception is to be made on any of these grounds. 6. There is no statement made as to the salvation of any other sort of person. Nothing is said about the baptized, professors, &c., only about believers. II. THE BLESSINGS WHICH BELONG TO THE BELIEVING. 1. He hath everlasting life. He was condemned and reckoned as a dead man; but he is now acquitted and his life is granted him. He was spiritually dead also, but through Christ he is quickened; and because Christ lives ever he shall live also. 2. He is in a condition of non-condemnation. In Christ he has been judged, condemned, and punished, and is therefore clear of the law and all its penalties. 3. He is passed from death unto life. In regeneration lies the essence and major portion of the resurrection. III. THE ASSUR-

ANCE WITH WHICH THIS DOCTRINE IS STATED. 1. It is certified by the terms in which our Lord utters it. 2. It is verified by conscious experience. 3. It should consequently be confidently proclaimed. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The gospel of Christ*:—We are here taught—I. THE NEED OF HEARING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST; and that not with the ears of the body only, but with the heart, the will, the affections of man. "He that heareth My word." II. BELIEF IN THE EVER-BLESSED TRINITY, in the Father and the Son, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. "He that . . . believeth on Him that sent Me." III. THE SINFUL ESTATE OF MANKIND, the fall through sin into spiritual death, and the consequent condemnation of the whole race of Adam, who through the sin of the first man have come into condemnation. IV. THE NEED WHICH WE ALL HAVE OF A REDEEMER AND MEDIATOR, through whose passion, death, and resurrection we pass from death unto life. V. THE HAPPINESS WHICH IS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN AND WHO OBEY GOD IN THIS LIFE, and in obeying Him possess Him who is everlasting life. VI. THAT ETERNAL LIFE which after the death of the body IS THE HOPE AND THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS, and which is assured to those who in resisting temptation and in overcoming sin here have passed from death unto life. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *A short sermon on a great text*:—I. THE PREACHER. 1. The dignity of His Person. (1) The Son of God. (2) The ambassador of the Father. (3) The faithful witness. 2. The solemnity of His manner. As became one who spoke with (1) full knowledge. (2) Absolute authority. (3) Tender sympathy. (4) Personal directness. II. THE DISCOURSE. 1. The meaning of salvation. (1) Eternal life. (2) No condemnation. (3) Fulness of existence. 2. The way of salvation. (1) Hearing Christ's word. (2) Believing Christ's Father. III. THE AUDIENCE. 1. Their persons—men. 2. Their characters—dead. 3. Their numbers—whosoever. 4. Their responsibilities—involved in their ability to hear and believe. Lesson: Take heed how ye hear. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Everlasting life*:—Life is of many degrees—lowest in the sponge, then in the oyster, and higher still in the worm. Through a long and beautifully graduated series we come to man, partly material, partly spiritual; the link between earth and heaven. Life is absolutely perfect in God only; the great source of life to all created beings. "This is life eternal," &c. (chap. xvii. 3). This life in its fulness implies—I. FREEDOM FROM SIN. 1. Its guilt. 2. Its pollution. 3. Its attendant evils. II. THE POSSESSION OF ALL GOOD. 1. Perfect love. 2. Perfect purity. 3. Perfect youth. 4. Perfect activity. 5. Perfect blessedness. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Eternal life*:—You will observe here that everlasting life is a thing which a man is declared, on certain conditions, to have in this world, that the death which is its contradictory is said to be escaped in this world, and in the very act of passing over into life; and that the condition of escaping the one and having the other is faith in God through Jesus. Now what I wish to do, is to point out the dignity and the joy of this true life of the soul, this everlasting life of faith; and if we can know the secret of its blessedness here, we shall know what its blessedness shall be hereafter. I. And first, TO THE JUSTIFIED SOUL THERE IS THE JOY OF LIVING ITS TRUE LIFE. In all life there is joy; much more in the soul's true life. In the free exercise of its noblest faculties; in the free use of its noblest powers; in the free apprehension of Divine truth, the free choosing of the right, the unselfish loving of the beautiful and the good; it is a joy even now and here so to live the true life of the soul. And when we come to analyze this joy, we find that in all its details it is a life of blessedness. 1. For, first, there is the joy of triumph, the *guadiam certaminis*, that courts and enjoys the well-won victory. Worldly and carnal pleasures woo the soul's affections from their true and worthy objects. To resist these is conflict worthy of heroic souls; to stand steadfast, to be true to truth, to goodness, to righteousness, this is victory, and the joy of it is bliss to the struggling, conquering soul. And when the soul's victorious inner life is translated into worthy outward action, that outward life becomes heroic too, the life of a knightly soul that proves its knighthood and receives its reward in scattering error, in righting wrong, in helping the weak, in relieving the oppressed, and in doing his duty to God and all the world. 2. And then there is the joy of progress. For the soul's true life is a progress from the less to the greater, from the partial to the more perfect good. There is growth in humility, and so there is no more galling and fretting of pride. There is growth in meekness, and so the burden of resentment is laid aside. There is growth in faith, and so the unseen things are seen with more and more distinctness to be the great thing. There is growth in hope, and so the soul grows glad and young as it lays hold on the hope of eternal life. There is growth in love—in the blissful love that never faileth, that suffereth long and is kind, &c.

3. And then there is the joy of self-sacrifice. Man had forgotten the great truth, that self-sacrifice for duty and for love is the very joy of the soul's true life. But God revealed it in Jesus. And revealing it He showed not only the Divine wisdom and power, but also the Divine blessedness. Who does not understand something of this! Who are the great and happy souls of earth? Not those, assuredly, who look for base ease, or sordid gain, or selfish advantage, or guilty pleasure; but the pure and strong and lofty souls, who in loving the unseen and following lofty ideals gladly sacrifice themselves for what they love. The patriot who goes at his country's summons to battle; the father and husband who scorns delight and lives laborious days for wife and children; the mother who turns away from all delights to bend in yearning tenderness above the couch of her sick or afflicted child; the Christian man or woman who in loving, dutiful deeds of brotherly love and goodwill, delight to help the unfortunate and make the wretched happy—these are the great and happy souls, and in their self-sacrifice they find the highest joy of their soul's true life. In a word, then, the soul's true life in this world is the life of faith, of hope, and of love. In the victory of its faith, the progress of its hope, the glad self-sacrifice of its love, its joy consists. And this brings me to my concluding thought. We have seen what the soul's true life in this world is. II. WHAT SHALL IT BE IN THE NEXT WORLD BUT THE SAME IN KIND, THOUGH IN FULLER, LARGER MEASURE? The only difference shall be that the limitations of sin, the hindrances of earthliness, shall be removed. Unfettered and free, the soul shall expand in the perpetual delight of life and love and peace—the delight of growing knowledge, the delight of more and more adequate utterance, the security and peace of more perfect self-consecration, the deep and tender joy of more entire self-sacrifice. How this shall be, I cannot tell. It is enough for me to know this one thing—that the soul's true life, the eternal life, begun here, shall continue after death substantially the same, and that its joys shall be the same, only fuller, larger, richer. Oh, then, let me ask myself this question: Am I living now the soul's true life—the everlasting life of faith and hope and love—and am I finding now and here the joy and the blessedness of that life? If not, then even heaven itself would be a hell to my untutored soul. But if I do know the joy and peace of believing, then eternal life is mine already. (*Bishop S. S. Harris.*) **Passed from death unto life.**—Notice the smallness of the conditions, and the magnificence of the offer. The salvation of a man's soul is simply a matter of capitulation, and the terms of the capitulation are, "Hear the messenger and believe the mission." I. THE UNDERTAKING WHICH THE ALMIGHTY HAS MADE OF WHAT HE WILL DO TO THOSE WHO GIVE UP AT DISCRETION. 1. Look a moment at our position. We have provoked God and attacked His rights, and therefore have separated ourselves from God. Therefore we do not deserve to die, nor sure to die, but we are dead. For death is not annihilation. Separation of soul from body is physical death: separation of soul and body from God is physical death. People abhor the thought of eternal punishment or eternal death; but what if that means separation prolonged through eternity. Is there anything in that inconsistent with God? But that would be hell enough. 2. Christ comes and offers union with Himself, that is, nearness to God which is life. (1) The nature of this life. (*a*) Physical life of a higher order because consecrated. (*b*) Intellectual life—a life of latent thoughts, energies and affections which, but for this, would sleep on for ever. (*c*) A life of true satisfying service. (2) Its characteristics. (*a*) A present possession. The moment you believe in Christ you live; you have done with death for ever. What is coming and is called death will not be death to you, because no separation. (*b*) A lasting life. In the old life nothing was very lasting; either the thing passed away, or the power to enjoy it. The new life has its hidden springs in God, and will last for ever. (*c*) A life free from condemnation. There is nothing now behind, and no future to be afraid of. Your sins were condemned and punished in Christ, and there shall be no resurrection of forgiven sin. II. WHAT ARE THE TERMS? 1. "Hear My word." (1) Do not you all hear it? Not with the inward ear. (2) But what word. If you receive any word, you will receive all. Take this one, "Come unto Me," &c. 2. "Believe on Him that sent Me." Not in Me. Some object to vicarious atonement on the ground that it does not put the Father in His right place. But Christ here, as elsewhere, traces it all to the Father and His love. It is part of your salvation to take worthy views of the Father. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Passing from death to life:*—I. THE STATE FROM WHICH EVERY BELIEVER IS DELIVERED. 1. Its nature. A threefold death has befallen man. The body dies, everlasting death is threatened, spiritual death is inflicted. This latter is the death

here, and is not simply the absence of what constituted life, but the presence also of the opposite. (1) Man's knowledge was a part of his life, but it has gone and he is ignorant and misrepresents the truth. (2) This flow of holiness is staunched, and he is defiled. (3) His innocency is blotted out, and he is guilty. (4) His title to heaven is gone, and he is exposed to hell. 2. Its forms. It does not always take the same shape. (1) A man's circumstances will do something to curb the tendencies of his nature. Your life may be chaste and outwardly religious, but with all this there is a defiled nature seen by the eye of God. (2) In other cases there is a complete contrast, and depravity knows no shame. 3. Its extent; total (1) as regards the individual. (*a*) The human form once so noble and symmetrical and undying has become enervated by disease, and falls into the grave. (*b*) The mind has not escaped its blight. Go to the lunatic asylum where the mind is gone, and to the cultured atheist whose vast intellectual powers are perverted. (*c*) The soul is dead, not that it has ceased to be immortal, but lives on in death. (2) As regards the race. However employed and wherever found man is the impersonation of death. 4. Its cause. Not God. Look at the proofs of Divine benevolence in the beauties of nature, and ask, Is God the cause of death? Look at the monstrosities of nature—the drunkard, *e.g.*, and ask, Is that God's handiworks? II. THE CONDITION TO WHICH, BY THE MERCY OF GOD, EVERY BELIEVER HAS BEEN BROUGHT: from death to life. 1. What is this life? (1) Life is a series of relationships. In vegetable life there is a relationship of dependence; in animal life of the senses: in rational life of consciousness; in spiritual life to God in Christ. (2) Life has its developments. This could not be predicated of a stone. In vegetables you see it at its lowest, in reptiles higher, in beasts higher still, in man highest; and in rational life you have the babe, the child, and the man, and so in spiritual. (3) Spiritual life is knowledge. Mark the contrast between men of large intellectual powers and a man half-witted, who knows God is his Father and Christ his Saviour. They are dead; he lives. (4) It is purity. (5) It is love. 2. Whence comes it? (1) Not from self; a corpse cannot raise itself. (2) Not from another; a corpse cannot raise others. (3) From God the fountain of life, through Christ, the resurrection and the life. III. THE PROCESS FROM THE ONE TO THE OTHER. 1. Its character a purely spiritual process, illustrated by the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly; the change from winter to spring; the resurrection of the dead. 2. Its means. The gospel embraced by faith. 3. Its Agent, the Holy Spirit. (*Gervase Smith, D.D.*) *Passing from death to life*:—I. From a death of UNBELIEF to a life of FAITH. II. From a death of FALSEHOOD to a life of TRUTH. III. From a death of SIN to a life of RIGHTEOUSNESS. IV. From a death of MISERY to a life of BLESSEDNESS. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *We are saved by believing*:—A small matter may suffice to shape the destiny of an immortal soul. In those ill times when there were slaves across the Atlantic, a lady went down to one of our ships accompanied by a negro servant. The lady remarked to the captain that if she were to go to England and take this black woman with her, she would become free as soon as she landed. The captain replied, "Madam, she is free already! The moment she came on board a British vessel she was free." When the negro woman knew this do you think she went on shore with her mistress? By no means; she chose to keep her liberty. How slight the change of place, but how great the difference involved: marvel not that faith involves such great things. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *We must believe or perish*:—If a man will not do that which is necessary to a certain end, I do not see how he can expect to gain that end. You have taken poison, and the physician brings an antidote, and says, "Take it quickly, or you will die. If you take it quickly I will guarantee that the poison will be neutralized." But you say, "No, doctor, I do not believe it; let everything take its course; let every tub stand on its own bottom; I will have nothing to do with you, doctor." "Well, sir, you will die, and when the coroner's inquest is held on your body the verdict will be, 'Served him right.'" So it will be with you, if, having heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you say, "Pooh-pooh! I am too much of a common-sense man to have anything to do with that, and I shall not attend to it." Then, when you perish, the verdict given by your conscience, which will set upon the King's quest at last, will be a verdict of *felo-de-se*. He destroyed himself. (*Ibid.*) *Faith must lay hold on Christ*:—One night, when preaching in Philadelphia, right down by the side of the pulpit, there was a young lady whose eyes were riveted on me, as if she were drinking in every word. I got interested in her, and after I had done talking I went and spoke to her. "Are you a Christian?" "No; I wish I was. I have been seeking Jesus for three years." I said, "There must be some mistake." She looked

strangely at me, and said, "Don't you believe me?" "Well, no doubt you thought you were seeking Jesus; but it don't take an anxious sinner three years to meet a willing Saviour." "What am I to do, then?" "The matter is, you are trying to *do* something; you must just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Oh, I am sick and tired of the word, 'Believe, believe, believe!' I don't know what it is." "Well," I said, "we'll change the word; take 'trust.'" "If I say, 'I'll trust Him,' will He save me?" "No; I don't say that. You may *say* a thousand things, but He will if you *do* trust Him." "Well," she said, "I do trust Him; but," she added in the same breath, "I don't feel any better." "Ah, I've got it now! You've been looking for feelings for three years, instead of for Jesus." (*D. L. Moody.*)

Vers. 25-27. **The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.** *The spiritual resurrection:*—I. Its SUBJECTS. The spiritually dead, in trespasses and sins. To have life we "must be born again." II. Its MANNER. 1. The dead hear the voice of the Son of God in the word preached. 2. This word receives its power from heaven. III. Its NATURE. Those who hear.—1. Live. 2. Shall live. Death is banished for ever. IV. Its SEASON. 1. The hour is coming. (1) At Pentecost. (2) Ever since. (3) Till time shall be no more. 2. Now is. (1) The day of the Spirit's power had already in some measure come. Under every dispensation many heard the voice of the Son of God and lived. (2) Now is the accepted time. V. Its SOURCES. 1. The life which is in the Son (ver. 26). 2. The authority exercised by the Son. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The spiritual awakening:*—I. THE TIME OF IT. Now, during the currency of this Christian dispensation, at any and every moment thereof (2 Cor. vi. 2; Heb. iii. 7, iv. 7). II. THE SUBJECTS OF IT (Eph. ii. 1). III. THE MANNER OF IT. The vitalizing of a dead soul results from the infusion into it of life by the Son of God (ver. 21). 1. Not directly. 2. But indirectly through the word which the Son speaks. IV. THE CONDITION OF IT. Not all the spiritually dead are quickened, or even all to whom the word of Christ is externally addressed, but only those who hear and believe (vers. 24–25, *cf.* Isa. lv. 3). V. THE GROUND OF IT. The fact that the Son is possessed of life in Himself as an original and inexhaustible fountain, even as it exists in the Father (ver. 26). VI. THE END OF IT. Life in the fullest and highest sense. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Life for the dead:*—I. SINNERS ARE BY NATURE DEAD. 1. Legally under the sentence of death (Rom. v.). We are guilty and condemned. The curse of the law and the wrath of God are upon all viewed in their relation to Adam. 2. Really. The body is subject to death and to all the miseries which precede death. The soul is dead in trespasses and sins. Natural death makes the body lifeless; spiritual death makes the soul graceless, and both soul and body comfortless for ever. (1) In natural death the body is without the soul; in spiritual the soul is without God. (2) Natural death disfigures the body; spiritual the soul. (3) Natural death makes the body cold; by spiritual the soul becomes cold toward God. (4) In the one a man loses all right to property that once was his; by the other men lose all their right which they had in Adam to communion with God. (5) As a dead body is without understanding, so the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. (6) A dead body cannot raise itself, neither can a dead soul. II. IN THE GOSPEL MEN ARE PROMISED LIFE. 1. This life is real. 2. It is suitable, removing condemnation, extracting the sting of death, imparting spiritual vitality to the condemned, guilty, and helpless. 3. Christ is this life, and the Holy Spirit applies it to the soul. 4. This life becomes part of a man's being. 5. This life, although obstructed in its growth, is capable of endless development. III. WHAT IT IS THAT QUICKENS THE SOUL OF THE DEAD. The voice of Christ is the Gospel, heard by the faith of the heart. (*J. W. Reeve, M.A.*) **Life in Himself.**—Life unoriginated, independent, absolute, eternal life (Psa. xxxvi. 9). I. SPIRITUAL. II. EVERFLOWING. III. OVERFLOWING. IV. ALL SATISFYING to men and angels. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *God is the focus and fountain of life:*—In Him life may be contemplated in its twofold activity. I. THE LIFE OF GOD PASSES FORTH FROM ITSELF. It lavishes itself through the realms of nothingness. It summons into being worlds, systems, intelligences, orders of existences unimagined before. In doing this it obeys no necessary law of self-expansion, but pours itself forth with that highest generosity that belongs to a perfect freedom. That is to say that God the Life is God the Creator. II. GOD IS BEING RETURNING INTO ITSELF, FINDING IN ITSELF ITS PERFECT SATISFACTION. God is thus the object of all dependent life. He is indeed the object of His own life; all His infinite powers and faculties turn ever inward with uncloyed delight upon Himself

as upon their one adequate end. We cannot approach more nearly to a definition of pleasure than by saying that it is the exact correspondence between a faculty and its object. Pleasure is thus a test of vitality; and God as being Life is the One Being who is supremely and perfectly happy. (*Canon Liddon.*) **And hath given Him authority to execute judgment.**—*The advent in judgment:*—I. WHO IS THE JUDGE? Christ. He must be Divine to work out so great a judgment; but His humanity is expressly given as a reason for His judgeship. 1. We know His character, and can rely on His fairness and goodness. 2. He knows us, can sympathize with our weakness, and can understand our temptations. 3. Having in His human life conquered the same temptations, He has a right to condemn us if we fail. 4. As Messianic King He has the office of judging those who submit to Him and those who reject Him. II. WHO ARE TO BE TRIED? 1. The dead. Death is no escape. Those who would not hear the voice of mercy must hear that of judgment. Spiritual death might prevent their hearing the first, but with physical death added they will hear the second. 2. All men. III. WHAT IS THE GROUND OF TRIAL? 1. Not opinions, feelings, professions, resolutions, but deeds. 2. Not what men expected of us, what the world did, what was fashionable, convenient, suitable or æsthetic in our conduct, but its moral character solely. The simplest but deepest lines of cleavage will separate men—the question of good or evil. 3. But this will be judged by One who reads the heart, weighs all circumstances, and characterizes an act according to its motive. Thus many deeds which the world accounts good will be condemned, and others that are condemned will be justified. IV. WHAT WILL THE SENTENCES BE? 1. A resurrection of life. The reward of obedience is for further obedience—not luxurious indolence. 2. A resurrection of judgment. To the impenitent death does not end all, nor any judgment-day. Their future is dark, but just and fair. V. WHEN WILL THIS JUDGMENT BE? No one can know. God has fixed it. Every day brings it nearer. To each man it comes virtually at death. (*W. F. Adeney, M.A.*) *The Son of Man our Judge:*—As a man His life will condemn us. I. His HUMILITY our pride. II. His TEMPERANCE our indulgence. III. His FORBEARANCE our impatience. IV. His CHASTITY our sensuality. V. His PIETY AND DEVOTION our ungodliness and worldly-mindedness. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **The Son of Man.**—1. In His exaltation (chap. i. 51); as being in heaven while on earth (chap. iii. 13). 2. As Lord of the Sabbath (Matt. xii. 8). 3. As blasphemed (Matt. xii. 32). 4. As coming in glory (Matt. xvi. 27). 5. As suffering (Matt. xvii. 12). 6. As rising (Mark ix. 9). 7. As Saviour (Matt. xviii. 11). 8. As sitting on His throne (Matt. xix. 28). 9. In His second advent (Matt. xxiv. 30). 10. As made under the law (Gal. iv. 4). 11. As subject to God's decrees (Matt. xxvi. 25). 12. As forgiving sins (Matt. ix. 6). 13. As houseless (Matt. viii. 20). 14. As wearing a golden crown (Rev. xiv. 14). 15. As Lord of the angels (Matt. xiii. 41). 16. As supreme Judge (Rev. i. 7). 17. As head of the Church (Rev. i. 13). (*Ibid.*) *The judgment of the Son of Man:*—Judgment, as Scripture knows it, is not the popular idea of judgment, which bids us be careful in reverence for the tribunal of human opinion; nor the scientific idea, which shows us how inexorably what we are about to-day will tell upon what we shall be; nor even the moral idea, which challenges us to say whether there is not a right and a wrong, and a choice which we can make between them. The judgment of Scripture is a simpler, deeper, stronger thing, which includes and explains all these. The judgment of Scripture is that which brings each man before God his Maker. In it God is a present, silent "Judge of all." God's revealed Word declares a judgment which must be stringent and searching, because it is the judgment of the All-Holy and All-Knowing. What question is it that we should ask? It is, "By what standard shall we be judged?" The text seems to suggest the answer, "The Father hath given to the Son authority to execute judgment, because He is" (the) "Son of Man." Not, as we might have expected, because He is Son of God, but because He is Son of Man. The Judge wears our manhood; His manhood equips Him for judgment, even as it equips Him for sympathy and compassion. It is by man's standard, then, that we are judged and shall be judged; and fairly, for it is both the judgment which tries us by what we are made to be, and the judgment which we know; the judgment which speaks within us, just in proportion as our manhood is true and our conscience clear and strong; the judgment which speaks to us still more clearly through the human voices of men and women better than ourselves, calling us to "quit as like men." In the Gospels we see the Son of Man beginning thus to judge. By the human instinct of compassion, the priest and Levite are condemned, and the good Samaritan approved; by the human instincts of gratitude and humility, the

forgiven, but unforgiving, servant is judged; by the common standard of faithful human service, and even by that of worldly sagacity and foresight, the servant who hid his lord's talent and the foolish virgins are judged; by comparison with the purely human qualities of zeal and pluck in the jewel collector, or of skilfulness even in the unjust steward, He rebukes men's slackness and unwisdom in the things that concern their souls; by the human instincts of charity, He declares that men shall be eternally judged, according as they have, or have not, regarded the appeal of the poor, sick, naked, hungry, and captive. Think, then, that we, individually and collectively, shall be judged by the standard of human excellence as it stands in our time, and as we may know it if we will. What a dignity and value this gives to the human life about us in all its width and variety. For there, amidst much that corrupts and confuses, are to be found the best thinkings, doings, and strivings of our time and place; and by them, as men of our time and place, we must be judged. In this respect there are some simple counsels which may help. We must, for example, often learn from those whom we can by no means wholly follow. The prudence of the unjust steward is commended, without sanction of his character; the Positivist, who believes in no hereafter, may be admirable in his tenderness for all the natural parts and sympathies of this present life; students, whom, perhaps, we must think narrowly indifferent to interests outside their own departments of knowledge, are often excellent examples to us by their thoroughness, their perseverance, their reverence for every fragment of fact. Again, there is judgment for some of us in simple things, in natural virtues. We may go high-flying after intellectual ambitions, and forget modesty and homely courtesy and kindness to those about us; or after special devotion and piety, while we neglect the simple duties of industry in daily work, or dutifulness at home, or brotherly kindness to Christians who are not of our sort. Once again, it would be well to judge ourselves by what is good in men of habits or temperament unlike our own; not to hug our own one-sidednesses, but to suspect them; to remember, if we are eager and easily moved, how much the slow, sober people have to teach us; or, if our pride is in moderation and solidity, how likely we are to need examples of warmer and less self-centred character, and a more generous appreciation of ideals. Remember, then, that the standard by which you must be judged is not that of your own low aims and narrow thoughts, but it is the standard of what you have the opportunity of raising those aims, or enlarging those thoughts, to be by a due use of all that is best and most inspiring in human life, as you have the privilege of knowing it. But we have not exhausted the meaning of the text. It cannot merely mean that we shall be judged by human standards. It must mean that we shall be judged by the standard of the true manhood of Christ, and of humanity, taught, restored, illuminated by Christ. We have His Name on our lips, His cross before our eyes, His teaching in the gospels, His means of grace lavishly given to us. Must there not be a judgment in this—a judgment because He is Son of Man revealing to His brother-men how they may be true men, as God their Father would have them be; and they will not? (*E. S. Talbot, D.D.*) *Christ will bring men to judgment*:—A man goes into an inn, and as soon as he sits down he begins to order his wine, his dinner, his bed; there is no delicacy in season which he forgets to bespeak. He stops at the inn for some time. By and by the bill is forthcoming, and it takes him by surprise. "I never thought of that!—I never thought of that!" "Why," says the landlord, "here is a man who is either a born fool or else a knave. What! never thought of the reckoning—never thought of settling with me!" After this fashion too many live. They eat and drink and sin, but they forget the inevitable hereafter, when for all the deeds done in the body the Lord will bring us into judgment. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Death will be followed by judgment*:—After a mission festival several pastors and deacons continued an hour together, when the conversation drifted from the heathen abroad to those around us, and the following story was told by a village miller:—"I sat at a garden concert with a friend of mine. The first part of the programme was ended, when an acquaintance of my friend's came to us. 'Have you heard,' said he to my friend, 'that Mr. R—— died yesterday quite suddenly? A great pity; he was an agreeable and clever business man, and a pleasant companion. Ah well! he enjoyed life while he lived, and he was quite right; for when we are once dead it's all finished.' 'Is it all finished? Do you really think there is an end of it?' said I. 'Ah!' returned he, 'I see you are one of the old superstitious ones. What shall come after death greater or better than this life? "As the tree falls, so it lies."' 'Quite right,' said I; "As the tree falls, so it lies;"

but—do not take it amiss, friend—when you wish to prove by this quotation that after death it is finished with respect to us, you have not considered the matter on all sides, or your opinion is a blind one. Near my mill I have a woodyard, and now and then I buy some trees to cut down. Often have I stood over the fallen trunks and thought of those words, "As the tree falls, so it lies;" none will grow one inch taller or thicker, better or worse; all that can be done in him is done. But now, dear sir, it is not all finished; does it not rather begin? I go from trunk to trunk proving the wood. "This," I say to myself, "will be good for building purposes, that will prove useful;" but for others, I say it is but fit for the fire. You know now how I think of the text. May God help us to become trees of righteousness.'" (*Der Glaubensbote.*)

Vers. 28, 29. **The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice.**—*The general resurrection*:—I. The RESURRECTION. 1. Its subjects. All who are in their graves. (1) The almost universal custom of preserving the remains of the departed bears witness to the truth of the text. No such custom obtains with reference to animals. The body was not formed to die, and men cherish the hope of its recovering its lost immortality. (2) Our text, therefore, gratifies the most sacred feelings of the human heart. Our separation from our loved ones is only temporary. (3) The same persons shall rise. Momentous changes, indeed, take place; but what changes take place between infancy and old age! Yet it is the same person in whom they transpire. (4) The analogy by which Scripture illustrates this mystery is that of grain sown in the earth, which dies in order to live again. 2. The power by which it is accomplished. Christ's voice. (1) Not the voice as heard through pastors, &c. The season for hearing, that for conversion, sanctification, comfort, &c., is over. This we can refuse to hear, but not that. (2) The voice of the archangel and the trump of God, terrible, irresistible, dead awakening. 3. The time. (1) It is determined in the counsels of God. (2) It will be at the winding up of the affairs of time, "the last day." The day of world's first judgment came; so did that of Sodom, and Babylon, and Jerusalem; and just as surely shall this. II. The JUDGMENT. All shall come forth. 1. The righteous. (1) They shall not taste of death. (2) Their bodies shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. (3) They shall obtain everlasting blessedness. 2. They that have done evil. (1) The unbelievers who are condemned already to have their condemnation confirmed. (2) They shall rise to be everlastingly banished. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The resurrection*:—What Christ avows and affirms is that He is the Son of God, and that is the first thing that was ever done in heaven—the eternal generation of the Son: that by which He proves this is that there shall be a resurrection of the body; and that is the last thing that shall be done in heaven. I. The DIGNITY of this resurrection. Marvel not at this—at your spiritual resurrection, that a sermon should work, or sacrament comfort. Deem not this a miracle. But there are things which we may wonder at. *Nil admirari* is but the philosopher's wisdom; he thinks it a weakness that anything should be strange to him. But Christian philosophy tells us that the first step to faith is to wonder with holy admiration at the ways of God with man. Be content, then, to wonder at this, that God should so dignify as to associate to His presence the body of man. God is a spirit, every soul is a spirit, angels are spirits, and therefore proportioned to heaven; so no wonder they are there. But wonder that God, who is all spirit, and is served by spirits, should have a love for this body. 1. Behold this love even here. (1) The Father was pleased to breathe into this body at first, in the creation. (2) The Son assumed this body in the redemption. (3) The Holy Ghost consecrates this body and makes it His temple by His sanctification. So the whole Trinity is exercised upon the dignifying of the body. 2. This purpose of dignifying the body is opposed—(1) By those who violate and mangle the body which God made in inhuman persecutions. (2) By those who defile the garment Christ wore by licentiousness. Some of the Roman emperors made it treason to carry a ring that had their picture on it to any place in the house of low office. What name can we give that sin to make the body of Christ the body of a harlot? (1 Cor. vi. 15–18). (3) By those who sacrilegiously profane the temple of the Holy Ghost by neglecting the duties belonging to the dead bodies of God's saints. 3. Those exceed this purpose who—(1) Pamper with wanton delicacies or sadden and disfigure with fastings and disciplines His own workmanship. (2) Who dishonour or undervalue the body or forbear marriage. (3) Who keep any rag of a dead man's skin, or chips of their bones, or lock of their hair for

a relic, amulet, or antidote against temporal or spiritual calamities. II. The APPROACH of this resurrection. The former resurrection Christ said, "Now is"; of this He said, "It is coming." In a sense this applies to death. The resurrection being the coronation of man, his lying down in the grave is his sitting down on that throne where he is to receive his crown. To the child now born we may say, "The day is coming"; to him that is old, "The hour is come"; but to him that is dead, "The minute is come"—because to him there are no more minutes till it do come. III. The GENERALITY of this resurrection. It reaches to all that are in the grave. God hath made the body as a house for the soul till He call her out; and He hath made the grave a house for the body till He call it up. Shall none, then, rise but those who have enjoyed a grave? It is a comfort for a dying man, an honour to his memory, the duty of his friends, a piece of the communion of saints, to have a consecrated grave; but the word here is *in monumentis—i.e.*, in receptacles of bodies of whatever kind. Some nations burnt their dead, there the fire is their grave; some drowned them, there the sea; some hung them on trees, there the air. The whole mansion of the dead shall be emptied. IV. The INSTRUMENT. The voice of the Son of Man. In the spiritual resurrection it is the voice of the Son of God, lest the human vehicle should be despised. Here it is that of the Son of Man, who has felt all our infirmities, lest we should be terrified at the presence of the offended God. The former we may hear if we choose; the latter we must hear whether we will or not. God whispers in the voice of the Spirit; He speaks a little louder in the voice of a man; but let the man be a Boanerges, yet no thunder is heard over all the world. But the voice at the resurrection shall be heard by the very dead, and all of them. V. The DIVERSE END. 1. You have seen moral men, or impious men go in confidently enough; but they will "come forth" in another complexion. They never thought of what was after death. Even the best are shaken with a consideration of that. But when I begin this fear in this life, I end it in my death, and pass away cheerfully; but the wicked begin this fear when the trumpet sounds, and never shall end it. 2. Fix on the conditions "done good." To have known good, believed it, extended it, preached it, will not serve. They must be rooted in faith, and there bring forth fruit. Conclusion: Remember with thankfulness the several resurrections that God hath given you. 1. From supersition and ignorance, in which you in your fathers lay dead. 2. From sin and a love of it, in which you in your youth lay dead. 3. From sadness, in which you in your worldly crosses or spiritual temptations lay dead; and—4. Assure yourselves that God, who loves to perfect His own work, will fulfil His promise in your resurrection to life. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *The doctrine of the resurrection* is peculiarly Christian. With natural reason, assisted by some light lingering in tradition, a few philosophers spelled out the immortality of the soul; but that the body should rise again is brought to light by Christ. It is the key-stone of the Christian arch; for if Christ be not risen our faith is vain. It was the main weapon of the early missionaries, and therefore should be oftener preached. It is, moreover, continually blessed of God to arouse the minds of men. We shall—I. EXPOUND THE TEXT. 1. There is a forbidding to marvel at the renewing of natural life, as in the case of Lazarus, &c., and at the quickening of the spiritually dead—both of which are things which it is legitimate to wonder at by way of admiration, but not in the spirit of insulting unbelief. But the greater marvel is the general resurrection. Yet to you it is less than that of the marvel of saving dead souls. In the former there is no opposition to omnipotence, but in the latter the elements of death are so potent that regeneration is a complicated miracle of grace and power. Nevertheless, to the few the former is the greatest marvel. Let us be admonished by these marvelling Jews. Does it seem impossible for that ungodly man to be converted? That you should be supported in your trouble? That your corruptions should be cleansed? Doubt no more. Your Saviour will raise the dead. 2. The coming hour. (1) "An hour," because near to Him: since we do not begin to look for an hour that is remote. It may be a thousand years off, but with Him that is but as one day. Like Him, therefore, count it close, and act as though it would come to-morrow. (2) "Coming," therefore, certain. Dynasties may stand or wither; but the hour of resurrection is sure, whatever else may be contingent or doubtful. Every second brings it nearer. Look at it, then, as a thing that ever cometh—(3) *the* hour *par excellence*. We hear of hours which have been big with the fate of nations, crises in history; but here is the culminating crisis of all. 3. All "that are in their graves." Those before the flood, those after; from east, west, north, south; mighty empires, &c., and you. 4. "Shall hear His voice." (1) Why, the ear has gone!

But the God who gives the ear to the new-born babe, shall renew yours. (2) That voice now sounding in this place is not heard by those who have ears; yet those who have no ears shall then hear it. How deaf must those be who are more deaf than the dead. You must hear the summons to judgment; God grant that you may hear the summons to mercy. 5. "Shall come forth." Not only emerge, but be manifested. Hypocrisy will be unmasked, and unobtrusive good acknowledged. 6. "Those who have done good and those who have done evil." (1) Death makes no change in character, and we must expect no improvement after death. (2) Only two characters will rise. There are no mingled characters. (3) All will be judged according to their works which have evidenced their faith. (4) They will meet with different dooms. II. DRAW LESSONS FROM THE TEXT. 1. Of adoring reverence. If the dead are to rise at the voice of Christ let us worship Him. 2. Of consolation to those who mourn departed friends. Weep not as if thou hadst cast thy treasure into the sea, thou hast only laid it in a casket whence thou shalt receive it brighter than before. 3. Of self-examination. (1) What shall be your position? (2) How shall you meet before God those whom you have sinned with before men? (3) How shall you meet Him as your Judge who would have been your Saviour? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The resurrection:*—I. THE EVIDENCE BY WHICH IT IS ESTABLISHED. 1. The express declarations of the commissioned servants of God (Heb. ix. 19; Job xix. 25–27; Psa. xvi. 9–11; Isa. xxvi. 19; Hos. xiii. 14; Dan. xii. 2; Matt. xxvii. 52, 53; 1 Thess. iv. 13–17; 1 Cor. 15). 2. Our Saviour's own resurrection. If Christ did not rise, our faith is vain; if He did, He can raise us, and His resurrection is a pledge of ours. 3. Let this evidence produce on your minds its legitimate impression, and banish all uncertainty. 4. The folly of scepticism will appear when we consider that this is in harmony with reason. For admitting God's infinite power, this is not impossible; and granting His infinite goodness, it is certain. II. THE AGENCY BY WHICH IT SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED. 1. By hearing Christ's voice. The archangel's trumpet is a symbol of that in its awakening power. 2. The mode is uncertain, but Christ has innumerable resources of which we have no knowledge. III. THE IDENTITY OF THE BURIED WITH THE RAISED. 1. If new bodies were produced they could not be said to come out of their graves. The word "resurrection" suggests something different from a new creation. Besides, it would be contrary to equity that one body should do good or evil and another be rewarded or punished. 2. Still "we shall all be changed," but not so as to lose our identity. The glorified Christ is the same Jesus as "the Man of sorrows." We shall be like Him, yet the same persons that we are now. IV. THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE ACT. V. THE IMPROVEMENT. The subject suggests—1. A powerful motive to seek an interest in the Christian salvation. We must all die; and if we have not been saved we shall rise to the resurrection of damnation. 2. Comfort under the loss of near and dear relatives. 3. Confidence in the prospect of our own dissolution. (*P. Grant.*) *The resurrection brought to light by Christ:*—I stood on the top of the Catskills one bright morning. On the top of the mountain was a crown of flashing gold, while all beneath was rolling, writhing, contorted cloud. But after a while the arrows of light shot from heaven, began to make the glooms of the valley strike tent. The mists went skurrying up and down like horsemen in wild retreat. The fogs were lifted, and dashed, and whirled. Then the whole valley became one grand illumination; and there were horses of fire, and chariots of fire, and thrones of fire, and the flapping wings of angels of fire. Gradually, without sound of trumpet or roll of wheel, they moved off. The green valleys looked up. Then the long flash of the Hudson unsheathed itself, and there were the white flocks of villages lying amid the rich pastures, golden grain-fields, and the soft, radiant cradle of the valley, in which a young empire might sleep. So there hangs over all the graves, and sepulchres, and mausoleums a darkness that no earthly lamp can lift; but from above the Sun of Righteousness shines, and the dense fogs of scepticism having lifted, the valleys of the dead stand in the full gush of the morning of the resurrection. (*T. De W. Talmage, D.D.*) *The conqueror conquered:*—If I were to call on you to give the names of the world's great conquerors, you would say, Cæsar, Alexander, Philip, and the first Napoleon. You have missed the greatest. The men whose names have just been mentioned were not worthy the name of corporal when compared with him. He rode on the black horse that crossed the fields of Waterloo and Atlanta, and bloody hoofs have been set on the crushed hearts of the race. He has conquered his every land and besieged every city; and to-day, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, New York, and Brooklyn are going down under his fierce and long-continued assault. That conqueror is Death. He carries a black flag, and takes no prisoners. He digs

a trench across the hemispheres and fills it with carcases. Had not God kept creating new men, the world, fifty times over, would have swung lifeless through the air; not a foot stirring in the cities, not a heart beating—a depopulated world—a ship without a helmsman at the wheel, or a captain on deck, or crew in the rigging. Herod of old slew only those of two years old and under, but this monster strikes all ages. Genghis Khan sent five millions into the dust; but this, hundreds of thousands of millions. Other kings sometimes fall back and surrender territory once gained; but this king has kept all he won, save Lazarus and Christ. The last One escaped by Omnipotent power, while Lazarus was again captured and went into the dust. What a cruel conqueror! What a bloody king! His palace is a huge sepulchre; his flowers the faded garlands that lie on coffin lids; his music the cry of desolated households; the chalice of his banquet a skull; his pleasure-fountains the falling tears of a world. But that throne shall come down; that sceptre shall break; that palace shall fall under bombardment, "For the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." (*Ibid.*) *The inevitableness of the resurrection:*—An infidel German countess said her grave never should be opened. She ordered it to be covered by a solid slab of granite; that around it should be placed square blocks of stone, and that the whole should be fastened together by iron clamps. On the stone, by her order these words were cut, "This burial-place, purchased to all eternity, must never be opened." Thns she defied the Almighty. But a little seed sprouted under the covering, and the tiny shoot found its way between two of the slabs, and grew there, slowly and surely until it burst the clamps asunder, and lifted the immense blocks. Man's power fails even to secure a tomb from natural destruction; much less can it secure the soul against that day in which each one is to give account of the deeds done in the body. (*J. L. Nye.*) *Evil* may be contemplated from two points of view, either on the side of its positive malignity, its will and power to work mischief, or else on that of its negative worthlessness, and, so to speak, its good-for-nothingness; *πονμρός* contemplates evil from the former point of view, and *φᾶυλος* from the latter. There are words in most languages which contemplate evil under this latter aspect, the impossibility of any true gain ever coming forth from it. Thus "nequam" (in strictness opposite to frugi), and "nequitia" in Latin, "vaurien" in French, "naughty" and "naughtiness" in English, taugenichts, "schlecht," schlechligkeit in German. This notion of worthlessness is the central notion of *φᾶυλος* (by some identified with "faul," foul), which in Greek runs successively through the following meanings: light, unstable, blown about by every wind, small, slight, mediocre, of no account, worthless, bad; but still bad predominantly in the sense of worthless. *Φᾶυλος*, as used in the New Testament, has reached this latest stage of its meaning; and *τὰ φᾶυλα πραξαντες*, are set over against *τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες* and condemned as such to the "resurrection of damnation." (*Archbishop Trench.*) *The resurrection credible:*—Wycliffe's corpse was burnt to ashes, and these ashes were cast into the river; carried into the sea, and thence dispersed in a thousand directions, can the particles ever again be reunited? The Christian philosopher sees no difficulty in the case. Did any of these changes happen to the Reformer's body irrespectively of those natural laws which God has ordained? And, if even so, is it not just as easy for Him to reverse their action as it was to give them that action originally? It is a well-known chemical law, that, by the use of proper agencies, bodies thoroughly dissolved may be recovered and restored to their pristine shape. A single illustration will suffice. If we throw a lump of solid camphor into a vessel of spirits of wine, it will soon be completely dissolved; nevertheless, by diluting the spirits of wine with water, we may recover the camphor in the form of a sediment; nay, with the loss of a few grains, we may restore it to its original shape. So, too, of a silver vase dissolved in aquafortis. Beyond all controversy, these experiments are, in the eyes of the philosopher, far less marvellous than the act of reconstituting a dispersed, disorganized body; and yet, bearing in mind the infinite power of Jehovah, we can conceive it just as easy for Him thus to restore originally as to create. *The future punishment of the wicked:*—A professor in one of our leading colleges some time ago went to the president with his doubts upon the subject of endless punishment, and confessed that he could "hardly believe the doctrine." "I couldn't believe it at all," was the president's reply, "if the Bible did not teach it." *Everlasting damnation:*—A venerable minister preached a sermon on the subject of eternal punishment. On the next day it was agreed among some thoughtless young

men, that one of them should endeavour to draw him into a dispute, with the design of making a jest of him and of his doctrine. The wag accordingly went, and commenced by saying, "I believe there is a small dispute between you and me, sir, and I thought I would call this morning and try to settle it." "Ah," said the clergyman, "what is it?" "Why," replied the wag, "you say that the wicked will go into everlasting punishment, and I do not think that they will." "Oh, if that is all," answered the minister, "there is no dispute between you and *me*. If you turn to Matt. xxv. 46 you will find that the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I advise you to go immediately and settle it with Him." (*W. Baxendale.*)

Ver. 30. **I can of My own self do nothing; as I hear I judge.**—*Christ's present judgment:*—This verse is a conclusion of this part of Christ's apology for His curing of the man, and commanding him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day, and for His asserting His unity and equality with the Father; wherein, from the former purpose, he sums up these conclusions: 1. That He is inseparable from the Father in operation (ver. 19), having no private power of His own (as they conceived of Him as a mere man); but the same in essence, power, and operation with Him. 2. That He is in all the Father's counsels, and hath the power of administration of all things communicate to Him from the Father, which is pointed out under the name of hearing, as it is verse 19, by seeing, to hold forth the spirituality of the way of communicating, and His infinite comprehension of all that is communicate, as hearing and seeing all. 3. That His government and administration is most just, as seeking no satisfaction to any will of His own, contrary to, or diverse from the Father's, as He is God; and that He doth this not only as God simply, but as God now incarnate also, being the same still with the Father, and acting in all things according to the will of God. And though as man, He have a will distinct from His will as God, and so diverse from the Father's will, yet that did act in subordination to the will of God (Matt. xxvi. 39). Whence learn: 1. The divinity of Christ is a truth that may no ways be quarrelled with, and doth call for our second and serious thoughts; therefore doth He recapitulate His apology, that this truth may be inculcate. 2. Such is the strict conjunction and perfect unity of the Father and the Son, that the Son neither doth, nor can do anything without the fellowship of the Father; so that in all His working the Father is to be seen and taken up; for "I can of Mine own self do nothing," saith He. 3. Christ, in the administration of all things, and executing of His purposes in this life, and at the day of judgment, is upon the Father's counsel, acting from Him, and all Christ's administrations are upon counsel and conclusion taken betwixt the Father and the Son, for, saith he, "As I hear, I judge." 4. Christ's administrations and sentences are all just and right, doing injury and violence to no man, nor ought they to be stumbled at by any, for, "My judgment is just," saith He. 5. The reason of the justice of Christ's judgment is because it is agreeable to the will of the Father, with whom He is one, and whose will is the rule of justice, as being supreme and absolute Lord; which will Christ, being incarnate and God-man, did conform Himself unto in all things, for, "My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will" (nor have any will contrary to, or diverse from His, as hath been explained), "but the will of the Father, which hath sent Me." (*G. Hutcheson.*) *Christ's present judgment:*—Note—1. There is a moral difference in the judgment of men concerning Divine truth. 2. Diversity of judgment is dependent on moral condition. 3. Moral condition is resolvable into one of two great principles of action—self-seeking or God-seeking. 4. Adoption of the Divine will is the essential condition of just judgments. Their principles—1. Explain the perversion of the Bible by its avowed disciples. 2. Indicate the method in which the gospel should be preached. 3. Supply a test of fitness for the work of the gospel ministry. 4. Show the necessity of Divine influence. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The unclouded heart:*—1. For the training of goodness, the ancient reliance was on the right discipline of habit and affection: the modern is rather on the illumination of the understanding. Vice is made a blunder of intellect, and, like optical delusions, to be cured by the most approved instruments for seeing. 2. This prescription is attractive from its apparent simplicity. It seems to take away all mystery from the moral emotions. But its value disappears the moment we use it, as, say, the miser, the cheat, the insane candidate for glory. When has it ever made such generous, just, and meek. It is true that you have *only* to give the slave of passion a different view of the objects of his desire and he is set free. It is equally true that you have *only* to make the paralytic run and

he will be well. 3. Christ, reversing the order of the explanation, placed the truth in a juster point of view. He knew that if sometimes because the reason is darkened the passions are awake, it more often happens that because the passions are awake the reason is darkened. Pure sympathies make a clear intellect. When auditors, feeling that, "never man spake like this man," asked, "how knowest this man letters?" &c., He said, "My judgment is just *because* I seek not Mine own will," &c.; and He instructed others how to gain a like discernment: "If any man do His will," &c. "Whatever be the word on which the judgment may be engaged, it will be invariably ordered by the sympathies of a just, disinterested, and holy mind. 4. Even in His abstruser toils, these are the wise man's mightiest power. The most turbid clouds which darken reason are those which interest, fear, and ambition spread, and these the pure affections sweep away. How often will a child penetrate the centre of some great truth. A pure-hearted man will be a right-minded man. 5. All the great hindrances to impartiality in the quest of truth have their seat in some class of selfish feelings. The excessive eagerness about reputation produces a thousand pitiable distortions of understanding. In one it takes the shape of a determination to be original and so extinguishes his perception of all ancient excellence, in another it passes into the pride of being moderate and sound, and so he dreads eccentricities far more than falsehoods. And what is partizanship but a collection of selfish feelings, fatal to all the equities of reason. 6. But the mere absence of selfishness is not the only condition for a just judgment. Impartiality will accomplish nothing without impulse. Clearness of intellectual view will be found not in one who follows the light without the deep love of it, but in Him who seeks the will of One who sent Him, and who trusts it with a "love that casteth out fear!" I. ON QUESTIONS OF PRACTICAL MORALS this principle holds good. The moral habits and tastes of men form their opinions much more frequently than their opinions form their habits, so that their theoretical sentiments are little more than a systematic defence after the act. Any moral practice may be recommended; yet how many things we palliate would be condemned by the very act of expounding them to others—duelling, *e.g.* It is fearful to reflect how the moral sentiments are modified by the atmosphere of social influence; how the indications of the unperverted conscience may become obscured or lost, and the possibility of remorse killed out. II. IN ITS JUDGMENT OF HUMAN CHARACTER the same principle rules. The pure affections still the confusion of the senses and remove all motive for not seeing men and life exactly as they are. One who looks on the world as his appointed post of strenuous duty and feels on him the Divine charge to leave it better than he found it must close neither eye nor heart against its ills; and as for its charities and virtues, delighting in them all, he discerns them all; bringing as they do the refreshment of a generous veneration what temptation has he to doubt or decry them. To the selfish, on the other hand, men are tools and have to be flattered into service, and accustomed to speak of good qualities which they do not possess, the mind dwells to such an extent on the negation of excellence that it ceases to believe in it, and thus the nobler half of human nature undergoes permanent eclipse. III. Those who "seek their own will," are liable to error respecting those CHANGES IN SOCIETY which are brought about by the nobler forces of the human will. It is happy for the world that over the vision of its greatest enemies, their own selfishness spreads a film concealing the powers which will effect their over-throw. In spite of all the pampered despot's vigilance, conspiracy, conducted by lean and praying patriots, has gone on unnoticed before his very eyes, and suddenly the tempest bursts. It is of the very nature of guilty power to be surprised by the apparition of high-minded virtue in a people. Conclusion: 1. Selfishness under the form of jealousy draws another cloud over the judgment and hides from it all that is fairest in kindred minds. 2. But our judgments will not be right unless our sympathies be not only disinterested but pure. In addition to not seeking our own will, we must seek God's. The partialities of the affections are nobler every way than those of self-love; but they are partialities still; and while they make our judgments merciful, may prevent their being just. (*J. Martineau, D.D.*)

Vers. 31–40. **If I bear witness of Myself My witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of Me.**—*The witnesses of the Son:*—I. A GREAT WITNESS. His forerunner. The Baptist as a witness for Christ was—1. Human (ver. 34; *cf.* iii. 31). 2. Brilliant. While he lasted he was like the lamp that gave light to the whole household of the Jewish people. So should every Christian in

his place as parent, master, teacher, citizen, be a blazing torch, or, at least, a useful lamp, to guide others to Christ (Matt. v. 16; Phil. ii. 15). 3. Acceptable. For a time the people buzzed round him like moths round a flame (Luke iii. 15). He was therefore a witness of their own selection, and hence one that might be supposed to be impartial. 4. Transcient. So Christ's witnesses can seldom count on protracted popularity (Heb. vii. 23). 5. Yet permanent (ver. 33). A word truly spoken for Christ never dies. II. A GREATER WITNESS. His works. 1. More exalted in its origin (ver. 34; *cf.* iii. 31). John's was from earth, Christ's from heaven. 2. More direct in its expression. Christ's works, being the Father's, proceeded straight from Him without passing through a subsidiary messenger as John. 3. More conclusive in its significance. John's was necessarily imperfect, he being but human. But Christ's works were such as the Father only could do (chap. iii. 2, xiv. 10, 11). The inference from verses 36 and 39 was irresistible that Christ was the Son of God. III. THE GREATEST WITNESS. His Father. 1. The Scriptures the medium of the Father's testimony (vers. 39, 46). 2. The Scriptures the Father's testimony *par excellence*. The Father speaks in them by the Holy Ghost. To reject them is to reject the last and highest form of evidence God can give. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The witness bearer*:—We are not informed whether our Lord's opponents expressed their feelings, but knowing all things, He replied to their secret objections that the testimony was valid, inasmuch as He was not alone in bearing it (ver. 31). Such testimony could not be given by any man (ver. 34); it could be given so as to be on a footing of equality with His own only by "another" such as Himself, viz., the "Father." The testimony was—1. "Of another," implying distinctness of personality, and yet equality of testimony in value. 2. That of the God of Truth, known to Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father as it cannot be known to men. Consider, then, the Father's testimony to Jesus by John. I. THEY HAD SENT TO JOHN (ver. 33). Some of them, perhaps, had themselves been deputies (chap. i. 19). By taking this step they had manifested a high opinion of John's testimony. What authority, then, ought that testimony to have on the subject they had submitted to him? II. JOHN BORE WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. John repudiated the Messiahship of himself, but announced Jesus as the "Lamb of God." Had they put by this testimony? They were now reminded of it. III. THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S TESTIMONY WAS NOT HIS, BUT THAT OF HIM THAT HAD SENT HIM (ver. 34). Man of himself was not equal to the task of witnessing to the glory of Christ. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." Man may be employed to proclaim what God is pleased to communicate, but the authority is not his, but God's. John was sent from God to bear witness of the light. How vain, then, to speak of the authority of the Church in the Roman sense. It abides in the Word which she is commissioned to proclaim, and in that only. IV. JOHN'S PLACE AND HONOUR IN SUCH A CAUSE (ver. 35). 1. He was a burning and shining lamp, a vessel prepared and ordained to diffuse light. The oil of grace in his heart was kindled from above, not from below. All ministers of Christ are of a similar character. 2. The Jews had rejoiced in this light, and had acknowledged John as a messenger from God. It was for a season only, however. John's ministry was short, and their willingness to rejoice in it was shorter still. When they found that he was the herald of no political deliverer, when they understood the conditions of entering the kingdom John predicted, and when he pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, they gave him up. Lessons: 1. Have we received the gospel as the Word of God? It is only when we hear God in the Word that we hear at all. 2. Were we once more willing to rejoice in the gospel than we are now? (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Christ's witnesses*:—God alone can testify touching the nature of a Divine relation. Christ has the witness of—I. THE BAPTIST. His predicted forerunner. II. HIS MIRACLES. III. THE FATHER. 1. At His baptism (Matt. iii. 17). 2. At His transfiguration (Luke ix. 35). 3. In the temple (John xii. 29). IV. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. 1. Old Testament. 2. New. V. HIS DISCIPLES in whom He dwells. VI. HIS ENEMIES, the rancour and persistence of whose opposition is a testimony to His Person and worth. (*J. W. Burn.*) *The witness of the Old Testament Scriptures to Jesus Christ*:—I. They witness to Him BY THE GREAT NEED OF A SAVIOUR, revealed by the lives and expressed in the words of the noblest of men. II. They witness to Him BY THE UNSATISFYING EXPEDIENTS to which men resorted to meet that need—law, ritual, sacrifice. III. They witness to Him BY TURNING MEN'S THOUGHTS from the past and the present to the future. The golden age of Israel was ever before her, not behind. IV. They witness to Him BY THE UNREALIZED IDEALS of Prophet, King, and Priest, which

Christ alone fulfilled. 1. As Prophet, He spoke with authority. 2. As King, He wrought with authority. 3. As Priest, He forgave with authority. (*C. M. Hardy, B.A.*) **These things I say, that ye might be saved.**—*Have an object:*—A minister once had the celebrated Andrew Fuller as a hearer. After service, both were invited to a neighbouring house for refreshment. The preacher, who evidently thought he had made no failure, was desirous to ascertain Mr. Fuller's opinion of his effort. The veteran divine seemed unwilling to be drawn out upon that subject, and for some time took no notice of his younger brother's allusions and hints. At length a remark was made of so inviting a character as that Mr. Fuller could not well avoid making some reply. He said, "I gave close attention to your sermon, and tried to ascertain at what you were aiming it: what was your object?" Several years afterwards that preacher referred to Mr. Fuller's inquiry as a cutting reproof which he deeply felt, and which had the effect of changing essentially the character of both his motives and his labours. (*Clerical Anecdotes.*) **He was a burning and a shining light.**—I. In the ANALOGY employed by our Lord we have the threefold characteristic of a Christian minister—light, heat, and lustre. He is a living lantern. "Light in the Lord." 1. The first qualification for a Christian teacher is that he sees. He has heard the voice, "Let there be light," and the voice has divided the light from the darkness. 2. The Christian doctrine is that the world and human nature are dark, and that Christianity is a light shining in a dark place. 3. In harmony with this view, every Christian man, and especially the Christian teacher, should be a light-bringer, none the less so because his temperament and character are called to a different routine of duties, or develop a varied order of excellences. There may be more or less of the red flare of human passion or the beautiful white light of love. Light is one, but it shines through various affecting media. There is light—(1) In the eye, by which we know sensible objects; (2) In the understanding, by which we know scientific relations and are able to reason, &c.; (3) In the will, which affects the whole range of our moral vision; (4) but we see most clearly when we see through our affections. 4. But the Christian, like John, must be a burning and shining light—the marriage of knowledge and zeal; the white and red lights of life; impetuosity and prudence; Peter and John going up to the temple; the jewels on the high priest's breastplate; the gorgeous red of the ruby, the soft blue of the sardonyx, the cataract splendour of the diamond. II. Our Lord permits the designation to wear the form of EULOGY. John was an extraordinary teacher every way. 1. When any insist on ecclesiastical authority, I like to point to John the Baptist. How strangely he must have startled the ordinary opinions of his day. To the priests his mission must have appeared most heretical and disorderly. How strange that the conservators of religion are ever the last to learn the meanings of a great revelation. But when the Word of the Lord burns in the heart of a prophet he cannot hold back. 2. John was no dreamer, but never did prophet appear more so, proclaiming the visionary kingdom at hand. In the nature of things the light would not be comprehended by the darkness. Suddenly, in the death state of the Jewish nation, John rose. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent ye." God's turning to man the plea for man's turning to God—the sum and seal of the gospel lies in that. III. GENERALIZATIONS. The burning and the shining light was—1. Before his age. The age was one of formalism and religious apathy. John was the impersonation of reality and earnestness. The most dreadful sight on earth is that of a preaching machine, yet that is often preferred to a prophet. 2. He was banished from society by his convictions. All men who leave the formalism of the present moment must make up their minds for the desert. But it is there we learn our true strength and the meaning of our mission. 3. He died a martyr to his faithfulness. (*Paxton Hood.*) *Sacrifice and submission:*—Suppose it were certainly predicted of your child that he should grow up the servant of other men, that he should have none of this world's honours, and that his life should be made up of sacrifice and submission; would you not conceive it a dreary prospect? This prospect was realized in John; but the Master pronounced it grand. The poet sings, "Lives of great men all remind us," &c. Thousands of young people have read these lines with hopefulness; of full-grown persons with misgiving; of the old who have wished that they had never heard them. But what are the elements of a grand life? There are easy, pleasant, showy, restless, plodding, successful, and average lives; but of grand lives two only are possible, both realized in Christ and in those who are like Him. I. THE LIFE OF SACRIFICE. There are those in this world whom God calls to live for others, and the wants of others are to them the gate of everlasting glory. It may

be the poor, sick, penitent, orphan, one's country, church, household, parish, city, or hamlet. Human want is everywhere. To resolve to live for others, to give time, wealth, prayers, that others not so fortunate may be helped, cared for, taught, and that not grudgingly or of necessity, nor for profession or pay or praise, and on the first motion, and in faith—that is the way to make life sublime. And it is sublime because—1. It contradicts the desires of the heart, which never go that way by themselves, and involves that most glorious of victories, the conquest of self. 2. Because it is like the life of Christ and of those who have loved Him best. II. THE LIFE OF HOLY SUBMISSION. In this life there is what is called the inevitable. Often this takes a formidable shape, and seems as if it might wreck the whole life. The wider the range of this enemy of peace, the greater the trial to a sensitive and eager spirit. But submission to the inevitable must take the form of intelligent resignation to the will of God to ennoble life. To this end—1. The mind must be kept in check by the thought of God. 2. The spirit of complaint be checked. 3. The habit of cheerfulness cultivated. Lessons: 1. One of warning to the prosperous: the one thing in their life which could have given it grandeur is lacking, and failure will be written on it at last without sacrifice and submission. 2. One of consolation to the unfortunate: acceptance of one's lot as from God, and making the best of it, makes it glorious. 3. Put, then, away mock heroic ideas of grandeur. There are lofty lives where the world cannot see, but God can; and noble lives, although covered with this world's tinsel glory, which will one day utterly fade away. (*Morgan Dix, D.D.*) *Light*:—The Word is a hand-lamp. Candles of tallow were first used, then lamps with wicks of flax were universally substituted. The ancients, in the absence of tables, used candlesticks from twelve inches to five feet high, made of wood, bronze, marble, silver and gold, with several branches. That of Antiochus was adorned with jewels set in chains. They were made in the form of lilies, seals, vines, and other figures. Lamps were used in marriage ceremonies, and placed in sepulchres. Olive oil was used, which on festive occasions was highly perfumed. Sometimes the lamps were held by the domestics standing round the table. Emblematically ministers are called candles (Zech. iv.; Rev. i., xi. 4). The Rabbis were called "Candles of the Law; Lamps of the Light." Light and fire were symbols of God (chap. i. 4, iii. 20). Lamps are required only in the sun's absence, so at Christ's coming John disappears. The Church is symbolized under the sign of a candlestick (Rev. i. 20). Caravans in the desert at night are preceded by a brilliant lantern, which lights all who follow. Should the bearer be careless, "Let your light shine" sounds from all. Christ was never called, like John, a "light-bearer"; the word light as applied to Him is entirely different. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The light and the lamp*:—Just as Christ was not a Light, but the Light, so John was not a lamp, but the lamp; he was the friend and servant of the Bridegroom, who was to go before Him with the torch of his testimony. Burning like fire, his call to repentance penetrated into the hearts of men; brightly shining, full of gospel truth, he went before, lighting the way which led to the Lamb of God. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The torch-bearer*:—John was not a permanent sun; he was the torch which cannot burn without consuming itself. Critics have interpreted the article as signifying the torch *par excellence*, as alluding to Sir. xlviii. 1, "the word (of Elias) shone like a torch," and as comparing John to the well-known torch-bearer who walked before the bridegroom in a nuptial procession; but the article simply means the light, of which there never was more than one in the house. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The lamp that burneth and shineth*:—The two epithets express the same idea; that of the ephemeral brilliance of a torch which wastes as it gives light. The imperfect "was" proves that the torch is now extinguished. John was imprisoned or dead. (*Ibid.*) A lamp shines by burning, and burns in shining; the sun wastes not while raying forth its beams. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Burning and shining lives*:—Some shine but do not burn; others burn but do not shine. True grace in the soul does both. Basil thundered in his preaching and lightened in his life. Of the martyrs Rogers and Bradford it was difficult to decide whether their eloquence or their holiness shone the brighter. (*Van Doren.*) *Let your light shine*:—As I have seen the glowworm at late evening, by the silent side of an empty English lane, mount some tall spike of grass and turn its tiny lamp, content to hang, head downwards, itself unseen, so that the exquisite soft green light which God had given it might be visible in its loveliness; so may one find in this world's lowly and unfrequented paths Christ's light-bearers, who shed each his own sweet love-light round a narrow circle of the dark, that the wayfarer who sees may praise, not his unsightly and, sooth to say, concealed self.

but that great Father in heaven who lit this faint taper upon earth, even as He lit the nobler fires which burn far up in heaven. But just as I have shut the poor glow-worm in a dark box or under an inverted dish, yet found that it spent all its radiance there unseen, only for sake of love, and because shine it must: so will the true soul, whom his Lord shall chance to imprison from shedding light on any human eye, rejoice no less to let his devout affections and gracious deeds be seen of Him who looks through the densest cover, and knows how to bestow an open reward. (*J. Oswald Dykes, D.D.*) *Christians must shine*:—Christians! it is your duty not only to be good, but to shine; and, of all the lights which you kindle on the face, joy will reach furthest out to sea, where troubled mariners are seeking the shore. Even in your deepest griefs, rejoice in God. As waves phosphoresce, let joys flash from the swing of the sorrows of your souls. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The benefit of light*:—The man who carries a lantern in a dark night can have friends all around him, walking safely by the help of its rays, and he not defrauded. So he who has the God-given light of hope in his breast can help on many others in this world's darkness, not to his own loss, but to their precious gain. (*Ibid.*) *The value of light*:—A blacksmith can do nothing when his fire is out, and in this respect he is the type of a minister. If all the lights in the outside world are quenched, the lamp which burns in the sanctuary ought still to remain undimmed. For that fire no curfew must ever be rung. *Burning and shining lights*:—Paul, Peter, James, or John—Luke, Mark, Matthew, or Apollos—Andrew, Philip, Barnabas, or Stephen—each would be a burning and shining light: in one the lustre might dart from the pen, in another from the tongue; from one might flash the lightnings of eloquence, from another the more quiet beam of lucid exposition. St. Bernard may illuminate a court, or Thomas à Kempis a cloister; Wickliffe may lighten a rectory or a kingdom; Luther may blaze over an age; Brainerd and Elliott may spend their fiery light in rousing the latent emotions of Indian tribes; or Williams, in identifying Christianity to savages with the arts of life; Whitfield may be the voice of one crying in the wilderness, echoless as soon as uttered; Madame Chantal, the glorious Elizabeth of Hungary, or the lovely Florence Nightingale, may show how the Tabitha and Dorcas spirit is not confined to any age, to cottage, or to court. But the fact about Christianity is, that it turns all its possessors, all its sound-hearted professors, into burning and shining lights. (*Paxton Hood.*) *The self-consuming life*:—As a burning and shining light while illuminating others consumes itself, so Christian teachers should sacrifice themselves in the service of God for their fellow-men. (*Zeisius.*) **Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in His light.**—Jesus compares the Jews to children who, instead of taking advantage of the precious moments during which the torch burns to accomplish an indispensable task, do nothing but dance and play the fool in its light till it goes out. It is impossible to characterize better the vain and childish satisfaction which the national pride has found for the moment in the appearance of this extraordinary man, and the absence of the serious fruits of repentance and faith which it was intended to produce. "Instead of being yourselves led to faith by John, you made him an object of curiosity. You pleased yourselves with him." Comp. Luke vii. 24, &c., which charges them with making it an amusing spectacle, and closes by comparing them to a group of children playing in the market-place. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *Playing with the light*:—"All you ever seriously contemplated was to leap, dance, make sport of, like gnats in the twilight, like flies round a lamp, like dancers at a wedding." The phrase marked not the progress of the Baptist's career, but the short-lived character of their favourable mood towards him, or the celerity with which their satisfaction in the radiance emitted by him turned into disgust. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Regeneration better than admiration*:—The Jews were pleased enough with the thrilling excitement of his ministry, and experienced the delight of a new and powerful sensation. But when John struck deep they forsook him, and never mourned when the martyr perished; as children sport with fire till they are burned, then they cast it aside. Thus the Athenians sought profane amusement in Paul's preaching (Acts xvii. 19). Thus popular preachers are followed by thousands who will the next day be found at the gaming table, the racecourse, or the theatre. Not admiration, but regeneration is what a minister should seek for. (*Van Doren.*) **I have greater witness than that of John.**—*The Greater Witness*:—Jesus was competent to bear witness to His own glory; so was the Father and the Holy Ghost. Each did, and they alone are competent witnesses. Besides the testimony of the Father through John there were—I. TWO OTHER FORMS IN WHICH THE FATHER BORE WITNESS. 1. By the works which He gave Jesus to finish (ver 36). John's

mission served its end by calling attention to them: the works themselves are now put in evidence. (1) What were they? Not miracles merely, but all that required to be performed for man's salvation. (2) In what sense were they "given" Him? (*a*) In the everlasting covenant; (*b*) When He was instituted in His mediatorial office; (*c*) In token not only of the Father's love for the elect, but for His Son. (3) They were given Him to finish. Not to enter on and fail to accomplish. All heaven and earth were entitled to act on the assurance that there could be but one issue. (4) Yet the works were His, done by His own inherent, personal, almighty power, and of His independent sovereign will. (5) These works bore witness that the Father had sent Him. They were evidences not of an ordinary prophetic, but of an extraordinary Messianic mission. 2. The Father had directly borne witness to Him (ver. 17). Here also was testimony greater than John's. (1) Christ doubtless referred to His baptism. Never had such a testimony been borne before. "Unto which of the angels," &c. The Father's voice was heard; the emblem of the Spirit was seen; the image of the invisible God was revealed. Thus the triune Jehovah visited the East. It was a descent more glorious than on Sinai. Jesus now appealed to it. (2) The Jews sought after a sign. Here was one. It had not been given in a corner. It bore testimony to the Only Begotten, but notwithstanding, the Jews remained in their unbelief. 3. This constituted their great sin which led ultimately to the cross. Unbelief is no less an evil in us. The evidence that Jesus is the Messiah is complete: who of us believes it unto salvation? What then if we be guilty of crucifying Christ afresh. II. CHRIST'S APPEAL TO THE JEWS ON THIS SUBJECT FOR THEIR CONVICTION consists of three charges. 1 (ver. 37). The Saviour spoke here of all the ways in which the Father had testified of Him. The Father's voice was uttered through Moses, the prophets, John, at Jordan and through the "works." But to them it was as though it had never spoken. They enjoyed such opportunities as their fathers never enjoyed. Some of these, however, had heard and seen. Abraham, Jacob, Moses. 2 (ver. 38). It was their national boast that they had the Scriptures, and a deep though superstitious regard for them. But they had not the word abiding in them. It was not so with all, however, *e.g.*, Mary, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael. How common now the former case, how rare the latter, and the consequent acceptance or rejection of Christ. 3 (vers. 39, 40). (1) He praised them for the duty. But how much depends on the spirit and aim of the search. Theirs was fruitless through prejudice. (2) They searched but did not come to the eternal life. Their discovery was an hallucination. How sad to read and hear about Christ and not find Him. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *The Son's complaint against His own*:—I. A GRAVE INDICTMENT. 1. Non-acceptance of His Father's ambassador (ver. 38). 2. Unwillingness to partake of His salvation (ver. 40). 3. Rejection of His gracious message (ver. 47). II. A SUFFICIENT PROOF. 1. They entirely misconceived the nature and use of the Bible (ver. 39). That which had been given them so as to prepare them for Christ they had failed to understand. They beheld in it a sort of superior talisman that endowed them with eternal life. They never dreamed of searching it for light to lead them to the Son. It is possible for a Christian to make a Saviour of the Scriptures rather than of Christ. 2. They were devoid of true love to God. They made much profession of knowledge and zeal for God's law, but had no sincere regard for the Law-giver. This was evinced by the fact that though they had the law it was not within them (ver. 38). 3. They were wholly out of sympathy with such a Saviour as Christ professed to be (ver. 43). Had He come as a temporal deliverer they would have rallied to His standard; but because He came in His Father's name and with His Father's love, and to do His Father's work, they would have none of Him. What a melancholy tale for that day and for this. 4. They were completely absorbed in their own personal ambitions (ver. 44), and so were incapable of appreciating Christ. 5. They were thoroughly steeped in scepticism even in regard to Moses (ver. 46, 47). Hence their unbelief in Him of whom Moses wrote, though not excusable, was not surprising. III. A FEARFUL FATE. 1. To be accused to the Father (ver. 45), to be impeached before the high tribunal of heaven as those who had dishonoured the Father's majesty in despising His Son. 2. To be prosecuted by Moses, the very law-giver in whom they had trusted. 3. To be deserted by the Son. Appalling retribution. Lessons: 1. A call to self-examination. 2. A note of warning. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **The works which the Father hath given Me.**—The declaration of this relation of the Father and the Son is peculiar to St. John. The Father hath given—I. ALL THINGS INTO HIS HAND (iii. 35, xiii. 3). II. ALL JUDGMENT (vers. 22, 27). III. TO HAVE LIFE IN HIMSELF (ver. 26). IV. A COMPANY

OF FAITHFUL SERVANTS (vi. 39; *cf.* vi. 65, vii. 2, 6, 9, 12, 24). V. COMMANDMENT WHAT TO SAY (xii. 49) AND TO DO (xiv. 31, xvii. 4, *cf.* xvii. 7, &c.). VI. AUTHORITY OVER ALL FLESH (xvii. 2). VII. HIS NAME (xvii. 11, &c.). VIII. HIS GLORY (xvii. 24, *cf.* ver. 22). (*Canon Westcott.*) **Search the Scriptures.**—I rather construe it in the indicative sense, "ye search," upon these reasons—1. Because of what is said in the verse itself, ye think ye have eternal life in them; in which words our Saviour intendeth not so much to show what they might have in the Scriptures, for then it had been proper to have said, In them ye have eternal life, as He meaneth to touch upon the erroneous conceit of the Jews, who thought they obtained eternal life by the study of the law *ex opere operato*. 2. Because of the context in the verse following, which lieth fairer in this sense, Ye study the Scriptures scrutinously, and they are they that testify of Me, and yet ye will not come unto Me—than taken thus: Search ye the Scriptures, for they testify of Me, and ye will not come to Me. Besides, consider—1. That Christ is speaking to the doctors of the Sanhedrim, the most acute, diligent, and curious searchers of the Scripture of all the nation. Men that made that their glory and employment; and howsoever it was their arrogancy that they thought their skill in Scripture more than indeed it was, yet was their diligence and scrutinousness in it real and constant even to admiration. It was exceedingly in fashion among the nation to be great Scripture men, but especially the great masters of the Sanhedrim were reputed as the very foundations of the law and pillars of instruction, as Maimony styles them in the treatise "Mamrim," cap. i. And therefore it cannot be proper to think that Christ in this clause sets them to the study of the Scripture, upon which they spent all their wits and time already, as confessing their studiousness, yet showeth them how unprofitably they did it and to little purpose. 2. They did exceeding copiously and accurately observe and take up the prophecies in Scripture that were of the Messias, and though they missed in expounding some particulars concerning Him, yet did they well enough know that the Scriptures did testify of Him abundantly. 3. The word that is used, ἐραυνᾶτε, which betokeneth a narrow search, seemeth to be intended purposely to answer the word דָּרַשׁ, which they themselves attribute to themselves in their unfolding of the Scriptures. (*J. Lightfoot, D.D.*) *Search the Scriptures*:—I. WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE SCRIPTURES? 1. Man had at first as perfect a knowledge of God as was necessary for him (Eccles. vii. 29). 2. This knowledge was impaired by the fall, so that a Divine revelation became requisite for his instruction in duty and the way and means to happiness. 3. Here a God revealed His will to Adam (Gen. iii. 15). 4. This was handed down by tradition for 2,500 years, and the long lives of the patriarchs preserved it incorrupt. Methusaleh lived 243 years with Adam, and 98 with Shem, who lived 50 years with Isaac. 5. Man's life being shortened, God wrote His law by Moses (Psa. xc. 10). 6. For the clearing of it He inspired prophets continually (Heb. i. 1; Numb. xxvii. 21). 7. When Christ came He inspired others to record His works and doctrine (chap. xiv. 26). 8. Hence the Scripture is contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments. (1) The Old in number thirty-nine, which the Jews reduced to thirty-two, and they divide them in this manner: (*a*) The Pentateuch. (*b*) The Prophets. (*c*) The Hagiographa. (2) The New Testament consisting of (*a*) Gospels, (*b*) Acts, (*c*) Epistles, (*d*) Apocalypse. 9. These are all that make up the canon; and that the Apocrypha is no part thereof is plain (Heb. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21; Eph. ii. 20). (*a*) Malachi was the last prophet. (*b*) From reason. They are neither of the Old nor New Testaments, in many places they contradict both, and they do not speak as from God. (*c*) From the Fathers. II. WHY ARE WE TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES? 1. Because they are the Word of God (2 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 20, 21). (1) Probably—(*a*) From their antiquity. (*b*) The simplicity of the penmen (Exod. xxxii.; Numb. xi. 11–14, xii. 3). (*c*) Their low quality (Amos vii. 14; Matt. ix. 9; Acts iv. 13). (*d*) Their high doctrine as Trinity, Creation, Fall, Incarnation, &c. (*e*) Fulfilment of prophecy. Gen. iii. 15 was given 4,000 years before its fulfilment; Gen. xii. 3 almost 2,000; Gen. xv. 13, 14, 400. So Dan. ix. 24; Gen. xlix. 10. (*f*) Their speaking with so much majesty and authority (1 Cor. i. 17). (*g*) Their efficacy and power to convert (Psa. xix. 7, 8; Heb. iv. 12). (*h*) The hatred of wicked men against them (John xv. 19). (2) Certainly—(*a*) If this be not God's word there is none. (*b*) God hath attested it by miracles. (*c*) If they were not from God, then either from Satan or man. Not from Satan, for they destroy his kingdom (James iv. 7). Not from men; good men would not cheat the world, bad men would not condemn themselves. (3) The use. If the Scriptures are the Word of God, then—(*a*) Here is terror to the wicked (Isa. xlviii. 22). (*b*) Comfort to the godly (Matt. v.

2-4). (*c*) Counsel to all. Wherefore: Reverence them; believe them; prize them (Psa. xix. 10; Prov. ii. 14, 15); be thankful for them; conform your lives to them; delight in reading them (Psa. i. 2; xix. 10). 2. Because they contain all things necessary to be known and believed, explicitly or implicity; which appears (1) from Scripture. (*a*) God is their Author, and therefore they are like Himself—perfect (2 Tim. iii. 16). (*b*) They furnish the man of God unto all good works (2 Tim. iii. 17; Psa. xix. 7). (*c*) They contain the whole counsel of God (Deut. iv. 2, xii. 32; Rev. xxii. 18, 19; Gal. i. 8, 9). (*d*) Christ and His apostles taught nothing but Scripture (Luke xxiv. 27; Acts xvii. 2, xxvi. 22). (2) From reason. If all things necessary are not in Scripture, then there is something which I have no certainty of, and then the Scriptures would be in vain (John xx. 21). III. ARE ALL BOUND TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES? Yes. 1. God commands all (Deut. xxxi. 11, 12; Col. iii. 16). 2. God commends it (Acts xvii. 11; 2 Cor. i. 13; 2 Tim. iii. 15). 3. They were written to be read of all (Rom. xv. 4); and were, therefore, first written in the vulgar tongues. 4. The knowledge of the Scriptures keeps from error (Matt. xxii. 29). 5. All are bound to mind their salvation. IV. HOW MUST WE SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES? 1. With reverence and devotion. 2. With attention and understanding (Acts viii. 30). 3. With affection (Acts ii. 37). 4. With fear (2 Kings xxii. 11-13). 5. With faith (Heb. iv. 2). 6. With delight (Psa. i. 2; cxix. 103). 7. To a right and good end. 8. Constantly (Psa. i. 2). V. USES. 1. Reproof to such as neglect to search the Scriptures. 2. The highest encouragement and motive thereunto. (1) There is none so ignorant but this will make him wise (2 Tim. iii. 15; Psa. xix. 7). (2) There is no heart so sinful but this will cleanse it (Psa. xix. 7). 3. No soul so dejected, but here it may find comfort (Psa. xciv. 19). 4. It is horrible ingratitude not to read what God hath written, and we shall have to answer for it. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Search the Scriptures*:—I. WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURES? 1. The Word of God. In the sense in which the words of man are his, and reveal his thoughts, will, purposes, the Scriptures are the Word of God. He is their Author, and they rest on His authority. This is opposed—(1) To the Deistical. (2) To the Rationalistic. (3) To the Quaker views. 2. From this it follows that they are (1) infallible; (2) holy; (3) powerful; (4) consistent; (5) the appointed means of salvation. We are enlightened, begotten, sanctified, and saved by the truth. 3. They are complete, containing all the extant revelation of God. 4. They are plain, so that every one can learn for himself what God says. II. WE SHOULD KNOW WHAT WE SEEK WHEN WE SEARCH. We should search—1. For knowledge of God, Christ, truth, duty. 2. For consolation. 3. For holiness. III. HOW ARE WE TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES? 1. Reverently and submissively, with fixed determination to believe every truth they affirm. Everything is right which they affirm, and wrong which they condemn. We are not to sit in judgment on Scripture. 2. With diligence. (1) Studying them much. (2) Consecutively. (3) What they teach on particular subjects. (4) Availing ourselves of every aid; fixing right principles, and availing ourselves of all subsidiary means. 3. With dependence; convinced that without Divine guidance we shall obtain neither right speculative knowledge, nor right spiritual views. 4. Therefore with prayer previous and continued. 5. With self-application. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Search the Scriptures*:—I. THE DIRECTION. 1. Not merely possess. 2. Nor survey. 3. But search as the woman for the lost piece of silver. II. THE SUBJECT OF SEARCH. The Scriptures not merely theirs, but ours. 1. Between sixty and seventy writings, composed at intervals of hundreds of years, yet with one chain of truth, one message. 2. The original source of even the nineteenth century's history, biography, and science. 3. The only guide for the soul of man. III. THE OBJECT OF THE SEARCH. 1. May we not search for scientific truth (Acts xvii. 26). 2. For our own family records from Adam to John. 3. For the Divine message to our individual soul. 4. More especially for the life and the testimony here mentioned. In, through, and by the Scriptures, eternal life is to be had. Life is the joy of every living creature, therefore search for it in the Scriptures that reveal it by testifying of Him who is "the Life." IV. METHOD OF SEARCH. 1. Fairly, without foregone prepossession. 2. Prayerfully. 3. Regularly. 4. Comprehensively. (*Pulpit Analyst.*) *Search the Scriptures*:—I. WHY. 1. Because it is Divine in its origin. (1) This it claims to be (Heb. i. 1, 2; 2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Tim. iv. 16). (2) This it can be proved to be from its fulfilled prophecies and its unique teaching. 2. Because it gives us correct ideas of our condition. (1) Our sinfulness. (2) The possibility and way of our salvation. 3. Because it makes us acquainted with our enemies and our dangers. (1) It exposes the wiles of the devil. (2) It furnishes us with weapons. (3) It throws light on our

dark and perilous way. II. How? 1. With prayer. Prayer gives insight to the searcher, and opens up the depths. 2. With an upright intention of submitting to the will of God. Not going with the desire to nourish preoccupied fancies; nor as a controversialist for polemical weapons, but to know what God has said. 3. Regularly and diligently. (1) By ourselves. (2) With our families. (*T. Snell.*) *Search the Scriptures*:—1. Christ's Scriptures were those of the Old Testament. 2. Of these Christ said, "They contain eternal life." Hence—(1) If you admit the New you must accept the Old, for Christ endorses it. (2) In the New it is the same truth and life as in the Old. 3. What a far better Bible is ours. Two witnesses to one Christ—first in figure, then in historical reality. 4. Remember what the Bible really is. God in His love desired to make Himself known to His creatures; so He gave His Son, "the express image of His Person." How could we know the Son? Only by the Holy Ghost, who testifies of Him in the Scriptures. The Scriptures—I. MAKE KNOWN OURSELVES. With this end, St. James says they are a mirror. There we can see our real selves. II. REVEAL SELF'S ANTIDOTE. Christ in His saving mission as promised, and as come, and as coming again. III. PROVIDE AN ORACLE TO RESOLVE DOUBTS; to check difficult questions; to show daily duty. IV. REND THE VIEW OF FUTURITY. Conclusion: How many of you could pass an examination in the facts and truths of the Bible? Shall a soldier not know the articles of war? Shall a scholar not know his grammar? "Search the Scriptures." (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Children's sermon*:—The Bible means *the* book, the book of books. Scriptures mean writings, *the* marks them out from all others. Search means hunt, dig. Why search? Because—I. THEY ARE THE WORD OF GOD. When you are absent from home you write to your parents, and although they do not see you they know from your handwriting, signature, and expressions that it is yours. God takes strange methods sometimes to convince men that the Bible comes from Him. A young man, an infidel, had to carry a large sum of money through a forest. He lost his way, and was benighted. He came to a cottage and obtained shelter. The owner was a rough-looking man, which made him afraid for his treasure. So he resolved to stay up all night and guard it. By and by the man reached down the Bible, upon which a load was taken from the traveller's mind. He knew he was safe in the house of a Bible reader. This led him to be a Christian. II. THEY MAKE KNOWN A SAVIOUR. A pious widow had a large family, all of whom became followers of the Saviour but one, a wild lad who went to sea. His mother gave him a Testament, and wrote his name and her own on the back. The ship was lost, and years passed by without any tidings. Eventually a sailor begged at the widow's door, and gave an account of his life. He had been shipwrecked, and with another had been cast on a desert island. His companion read day after day in a little book his mother had given him. "He wept a good deal over his sins, and gave himself up to the Saviour and soon afterwards died, and gave me the book." The book was produced, and it was the very one the widow had given to her boy. III. THEY TEACH US HOW TO LIVE. 1. As ever in the sight of God. "Thou God seest me." 2. To be obedient and useful. IV. THEY SHOW US THE WAY TO HEAVEN. (*E. Woods.*) *The duty and advantage of searching the Scriptures*:—The supreme Authority in religion here sweeps away (1) the dishonourable reflections of the infidel; (2) the servile restraints of the superstitious; (3) the wild fancies of the enthusiast. For how can Christianity be accused of conspiring to keep the world in ignorance when its injunction is, Read and investigate, making it therefore a duty to learn to read and to reason? How can it be charged with enslaving the mind by delivering it over to priestcraft, when its Author commanded a promiscuous audience to search for themselves? How can it be charged with fanaticism, when we are charged to bring all our sentiments and feelings to an inspired standard to be regulated? No! the most formidable foe to ignorance, and the most active stimulant to knowledge; that which best secures for the awakened mind the full enjoyment of its rights and the freedom of its inquiries, and the best safeguard against the perversion of our reason is the Bible. I. To THE BIBLE Christ points while He says, "Search," &c. 1. The Scriptures are a mine of wealth. 2. We should therefore search them as men digging for hid treasure. (1) This suggests that its discoveries do not all lie on the surface to be obtained by a casual glance. Books partake of the qualities of their author. If the mind be profound, so will be the writing. What depths then may be expected in a volume inspired by God. (2) Yet with all this depth there is the utmost simplicity. The Scriptures first instruct our childhood, and to the last engage the mature reflections of old age; before we can understand any other book we may read this to profit; and after we have exhausted all others,

we still find something here to learn. (3) But if searching implies difficulty, then careful and frequent perusal is required; and this should be accompanied with the comparison of one part of Scripture with another, and with the use of every available help and with prayer. (4) This searching does not preclude hearing. II. The Saviour here points TO OURSELVES and reminds us of our professed principles. "In these Scriptures ye think ye have eternal life." He appeals—1. To the principle that in the Scriptures we have eternal life. How fondly we cling to life; yet we must soon part with it. We aspire, therefore, to a continuance after this present state, and nothing short of eternity can satisfy our cravings. What then will discover and guarantee this to us? Not the speculations of reason, but the revelation of God. This discloses to us the duration and blessedness of eternal life. What a motive then to search it to find this pearl of great price. 2. To persons, for "you yourselves judge that you have eternal life in the Scriptures": (1) to those who neglect it altogether; (2) to those who keep it as a gilded toy; (3) to those who only read it on Sundays; (4) to those who pay no more honour to it than they do to their catechism, prayer book, or favourite author; (5) to those who study it superficially or partially, or for the support of their own private views. III. The Saviour here points TO HIMSELF as He says, "These Scriptures testify of Me." Note—1. The fact that we have here the testimony of Jesus. This is declared to be "the spirit of prophecy," or the soul of revelation. As the single principle of gravitation throws light on the whole system of the universe, so the discovery of Christ and His salvation explains the whole record of Scripture. 2. The argument which thence arises—(1) That the Scriptures by testifying of Christ afford us eternal life. He whom they reveal came not only to convince us of the fact and the grandeur of our immortality, "I came that ye might have life," &c. (2) That the Scriptures deserve to be diligently searched. What folly for a man who yearns for heaven to neglect the only means of getting there! (*J. Bennett, D.D.*) *The necessity of searching the Scriptures*:—Truth must be sought, and that with care and diligence, before we find it. Jewels do not use to lie upon the surface of the earth. Highways are seldom paved with gold. What is worth our finding calls for the greatest search. . . . Prejudice is the wrong bias of the soul, that effectually keeps it from coming near the mark of truth; nay, sets it at the greatest distance from it. They are few in the world, that look after truth with their own eyes; most make use of spectacles of other's making, which causes them so seldom to behold the proper lineaments in the face of truth; which the several tinctures from education, authority, custom, and predisposition do exceedingly hinder men from discerning (John vii. 48; St. Luke xi. 52). (*Bp. Stillingfleet.*) *Blank pages of the Bible*:—I dare say none of you ever saw a kind of ink used for secret writing. Common ink, you know, leaves a very plain mark on the paper; but this ink of which I am speaking fades away directly it is used, and the paper seems to be blank. But if that sheet of paper is held to the fire, the writing comes out, and can be read easily. Now to a great many people the pages of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, seem all blank, without any beauty or interest. But if you learn to read God's word with care and intelligence, above all, if you pray to God to show you the true meaning, the pages which seemed blank before will be full of interest for you. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Practical searching*:—Search the Scriptures, not as thou wouldst make a concordance, but an application; as thou wouldst search a wardrobe, not to make an inventory of it, but to find in it something fit for thy wearing. (*J. Donne, D.D.*) *Scriptural investigation*:—1. The Sadducees "erred, not knowing the Scriptures," and this is the source of error all time through. 2. Christ made the Scriptures His constant rule and guide, and so, therefore, should we. I. IT IS EVERY MAN'S DUTY TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. God's purpose in vouchsafing the Scriptures was in consequence of our fall, and the necessity of a new birth in Christ Jesus; and their characteristic feature is to lead men to a practical knowledge of these two great truths. If man had continued in a state of innocence he would not have needed an outward revelation, because God's law was originally written on his heart; but since his fall, without such a revelation he could never have known how God could be reconciled. This revelation, then, is suited to his wants as a fallen creature, and that is sufficient evidence of its divinity. The infidel desires a sign, but no sign shall be given him but this, and if this is not enough, he would not believe though one rose from the dead. II. SOME SUITABLE INSTRUCTION WHEREBY THE SCRIPTURES MAY BE STUDIED WITH PROFIT. 1. Have in view the one end for which they were written, to show the way of salvation through Christ. Always look for Christ; in Old Testament prophecies, &c., and in

New Testament teaching. 2. Search with a humble disposition, for God hides its meaning from the wise in their own eyes, and reveals it to babes who desire "the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby." 3. Search with a sincere intention to put in practice what you read. "If any man will do His will," &c. But to those who read without a desire to keep the commandments, but only for amusement or cavil, God will never reveal Himself although they search to the end of time. 4. Make an application of everything you read, and this will make "all Scripture profitable for reproof," &c. 5. Labour to obtain the influence of their Divine Author. It was for the want of this that the disciples fell into frequent and inexcusable mistakes. Therefore begin by praying that the Spirit who guides into all truth may assist you, and close by praying that He may engraft the truth on your heart. 6. Read diligently, thoroughly, daily. (*H. J. Newbery, M.A.*) *The inexhaustible treasures of Scripture*:—In the Dresden gallery of royal gems there is a silver egg: touch a spring, and it opens, disclosing a golden chicken; touch the chicken, and it opens, disclosing a crown studded with gems; touch the crown, and it opens, disclosing a magnificent diamond ring. So it is with the Bible; as we study it, we touch successive springs, disclosing exhaustless treasures. (*G. D. Boardman.*) *The importance of Scripture study*:—The Bible should be diligently studied because of—I. ITS ORIGIN. Divine (2 Tim. iii. 10). II. IT IS FOLLOWED BY THE QUICKENING SPIRIT OF GOD. III. IT IS FITTED FOR ALL PEOPLE. 1. There is no nation wherever located or however educated for whom it has not just what they need. 2. It is adapted to all varieties of moral development. IV. THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN GIVE SO MUCH LIGHT TO THE WORLD. 1. It is like the sun; all other lights are like candles, oil, gas, or electricity. 2. Its effects, like those of the sun, are to kindle all other lights. 3. Like the sun it gives life, beauty, &c. V. ITS AMPLITUDE REQUIRES CLOSE AND PERSEVERING ATTENTION. Who can study a picture-gallery or inspect a building to profit with one visit? The miner requires years before he can exhaust the mine. So the Bible. VI. IT WILL ASSIST MORE THAN ANY OTHER BOOK IN FORMING A CLEAR, TERSE LITERARY STYLE. The greatest writers and speakers have been indebted to it. VII. THE BIBLE IS A LIBRARY IN ITSELF. The fewness of the books is no objection. An old doctor uses few medicines. VIII. THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO GOOD SOCIETY. Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, our blessed Lord, &c. IX. THE BIBLE IS IMMUTABLE. 1. In doctrine. 2. In language. 3. In influence. Persecutors have destroyed it, and infidels argued it out of existence; but it still lives and they are gone. X. IT IS INEXHAUSTIBLE. All physical growth has a law of limitation, but there is no limit to the growth of the soul. For the expanding needs of our spiritual nature the Bible has an infinite supply. You can master every other book; the Bible never. XI. IT TESTIFIES OF GOD. XII. IT REVEALS ETERNAL LIFE. Sin is the germ of death; the Word plants the seed of never failing vitality. (*H. M. Scudder, D.D.*) *How we should study the Bible*:—I. PERSONALLY. Commentaries and lesson-helps are sometimes a hindrance. We must do our own thinking, evolving for ourselves what God has involved. 1. We must compare Scripture with Scripture, for the Bible is its own best commentator. The Gospels supplement each other; the Acts explain the Epistles; both covenants form one Divine unity. 2. Master the principles which be at the foundation of Hebrew poetry and prophecy, particularly the principle of parallelism; for while our rhyme is that of sound, the Hebrew is that of thought. 3. Learn the geography and natural history of the Bible. A true map is in a sense a part of the Bible. 4. We must put forth all our mental powers to perceive acutely, conceive accurately, reason closely, and express clearly. We must learn how to trace analogies, bring out real points, follow the outline of arguments, detect links, and observe general drifts. 5. We ought to summon the aid of imagination to realize actors and scenes. 6. But let us beware of the old sin of letter worship; that killeth, only the Spirit giveth life. Seek the essential under the incidental, the central under the superficial, the eternal under the transcient. II. HUMBLY; with docility of spirit; stripping ourselves of preconceptions; searching not for the confirmation of our opinions but for the truth of God. Only the pure in heart, those of unmixed pellucid motives shall see God. "The meek He will guide in judgment." III. PRAYERFULLY. Scholarship is but a telescope, and telescopes are of no use to the blind or in the dark. The spirit must illuminate our understandings and guide into all the truth. IV. EXECUTIVELY. Do the truth as well as study it; in fact, this is the only way of knowing and believing it. (*G. D. Boardman, D.D.*) *Bible study*:—The Bible should be studied—I. CRITICALLY. We are all possessed of judgment and reason, and God intends us to employ them. A large

number of passages have come to be used in a conventional sense, which is not their real sense. It is the latter we ought to find. Make, then, the Greek Testament an object of study; or, if not, a good commentary. II. CONSECUTIVELY. We do not do the Bible justice if we read a scrap here and a scrap there. The Epistle to the Romans, *e.g.*, as all letters, should be read straight on. If you can only master a few verses keep to them, but do not let the chain be broken. III. OCCASIONALLY. Carry a little Testament about with you to refresh you as you take a glass of water when you are thirsty between meals. IV. TOPICALLY. Take the subject of justification and see what Paul says, and then James, and then John. Don't be afraid of controverted subjects. Work them out for yourself, not from treatises or sermons, but God's Word. V. EXPERIMENTALLY. When you read a passage ask yourself. With what lesson am I impressed? Don't be content with being interested, try and get something for edification. VI. DEVOTIONALLY. If we want a real feast let us go down upon our knees, spread the Bible open before us, and realize that God is speaking to us. This is where the Jews failed in spite of all their critical care and reverence. "Ye have not His word abiding in you." Many people use their Bibles as superstitiously as any Chinaman uses his praying machine. "I have read my chapter this morning, and my conscience is satisfied." But how much good has it done you? Just as much as counting the beads of a rosary; *i.e.*, none, unless you have found in it a living Saviour. (*W. H. M. H. Aitken, M.A.*) *The testimony of the Scriptures to Christ*:—I. As making atonement for sin, and thus providing THE GROUND OF LIFE. II. As procuring the influences of the Spirit, and thus providing THE MEANS OF LIFE. III. As exhibiting a perfect humanity, and thus providing THE MODEL OF LIFE. IV. As overcoming death, and thus providing THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *How to study the Bible*:—To some the Bible is uninteresting and unprofitable because they read too fast. Among the insects which subsist on the sweet sap of flowers there are two very different classes. One is remarkable for its imposing plumage, which shows in the sunbeams like the dust of gems; and as you watch its jaunty gyrations over the fields, and its minuet dance from flower to flower, you cannot help admiring its graceful activity, for it is plainly getting over a good deal of ground. But in the same field there is another worker, whose brown vest and strong straightforward flight may not have arrested your eye. His fluttering neighbour darts down here and there, and sips elegantly wherever he can find a drop of ready nectar; but this dingy plodder makes a point of alighting everywhere, and wherever he alights he either finds honey or makes it. If the flower-cup be deep, he goes down to the bottom; if its dragon mouth be shut, he thrusts its lips asunder; and if the nectar be peculiar or recondite, he explores all about till he discovers it, and then, having ascertained the knack of it, joyful as one who has found great spoil, he sings his way down into its luscious recesses. His rival of the painted velvet wing has no patience for such dull and long-winded details. But what is the end? Why, the one died last October along with the flowers; the other is warm in his hive to-night amidst the fragrant stores which he gathered beneath the bright beams of summer. To which do you belong?—the butterflies or the bees? Do you search the Scriptures or only skim them? (*J. Hamilton, D.D.*) *The Bible to be studied often and lovingly*:—Lord Bacon tells us of a certain bishop who used to bathe regularly twice every day, and on being asked why he bathed thus often, replied, "Because I cannot conveniently do it three times." If those who loved the Scriptures were asked why they read the Bible so often, they might honestly reply, "Because we cannot find time to read them oftener." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Superstitious use of the Bible*:—The Bible is sometimes used as a book of magic. Many open it at random, expecting to be guided by the first passage that they see, as Peter was told to open the mouth of the first fish that came up and he would find in it a piece of money. A missionary of high standing was cured of this superstition by consulting the Bible in an important matter of Christian duty, and the passage that met his gaze was, "Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming." (*J. M. Buckley, D.D.*) *The advantage of unfettered Bible study*:—It was a glorious hour in England when the Bible was unchained, when every man could hear and read in his own tongue, wherein he was born, the history it told of the doings of God with man. Freedom sprang to light wherever the book went, and at its touch imagination stirred and awoke to life. A fresh world of thought and feeling, the world of the Oriental heart, opened out its riches to the poet and the philosopher. New blood streamed through the veins of English literature. Not only intellectual, but political free-

dom deepened wherever its words were heard and its principles received. It gave new force to the struggle against tyranny. It gave fresh impulse to political progress. It made cruelty, injustice, the oppression of the weak, the corruption of the great and the small, more hateful and intolerable. It initiated reform; it was the standard of all noble revolution. Our civil freedom—accelerating as it goes—has always taken much of its impulse from the book of true liberty, true fraternity, true equality. And it is not only intellectual freedom or political freedom which have gained their living force from this book. Higher than the imagination of the poet, the intellect of the philosopher, and the patriotism of the citizen, is the immortal spirit which abides in man. The spiritual being of man lay crippled and unmoved in England, like the lame beggar of old at the beautiful gate of the temple. When the Bible was put into the hands of every man in the country, it came, like Peter and John of old, to the heart of England, and proclaimed the gospel of Christ Jesus. Straightway the soul of England received strength, and entered into the temple of spiritual freedom, walking, and leaping, and praising God. Far and wide the book penetrated into the homes of England, and the fetters which had been bound on the spirits of men mouldered into the dust from whence they came. Religious freedom was the Bible's child. (*S. A. Brooke, M.A.*) *The Bible interpreted by love*:—You have heard of the story of the blind girl who, when her fingers became callous, cut her finger-tips to make them more sensitive. This, however, only made them harder, and then she could not read her Bible at all. At last, after bitter weeping, she kissed her Bible a farewell. To her intense joy, that kiss revealed to her the fact that she could read the raised words with a touch of her lips. Ever after she kissed into her soul that precious Word. (*H. M. Scudder, D.D.*) *Christ in the Bible*:—I know that men sneer at the idea that Christ is traceable everywhere in the Scriptures. A wealthy man builds and furnishes a house for the reception of his much-loved bride. When she enters it she finds that all the rooms and all the furniture, from the least to the greatest, bear signs that she was thought of. Will she sit patiently under a sneer at her acknowledgment of the forethought of the bridegroom for her needs and tastes? Will she not point out the proofs, above and below, in common and peculiar things, and reassert that she sees the signs of his perfect knowledge and love everywhere? And shall we be frightened by a sneer from affirming that God, who built up all the books of the Bible, saw His end, and made reference to that end in every stage of revelation—that Christ is everywhere? Does not our Lord support the idea when He says to the Pharisees, "Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of Me"? And "Ye will not come to Me that ye may have life" is a mournful form in which He explains their utter misconception of the Scriptures. May that saying not be applicable to us! Let us read the Bible to find Christ. (*D. G. Watt, M.A.*) *Christ in the Bible*:—There was once a famous artist who made a wonderful shield, and worked his own name so cleverly into it, that it could not be removed without destroying the shield. The Bible is like that shield, and the name of Jesus is so worked into it that we find it everywhere. Have you ever seen a photographic artist take one of those sun-pictures which are now so common? Well, at first there was no picture, only a piece of glass with a kind of white cloud upon it. But presently, as the artist poured certain chemicals upon it, a picture began to come out of the mist; first one feature, then another, till you saw the likeness of a friend. The Old Testament Scriptures sometimes appear strange and uninteresting to you; there is a mist over them as it were. But as you study the words, or hear them explained, gradually new beauties, new features, come out, and you find a likeness. Whose likeness, my children? The likeness of Jesus Christ. Have you ever seen a kaleidoscope? When you hold it to your eye and turn it round, you see a number of pieces of coloured glass which form all kinds of beautiful patterns, such as stars, and crowns, and fountains, and flowers. The Bible is very like a kaleidoscope. When you look carefully into it, the more you turn over its pages and study them, the more beautiful things you find there; and remember that all these beautiful things will show you something about Jesus. Whether you are reading in the Old Testament or in the New, whether you study the law or the prophets, or read about the Judges or the Kings, you will find something about Jesus. He said, "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Me." Whenever you read your Bible do so with one object—always read looking for Jesus. (*H. J. Wilmot Buxton.*) *Christ the interpreter of the Bible*:—In the vision of the apocalyptic book sealed with seven seals, one only out of all on earth or in heaven was able to break the seals and read the scroll: it was He who is alike the Lion of

Judah and the Lamb of God. And He is still the only one who is able to interpret His own volume. We must consult Him, then, if we would understand His Word. *Search the Scriptures*:—It is said of some of the mines of Cornwall that the deeper they are sunk the richer they prove; and though some lodes have been followed a thousand and even fifteen hundred feet, they have not come to an end. Such is the Book of God. It is a mine of wealth which can never be exhausted. The deeper we sink into it, the richer it becomes. (*Charles Graham.*) *The Bible worth searching*:—There is gold in the rocks which fringe the Pass of the Splugen, gold even in the stones which mend the roads, but there is too little of it to be worth extracting. Alas! how like too many books and sermons! Not so the Scriptures; they are much fine gold; their very dust is precious. *Christ the gem of the Scriptures*:—What the pin is when the diamond has dropped from its setting, that is the Bible when its emotive truths have been taken away. What a babe's clothes are when the babe has slipped out of them into death, and the mother's arms clasp only raiment, would be the Bible if the Babe of Bethlehem and the truths of deep-heartedness that clothed His life should slip out of it. *The Bible handy*:—Dear friends, fly to this comfort with speed in every time of trouble; get to be familiar with God's Word, that you may do so. I have found it helpful to carry "Clarke's Precious Promises" in my pocket, so as to refer to it in the hour of trial. If you go into the market, and are likely to do a ready-money business, you always take a cheque-book with you; so carry precious promises with you, that you may plead the word which suits your case. I have turned to promises for the sick when I have been of that number, or to promises to the poor, the despondent, the weary, and such like, according to my own condition, and I have always found a Scripture fitted to my case. I do not want a promise made to the sick when I am perfectly well; I do not want balm for a broken heart when my soul is rejoicing in the Lord; but it is very handy to know where to lay your hand upon suitable words of cheer when necessity arises. Thus the external comfort of the Christian is the Word of God. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The test of truth*:—A man offers you a note. You are not quite sure about it. You say to him, "I don't know. Hold on; I'll let you know in half an hour"; and away you run, round the corner. Your lawyer lives near by. You show him the note. "Such a one offered me this. I thought I'd just speak to you about it. What would you do?" "Better have nothing to do with it," says the lawyer, shaking his head. You run back, and say to the man, "I've concluded not to take that note." Then some transaction is urged upon you. You hesitate. You don't know exactly whether it will stand in law. "Wait," you say, "wait a minute—I can't decide yet"; and away you go, round the corner. "Oh, yes," says your lawyer, "that's all perfectly right and safe"; and back you run, and the matter is settled. He is the "man of your counsel." Just in this way should you consult the Bible in regard to all the actions of your life. *The Scriptures without comment*:—There is a story told concerning John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Good Thomas Scott, the commentator, wrote notes to it; he thought the "Pilgrim's Progress" a difficult book, and he would make it clear. A pious cottager in his parish had the book, and she was reading it when her minister called. He said to her, "Oh, I see, you are reading Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Do you understand it?" She answered innocently enough, "Oh, yes, sir, I understand Mr. Bunyan very well, and I hope that one day I shall be able to understand your explanations." *The wonders of Scripture*:—The boy holds his ball of twine in his hand, and thinks it is not much, he can clasp it so easily; but when he begins to unroll it, and his wind-borne kite mounts higher and higher, till at length that which on the ground was taller than he is now no bigger than his hand, he is astonished to see how long it is. So there are little texts which look small in your palm, but, when caught up upon some experience, they unfold themselves, and stretch out until there is no measuring their length. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The Bible first*:—A business man sat at his fireside in the city. Near by him, playing on the floor, was his only child, a beautiful little boy. It was early in the morning. The day's task was not begun, and while waiting for his breakfast the father took up the daily paper to read. The dear child came and climbed up on his father's knee, and, laying his hand gently on the paper, looked lovingly up into his face and said, "No, no, papa, Bible first, Bible first, papa." Very soon after this dear child was taken sick, and died. As that father stood by the coffin in which his dead darling lay, and when he laid him in the grave, he seemed to hear his gentle voice repeating those simple words, "No, no, papa, Bible first." He never forgot those words. They were ringing in his

ears all the time. He made them the rule of his life. *A search warrant*:—"What warrant have you to read the Bible for yourself?" was the demand of another priest of a new convert to the true faith. "Och!" was the answer, "I've a sarch warrant" (John v. 39). *Diligent seeking will be rewarded by joyous finding*:—A friend of mine had been told that the Word of Life was contained in his Bible. He went quickly home, and he said, "If it is there, I will find it." He began with Genesis, and read on further, until in due course of time he reached that good evangelical chapter, Isaiah liii. He read carefully until he came to the words, "By His stripes we are healed." "That is it," said he; "I have it now; we are healed; I am healed. There is no hoping or wishing, or 'perhaps,' or 'but,' or 'if'—we are healed." (*Dr. Mackay.*) *Heathen testimony to the excellence of the Scriptures*:—A Hindoo paper, published in Bengal, speaks as follows of the excellence of the Bible:—"It is the best and most excellent of all English books, and there is not its like in the English language. As every joint of the sugarcane, from the root to the top, is full of sweetness, so every page of the Bible is fraught with the most precious instruction. A portion of this book would yield to you more of sound morality than a thousand other treatises on the same subject. In short, if anybody studies the English language with a view to gaining wisdom, there is not another book which is more worthy of being read than the Bible." *How to search the Scriptures*:—As the apes in the story, who, finding a glow-worm on a very cold night, took it for a spark of fire, and heaped up sticks upon it to warm themselves by, but all in vain, so do they lose their labour that, in the warrantable search of Divine truth, busy themselves about sounds of words and incoherent Scripture sentences; when, partly from depravedness of mind, partly from ignorance, partly from instability, suddenness, and haste, they make a snatch, and run away with that which looks somewhat like the sense of Scripture, and so deceive their own souls, crying out, like the mathematician in Athens, "I have found it, I have found it," when indeed they have found nothing to the purpose nor anything to the true information of themselves or others in the ways of God and goodness. *Bible facts*:—The learned Prince of Granada, heir to the Spanish throne, imprisoned by order of the Crown lest he should aspire to the sovereignty, was kept in solitary confinement in the old prison at the Place of Skulls, Madrid. After thirty-three years in this living tomb death came to his release, and the following remarkable researches marked with an old nail on the rough walls of his cell, told how the brain sought employment during those weary years:—"In the Bible the word Lord is found 1,853 times; the word Jehovah 6,855 times, and the word reverend but once—in Psa. cxi. 9. The 8th verse of Psa. cxvii. is the middle verse of the Bible. Esther viii. 9 is the longest verse, and John xi. 35 the shortest. In Psa. cvii. the 8th, 15th, 21st, and 31st verses are alike. Each verse of Psa. cxxxvi. ends alike. No words with more than six syllables are found in the Bible. Isa. xxxvii. and 2 Kings xix. are alike. The word girl occurs only in Joel iii. 3. There are found in both Testaments 3,586,483 letters, 773,693 words, 31,373 verses, 1,179 chapters, and 66 books." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Origin of the Bible Society*:—Mary Jones was the daughter of a poor weaver living in a humble dwelling at the foot of Cader Idris. She was born in 1782, and early in life began to learn her father's trade. She attended a Sunday-school, and was soon distinguished by her readiness to learn and repeat large portions of the Word of God. As yet, although there had been many editions of the Welsh Bible published, it was an exception to see a copy in a poor man's house in Wales. The nearest Bible was two miles distant from Mary Jones's house. She had permission to read it as often as she chose. Meanwhile she carefully set aside all her pence, determined if possible to buy a Bible of her own. After years of saving she succeeded in making up the sum necessary to buy a copy of the Welsh Bible. She ascertained that Bala was the nearest town in which a copy might be got; and it was twenty-five miles away. But nothing daunted the girl set off, and walked all the way foot-bare, carrying her boots in a bag in order to put them on just before entering Bala. She arrived at Bala late in the evening—too late to see Mr. Charles, from whom the Bible was to be had. In the morning she went to Mr. Charles, and he was touched by her simple story. He said: "I am sorry that you have come all the way to obtain a Bible, seeing I have no copy to give you. All the Bibles I received from London have been sold months since, excepting one or two which I have promised to keep for friends." Mary Jones wept bitterly. The disappointment was too much for her. But Mr. Charles could not withstand her tears, and he at last gave her one of the promised Bibles. Mary placed the Bible in her

bag, and bade good-bye to the good Mr. Charles, feeling grateful to him for letting her have what she considered the greatest of treasures. Her visit to Mr. Charles left a lasting impression on both. Often afterwards did Mr. Charles refer to that touching incident to convince his English friends of the intense craving of the Welsh nation for the word of life. In December, 1802, Mr. Charles laid before the Committee of the Religious Tract Society the pressing needs of his country; and related the story of Mary Jones. The story awakened sympathy in every breast, and it was then resolved, not only to have a Bible Society for Wales, but a Bible Society for all nations. This was the origin of the Bible Society. Who would have thought that little Mary Jones's journey to Bala would have supplied the important link which, until then, had been wanting in the chain of events before the Bible Society could spring into being? Mary lived to an old age. The Bible she bought at Bala was by her bedside when she passed away. She no longer required to read it. She knew all its promises and consolations by heart. This Bible has recently been handed over to the British and Foreign Bible Society with the formation of which it has so sacred a connection. An open Bible is engraved on her tombstone with the words, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." Then come these words:—"Mary, widow of Thomas Lewis, weaver, Bryncrwg, who died December 28th, 1864. Aged 82. This tombstone was erected by contributions of the Calvinistic Methodists in the district, and other friends, in respect to her memory, as the Welsh girl, Mary Jones, who walked from Abergwynolwyn to Bala, in the year 1802, when sixteen years of age, to procure a Bible of the Rev. Thomas Charles, B.A. A circumstance which led to the establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society." (*Clerical Anecdotes.*) *Dr. Johnson's dying counsel:*—Dr. Johnson said to a young gentleman who visited him on his deathbed, "Young man, attend to the voice of one who has possessed a certain degree of fame in the world, and who is about to stand before his Maker. Read the Bible every day of your life." (*W. Baxendale.*) **Ye will not come unto Me, that ye might have life.**—*Man's happiness dependent on his coming to Christ:*—You have read the lives of wise and good men, and yet without any conception that they were anything else, and that with all their excellences they had corresponding defects. Now, if Jesus Christ was a mere man you would have the same impression on reading His memoirs. But this is not the case. Who can read our text and feel that Christ was merely a wise and good man? I. THE FINAL SALVATION OF MAN IS MADE DEPENDENT ON HIS COMING TO CHRIST. 1. Christ is a unique Being who exists in a condition unlike any other, not a condition of simple humanity or simple Divinity, but one who combines the attributes of both. 2. To sustain the character of Saviour it was necessary that He should suffer the just for the unjust, and that He should have the power to remit sin and confer eternal life. 3. To secure the benefits the sinner is required to come to Christ, not corporeally, speculatively, but by personal application of enlightened faith. 4. This Christ required in the days of His flesh, and He requires it now. (1) There must be an acknowledgment of His power to confer the blessing—just the same as when you apply for a favour to your friend. You insult him if you disbelieve in his power. (2) You must renounce your trust in everything else but your own need and His clemency. Does the pauper require a little wealth to qualify him for asking relief? 5. Coming in contact accidentally or designedly with others sometimes leads to unanticipated and important results. Chance meetings have been full of weal or woe. But no meeting was ever fraught with such effects as the meeting of a sinner with his Saviour. Take the case of the impotent man; that of any saved man. (1) Internal: guilt removed, conscience allayed, passions quelled, apprehension destroyed, and instead peace, joy, hope, &c. (2) External: the drunkard is made sober, &c. 6. Not only are the results extraordinary, they are satisfactory. The mind is at ease, and sometimes rises to transport; and there is not the slightest wish to have this occurrence undone. II. Strange as it may appear MEN WILL NOT COME TO CHRIST THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE. 1. Why? (1) Some are too proud to come. There is nothing more offensive to the pride of a man of intellect or social virtue to be told that he must come in the same way as the publicans and the harlots. (2) Some say they cannot, and wait for Divine assistance. That is conveyed with the command. Come, and you will have power to come, as the withered hand was bestowed by stretching it forth. 2. This refusal is extraordinary. (1) Man in all his stages—as child, youth, man—regards the temporal future with growing solicitude. Why not, then, the eternal? (2) This eternal future is vastly more important, and is forfeited by not coming to Christ. Imagine a condemned criminal not accepting an offer like this! 3. This refusal is

so extraordinary that it deserves to be recorded. Write down, then, solemnly—"I will not come to Christ," &c. (*T. East.*) *Coming to Christ for life*:—Suppose a legislator, anxious to deter his subjects from crime, were to threaten confiscation of property. An individual offends and is punished. Suppose the children to tread in the steps of the father, and the legislator to have devised a method without encroaching on the principles of rectitude, by which the forfeited inheritance might be restored on easy terms, what would you think of the children if they despised the blessing and rejected the offer? And yet that was the case with the Jews, and is the case with the sinner. Perhaps you may conclude that you have obeyed this invitation because you are a professor of Christianity, but you have not unless you are a real Christian in heart and conduct. I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HINDER SOME FROM COMING TO CHRIST. 1. Disbelief in Christ's Divine mission. (1) But shall a man be condemned because he does not apply for salvation to one in whom he disbelieves? No, but for disbelieving that God has commissioned that One to be a Saviour. (2) But shall he be condemned because a certain impression is not produced upon him, and because the evidence is insufficient? Yes, if through his own culpability, which is the case where the gospel is preached in its purity and simplicity. 2. The Pharisees abstained because they were self-righteous—a reason which keeps many away still. 3. Others are deterred by the cares of the world. They have no time for it, and besides industry is a part of religion; they come to church, and what time can be spared should be spent in enjoyment. 4. Others come not because bound by the chains of criminal practice. 5. With some youth is the impediment. I will some day, but there is plenty of time. 6. With others age is the obstacle. It is now too late to change, and the meetness of declining years co-operates with mental repugnance. II. IN WHAT MANNER AND WITH WHAT DISPOSITIONS ARE WE TO COME. 1. With a sense of sin, its guilt and power. 2. With a conviction of our own impotence and deservedness of punishment. 3. With a desire to be saved. 4. With a faith in Christ's power and willingness to save. 5. With a determination to be obedient to Christ's commands. III. PRACTICAL APPLICATION. 1. To sinners. Come at once. 2. To disciples. Show that you have come by fulfilling the duties you owe to Christ. (*T. Gisborne, M.A.*) *Coming to Christ the only means of salvation*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT HERE BY LIFE? As death is put for evil, so is life for all that is good (Deut. xxx. 15). And seeing that the happiness which God hath prepared for His people consists in the full enjoyment of all that is good, it is called life; and eternal life, because it shall last for ever. Though it be perfected only in the other world it is begun in this. At our new birth, when we are made God's children by adoption and grace the Holy Spirit is breathed into us and becomes the principle of eternal life in us (chap. v. 47, 54; v. 24; 1 John iii. 15). II. THIS LIFE IS TO BE HAD IN CHRIST JESUS, AND IN HIM ONLY (John xvii. 2; xiv. 6; Col. iii. 4; 1 John v. 20). All things related to it are founded in Him. He purchased life for us, promised it to us, prepares it for us and us for it, and bestows it upon us. To make this clear—1. Man created in the image of God was immortal; but the first man in whom all the rest were contained by sinning made himself and his posterity obnoxious to the death God had threatened. 2. But Jesus Christ, the second Adam, having taken away the sin of the world, hath thereby abolished death, so that man by Him may have life again. 3. Christ being now by the right hand of God, exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, confers upon the penitent believer this life. III. THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE THIS LIFE MUST GO TO CHRIST FOR IT. 1. By coming to Him He means believing in Him as—(1) Our Prophet, assenting to all He has revealed to us. (2) Our Lord and Master, obeying all that He commands. (3) Our Priest, and trusting in His merits. 2. By thus coming to Him He gives us grace to repent, power to resist temptation, His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, to strengthen our faith, and to guide us to heaven. IV. NEVERTHELESS MEN WILL NOT GO TO CHRIST FOR LIFE. 1. The truth of this proposition is proved by our Lord's assertion, and is confirmed by experience. 2. The reasons. (1) Because men are so stupid as not to care for it; they look no further than what just lies before them, and go on eating and drinking, and sleeping and playing, till death comes and carries them to a place they never thought of in their lives (Deut. xxxii. 28, 29). (2) But if they cannot with all their art keep their conscience quiet they flatter themselves with hopes that they will do well enough without troubling themselves about going to Christ, for they are moral. (3) And of those who have some sense of their sins many think that their good works counterbalance them. (4) But there are others who are poisoned with heretical opinions, denying Christ's Divinity and Atonement. (5) The greatest reason, however, is

that they have things which they deem of greater moment (Luke xiv. 18–20; but Matt. xvi. 26). (*Dp. Beveridge.*) *How to come to Christ, and the great hindrance:* —I. LIFE IS ONLY TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST (ver. 39). 1. Not in the letter of the Word, but in the Living Word; not in an idea, but in a Person. Many are now satisfied with an imaginary Christ. 2. Why? Because they have never known the want of a real Christ. If they felt the pangs of hunger they could never be satisfied with wax fruit. 3. The real Christ differs from the ideal in that He is a living Christ, and can communicate the life that is in Himself. 4. Vain all your self-satisfaction, morality, prayers, &c., if you have not life from Him. II. THE WAY TO OBTAIN THIS LIFE IS BY COMING TO CHRIST. 1. There are various steps in this process indicated by great Scripture words. (1) "Coming" to the Cross. (2) "Looking" away from everything to Christ. (3) "Believing" that He died for us. (4) "Receiving" Him in all His fulness. (5) "Embracing," grasping, or holding Him fast. 2. These are acts of faith, so you must—(1) Believe the record that He is "the Lamb of God," &c. (2) Believe that He has given you your discharge in full. You can only do this by committing all your sins to Him. III. LIFELESS SINNERS DO NOT COME TO CHRIST BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT. (*W. J. Chapman, M.A.*) *The great refusal:*—I. WHY IS IT THAT WE WILL NOT COME TO CHRIST FOR LIFE? 1. Negatively. Not (1) from any want of sufficiency in Christ to meet our need (vers. 21–29). (2) From any want of evidence that He is the eternal life (vers. 31–39). (3) From any want of consciousness of the need of life (ver. 39). We all want something we have not, and few are so besotted as not to feel their need of heaven. 2. Positively. Prejudice and enmity against Himself, arising from self-righteousness and unbelief. He gives four reasons for this. (1) Ver. 41. The Lord Jesus is not fashionable in the world. (2) Ver. 42. If you only knew how God delights in Christ, and is honoured by Him, you would love and admire Christ too. (3) Ver. 44. The thing that keeps many back is the knowledge that he would be sneered at. (4) Ver. 46. We don't believe our Bibles, and therefore do not come to Christ for life. II. CHRIST SETS BEFORE US THREE WEIGHTY MATTERS. 1. The great want of our souls is life. We think that reformation, good resolutions, a certain amount of sorrow, will do when Life is wanted; for the Bible is in nothing more emphatic than that man is dead in trespasses and sins. Consequently words, works, prayers, repentance, are all dead till we come to Christ. That is the beginning of religion. 2. The great duty and privilege of every sinner. (1) We must come to Christ because (*a*) God commands it; (*b*) it is the end of Christ's coming; (*c*) the purpose of gospel preaching; (*d*) the object of the mission of the Spirit. (2) It is our privilege to come (*a*) because life is to be had on the easiest terms; (*b*) because all men, without exception, may receive it. (3) But what is coming? Taking Him at His word and pleading His promise. You want no further warrant than your need and His invitation. 3. The great folly of infatuated sinners. Health proclaimed to diseased souls, life to dead souls; when the world, pleasure, evil calls, they go, but God calls in vain. What is this but folly? Conclusion: 1. Christ says, "Come unto Me": not to ministers, priests, ordinances: men readily go to them. 2. Not to go to Christ for life is to reject Him. (*Marcus Rainsford.*) *The lamentations of Jesus*:—I. Men, apart from the salvation of God, are in a state of DEATH. 1. In this plaint of the Saviour's the true condition of sinners is seen in awful distinctness. He knew what was in man. 2. The estimate of man's state and prospects is of vital importance. To deny or neglect is (1) to accuse Christ of coming into the world on a needless errand; (2) to reject the only offer of deliverance. II. In order to pass from death to life we must COME TO JESUS. 1. On our part it is not a word, but an act. A dead-letter knowledge destitute of moving power pervades and paralyzes the Church. 2. Beware lest you lose yourself in any mist which may gather round the expression, "Come unto Me." In the experience of life we frequently pass over from one confidence to another, and we do this as really and potentially as we come in body from one place to another. It is not an incapacity to understand such a change, it is unwillingness to make it. III. In order to live NOTHING MORE IS NEEDED than to come to Jesus. 1. No preliminary qualification is demanded. None are excluded for the presence of one quality or the absence of another. 2. To go conclusively off from self and all other confidences and cleave to the Son of God as all your salvation is all that is necessary. 3. The effects which the change produces have not produced the change. 4. It is not the coming to Christ and a better obedience that will bring life to the dead. Coming to Christ is itself alone this. IV. Those who are spiritually dead are NOT WILLING to come to Christ for life. 1. This seems strange, and the Lord Himself

wondered at their unbelief. 2. The human nature of the question is graphically represented in the history of Naaman. Most men would do difficult things willingly for the sake of what they call heaven; but they are unwilling to do the easy thing God requires. 3. The want lies in the will. V. Jesus COMPLAINS that they will not come to Him for life. 1. Here the Saviour opens His heart that He may look in and see the love that fills it. 2. The upper side of religion is not a sentiment, but a fact; such also must its under side be. The one is Christ's coming into the world to die for us; the other is our coming to Christ to live in Him. Mercy let down from heaven must be grasped by the needy on earth while it is within their reach. 3. When you neglect this great salvation you mar the Saviour's joy. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Refusing life*:—I. THE UNWILLINGNESS OF MEN TO COME TO CHRIST. What is the cause of this reluctance? 1. It is not the Saviour's fault. He not only invited but went, and does so to-day. 2. Scoffers say it arises from the visionary nature of the gift which Christ offers. 3. What too despondent friends of religion say amounts to the same thing, viz., that men are too gross and worldly to care for such a thing as immortality. But how then shall we account for the pilgrimages and endless mortifications of devotees. 4. No, the cause lies deeper, even in the sinfulness of the human heart. Just as darkness is opposed to light, so is sin to holiness. II. WHAT IT IS THAT MEN GAIN BY COMING TO CHRIST. 1. It is inferred that life out of Christ is transient, unsubstantial, and must die. However fair and moral a man's outward life may be, if sin is busy in his heart he must perish. 2. But if you come to Christ in heart you shall obtain life. (1) The life of holiness. (2) Of Christ. (3) Of heaven. III. THE GREATNESS OF THIS GAIN OUGHT TO REMOVE ALL UNWILLINGNESS TO COME TO CHRIST. Those who obtain life obtain—1. Perfect security, and all things work together for their good—loss, sickness, bereavement, death. 2. Constant progress in time and in eternity. 3. Happiness now and for ever. (*G. Colborne, Ph.D.*) *Unwillingness to come to Christ*:—I. THE PLAN OF SALVATION. coming to Christ. There must be personal contact between Christ and your spirit. Faith, like a hand, must spiritually grasp Him. 1. The text implies that we are to come to Jesus Christ for everything, for life includes all that is needful to salvation and salvation itself. 2. Christ gives us actual spiritual life and judicial life, so that we are saved from condemnation. 3. This way of coming to Christ is the only way, for "there is none other name," &c. 4. It is a sure and open way. None have ever tried it and failed. The Fountain has never been closed. II. YOUR POSITION IN REFERENCE TO THIS PLAN OF SALVATION. 1. I would have you get alone and say deliberately, "I will not come," &c. 2. You will not because you have not. (1) Some of you say softly, "I cannot." This is the same as "will not." If you had the will you would have the power. (2) Others, "I dare not." Turn that the other way, "I dare not refuse to come." 3. Think of what you are spurning. (1) Life eternal, and the day will come when you will think with anguish that you have despised it. (2) Christ Himself, incarnate, dying, glorified. (3) You refuse to come to Him. Not to Sinai, but to Calvary. Salvation is worth Christ dying for, but not worth your thinking about. 4. Think of why you will not come. (1) Do you hope to find salvation somewhere else? This is what the Jews did and failed: so will you. (2) Is it some secret sin? (3) Sheer frivolity perhaps. If you must play, play with something cheaper than the blood of Christ, something less precious than your souls. III. WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF THIS? I suppose some of you think you will come to Jesus some day. Why not now? Every day adds to the chances that you never will come to Christ. And if not you must die eternally. What is that? Ask those who know—Dives. IV. LET US HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE A CHANGE TO-NIGHT. 1. You may come. Christ invites; the Spirit and the Bride say, Come! 2. Respond, "I will come." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Men by nature unwilling to come to Christ*:—I. MEN BY NATURE ARE FAR FROM CHRIST. In respect of—1. Knowledge. 2. Union. 3. Participation. 4. Converse. II. SINNERS ARE UNWILLING TO COME TO CHRIST. 1. Many think they have already come. 2. Many do not fully apprehend their need of Christ. They think it enough to be sorry, reformed, mean well, &c. 3. Many are too busy, and so have no leisure for such a journey: pleasure, business, care, &c., prevent (Luke xiv.). 4. Many will not part with that which keeps them at a distance from Christ, viz., sin. 5. Many are possessed with prejudice against Christ as represented in the gospel. III. THE USES. 1. Of information. (1) Man's wretchedness. (2) Man's helplessness to deliver himself. (3) The sufficiency of Christ and His salvation. 2. For examination. Those who come to Christ—(1) Are sorry that they were so long ere they came to Him. (2) Are acquainted with the way to Christ, having walked in it.

(3) Have a high esteem of Christ. (4) Are in a new condition. (5) Walk with Christ. (6) Are at a greater distance from sin and the world. (7) Have renounced their own righteousness. 3. Of exhortation. Consider—(1) The necessity of coming to Christ. (*a*) You are under the power of Satan. (*b*) You are under the guilt of sin. (*c*) You are under God's wrath. (*d*) You are under the curse. (*e*) The justice of God is engaged to destroy you. (*f*) Your outward enjoyments and accommodations in the world are uncomfortable, unsanctified, accursed. (2) The advantage of coming to Christ—freedom from all these disadvantages; and—(*a*) Union with Him, real, happy, everlasting. (*b*) Communion with Him. (*c*) Participation of Him in all He is and all He has: His obedience, miracles, prayers, resurrection, &c. (3) The equity of coming to Christ. (*a*) You lose nothing, but gain enough by it: health from sickness, liberty from captivity, beauty instead of deformity, sanity for madness. (*b*) He waits till you come, condescendingly, industriously, patiently. (4) The danger of not coming: the guilt of soul murder. If you will not come to Christ—(*a*) He will come against you either in a severer way to reclaim you or to destroy you. (*b*) He will depart from you, and you know not how soon. (*c*) You shall not come hereafter. (*d*) Ye shall not have life. IV. THE CONVERSE. Those that come to Christ will have life. What life? All that is opposite to the death Adam brought into the world. Those who come to Christ —1. Have another kind of temporal life. (1) In respect of its tenure. The sinner's title is common providence; the saint's that of the covenant of grace. (2) In respect of its blessing. Life is not a blessing special but in Christ. (3) In respect of its comfort. (4) In respect of its usefulness. 2. Spiritual life. (1) The life of righteousness (Rom. v. 18). (2) The life of holiness in its principles, increase, acts, continuance. 3. Eternal life in respect to—(1) Its title. (2) Hope. (3) Earnest. (4) Possession. Conclusion: Have you this life? If so, where there is life there is—1. Breath; 2. Motion; 3. Sense—seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting. (*D. Clarkson, B.D.*) *The reasons why men do not come to Christ*:—I. THEY PLACE NO VALUE ON THE BLESSINGS HE OFFERS. These blessings are—1. Remote. 2. Of a spiritual nature. (1) Pardon of sin. (2) Peace of conscience. (3) A joyful hope of immortality. (4) Holiness. II. THEY HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF CHRIST TO GRANT THE BLESSINGS HE PROMISES. III. THEY OBJECT TO THE TERMS UPON WHICH HE OFFERS SALVATION. 1. Self-denial and the taking up of the cross. 2. Repentance. 3. Faith. 4. Purity and spirituality. (*J. Venn, M.A.*) *Christ's lamentation over those who will not come to Him*:—The discourse from which these words have been taken arose out of a conflict between our blessed Lord and the Pharisees respecting the observance of the Sabbath. I. We have, in the words before us, CHRIST'S EXPLANATION OF MAN'S INVETERATE SPIRITUAL MALADY. 1. Apart from Christ, men are spiritually dead. In forms, more or less repulsive, we find spiritual death wherever we look, in the world at large or in our own circle of friends. Intellectual life is not wanting. Never, perhaps, was there a period in the history of our race when intellectual life existed in a form more vigorous. Moral life is not wanting. One of the indirect results of the spread of the gospel is to enlighten the conscience even of those who do not receive it. But they have no spiritual life. God is not the object of their supreme affection. And, alas! this spiritual death is not confined to the world. Look for a moment at the Church. 2. Now, what is our Lord's explanation of the solemn fact that spiritual death thus so generally obtains, notwithstanding that He has brought life within the reach of men and offered it to them in His gospel? He does not say that it is because they have never read the revelation of the Father's love in Him, that they are as they are. But He says, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." 3. But let us look at this solemn truth as it affects the anxious inquirer after salvation. It is only because men do not come to Christ for salvation, and therefore have no life, that the ordinances of the house of prayer are so often, and to so many, empty, fruitless exercises. Again: with how many questions does the inquirer after salvation often trouble and perplex his mind, from all of which he would be delivered, if he would only come for life simply and in faith to Christ. For instance, he sometimes perplexes himself as to the nature of conversion, and wonders, and asks himself whether it has taken place in his case. Regeneration takes place in the very act of receiving Christ as our life. Coming to Jesus for life and salvation is not the result, but the very means of the new birth. II. We have in the words of our text, CHRIST'S LAMENTATION OVER THE CAUSE OF THE CONTINUED SPIRITUAL DEATH OF MEN. "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." I cannot discern, my brethren, in the utterance of these words by our blessed Lord,

the tones of wrath. Oh, no! sadness must have covered His face with gloom as, looking over the reckless multitude, He said, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." Christ might justly have spoken in anger. He would probably have done so had He been less holy and Divine than He was. 1. This complaint seems to open to us the very heart of Christ in its aspect towards men. It reveals to us the intensity of His love. The greatest joy He can possess is to impart Divine life to sinners, who are perishing because they have it not. The greatest grief which can oppress Him is to find His love, which would have given this life, despised and spurned. This has been so beautifully illustrated by a living writer, by a reference to one of the most familiar scenes of domestic life, that I must adopt his illustration, though not in his words. One of the deepest joys of a mother's heart is to nourish her babe from her own breast. It is a double grief! He grieves for the death of the dead, and the loss of His own life-giving! How deep and tender, therefore, the love of Jesus for perishing men! 2. In the second place, the complaint of Jesus suggests the solemn thought that the sinner's death is the sinner's fault! Possibly, you sometimes think that a portion of the fault, at least, may lie upon your minister. Possibly you sometimes blame the Church. There are so many frailties in those who compose it, that they are a stumbling-block to you! The fault of your death is not to be found anywhere but in yourself! (*E. J. Hartland.*) *Hindrances to conversion*:—I. Some refuse Christ from IGNORANCE OF THEIR TRUE SPIRITUAL CONDITION. Content with lip-knowledge. Need to realize that "respectability is not conversion." II. Some are hindered by what they deem OPPOSING FORCES. 1. Pre-occupation. 2. Mistaken ideas of religion. 3. Inconsistency of professing Christians. 4. Fears—of God, of man, of self, of the danger of falling. III. All these are SUMMED UP IN CHRIST'S WORDS, "Ye will not." How long is this to last? Why give everything to gain the world, and take no step to save your soul? IV. YOUR LOSS IS LIFE. Christ came to rescue from death. Appreciate His love by appropriating His salvation. (*John Edwards.*) *Christ alone is rejected*:—When the dove was weary she recollected the ark, and flew into Noah's hand at once: there are weary souls who know the Ark, but will not fly to it. When an Israelite had slain, inadvertently, his fellow, he knew the city of refuge, he feared the avenger of blood, and he fled along the road to the place of safety; but multitudes know the refuge, and every Sabbath we set up the sign-posts along the road, but yet they come not to find salvation. The destitute waifs and strays of the streets of London find out the night refuge and ask for shelter: they cluster round our workhouse doors like sparrows under the eaves of a building on a rainy day; they piteously crave for lodging and a crust of bread; yet crowds of poor benighted spirits, when the house of mercy is lighted up, and the invitation is plainly written in bold letters, "Whosoever will, let him turn in hither," will not come, but prove the truth of Watts's verse: "Thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come." 'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Shall we refuse life?*—Many years ago, when the great war was raging in America between the Northern and Southern States, no cotton came to supply the Lancashire mills, and hundreds of thousands of people were reduced to great poverty and suffering for want of food and clothing. Oh! how fervently they prayed that the war might soon be over, and that God would send them "cotton." At last the war closed, and the sea was again white with the sails of cotton-bringing ships, and soon a railway train laden with the precious thing arrived at Preston, in Lancashire. The town was filled with joy, and when the first load of cotton was brought through the streets on a dray, the people went out by hundreds to welcome it. They marched on either side of it, and many of them kissed the bales of cotton as they moved along, and sang: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," for now there would be work, and food, and comfort. And when in the year 1871 the gates of the famine-stricken Paris were thrown open after the terrible siege, and a drove of fat cattle were driven along the streets to be killed for food, the women rushed from their doors and, throwing their arms around the necks of the sleek oxen, kissed them a welcome to their ruined city, for their coming was life to them and to their children. And is not Jesus "Life" to us? Is He not a thousand times more to us than cotton or cattle were to the people of Preston and Paris? And shall we refuse Him, or receive Him coldly? What think you? (*R. Brewin.*) *Sinners will not come to Christ*:—Since I have been watching the sea a wind has sprung up, and suddenly the ocean is dotted with ships. This little town has a harbour, and trading vessels of small tonnage evidently expect a storm, for here they

come. Like sea-fowl borne on white wings they are flying for the harbour. Differing in their tacking, yet it is evident that they are all making for one spot. How beautiful it is to see them enter the haven, cast anchor, and rest! Oh, that our fellow-men were equally wise as to spiritual things! A thousand signs betoken the approaching tempest; they know there is a place of refuge, will they not hasten to it? They will suffer loss, nay, they will be wrecked totally, if they try to weather the last dread storm; the harbour is free, there is time to reach it, there is ample room within its shelter; why will they refuse the safety? Ah me! this is cause for tears. Are my fellow-creatures mad? Do they despise Jesus, the appointed haven of souls? Do they so despise Him as to perish to show their contempt? My God, help me to mourn for them, if I cannot persuade them, and do Thou give them understanding enough to accept their own lives. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sinners will not come to Christ*:—If there is any man here who says, "I cannot come," I beg him to express himself properly, and speak out the sad fact as it ought to be spoken. Here is the style: "Unhappy wretch, I cannot come to Christ! Millions in heaven have come, but I cannot come. My mother died in a good hope; but, 'Mother, I cannot come.' My father has gone home to be with Jesus; but I cannot come." I thank God that this statement is not true; but if you say it, and believe it, you ought never to rest any more; for if you cannot come to Christ, you are the unhappiest person in the world. May I ask you to do another thing? If you still intend to say, "I cannot come," will you speak the truth now? Will you alter a word, and get nearer the truth? Say, "I will not come." "I cannot come," is Greek, or double Dutch; but the plain English is, "I will not come." I wish you would say that rather than the other, because the recoil of saying, "I will not come: I will not believe in Jesus: I will not repent of sin: I will not turn from my wicked ways"—the recoil, I say, from that might be blessed by God to you to make you see your desperate state. I wish you would then cry, "I cannot sit down and make my own damnation sure by saying that I will not come to Christ." (*Ibid.*) *Christ's desertions and complaints*:—Jesus, Mediator between God and man, suffers two desertions, and utters two complaints. On that side, God forsook Him; and on this side, man. The answer to the first desertion, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" came in a strong cry from His dying lips; the answer to the second is written here, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." The desertion by the Father in the utmost agony of the Son was the greater—was inconceivably, infinitely great; but the lower and lesser—the desertion by sinners whom He seeks that He may save—pierces His heart more painfully, because the last desertion makes the first for that case of no avail. When we come to Him for life, He sees, He tastes of the travail of His soul and is satisfied; when we refuse, He complains that so far His soul has travailed in vain. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord "risen from the dead"; the Lord is gladder when He sees disciples coming to Himself as doves to their windows. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Will, the seat of inability*:—Nelson could not see the signal for suspending battle because he placed the glass to his blind eye, and man cannot see the truth as it is in Jesus because he has no mind to do so. Ungodly men are, as the country people say, "like the hogs in a harvest field," who come not out for all their shouting; they cannot hear because they have no will to hear. Want of will causes paralysis of every faculty. In spiritual things man is utterly unable because resolvedly unwilling. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Will—not violated by grace*:—When we see a casket wrenched open, the hinges torn away, or the clasp destroyed, we mark at once the hand of the spoiler; but when we observe another casket deftly opened with a master-key, and the sparkling contents revealed, we note the hand of the owner. Conversion is not, as some suppose, a violent opening of the heart by grace, in which will, reason, and judgment are all ignored or crushed. This is too barbarous a method for Him who comes not as a plunderer to his prey, but as a possessor to his treasure. In conversion, the Lord who made the human heart deals with it according to its nature and constitution. His key insinuates itself into the wards; the will is not enslaved but enfranchised; the reason is not blinded but enlightened, and the whole man is made to act with a glorious liberty which it never knew till it fell under the restraints of grace. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 41. **I receive not honour from men.**—Lest they should think that in commending Himself and challenging them He was hunting after vainglory, as false teachers do, Christ obviates that mistake, and showeth that He was seeking no such thing, nor was capable of any addition of honour from the creature. Whence learn

—1. Christ is so omniscient that He knoweth and marketh the thoughts of every one that He dealeth with; so much doth His obviating their thoughts teach. 2. It is the usual fault of men that they have but low and base thoughts of Christ, and that they measure and judge of Him and His followers by themselves, for this suspicion of Christ imported that they looked on Him as a mere man, and as they were themselves ambitious (ver. 44), so did they judge of Him, and so are His servants judged of. 3. Christ was no hunter after vainglory, nor is He capable of any addition of honour by men's acknowledging of Him; nor ought men to think that He seeks them because He hath any need of them, or that they add anything to Him, when He makes them somewhat; for albeit men are bound to manifest and declare His super-excellent glory; and men by sin do what they can to dishonour Him, as who would cast dirt or spit against the sun? Yet His infinite glory is neither capable of addition nor diminution from the creature; for "I receive not honour from men." (*G. Hutcheson.*) *Vanity of worldly honours*:—The subjects of Charlemagne, after his death, set his corpse on a throne in a sepulchre, and put a sceptre in his stiff hand and a crown on his bloodless temples; but long ago he came down to a prostrate condition. At the Tuileries, in Paris, during the revolution of July, when the mob broke in, a boy, wounded to death, was laid on the emperor's throne, and his blood gave deeper crimson to the imperial upholstery; but, after all, he came down into the dust where we must all lie. (*Dr. Talmage.*) *Worldly honours delusive and dangerous*:—Heliogabalus, the Roman emperor, being jealous of the power of the senate, invited the senators to a great feast. When they were overcome with wine, Heliogabalus left the hall. The doors were fastened without; yet the carousal continued. The emperor shouted to them from a glass door in the ceiling, that, as they were ever aspiring after fresh laurels, they should now be satisfied. Wreaths and flowers began to rain upon them. The senators cried, "Enough, enough!" but the rain continued. Terror seized them. They flew to the doors; but they were immovable. Escape was impossible. The relentless storm continued till all were buried and suffocated beneath the murderous sea of flowers. (*E. Foster.*)

Ver. 42. **Ye have not the love of God in you.**—*The sin of not loving God*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO LOVE GOD? Hereunto is required—1. Knowing of Him. 2. Our choosing Him as our portion and sovereign good (Deut. xxvi. 17; Psa. xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26). 3. Our exercising all the acts of love towards Him. (1) Good will. (2) Desire of union. (3) Complacency. II. HOW ARE WE TO LOVE GOD? 1. With all our hearts (Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37). 2. Above all things (Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26). 3. At all times. Because—(1) Of the infinite perfections of goodness in Himself. (2) Of His infinite expressions of goodness towards us. III. How DOES IT APPEAR TO BE SIN NOT TO LOVE GOD? Because—1. God has commanded it (Deut. vi. 5). 2. We have so many obligations to love Him. 3. The want of this turns everything else to sin. IV. WHO ARE GUILTY OF THIS SIN? 1. They that acknowledge Him not. 2. That think not of Him (Psa. cxix. 97). 3. That long not after Him (Psa. lxxiii. 25). 4. That rejoice not in Him. 5. That love anything as much or more than Him (Luke xiv. 26). 6. That love not His (1 John iv. 12; v. 1). 7. That do not endeavour to be reconciled to Him. 8. That do not obey Him (John xiv. 15). V. MOTIVES TO LOVE GOD. 1. It is the first and great command (Matt. xxii. 38). 2. We can perform no duty aright without it (1 Cor. xiii. 1). 3. It will make all other duties easy and pleasant. 4. Consider how infinitely God deserves our love for what He is in Himself; and also for what He is to us. He—(1) Made us; (2) Maintains us; (3) Protects us; (4) Redeemed us; (5) Sanctifies us; (6) Prepares heaven for us. 5. If we love God all things shall work together for our good. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Marks of the love of God*:—I. In suggesting various MARKS by which you may ascertain whether you love God or not, I would mention—1. The general bent and turn of your thoughts when not under the immediate control of circumstances. These afford clear indications of the general temper and disposition. It is impossible that such a Being should be absent long from your thoughts unless you are decidedly indifferent to Divine things; the charge against the ungodly is that "God is not in all their thoughts." Consider this, ye that forget God. 2. How you stand disposed to the exercises of religion: if God is the Object of your love you will gladly avail yourselves of the opportunities for cultivating a closer friendship with Him. 3. How you stand affected towards His Word. We can derive no just thoughts of God but from that. All, therefore, who sincerely love

Him study that. "How I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day." A neglected Bible is an unambiguous sign of an unsanctified heart. 4. With what sentiments do you regard the people of God? If you do not love the image which you see, how can you love the unseen original? 5. Consider the disposition you entertain toward the Son of God. "If ye had loved the Father, ye would have loved Me also." 6. Examine how you are affected by His benefits. These are so numerous and distinguished that they ought to excite our gratitude; and yet are they the only benefits we receive without thankfulness. 7. In what manner are you impressed with a sense of your sins? 8. How are you affected towards this world? II. Supposing a conviction to be produced that you have not God's love in you, let me make the proper IMPROVEMENT. 1. It should be accompanied by deep humiliation. 2. Let this humiliation be accompanied with concern and alarm. 3. This is an awful, but not a helpless state. Jesus is the way to the Father's heart. (*Robert Hall.*) *The absence of the love of God:*—There are some charges which cannot be advanced without exciting the strongest feelings, such as cowardice and falsehood. And yet there are graver charges which excite no emotion, or, if perchance the conscience be aroused to the sense of their truth, anodynes are applied and men return to recklessness and indifference. It was so with the Jews and the allegation of the text, and it is so to-day. Observe—1. THAT THE LOVE OF GOD IS THE PRINCIPLE WHICH OUGHT TO ACTUATE ALL HIS INTELLIGENT CREATURES. 1. Deut. vi. 1–6 six times repeated and confirmed by Jesus Christ. 2. God's revelations of His character and proceedings, show the reasonableness of this command, for they show His love for the purpose of making us happy. Contemplate—(1) Providence. (2) The scheme of grace. 3. This should lead us to recognize His claim upon our love. II. THAT THERE ARE MULTITUDES OF THE HUMAN RACE WHO ARE DESTITUTE OF THE LOVE OF GOD. 1. This is proved from Scripture. How multiplied are the charges against men that they forsook God, departed from, hated, denied Him! Christ said, "They have both seen and hated Me and My Father," and Paul, that they are "haters of God." 2. This will always be the case where men are left to the influence of their own minds without the counteracting principle of Divine grace. 3. This accounted for by man's fall, which introduced in the human mind a dislike to God and His commandments (Rom. viii. 7, 8). III. THAT THERE ARE SIGNS BY WHICH THE ABSENCE OF THE LOVE OF GOD MAY BE DETECTED. 1. A rejection of the Divine testimony respecting the Person and work of the Son (see the whole context). 2. The infraction of the judicial or moral commandments of the law (chap. xiv. 21, &c.). 3. Inordinate desires for and pursuit after worldly gain (Matt. vi. 24, xix. 16, &c.; 1 John ii. 15–17; James iv. 4). 4. Destitution of true practical kindness towards other men (1 John iii. 14, &c.; iv. 7, 12, 19). IV. THAT THOSE WHO ARE DESTITUTE OF THIS LOVE ARE LIVING IN AN AWFUL STATE WITH REGARD TO THEIR ETERNAL INTERESTS. The absence of the love of God—1. Abandons man to the dominion of those passions whose uniform tendency is the production of abasement and sorrow. 2. Excludes men from the favour of God and exposes them to future punishment. (*J. Parsons.*) *The emptiness of natural virtue:*—1. Jesus knew what was in man, had a faculty of perceiving what lay under a semblance that would have imposed on other men. 2. In the exercise of this faculty Jesus came forth with the utterance of the text. He saw, in spite of their zeal for the Sabbath and God's honour, that the Jews had not the love of God in them. 3. It is mortifying to the man who possesses many accomplishments of character to be told that the most essential accomplishments of a moral being is that in which he has no share, and wanting it, he wants not merely obedience to the first and greatest commandment, but the impregnating quality of all acceptable obedience. 4. There is no more useful exercise than that of carrying round this conviction amongst all conditions of humanity. The pride of the Pharisees was opposed to such a demonstration, nor do men of taste, feeling, and morality understand how they should require the same treatment in preparing them for immortality with the profligate. 5. But the Bible everywhere groups men into two classes, with one clear line of demarcation between them, and this we can find out to be in accordance with the actual exhibition of human nature. There are men who do and men who do not possess this love of God. I. TAKE AN EXTREME CASE, A MORAL MONSTER, who, in addition to every other vicious feeling and practice, can steel his heart against the atrocity of murder. We have no difficulty in assigning his place. It were a monstrous supposition that the love of God were to be found in him. II. DETACH FROM HIM ONE OFFENSIVE FEATURE. He recoils from murder. Has he thereby become a spiritual man? Is the difference assigned to

him due to the love of God? Your consciousness will tell you that the heart has constitutional feelings unaccompanied by any reference to even the existence of God. III. If this natural recoil from murder be experienced by the man who has no love to God, why may it not be carried further and yet the same love be absent? LET THERE BE THEN A FURTHER TRANSFORMATION. Endow the man with natural tenderness and make him a fair every-day character. Still he only constitutionally revolts from crime without any movement of affection towards God. IV. PROCEED IN THIS WORK. Conceive of an exquisite softening of affection and tenderness over the whole character. Do these refined sensibilities constitute a spiritual man? The feeling heart if unaccompanied by the love of God is no better evidence than the circulation of the blood. V. Go STILL FURTHER. Let the heart be filled with upright and honourable principles. But there is a principle of honour in the human mind apart altogether from any reference to God. VI. But it may be asked, WHAT BETTER EVIDENCE CAN BE GIVEN OF OUR LOVE TO GOD THAN THE EXISTENCE AND PRACTICE OF THESE VIRTUES? It takes us to the bottom of this delusion to observe that though the religious principle can never exist without virtuous conduct, yet such conduct may be due—1. To natural disposition. 2. To a perception of its beauty. 3. To secure friendships. 4. To a perception of it as part of a fashionable deportment. But it is only when he is virtuous, because it is a prescription of Divine law that there is any religion in it. If you do what is virtuous because God tells you, then only do you give an example of the authority of religion over your practice. God cannot reward you in the capacity of Master when His service is not the principle of it, nor as Judge when your virtue has no reference to His law. And the highest sense of duty towards society will not be received as an atonement for wanting a sense of duty to God. He gave you your virtuous faculties and provided a sphere for their exercise, yet you do not love Him. Conclusion: 1. Virtue without religion, from the want of an adequate motive, is at best imperfect and breaks down under the severe pressure of temptation. Christian virtue sustained by the love of God is invincible, perpetual, permanent. 2. If Scripture and all experience are on the side of our text, should not this be turned by each of us to personal account? 3. The love of God may be, and can only be, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. (*T. Chalmers, D.D.*) *Anathema Maranatha* (in conjunction with 1 Cor. xvi. 22):—Our Lord is remonstrating with the Jews for their desire to slay Him. By taking His life they would be taking their own (ver. 40). This was attempted under the pretence of love to God. Our Lord here exposes its hollowness. The other verse is a prediction of the inevitable consequence of impenitence. In 1 Cor. xii. 3 Paul tells us that the Jews called Jesus Anathema, *i.e.*, a person devoted to destruction. How He turns their doctrine upon them! "It is not Jesus who shall be destroyed, but those who do not love Him." I. THE MIND DELIGHTS IN SOME SPECIFIC AND ABSORBING PURSUITS, and the range of its search will widen, and its standard rise in proportion to the purity, reverence, and the devoutness of the desire. II. THIS TENDENCY FINDS ITS REWARD IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE HIGHEST GOOD. Finite intelligence can rest only in its infinite source. III. THE PATHWAY TO SUCH AN ISSUE IS OPENED IN THE GOSPEL. 1. With unobtrusive step. There is no vulgar ceremonial, no wild or harsh Eureka. 2. With surprising grace. 3. With convincing luminousness. Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." 4. With unembarrassed access. Willinghood is the only condition. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." IV. THE REVELATION WHICH THE GOSPEL MAKES IS THE GREAT MORAL TRIBUNAL AND TEST. 1. It tries our estimate of law. He who underrates the gospel lowers the standard of the law. A low estimate of moral law means a low estimate of God. 2. It tests our reverence for God. The mind which shrinks from the obligations of the gospel is deficient in its veneration for the Supreme. 3. It tests our susceptibility to transcendent worth. Without a sense of our utter worthlessness there can be no appreciation of Christ. Any sense of personal righteousness detracts from our estimate of His. Just as a man dwindles in His own esteem Christ rises and expands. Christ came not to dower the rich and cleanse the pure, but to enrich the poor and wash the filthy. V. TO SET THIS GOSPEL AT NAUGHT IS TO BE LEFT WITHOUT EXCUSE. 1. Unless we can find a substitute; but all substitutes hitherto have been like the cup of Tantalus. Read the "Transactions of the British Association" beside a sick bed, or take them as a light to the feet, and where is your consolation? 2. Unless we can silence clouds of witnesses. Could a lie have filled the martyr with new faith? 3. Unless we can do all this without misgiving. 4. But to yield to this gospel is to pass within the range of everlasting love. (*A. Mursell.*) *Love the supreme test:*—As a man

loveth so he is; for the lover is in the thing loved, more properly than in himself: wherefore, if a man love earthly things, he may be called an earthly man; but if he love heavenly things, or God, he may be called an heavenly or a godly man. Therefore love God and heavenly things, for undoubtedly that is the best and most assured love; for they be, and ever shall be, permanent; and all earthly things be soon vanished and ended; and so the love of them is in vain (1 John ii. 15–17). (*Dean Colet.*) *The tests of love:*—1. We take delight in pleasing the object of our affection. 2. We delight in the society and conversation of those we love. 3. We naturally prize the approbation of one whom we love. 4. We have reference to the feelings of one whom we love, in all our conduct. 5. We naturally love to think of the object of our affection. 6. We delight in conversing about an object of our affections. 7. We are pained when separated from those we love. 8. We naturally love the friends of the object of our affection. 9. We naturally avoid the enemies of our friends. 10. We are grieved when our best friend is abused in our presence. 11. We are naturally credulous and pleased if we hear any good of those we love. 12. We love to see means used to promote the interest and happiness of those we love. 13. It is difficult for us to believe an evil report of one whom we love. 14. When we are compelled to believe an evil report of the object of our affection, we are careful not to give it unnecessary publicity. 15. We naturally try to put the most favourable construction upon any event that might be injurious to the interest or reputation of a friend whom we love. 16. When any of the friends of one whom we greatly love fall into any conduct that is greatly dishonourable to the object of our affection, it distresses us, and we are disposed, as far as possible, to prevent a repetition of the event. Nothing is more common than for impenitent sinners to affirm that they do love God; and yet nothing is more certain than that they do not love Him. (*C. G. Finney.*) *The world does not love God:*—I have been reading Chinese books for more than forty years, and any general requirement to "love God," or the mention of any one as actually "loving Him," has yet to come for the first time under my eye. (*J. Legge, D.D.*) *The awful charge:*—I. HERE IS AN AWFUL CHARGE. "Ye have not," &c. To whom does this apply? 1. To those who are habitually unmindful of Him. Our thoughts as naturally follow the object of our regard as the needle the loadstone. Says David, "I love Thee, O Lord, my strength." Observe what follows: "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me," &c. But of the wicked it is said, "God is not in all their thoughts." 2. To those who do not trust in Him. We cannot confide in one we dislike, and we know not how to distrust one whom we truly esteem. 3. To those who are unconcerned for His honour and interest. Is our friend misrepresented? We naturally stand forth in his defence; we could not see him injured or wronged without pain, and without endeavouring to have him righted. But what lamentable unconcern do we witness for God and the things of God! 4. To those who are indifferent about His presence and favour. We value the regard of those who are dear to us. II. CONSIDER THEIR SIN AND DANGER. God has the highest claims to our love, and not to love Him is a sin of no ordinary magnitude. 1. It is a most comprehensive sin. Love is the fulfilling of the whole law, and hence the want of it is a sin which violates the whole law. It is the want of everything that is morally good, the root of all evil, the spring or root of all disobedience. 2. It is a most inexcusable sin. For can any plead want of ability? Is not the passion of love implanted in our nature? 3. It is a most ruinous and destructive sin. All who die without love to God must be excluded from His presence, shut out from His kingdom. Apply the subject—1. To those who are destitute of this love. Humble yourselves before God. 2. To those whose love to God is low and languid. Let them seek to have it revived and invigorated by a contemplation of the Divine excellencies—grace and love—as displayed in the great Mediator. 3. To those whose love to God is increasing. "If any man love God, the same is known of him." (*The Evangelist.*)

Ver. 43. **I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not.**—Whence learn—I. Albeit Christ be God over all, equal with the Father, and Lord over His own house, and so acts in His own name, yet IT PLEASED HIM TO CONDESCEND as Mediator, not only to purchase life to them that come to Him, but to COME into the world CLOTHED WITH A COMMISSION FROM THE FATHER to make offer of this purchased life, that by His condescendence He might commend His love to His people, and teach them humility, and not to run on a calling unsent, and that we might look on Him as approved of the Father, and that such as come to Him the Father will accept

them, for saith He, "I am come in My Father's name" (see Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7, &c.; Matt. iii. 17; Heb. v. 4, 5). II. CHRIST thus coming IS TO BE RECEIVED, His doctrine to be heard, Himself to be acknowledged for such in His person, offices, commission, and benefits, as He declareth Himself to be; to be rested on and embraced, to be employed and submitted to as such, for so is imported in that they should receive Him. III. Albeit Christ be the great Ambassador of the Father, not a servant, but the Son (Matt. xxi. 37). And albeit He was singular in His admiration of His office, and all tending to the good of sinners, YET SUCH IS THE PERVERSENESS OF THE WORLD AS NOT TO MAKE HIM WELCOME; for it is the peculiar privilege of the elect to be drawn to Him, and others, they neither see His excellency, nor feel their need of Him; therefore saith He, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not." IV. SUCH AS REJECT CHRIST ARE DESTITUTE OF THE LOVE OF GOD, nor have they any evidence of respect to Him, since Christ is the clearest image of the Father, and cometh in His name, and the Father will not be acknowledged but in and through Him. Therefore by this doth He prove that challenge (ver. 42). V. WHEN CHRIST MANIFESTS HIMSELF to the world, IT IS USUAL WITH SATAN TO HOUND OUT SEDUCERS AND FALSE TEACHERS, to study to bear him down, to seduce souls, and by their courses to make the way of truth odious; for so is imported that another shall come, pretending either to be the Christ, or to hold Him out to others (see Matt. xxiv. 5, 24; Acts v. 36, 37). VI. ALBEIT FALSE TEACHERS PRETEND TO COME IN GOD AND CHRIST'S NAME (Matt. xxiv. 5), YET THEY DO BUT COME IN THEIR OWN, as having no commission when they run, as making themselves, their reputation and advantage, their chief aim in their undertaking, and as speaking the imaginations of their own heart and brain, without any warrant from God; for "another shall come in His own name." VII. SUCH AS EMBRACE NOT CHRIST MAY TAKE WORSE IN HIS ROOM, and will easily receive and embrace false teachers and seducers. Men's nature is propense to evil courses, and is readiest to be affected with what is wrong. And seducers are more ready to serve men's humours than faithful ministers may be, and withal it is God's just judgment on the world to give them up to such, since they will not receive the love of the truth (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12). Therefore saith He, "If another come in his own name, him ye will receive." This is the heinous sin of men, to affront Christ, to respect Satan in his messengers, before God in His Son, as to prefer lies to truth. And it is their dreadful punishment to be given up to such delusions, because they will not see the light, or do receive it only as it may serve their turn, or weary of the light, and walk not answerable to it. And men should be ashamed of their errors, as being their plague, and a proclamation that they have not received the love of the truth. (*G. Hutcheson.*) He who despises the Dove (John i. 42) falls a prey to the frogs (Rev. xvi. 13). (*R. Berser, D.D.*) There is light for those loving light, and darkness for those loving darkness. (*Pascal.*) Robert Owen rejected Christianity, and died a believer in spirit-rapping. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*)

Ver. 44. **How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?**—*False and true glory*:—Something is lost in this rendering of "honour" in the place of glory. More is lost by the substitution of "from God only" for "from the only God." Glory is the forthshining of light, the manifestation of a perfection inherent in the person spoken of. What a rebuke, therefore, lies in the phrase "Receiving glory one from another," implying a claim of inherent excellence. To speak of it in connection with man is to deny creation and the fall, to deify man and to dethrone God. The other substitution is less excusable. The very object of the expression is to show that there is none good but One, that is God. There is but one Being who has any light to emit, any excellence to manifest. Any other glory must be counterfeit; to accept or profess to give it is an affront to the majesty of God as the one Being. I. THE TENDENCY WHICH IS IN ALL OF US TO RECEIVE GLORY FROM ANOTHER. This is a different thing from that of which St. Paul says, "Render honour to whom honour is due," or St. Peter, "Honour all men." Honour is respect, recognition of the claims of position, character, humanity, not the impious flattery, for receiving which Herod was smitten. But much of that which men give to or expect from another is glory—the ascription of inherent excellence. We should call it cant to be reminded that God is the giver of that which makes a sagacious statesman or an eloquent orator. The thought, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" though it lies on our theological shelf, is not welcome as a monitor. We have borrowed the word "talent" from the parable, but we have divorced it from its context—as the memento of a Lord who will hold His servants

in strict account. II. In contrast with this habit OUR LORD SETS BEFORE US THE ALTERNATIVE OF SEEKING GLORY FROM THE ONLY GOD. It seems strange after the above definition of glory to seek it from God as something He can communicate. Yet our Lord speaks of seeking from God that forthshining in ourselves The life to which Christ calls us is no tame monotony. It is a seeking of glory; the ambition to be accepted; an aspiration after an applause that the world wots not of. It is the desire for the approval of God Himself which attends upon the exercise of the Christ-like mind. Where this life is there is elevation above lying world-worship. Begin this ambition at once. If hitherto we have allowed the thought of other people to come in, let us do little acts of good which no one can discover, or form some in secret, some good habit hitherto falsely ascribed to us, and thus seek a glory that comes from the only God. III. THE CONNECTION OF FAITH WITH THESE HABITS. 1. How can ye believe who seek the one glory? To believe is to realize the invisible. This is the direct opposite of the habit before us. To receive glory from another is to be deaf and blind to all but sense and time. 2. How can ye believe who seek not the other glory? Faith is a thing which presupposes a searching after, till it finds the God in whom man lives and moves and has his being: the half unconscious consciousness that there is a glory which God, the alone good and great and glorious, destines for and can alone bestow on man. 3. "How can ye believe?" (1) It is good for us to be sternly reminded that there are states of mind incapable of believing. (2) The gospel may be true all the time and you responsible for rejecting it. How can ye believe with your worldly lives and ambitious projects? (3) Lord, convince us of the shame and folly and wickedness of this earth-bounded, miserable creature worship, and draw our thoughts upwards to Thy glorious presence. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The peril of seeking honour of men:*— 1. All its attendant circumstances add weight to this remarkable utterance. It is the statement of the hidden reasons for Jewish wilfulness. There was a deep moral incapacity which made Christ's words and works powerless. 2. That which made belief powerless in the Jews makes it powerless in us. 3. In a very few touches He shows the real character of this evil—the allowing man's estimate to become the measure of what is to be honoured. I. WHAT THIS DANGER IS THE EFFECT OF WHICH IS TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO SAVINGLY RECEIVE THE TRUTH. 1. Pride. Take, *e.g.*, a man of high intellectual power. Poor as it is held by God's standard, yet when judged according to the low measures many propose to themselves, the man has a right to be proud. Accordingly, he becomes a law unto himself and looks on others with a calm sense of superiority. By degrees he has a secret pleasure in going against the common forms of belief. His greater acuteness shows him errors in creeds, and then perhaps he stoops to be a leader of babes and grows into a heresiarch, or sinks, if truth be too strong for him, into the sadder honours of a spurious martyrdom. But for some overpowering work of grace, belief is impossible to such a man. Wrapped up in the superiority of a Pharisee, or embittered into a scoffing Sadducee, how can he believe? 2. Self-conceit—a bastard growth of the same evil root. There is scarcely any peculiarity on which such may not ground a high estimate of themselves. Singularities of dress, bodily defect, a lisp, &c., show the workings of this lesser devil. What is there in this empty, inflated, irritating soul on which the gospel can lay hold when a strange dress, &c., is enough to satisfy his desire for greatness? 3. Vanity—closely related to the two former and yet widely different. It is a diseased desire for the good opinion of others to mend or bolster up our good opinion of ourselves. There is no humiliation to which a vain man will not stoop; he would rather be laughed at than left unnoticed. His itching desire to bring himself into notice spreads into his religion, and shows itself in small instances of ridiculous manner or rite. How can such an one believe? 4. Self-consciousness is a struggling form of the same evil. The self-conscious man is ever tormented with an ever-present vision of self in what he is doing. He cannot confess sin without thinking how well he is doing it, nor pray without thinking how others, if they only saw him, would applaud. All of these forms have about them this deadly element, that they substitute some lower object for the one true end of a man's being—to do the will of God. II. WHERE IS OUR DELIVERANCE? 1. We cannot find it in ourselves. The proud man cannot reason himself out of his pride; self-conceit will survive all disgrace; vanity will go on all through life blemishing everything, and self-consciousness will poison a life of active exertion and contemplative piety. 2. Self in this deceitful form can only be cast out by our Maker. In His presence only can we see our littleness. There all self-delusions fade. It is well, then, to get there from time to time in a solemn and

especial manner. 3. But then you must watch in detail against the temptation. (1) Think as little as possible about any good in yourself; turn your eyes from self and speak as little as possible about yourself, and specially be on your guard against the little tricks by which the vain man seeks to secure attention. (2) Take meekly the humiliations which God in His providence deals out to you. (3) Place yourself often beneath the Cross. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *Undue regard to reputation a source of unbelief*:—I. THE NATURE AND EVIL TENDENCY OF AN UNDUE REGARD TO REPUTATION. 1. There is a proper regard which is useful and laudable. This Samuel and Paul had. We may value it—(1) As a test of our own character, and as an instrument for doing good. (2) But in a moderate manner, and (3) Not as the main motive of our conduct. 2. There may be an undue regard in cases in which the opinion of the world seems to be entirely despised. An affectation of singularity, a contrariety to the maxims and conduct of the world, may spring from a desire of reputation. 3. In general, however, it is by the dread of singularity that this undue regard is evinced. We are anxious to follow the world. The evil of such a principle is great. (1) It robs God of His proper glory. (2) It is base and mean, therefore, and further because it is but the love of self. (3) It is highly prejudicial to others. For it will induce us to flatter them in order that they may be pleased with us. (4) It fails of its object. The world is a hard master. "Them that honour Me I will honour, but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." II. THE NATURE AND EXCELLENCY OF SEEKING THE HONOUR THAT COMETH OF GOD. 1. Its nature and advantages. The man who is guided by this motive—(1) Sets God ever before him as his supreme Lord whom he is bound by every obligation to obey. (2) He learns to attach little value to human approbation. (3) He obtains peace, and (4) The time is coming when he will enter upon eternal honour, while those who act from the opposite principle will be rewarded with shame and everlasting contempt. 2. Its excellence. It is—(1) Pure, unalloyed by any mixture of imperfection, and consists of regard for a Being infinitely pure. (2) Simple, because it has but one end in view. (3) Noble, because its end is the glory of God. (4) Fixed and permanent. The tastes of men vary, but the will of God is unchangeable. (5) Always productive of peace and happiness. III. THE CONNECTION OF THESE PRINCIPLES WITH A READY RECEPTION OF THE DOCTRINES OF CHRIST. As the understanding is biassed by the affections, it follows that when the love of reputation operates the mind is predisposed to believe that system which is fairest in human estimation. The man who follows the world has nothing to do with principle or truth. He is a slave to those whose opinion he courts. It is not to a character like this that it belongs to pursue the calm investigation of truth or to suffer for it. This requires independence and unselfishness only imparted by the influence of some great principle, such as a supreme desire for the favour of God. Hence Nicodemus, Joseph, Nathanael, Zacchæus, &c., were already disposed by the fear of God to embrace the gospel, while in the Pharisees, whose religion was vanity and whose hearts thirsted for applause, rejected it. (*J. Venn, M.A.*) *Why men cannot believe in Christ*:—I. THE HINDRANCE IN THE WAY OF THE PHARISEES. 1. The mere fact of receiving honour, even if that honour be rightly rendered, may make faith a difficulty. He is in danger of being elevated above the conviction of sin and of the necessity of salvation. 2. It is still more perilous if, receiving honour, we come to expect it. Those who do are not in the condition which renders it easy to say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." 3. The Pharisees received honour, but it was quite undeserved. They extolled one another for ostentatious religiousness, whereas they devoured widows' houses, &c. If a man has a fine character and doesn't deserve it, and allows it to go on, how can he believe in Christ whose light shows him in his true colours? How can the man who has lived in the dark love the light? 4. Always receiving this honour, they deceived themselves into believing that they deserved it. The deluded becomes self-deluded, and when the smoke of incense makes their eyes dim with self-conceit, it is not at all marvellous that they cannot believe in Christ. 5. The praise of men generally turns the receivers into great cowards. To believe in Jesus is to forfeit that. Men would no longer salute them as Rabbi, but turn them out of the synagogue. So a good many now cannot believe because they are afraid. The commercial traveller would be exposed to the chaff of the commercial room; the working man to the coarse remarks of the workshop. Some are afraid of the boon companions whom they have led. How many live on the breath of their fellow men! II. OTHER HINDRANCES. 1. Some are unable to believe because they have a very high opinion of themselves. They have never done anything amiss, or have good hearts at bottom.

2. In many cases there is a strong aversion to confession of sin and to approach to God. 3. In others the hindrance is indolence. 4. Many are too fond of pleasure to believe in Christ. 5. Habitual or occasional sin. 6. Love of gain. 7. An unforgiving temper;—all impede faith in Christ. But they all aggravate the sin. Dare you plead them before God? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The idolatry of genius*:—I. DESCRIBE THE EVIL. 1. The lowest and least sinful grade of it is when men value genius and do homage to it simply for its own sake, and apart from its uses. This evil is exemplified where men honour another, not for anything he has done, but simply because he has received from God some quality, intelligence, beyond that ordinarily bestowed. He may be a vain man, who is concerned chiefly to use his gifts for display; or an indolent man, who allows life to pass away without his doing any benefit; or a thoughtless man, who has never formed one worthy aim; or an irresolute man, who is driven through life as a mere waif. 2. A worse is reached when men suffer their admiration of genius to blind them to moral distortions. Sometimes the man is bold and wicked enough to employ genius for feathering the poisoned arrows of vice, so that they may fly the surer and strike the deeper. At other times only the tendency of his writings saps the moral principle. In other cases the writer may have kept his page comparatively clean whilst he has been himself a man of notoriously flagitious life. Are such men worthy of being held up to admiration? 3. Another stage, more daring and wicked, is when men of superior powers are actually deified. This is exemplified in those forms of heathen hero-worship; and something not essentially different from this may be found in the saint-worship of the Romish Church. It may appear to some, however, that there is no risk of this species of idolatry attaching itself to mere literary genius. But what is to be said of the deliberate proposal of Comte—to revise the Calendar, and appoint days for the special worship of great men, gods, heroes, saints; in the first of which he would place such names as those of Moses, Homer, St. Paul, Shakespeare, Frederick the Great; in the second, Buddha and Confucius; and in the third, Hercules and Ovid? II. THE EVIL AND DANGER OF SUCH A TENDENCY. The worship of genius is—1. Irrational. The difference between one man's intellect and another's can never be so immense as to make it compatible with the dignity of a rational being for the less gifted to bow down in homage and reverence to his more richly endowed brother. Is it not a dereliction from our proper manhood? What would be thought of us were we to treat other gifts of God after the same fashion? Beauty, strength, &c. 2. Immoral. The first principle of morality is, that a man is neither to be praised nor blamed for what is merely physical and constitutional. The mere possession of a gift infers no excellence, implies no worthiness. It is as the possessor uses them that he becomes a fit subject for approbation or the opposite. The immorality is heightened when a man of genius is lauded, in spite of the impurity, blasphemy, or falsehood of his writings, or the crimes of his life. 3. Prejudicial to the moral interests of the youth of the community. "We must put an end," says the Platonic Socrates, speaking of the immortal stores of the Greek poets, "We must put an end to such stories in our State, lest they beget in the youth too great a facility for wickedness." 4. Idolatrous. You worship genius: Why?—Because it is the gift of God? So is nature. Because it is attractive and brilliant? So is the sun, so are the stars, the earth, the sea. Because it fills you with delight? So do the flowers. Where do you draw the distinction? (*W. L. Alexander, D.D.*) *Self-seeking*:—A certain king had a minstrel whom he commanded to play before him. It was a day of high feasting; the cups were flowing, and many great guests were assembled. The minstrel laid his fingers among the strings of his harp and woke them all to the sweetest melody, but the hymn was to the glory of himself. It was a celebration of the exploits of song which the bard had himself performed, and told how he had excelled high-born Hoel's harp, and emulated soft Llewellyn's lay. In high-sounding strains he sang himself and all his glories. When the feast was over, the harper said to the monarch, "O king, give me thy guerdon; let the minstrel's meed be paid." Then the monarch replied, "Thou hast sung unto thyself; pay thyself. Thine own praises were thy theme; be thyself the paymaster." The harper cried, "Did I not sing sweetly? O king, give me thy gold!" But the king said, "So much the worse for thy pride, that thou shouldst lavish such praise on thyself. Get thee gone, thou shalt not serve in my train." (*W. Baxendale.*) *Happiness and humility*:—Some time since I took up a work purporting to be the lives of sundry characters as related by themselves. Two of those characters agreed in remarking that they were never happy until they ceased striving to be great men. (*E. Payson, D.D.*)

Vers. 45–47. **Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.**—The day of judgment is likened to a trial, and we learn that with every verdict there will be given reasons which shall satisfy the intelligent creation. When we read of books and witnesses, we may be sure there will be evidence we shall not be able to contradict. 1. Conscience will probably be the great accuser. This may now be torpid; but circumstances constantly occur to show that it is not dead. 2. Conscience now awakens with memory, and so it will be then; and so memory will reproduce every action, and conscience will determine its character. Addressing Himself to Jews, our Lord, notwithstanding the testimony of His miracles, avers that He will not accuse them for their infidelity. There were such clear attestations in the writings of Moses to Himself, that it would be sufficient only to produce them. And what a forgetfulness of the element of their religion, and what a stifling of conscience must there have been ere they could profess to trust in a lawgiver whose laws they set at nought! I. Our Lord makes it A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE ON MEN'S BELIEVING MOSES, THAT THEY SHOULD BELIEVE IN HIM. 1. The law and the gospel, therefore, must be parts of the same system. (1) If you consider the law as a system of types, and compare it with the gospel as the antitype, it seems impossible to avoid being struck by the correspondence. (2) The gospel furnishes us with the character in which the law is written, and thus enables us to decipher its hieroglyphics. 2. How can we account for this? Not by chance; for there is not here and there an accidental resemblance. But when it is the business of a lifetime to find out all the reciprocities, and the impossibility of a lifetime to detect one disagreement, we are compelled to believe that, whoever constructed the gospel, formed it for the purpose of adapting it to the law. 3. Let us see how the argument stands. (1) The founders of Christianity must, if impostors, have laboured to give plausibility to their system by assimilating it to the law; but in order to success, they must have had unbounded familiarity with the Mosaic institution and unbounded ingenuity in giving substance to shadows. (2) Had the apostles been learned rabbis, they would not have been equal to this; but they were unlearned peasants. (3) The only theory on which we can account for this mutual adaptation, is that both come from God. 4. Consequently, to reject one is to reject both. The Jews, indeed, had no such acquaintance with the gospel as we have; but they had abundant opportunity of noting the correspondence of Christ with the Messianic prophecies. They rejected the former, and hence the latter also. 5. To follow the same line of thought further. The Bible, though composed in different ages and by different writers, is an uniform book, presenting throughout the same truths, though with a great variety of exhibition and marked by a surprising similarity of style. This is convincing alike of the unity and Divinity of its authorship, and to believe one part of it is to believe the whole. II. THE FORCE OF THE REASONING THAT IF MOSES WERE NOT BELIEVED NEITHER WOULD CHRIST BE. 1. We are wont to think that were Christ to speak and work now as He did eighteen hundred years ago, that His ministry would result in widespread conviction of unbelievers and conversion of sinners. But if the fact that the Jews resisted the writings of Moses proved that there was no hope of them being overcome by the words of Christ, we might infer that those who reject the preaching of Christ's ministers would reject Christ Himself. The amount of necessary resistance would not be greater in the one case than the other, except that the Jews had an incomplete, but Christians have a perfect Bible. But would not Divine eloquence and miracles be more powerful than the written Word? No. (1) Because the Holy Spirit is the Agent of conversion in either case. (2) Because there being no respect of persons with God, one generation is dealt with by the same laws as another; and we have no right to believe that in handling a miracle the Spirit would apply a greater effort than in handling the Word. (3) In resisting the writings of Moses the Jews had resisted the Holy Spirit speaking in those writings, and henceforward, in resisting the word of Christ, they were to resist the Spirit speaking in those words. And so now the Spirit turns upon us sufficient evidence to convince, but not to compel. (4) "To think that we should be converted by miracle who are unconverted by Scripture is to apologize for infidelity by throwing the blame upon God." It holds good to-day, "If we will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither shall we be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ's testimony to the Bible:*—There is much controversy about the Book. It will be interesting, amid the din and tumult, to find out what Christ thought of it. If He makes it out to be a good Book, I shall continue my faith in it. If He is hesitant or doubtful, I shall not hesitate to give

it up. I. IN REGARD TO OTHERS. 1. He commended it as an object of study. (1) Without one word of caution. He points to it as you would point your child to a garden, where you give him liberty to roam where and eat what it may. If there was a pit there, or a poisonous serpent, and your child came to harm, you would be to blame. So Christ sends us to the Bible, and takes the entire responsibility. (2) Authoritatively; not with a polite wish, but with a command. We want to do away with the imperative mood, and are inviting people to be courteous enough to let the sunlight into their chambers. If you have any doubt about your Bible, then go like a crouching dog and ask people to kindly listen to your tale. But if it be in your heart as the life of your life, then speak it boldly and lovingly. (3) Completely. He does not say, "When you come upon anything that taxes your fancy, put that into the waste-paper basket, and go on; when you meet with a difficulty, pass it by, and accept what you can accept; when something appears incredible, reject it, and pass on to what you can accept." Had there been anything wrong there I know, because I know His truth and nobleness, that He would have told me of it. 2. He declared its absolute integrity, and exactly as a truth-speaking man would do. Persons came to Him with a difficulty, and in His answer there is this parenthesis: "The Scriptures cannot be broken." This was not special pleading. The subject had no reference to Scripture. The remark is casual and unstudied, and one on which those who examine witnesses place great reliance. He had the opportunity of making annotations, of saying, "I now refer to the moral parts," or "I am speaking eclectically"; but His whole assumption, on the contrary, broadens out into an infinite confidence in the integrity of the Scriptures. 3. He taught that it contains the great answers to all the great questions of the soul. (1) As regards duty. A man came to Him, asking, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus instantly replied, "What is written in the law?" and showed that that great question had been answered from the beginning. (2) As regards destiny. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus He showed that the men of olden time did not go down to hell without warning. "If they hear not Moses," &c. II. IN REGARD TO HIMSELF. He was not a mere lecturer about the Bible. 1. He fled Himself to it in the time of His temptation and agony. "It is written." In His great crisis He goes to the Bible; He has it in His heart; He quotes it as if He had written it. 2. Coming out of the wilderness into society, we find Him even quoting it in self-vindication. Again and again He said to learned men, "Have ye never read?" To His own disciples, "How is it that ye do not understand?" And when He began to read, their hearts began to burn. They had been reading the Scriptures, and yet had made nothing of them, like many to-day. Read it with Christ, and you will find His person, claims, promises, vindicated everywhere. 3. Christ found Himself in the whole Bible. "Had ye believed Moses," &c. "Beginning at Moses," &c. And what is the Old Testament testimony to Him? That He is Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, Sovereign, Friend; "the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever." Then search the Scriptures; read them through. 1. This alone will qualify you for criticizing it. 2. This alone will give you solid comfort and eternal life. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The unity of the Bible an argument for its Divinity*:—In reading the Bible I seem always to hear the same voice: whether the volume is informing me how the unshapen chaos resolved itself at the Creator's bidding into symmetry and life—or men, who, familiar with the scenes, are gathering centuries into sentences; or the lawgiver is arranging the ceremonies of the mystic volume; or historians are discoursing of battles and captivities; or evangelists describing the institutions, and apostles unfolding the doctrines of Christianity—I seem always to hear the same voice, as though the words of John, the exile in Patmos, were the echo of those of Moses, the leader of Israel. There is vast difference in the subjects successively touched on; but, notwithstanding, there is a tone which I always recognize, and which always impresses the feeling that I am hearkening to the same speaker. There seems no change in the instrument, though continual change in the sound; as if at one time the whirlwind swept the chords, that I may be astonished with the utterance of wrath and devastation, and at another they were touched by an angel's hand, that I might be soothed by the melody of mercy. There is the same scheme carried on by the wanderings of patriarchs, the sacrifices of priests, the ambition of kings, and the sufferings of martyrs. The same style is preserved by the poet in his hymns, by the prophet in his visions, the lawgiver in his codes, the historian in his annals; so that, as though the Author never died, but appeared at one time in one character, and another in another, the Bible comes to me as the dictate of one mind, and the writing of one pen. Inspira-

tion only accounts for this; but we cannot imagine any other solution. And if (for it is on this our text bids us fasten) there be such a sameness between the Jewish and Christian dispensations, that all the types in the one find exact antitypes in the other, and thus the two have such a relationship, that they compose one uniform system, we must receive both or reject both. If we believe Moses we must believe Christ, and if we believe Christ we must believe Moses; and this serves to vindicate what might otherwise seem difficult, that no Jew can truly believe his own religion and yet deny the Christian religion. "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me." (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *The impossibility of inventing the correspondence between Moses' testimony and Christ's work*:—We should like to see a company of acute and scientific reasoners, but ignorant of Christianity, sit down to the study of the books of Leviticus and Exodus; they shall be told, "These books are full of types, and emblems, and figures, and ceremonies, and you must strive to devise a simple religious system, which shall give significance to every item of this symbolic array; there are mysterious intimations," we will tell them, "in every page, couched in parabolic language, or under sacrificial institutions, and your endeavour must be to invent a scheme of theology which shall afford a plausible and rational explanation of all that is thus obscure." Now do you honestly think that our company of ingenious and intelligent writers would make much way with their task? Can you believe that, as the result of their joint labours, there would be sent into the world any scheme of religion which should fix the plain meaning, or at least afford a clue, to all the mysteries of the books of Exodus and Leviticus? Yet this is precisely what is done by the system of Christianity; done with so unvarying a carefulness, that you cannot find a point to which there is nothing corresponding. The men, moreover, who effected this were ignorant and illiterate; so that the books were compiled when there was none of those human appliances which at best would but ensure the most limited success. What alternative, then, have we but that of admitting a supernatural interference, and ascribing to God the whole system of Christianity? (*Ibid.*) *Christ in the Old Testament and in the New*:—Christ was in the faith of the patriarchs like corn in the ear; in the faith of the law like corn grown into flower; but since the Incarnation He is in our faith completely as when corn is made into bread. (*Bernard.*)

CHAPTER VI.

THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN CHAPTERS V. AND VI.—Our Lord is in Galilee. It has been, perhaps, a year since the healing at Bethesda. His ministry in Galilee has gone forward, as described by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, including many miracles, the Sermon on the Mount, the early parables, and the mission of the twelve. Returning from this mission, on which they went two and two throughout Galilee, teaching and healing, the twelve were weary and worn, as Jesus Himself had been when He reclined beside Jacob's well. So He compassionately said to them (Mark vi. 31), "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." That project led to his feeding the five thousand. This is the first narrative in which John has been parallel to all three of the other Gospels (Matt. xiv. 13–33; Mark vi. 31–52; Luke ix. 10–17), and it will not be so again until the triumphal entry. John's chief object is to present the Saviour's discourses, and he probably gives this one Galilean event in common with the other Gospels only by way of introducing the great discourse on the Bread of life. (*J. A. Broadus, D.D.*) *The moral connection between Chapters V. and VI.*:—The record of a critical scene in Christ's work in Galilee follows the record of the critical scene at Jerusalem. At Jerusalem Christ revealed Himself as the Giver of life; here He reveals Himself as the Support and Guide of life. In the former case the central teaching was upon the relation of the Son to the Father; in this case it is in the relation of Christ to the believer. The episode contains the whole essence of the Galilean ministry. It places in decisive contrast the true and false conceptions of the Messianic kingship, the one universal and spiritual, the other local and material. (*Bp. Westcott.*)

VERS. 1–21. **After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee.**—*The reason*

for this journey :—I. AS REGARDS HIMSELF. 1. To avoid the fury of Herod who had just slain the Baptist. 2. That the anger of the scribes and Pharisees (Mark vi. 3) might abate. In this He teaches us to avoid all that might needlessly irritate sinners and thus confirm them in their sin. God withdraws at times from men only that He may take from them the occasion of sin. Going not in wrath, but in love. II. AS REGARDS THE DISCIPLES. 1. To give them leisure and retirement. They were somewhat too full of all the things that they had done and taught, and harassed by the continual coming and going of the multitudes who thronged the master. 2. To train them in philanthropical as well as spiritual work. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *The great multitude waiting to be fed* :—1. The great company flocking to Christ are the unbelieving nations of the world with a glimmering sense of their wants—a first pang of hunger for the bread of life. 2. The willingness of Jesus to supply bread is reproduced in the Church's obedience to the command "Go ye into all the world," &c. 3. The perplexity of the disciples has a counterpart in our acknowledgment of insufficient means and failure to propagate the gospel. 4. The miracle shows us that the world can only be fed by Jesus Christ. Let us consider—I. THE NUMBER AND CONDITION OF THE MULTITUDES WHO ARE STRANGERS TO THE FAITH AND HOPE OF CHRISTIANS. 700,000,000—about two thirds of the whole race—regarded under three great divisions. 1. Brahminism, professed by 150,000,000—ancient, idolatrous, cruel, licentious. Not a growing religion. Energetic reformers within its fold are leading the most intelligent away from idolatry, but not to Christ. 2. Buddhism arose in the six century B.C. Its founder a philosopher, moral and benevolent. Disgusted with Brahminism, he invented a system of pure morality, but without a personal God and immortality. Numbers about 400,000,000. 3. Mohammedanism numbers about 80,000,000. It borrowed a little light from revelation; abhors idolatry; acknowledges Jesus as a prophet. Its morality is low, and its dream of a future life is tinctured with sensuality. Its history is a tissue of impurity and cruelty. II. OUR CONDITION AND MEANS OF FEEDING THIS GREAT MULTITUDE. Christians not above 300,000,000 in number. From the commencement Christianity has been promulgated—1. By foreigners visiting some gospel centre, as on the day of Pentecost, and carrying the seeds of life to their own homes. In no country are there so many heathen visitors as in England. Were their spiritual needs provided for here what vast good would result! 2. By colonists and traders. Professing Christian Englishmen are everywhere. Would that they possessed what they profess. 3. By missions. Your duty is—(1) To pray the Lord to raise up more missionaries. (2) To ask your self whether you could go, and to encourage others to go. (3) To support those who do go. (4) To keep up, by reading, &c., a living interest in their work. (*W. T. Bullock, M.A.*) *Christ the Refresher of mankind* :—I. THE MIRACLE OF THE BREAD. 1. Our Lord here appears as the Master of matter and natural laws. We are, in a certain sense, the slaves of matter, and when we conquer Nature it is only by obeying her. 2. The miracle appears to have been recorded because it led to disbelief. Now men say that there is too much miracle about Christ; then they said there was too little. But if you juggle away the miracles of the Book you cannot get rid of the miracle of the man. 3. In the fulness of Christ, as here revealed, is to be found the solution of the pressing social problems of want and pauperism. II. THE PARABLE OF THE BREAD. Christ's words are works, and His acts speak. We shall be better able to understand the refreshment which may come to us from this parable if we read it in the light of "Give us this day our daily bread." This means—1. Give us food sufficient, and do not spiritualize this away, 2. But let us not gird in those words with the narrow rim of the loaf. Give us sanctifying bread. The words of Jesus are spirit and life. 3. There are many substitutes for the bread of Christ—morality, education, art; but in these things is no abiding satisfaction. 4. There are those who speak as though there were two breads—a manly, undogmatic, free-speaking religion for the strong man; and Christianity for the weak man. But the time comes to the strongest when he feels that he has a woman's heart within him, and when in his hour of anguish he cries to God for bread, what will it profit him to find a stone, though it be the whitest intellectual marble. The bread for the woman and the child was the same here as for the strong man. (*Bp. Alexander.*) *Christ the best Provider* :—I. CHRIST IS READY TO SATISFY THE WANTS OF THE BODY. Many persons do not trust Him in earthly pursuits. Christianity for them is something "very spiritual." "They cannot live by prayer." "Sermons do not satisfy hunger." "Godliness does not give success in trade." The gospel and Christian experience, however, show that Jesus is a good Provider for bodily wants. 1. He

has sympathy for the needs of mankind (ver. 5). Although tired and weak and engaged in the greatest affairs, yet, like a good householder, He is mindful of the least wants of His people, and provides an evening meal. He does not forget the hungry raven: will He forget those who He has taught to pray for their daily bread (Deut. iv. 7). 2. He awakens sympathetic hearts and hands to alleviate want. Here the disciples. The apostolic Church, in the Spirit of Christ, cared for its poor, widows, and orphans. Rome built splendid theatres: the Spirit of Christ builds hospitals. II. CHRIST NEVER FORGETS THE WANTS OF THE SOUL. 1. Man's greatest want is bread for the soul—food that will be good when the world shall pass away, that will be palatable in old age, that will strengthen in sickness, and restore the dying. 2. The Saviour's highest act of sovereignty is the bestowment of this spiritual food. 3. His aim is to awaken desire for this heavenly bread by means of earthly good things and providences. (*C. Gerok, D.D.*) *The compassion of Christ*:—Christ's mercy was not a mouth-mercy, as was that of those in St. James' time, that said to their necessitous neighbours, "Depart in peace, be warned," but with what? With a fire of words, &c. But our Saviour, out of deep commiseration, both pitied the people and healed them on both sides, within and without. Oh, how well may He be called a Saviour, which, in the original word, is so full of emphasis, that other tongues can hardly find a fit word to express it by! (*J. Trapp.*) *Christ feeding the five thousand*:—I. THE ZEAL DISPLAYED BY THE PEOPLE IN FOLLOWING JESUS. 1. Although they knew He had gone into a desert place. 2. Some were doubtless actuated by curiosity, but others were anxious to profit by His words. 3. We may blame those who came from improper motives, but their zeal should condemn our coldness and neglect. II. THE READINESS OF CHRIST TO PROVIDE FOR HUMAN WANT. III. THE TRIAL OF THE DISCIPLES' FAITH. Often in this way God opens our eyes to our own weakness and His sufficiency. IV. THE PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST. 1. Confusion avoided. 2. Women and children protected from rudeness. 3. Quick distribution facilitated. V. THE NATURE AND METHOD OF THE MIRACLE. 1. The quality of the food was not changed, but its quantity was increased. Our Lord does not pamper luxury, but satisfies hunger. 2. The people received the bread from the apostles. Thus Christ taught respect for His ministers, because they act on His behalf. 3. The same miracle is repeated every day by a different process, and we give no heed to it (Psa. civ. 14, 15). VI. The narrative teaches us a lesson of ECONOMY and FRUGALITY. The bounties of Providence are never to be wasted; when we have more than we need, let it be given to others. (*J. N. Norton.*) *Christ feeding the five thousand*:—We have here—I. A PICTURE OF HOPEFUL PROMISE IN THE MULTITUDE. 1. They were looking for the Messiah, and, if they did not exactly believe, they had a large idea that Christ was He. Their notions were more or less confused; some were influenced by gaping wonder, but all were enthusiastic to hear Christ, and disappointed His desire for rest. 2. Christ honoured this imperfect zeal. It was in some sort a seeking of the kingdom in preference to earthly comfort, and evinced a confidence in Christ that He never disappoints. And what He would not do for Himself, and what the devil could not extract from Him, is instantly commanded by human need. 3. The murder of John the Baptist had something to do with His retirement. When grace is mistreated it withdraws. What is driven away by the impiety of the great is called forth by the confidence of the poor. 4. The self-denial of the people was commendable. They had to make a long circuit and adventure into a desert region. The way to Christ is never smooth, but sincere devotion follows Christ in the face of all trials. II. A PICTURE OF FAULTY FAITH IN THE DISCIPLES. 1. According to earthly reason, Philip and Andrew were right. In the common course of affairs the thing was impossible. But they should have known Christ better. Their faith was overborne by looking only at human helplessness instead of at Divine resources. Trust in God suffers from mammon on one side and poverty on the other. The rich disregard Providence because they have plenty; the others grumble at it and undertake to make a way of their own. III. A PICTURE OF WONDERFUL GOODNESS IN CHRIST. 1. This has been likened to 2 Kings iv. 42–44. But we see at once that the one was the work of the servant, the other that of the Master. 2. We observe the truly Messianic character of the miracle. The prerogative of God in the absoluteness of the Godhead is to create what is from what is not. But redemption is the taking of what is, and a developing of something additional. It is the making of a saint out of a sinner. Like the miracle, the redeeming process is—(1) Inscrutable. The Incarnation, the operations of the Spirit, the conveyance

of spiritual aliment through the means of grace, are beyond our comprehension. (2) Gracious. Christ might have shown His almightiness in works of judgment. So now. IV. THE MATERIALS OF HAPPY ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMISE TO FAITH AND OBEDIENCE (Phil. iv. 19; Psa. xxxvii. 3). (*J. A. Seiss, D.D.*) *Christ feeding the five thousand:*—I. OUR LORD OFTEN PUTS QUESTIONS TO HIS DISCIPLES WHICH THEY CANNOT ANSWER, AND LAYS ON THEM DUTIES WHICH THEY CANNOT PERFORM BY THEMSELVES. His object is to prove them, and to reveal their ignorance and weakness, that they may appeal to Him for help. II. CHRIST IS THE GOD OF ORDER, AND NOT OF CONFUSION. His methodical and orderly arrangement—1. Facilitated the feeding of the multitude. 2. Allowed the miracle to be clearly seen. 3. Prevented crushing. 4. Secured that none should be overlooked. 5. Enabled the disciples to count. Note the ordiliness of Christ's kingdom. III. CHRIST EXHIBITS DIVINE RESERVE IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS MIRACULOUS POWER. 1. He used existing materials. 2. Employed existing agencies. 3. Although He could have created food and satisfied hunger without any aid. 4. Apologetic significance of this. IV. CHRIST TEACHES US TO RECOGNIZE GOD AS THE GIVER OF OUR FOOD AND COMFORTS (ver. 11). V. CHRIST TEACHES THOSE WHO FOLLOW HIM TO EXPECT AMPLE PROVISION FOR THEIR TEMPORAL WANTS. VI. CHRIST TEACHES US A LESSON OF ECONOMY IN THE MIDST OF PLENTY. However little He gives there is a surplus. But whether He gives little or much, the surplus is not to be wasted. VII. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MIRACLE. 1. Christ is the bread of life from heaven. 2. He fills with Himself every hungry soul who eats. 3. He gives Himself by means of His disciples. (*Family Churchman.*) **The Sea of Tiberias.**—Had St. John written in Galilee for Galileans he would have limited himself to the ordinary expression; but writing out of Galilee, and for Greeks, he adds, "Which is of Tiberias." The city of Tiberias, built by Herod Antipas, and thus named in honour of Tiberius, was well known to strangers. It was so called by the Greek geographer Pausanius, while Josephus used indifferently the two names. (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The destination of our Lord:*—St. Luke alone mentions Bethsaida as the place near which the miracle took place. It has been asserted that he means Bethsaida near Capernaum, and that the event therefore took place on the western shore. But this would make St. Luke contradict both the other evangelists and himself; for he tells us that Jesus withdrew to "a desert place" belonging to a city called Bethsaida. Now, the mention of such a purpose forbids us to entertain the notion that Luke is speaking of the city on the western shore, where our Lord was always surrounded by multitudes. Josephus speaks of a town bearing the name of Bethsaida Julias, situated at the north-east extremity of the lake, and the expression Bethsaida of Galilee, by which St. John (chap. xii. 21) designates the native city of Peter, Andrew, and Philip, would be unmeaning unless there were another Bethsaida out of Galilee. This latter was in Gaulonitis, in the tetrarchy of Philip, on the left bank of the Jordan, a little above where it falls into the Lake of Gennesareth. It was the place of Philip's death and splendid obsequies. (*Ibid.*) **A great multitude followed Him.**—Here we see how eager was the desire of the people to hear Christ. Since all of them, forgetting themselves, took no concern about spending the night in a desert place. So much the less excusable is our indifference and sloth when we are so far from preferring the heavenly doctrine to the gnawings of hunger, that the slightest interruptions immediately lead us away from meditation on the heavenly life. So far is every one of us from being ready to follow Him to a desert mountain that scarcely one in ten can endure to receive Him when He presents Himself at home in the midst of comforts. But as the flesh solicits us to attend to its convenience, we ought likewise to observe that Christ of His own accord takes care of those who neglect themselves in order to follow Him. For He does not wait till they are famished and cry out for hunger, but provides food for them before they have asked it. (*Calvin.*) **When Jesus then lifted up His eyes and saw a great company, He said unto Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread."**—*The compassion of Jesus:*—I. IT WAS WITHOUT RESPECT OF PERSONS. He never raised the question as to race or religion. If people were in trouble it made no difference to Him who or what they were. II. IT MEANT PRACTICAL HELP. The disciples had an interest in the multitudes which they expressed by their advice to them to go and buy food. That was cheap benevolence. But Christ's compassion never spent itself on good advice. The good Samaritan was Himself, and His conduct is the law of Christianity. III. IT HAD REFERENCE PARTICULARLY TO SPIRITUAL NEEDS. The miracle was only a text for the sermon on the "Bread of life." (*Monday Club.*) *Christ's compassion:*—It is related of the

mighty Xerxes, that as he looked upon his countless host, and remembered how soon all, even the youngest and stoutest must be sleeping with the dead, he gave vent to his feelings in a flood of tears. What a far nobler spectacle to behold the Saviour of sinners, moved with compassion for the multitudes who followed Him, with fainting steps and sorrowing in His inmost soul, that so many whose bodily hunger He was about to satisfy with food, would, in the end, starve their souls by refusing the Bread of life! (*J. N. Norton.*) *The Church and the world*:—1. It was rather to the disciples than to the multitude that the events of the day were significant. They had been taught by degrees all that was involved in "leaving all" to "follow Him." From the beginning it has been essential that a man should forsake the world. But the world may be forsaken in many ways. Some have done so out of contempt for it; others for the sake of a wholly selfish personal culture. But Christ now taught His disciples what was their mission to the world they had left. They had left it only that they might serve it more effectually, and were now to love it with a new love. Discipleship involved practical laborious service, not only to Christ, but to men. 2. There was something like embarrassment in Philip's answer to our Lord's question: but before we blame him let us put ourselves in his place. It was an unexpected appeal to limited resources. The disciples had a common purse. All their modest requirements were provided for, but all their quiet economy was invaded by a proposal to feed 5,000. 3. Christ intercedes with the Church for the world. His intercession is not only with God for us all, but with us for one another. (1) We are prone to make a life of personal edification the sum total of discipleship, turning our backs on the problems of life, suffering and sin around us. But while Christ is carrying upon His heart the burden of the world He cannot delight Himself in a companionship that seeks to be exclusive and selfish. (2) Again Christ would not have us think less of each other as Christians, but there must be no forgetting of those who are without, the world and its terrible hunger, physical and moral. (3) Philip's answer betrays his impatience with the apparent unreasonableness of the question. And how often have we given the like answer, and silenced the earnest man of large faith whom Christ has made the mouthpiece for His question. 4. Andrew's reply was a great advance on Philip's. From Philip's non-existent two hundred pennyworth to Andrew's actual five loaves is certainly to make progress. It is moving out of the negative into the positive, out of that region in which our cynicism and despair so often tarries into the region of practical endeavour. Our Lord takes him at his word as we find in the parallel narrative, "Bring them to Me." A minute ago it could have been said exactly what the five loaves were worth, and how many men they would feed, but since the Lord's words, all our powers of calculation are confounded. We contemplate things in themselves without seeing any touch of the Divine power upon them, and so we could never make five loaves worth more than five loaves. We take the measure of a man—his natural powers, education, &c., and we leave no room for another factor that may multiply indefinitely the whole series—the living power of Christ. 5. We ought to notice that our Lord did not say, "Whence will *you* buy bread," but, "we," you and I. (1) Do not let us think of our Lord as throwing upon His Church dark and difficult questions for her to solve; He is rather seeking to bring her into fuller fellowship with Himself. (2) We must recognize here the proffer of our Lord's own wisdom and power for the answering of His own question. Not only does Christ intercede with the Church for, but works with her upon the world. (*F. W. Macdonald.*) *Philip and his Master*:—1. Observe how careful the Spirit is that we should not make a mistake about Christ. 2. Learn that we being apt to make mistakes need that the Spirit should interpret Christ to us. 3. Our Divine Lord has a reason for everything he does. I. HERE IS A QUESTION FOR PHILIP. 1. Put with the motive of proving him. Christ would then—(1) Try his faith and He found it very little. Philip counted pennies instead of looking to omnipotence. Few of us can plead exemption from this failure. (2) His love which was of better quality, for he did not ridicule the question. (3) His sympathy. This was greater than that of those who said, "Send them away." God seldom uses a man who has a hard or cold heart. A man must love people or he cannot save them. 2. Why was it put to Philip? (1) Because he was of Bethsaida. Every man should think of the place in which he lives. A native of a village or town should be its best evangelist. (2) Because probably Philip was the provider as Judas was the treasurer. Even so there are ministers, Sunday-school teachers, &c., whose official business is to care for the souls of men. (3) Perhaps because Philip was not quite so forward as others. He was about number six. People in this middle position

want much proving. The lowest cannot bear it; the highest do not need it. 3. The question answered its purposes. It showed Philip's inability and weakness of faith; but only that he might be made strong. Until Christ has emptied our hands He cannot fill them. 4. The question was meant to prove the other disciples as well. Here is a committee of two. I like this brotherly consultation of willing minds. Philip is willing to begin if he has a grand start; Andrew is willing to begin with a small capital. Philip was counting the impossible pence and could not see the actual loaves; but Andrew could see what Philip overlooked. II. THERE WAS NO QUESTION WITH JESUS. 1. He knew. "Ah!" says one, "I don't know what I shall do!" Jesus knows all about your case and how He is going to bring you through. 2. He knew what he would do. We embarass ourselves by saying, "Something must be done, but I do not know who is to do it!" But Jesus knows. 3. He knew how He meant to do it. When everybody else is defeated and nonplussed He is fully prepared. He did it as one who knew what he was going to do. (1) Naturally. Had it been a Roman Catholic miracle the loaves would have been thrown in the air and come down transformed. Popish miracles are theatrical and showy. (2) Orderly: He bade the men sit down on the grass in rows. (3) Joyfully: He took bread and blessed it. (4) Plentifully. III. THERE OUGHT TO BE NO QUESTION OF A DOUBTFUL CHARACTER ANY LONGER TO US. 1. The question that troubles many people is, "How shall I bear my present burden?" That is sent to prove you; but it is no question with Christ, for "as thy days so shall," &c. 2. What is to be done with this great city? The Master knows and so shall we when we begin to co-operate with Him. 3. What must I do to be saved? Inquire "What wouldst Thou have me to do and this will be solved." (*C. H. Spurgeon*). "*Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*"—Why this to Philip? At the beginning of all His ministry we read, "Jesus findeth Philip, and said unto Him, Follow Me." Then Philip findeth Nathanael, to tell the news. But he does not say, "We have been found," but "We have found Him," &c. A fairly good confession, though giving man the lead instead of God. No wonder, then, that by and by, even at the end, Philip was but half-persuaded of our Lord's ministry, saying, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Philip being thus, to Philip teaching comes well in the question set to him, and he shall say and find whether bread and holy living comes from earth or heaven. He still thinks it must begin from man's side. He calculates the bread required; he gives an estimate of cost. Peter comes a little nearer with a grain or two of faith; he can get "five loaves and two fishes; but what are they among so many?" That is a question to write up and keep before us, if we are ever tempted to despise the day of small things. What is the missionary among so many? or the pastor, or the Sunday-school teacher, or the district visitor? What is the adequacy of the writer, or the speaker, or the worker? of the society, of the corporate body, of the home word, or any influence of teaching or of help? They are all insufficient, palpably and avowedly, in themselves; yet they may, like the loaves here, get a sufficiency from Christ. One little agency may still become the grain of mustard seed He sows, the little piece of leaven He puts into the lump. What is an help among so many? What may it not be as it passes into our Saviour's hands? (*Canon T. F. Crosse, D.C.L.*) *The testing power of circumstances*:—I. WHAT WAS CHRIST'S OBJECT IN PUTTING THIS QUESTION TO HIS DISCIPLES. 1. The question seemed to betray perplexity, but it was not so. He condescended to espouse this difficulty that He might bring to light that which was working in the disciples' spirits. The hinge of all mysteries is not in themselves, but in their concealment for the wise purposes of Deity. They will come out gradually and slowly, and then we shall see how marvellously past and future coincide with each other. And all this is simply the exercise of faith. We must wait for God's demonstration. 2. Observe, how completely our Lord's purpose was answered. Three suggestions came from three different quarters. (1) To throw the multitude upon their own resources, "Let them go into the villages," &c. (2) That they should be supported out of the resources of the disciples, but that the two hundred pennyworth was beyond their resources. (3) To make the resources go as far as they might. "There is a lad here," &c., and then the difficulty arises, "What are these," &c. Their proper course would have been to leave the perplexity with omnipotence. That they believed in our Lord's omnipotence is certain, but though they knew it as an abstract fact, they could not bring it to bear on the present emergency, and therefore, they threw themselves on that which any faithless man could throw himself upon human power in human distress. The Saviour must have asked the question, "How is it that they have no faith?"

This is the way man ever treats God, turning to Him as a last resource only. 3. This is the course the Lord has taken from time to time to make men understand themselves, throwing them into difficulties and leaving them to prove what is in them by their extrication from those difficulties, as seen in the case of Israel at the Red Sea and before Jericho. II. THE WAY IN WHICH CHRIST PUTS THE SAME QUESTION TO US. 1. In the announcement of doctrines offensive to the natural man. (1) That of the divinity of Christ and reason protests against it. (2) That of the atonement and our sense of equity protests against it. (3) That of man's depravity and man's pride recoils. (4) That of man's impotency, and the sense of self-reliance on self resources protests. And when it comes to this, a man is brought to the test, is he willing to put reliance upon Christ? or is he determined to trust in himself. 2. The infliction of trial. Previous to trial most men, like Peter, think they can go through anything, but when it falls upon us, how our notes are changed! In that way God puts the question, are you able to trust Me? 3. The successes and prosperities of life. Riches, which do not spoil a man's character, they simply bring out the evil that is in him. You shall look abroad upon the face of nature, and possibly you may see in the cold time of winter, and the chill dews of spring, the whole surface of the meadow without anything deleterious produced upon it; and you may look at the same field when the warm and bright sunshine of summer and autumn comes, and you find it swarming with weeds. Why, who hath come and planted the tares amongst the wheat? No one; they have been there all along: only in the nipping cold times of the year they were not able to come out; but when the sun came, that which was lurking below came to the surface. This was how it was with Hazael, and how it has been with many a man since. (*Dean Boyd.*) *The arithmetic of Philip and the arithmetic of our Lord*:—In the reckoning of men there is always a deficit; in the reckoning of Christ there is always a surplus. (*Lange.*) *Sums proved* (Children's Sermon):—You know what puzzle questions are; they are questions to make you wonder, and the more you wonder the more interested you become, and the more interested you grow the better you are likely to understand the answer when it comes. But is your teacher ever puzzled? No; he simply asks the question to prove you, to find out how much you know. It was for this purpose that Jesus put the question to Philip, viz., to find out what kind of a scholar he had become. I. WHAT WAS THE QUESTION? How to meet a difficulty. Philip worked it all out in mental arithmetic. First he made a rough guess as to the number of people. Then he remembered how much a little for each would cost. Then he worked out a sum in proportion. "If it cost so much for one, what will it cost for five thousand?" And the answer was two hundred pennyworth. II. WAS THE ANSWER RIGHT? No. 1. Because it only told what *wouldn't* be enough. 2. Because it wasn't a reply to the question that Jesus had asked. Jesus did not say, "How much money is required?" But "How are we to get bread?" If Philip had learned his lessons properly, he would simply have said, "Thou who canst raise the dead, Thou canst create bread." Conclusion: 1. Do not leave Jesus out of your calculations. 2. Look the question carefully, "Whence shall *we*?" Philip hadn't noticed that; but it makes matters much simpler, for if Jesus is going to help there won't be much difficulty. So Philip did what he could, brought a few loaves and fishes to Jesus. Then Jesus did what He could, blessed what Philip had brought, and the little became enough for the many. 3. Remember the power of that *we* in—(1) the government of your temper; (2) The great question, "What must I do to be saved." (*J. R. Howatt.*) **Two hundred pennyworth of bread.**—The air is full of projects for the amelioration of the condition of the poor and for arranging the relations of capital and labour. This story will afford help in these, if its suggestions are heeded. The spectacle of the disciples wrestling with their problem is a piteous one, but it is deplorably familiar. Note our Saviour's wisdom. "How many loaves have ye?" A prudent estimate of our resources is the earliest thing in demand. I. AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF OUR DEPENDENCE ON THE SAME PROVIDENCE OF GOD WILL BE OF THE MOST VALUABLE ASSISTANCE IN TEACHING US THE PRACTICAL WAY IN WHICH TO AID THE POOR. Put away all superciliousness. "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." There is no possible philosophy by which an opulent man can prove himself any wiser or better than one who is reduced in income. Many a man has toiled as industriously, and planned as shrewdly, as ever any one of us did; but chances have been against him. Still, we are to remember that this does not prove that we are the better men, nor that he is worse; it only proves that God is sovereign over His creatures. That was a sober

counsel for all the ages which Moses gave Israel (see Deut. viii. 11–18). II. MEN WILL COME TO MORE REAL WISDOM AND USEFULNESS IN CARING FOR THE POOR AND THE HUNGRY WHEN THEY ACTUALLY ADMIT THAT SOMETHING MUST BE, AND CAN BE, DONE BY THEMSELVES. There is a suggestion of great sense in the witticism of Sydney Smith: "Whenever A sees B in trouble, he is sure to say, with due consideration, that C ought to help him." Much of the most available and valuable human sympathy in this world is wasted in just a blind and suffused wishing that some plan could be made by which every relief could be given at an extraordinary effort. What is wanted is a quiet endeavour to help one man, or one woman, or one child, as the nearest one to our hand. Mass-meetings are valuable; great associations awake zeal and direct it; but individual effort will go farther, and reach the case more swiftly. It is sad to think how societies multiply, while the cry of the lowly and the poor does not grow less. You pass blanketed puppies led by a ribbon, taken out by a hired man for their airing, three avenues from the streets where human beings are shivering, uncovered and hungering in the cold. Now, something might be done when each Christian admits he can do a proper part of it. III. IT MIGHT BE SAID HERE THAT IT WOULD NOT BE SO DIFFICULT TO FIND FUNDS TO PURCHASE "TWO HUNDRED PENNYWORTH" OF BREAD WITH WHICH TO FEED THE HUNGRY, IF THE RICH WOULD BE INDUSTRIOUS. Useful occupation is the rule for the race: if any man will not work, neither let him eat, but when he has enough to live upon, does that end his service? Might there not be some good when a merchant has gained enough for himself to withdraw upon, if he would just stay in business for a few years longer, devoting the gains of his gifted experience to the Lord? It is the business of a child of God to add to the aggregate wealth of the world by a thrifty productiveness, and then the rich people can take care of God's poor. IV. MONEY FOR PROCURING FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY WOULD BE FORTHCOMING EASILY, IF CHRISTIANS PRIZED AND PRACTISED ECONOMY IN THE SCRIPTURAL WAY, AND DIVIDED THEIR SAVINGS IN MINISTERING TO OTHERS. All superfluities are mere grace, and ought to be given away unhesitatingly when poorer people are in actual distress. We do not venture to say what our Lord would have remarked to Philip, in his perplexity at not finding out how to procure two hundred pennyworth of bread, if the unsophisticated fisherman had come over from Capernaum with anything like a gold-headed cane in his hand, or with a seal-ring on his finger. The state has assumed the board and clothing of an able-bodied man for twenty years of uselessness in prison, because he tore a jewel out of the ear of a woman who was lavishly wearing four-thousand dollars worth of ornaments upon her own person that day in the street. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Christ's thoughtfulness*:—The people took no thought for food. Christ doth it for them. And surely if He so far provided for them that at a sudden motion came out after Him, can we think that He will be wanting to those that seek Him continually, and with full purpose of heart adhere unto Him. (*J. Trapp.*) *Believers must help Christ*:—Our Lord sought to stir up Philip's sympathy. Come, Philip, what shall you and I do? Whence shall we buy bread to give them to eat? I trust that our God has also given us some communion with His dear Son in His love to the souls of men. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Unbelief discovered by trial*:—Christ had said, "Give ye them to eat." "To try them" only, as St. John hath it. And upon trial he found them full of dross, as appears by their answer. The disciples were as yet very carnal, and spake as men. (*J. Trapp.*) *Jesus knows*:—He knew. He always does know. "Ah," says one, "I am sure I do not know what I shall do." This is sweet comfort: Jesus knows. He always knows all about it. Do not think you can inform Him as to anything. Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him. He knew what He would do. He meant to do something, and He knew what he was going to do. He was not in a hurry; He never is. He does everything calmly and serenely, because He foresees what He will do. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Philip and Andrew; or, disciples may help one another*:—Philip says, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient," and Andrew says, "Well, no, it is not, but there is a lad here with five barley loaves and two small fishes." I like this brotherly consultation of willing minds. Philip is willing to begin if he has a grand start; he must see at least two hundred pennyworth of bread in hand, and then he is ready to entertain the idea. Andrew, on the other hand, is willing to commence with a small capital; a few loaves and fishes will enable him to start. When saints converse together they help each other, and, perhaps, what the one does not discover the other may. (*Ibid.*) *Incidental tests*:—God puts us in the midst of a whole apparatus of tests, that those

tests may bring to light that which is in us; for it is absolutely true that feelings may be now lurking in us, just as there is fire lurking in the flint stone, which may remain there from the days of creation undetected and undeveloped till the genial steel strikes upon it, and then, when the blow of the steel brings to light the concealed, the long concealed fire, we are amazed to find that in that cold mass there could have lurked a thing that was so vivid and so sparkling. All this is that great teaching, that marvellous discipline of circumstances; for after all, it is not by direct teaching, it is not by explanation that men ever learn to know themselves; it is by the wretched and by the painful instruction of circumstances. Is it not the fact that a man shall discover more of himself in a short illness of perhaps a few days than he has learned of himself from many years' teaching previously? (*Dean Boyd.*) **There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes.** *Lessons for ordinary persons and about little things*:—I. ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE LOWLY. For the insignificant, the commonplace who make up the greater portion of mankind, there is either no gospel or it is Christ's. 1. For the world of wealth, power, brute violence, sceptical intellect is inflated with its own self-importance. The haughty beauty will scarce deign to glance at the plain neglected girl; the proud aristocrat is patronizing or contumelious to those who are not of his own caste; the conceitedly clever will revel in his power to wound the inferior capacity. "This multitude that knoweth not the law is accursed," says religious pride. "These persons are not in society," says fashionable pride. "Mankind is composed of 1,000,000,000 mostly fools," says intellectual pride. 2. See how Christ in His every word and action set His face against all this. Despised Galilee was His country; Nazareth His home; the manger His cradle; the Cross His bed of death; women His intimates; infants His proteges; lepers the objects of His compassion; the depraved the recipients of His mercy. This is not only the lesson of love, nor that He loved as none other had loved, but that He loved those whom none had loved before, the friend of publicans and sinners. II. NOT LESS COMFORTING IS THE ACCEPTANCE BY CHRIST OF LITTLE THINGS. He instantly made use of the poor lad's barley loaves and fishes. His symbols of the kingdom were a handful of loaves and a grain of mustard seed; the widow's mite receives His commendation; and those whom He will finally accept will be those who have done little deeds of kindness. Lessons: 1. Most of us have only one talent. The world attaches importance to our deficiency, but when God comes He will not ask how great or how small were our endowments but only how we have used them. He who has one talent sometimes makes ten of it; while he who has ten sometimes makes them worse than one. The last may be first and the first last. Was it not so with those whom He chose, "Not many rich," &c., were called. 2. Why then should any of us be ashamed of our earthly insignificance? We have only five barley loaves, &c., which indeed in themselves are useless, but when given to Christ He can make them enough to feed 5,000. Take the one instance of kind words of sympathy and encouragement. What may they not do? What may be left undone if they are unsaid. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *The lad and the hungry multitude* (Children's Sermon):—I. THE INTEREST A BOY CAN HAVE IN JESUS. He may have heard his parents or acquaintances tell about the Saviour, and, boy-like, he probably made up his mind that, when an opportunity came, he would go where He was, and look and listen. There was evidently something about Jesus that interested little people. We know that He loved them, and if He loved them He would be apt to talk to them in a way to please and do them good. Children always are quick to find out those friendly to them. II. THE USE JESUS CAN MAKE OF EVEN A BOY. No one in this multitude, it seems, except this lad, brought anything to eat. Whether this was a lunch his parents put up for him, or what he brought along with him to sell, we do not know. The fact that he had the loaves and fishes is mentioned to Christ who considered the fact of some importance. For He called the boy to Him, and then took what he had, and made his few loaves and fishes answer for the wants of all. Nor could any one have been more astonished than the boy himself to see how those loaves and fishes lasted. Christ can use children if they are willing, and sometimes they have been of great service. He can use their gifts, whether they be the pennies which they have earned, or some piece of handiwork they have made. None are too young to serve Jesus, and such have often been employed by Him to accomplish good. III. IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO KEEP IN GOOD COMPANY. This boy would have missed a great deal if he had not gone out that day to see Jesus. If he had given himself up to having some fun with his comrades, he would not have been

honoured as he was by Christ. If this boy had told his mates that he was going to hear the wonderful Teacher whose fame was filling the whole country, they might have ridiculed him, and tried to persuade him to go with them; but by bravely following out his purpose to see and hear for himself, he not only was gratified therein but was noticed and used by Jesus. I think that proved to be the most noteworthy day in his life. What he heard and what happened to him at that time he could never forget, for it probably influenced him as long as he lived. He may have become a follower of Jesus from that day, and a preacher of the gospel to others when he grew up to be a man. It was the turning point in his history. (*M. G. Dana, D.D.*) *The resource of Christ:*—Pythias is famous for that he was able, at his own charge, to entertain Xerxes' whole army, consisting of ten hundred thousand men. But he grew so poor upon it that he wanted bread ere he died. Our Saviour fed five thousand, and his store was not a jot diminished. (*J. Trapp.*) *Five barley loaves and two fishes:*—The mention of barley loaves gives a hint of the social condition of the multitude which followed Jesus. Wheat is the staple grain in the East; but, like other good things, it is apt to be absorbed by the rich. The poorer people have, therefore, to content themselves with the coarser barley, which they grind themselves in their stone handmills, and bake into a coarse kind of flat cake. The mention of fishes is characteristic of the region. The sea of Galilee has always been famous for the excellence of its fish supply, which is not only plentiful, but varied. Doubtless many of the crowd who followed Jesus came from among the poor fisher-folk, who were concerned with supplying the wants of the prosperous towns, now in ruins, which, in the time of Jesus, kept up a fleet of small ships on the sea of Galilee. (*S. S. Times.*) *The barley loaves* of the Jews would seem to have been smaller than those made of wheaten bread, rough to the taste even though nutritious, and the food of only the common people, an emblem of His own doctrine, which the common people heard gladly, and which, however hard to the natural man, is yet full of life for the soul. (*W. Denton, M.A.*) *Plenty out of Christ's poverty:*—Barley bread was so coarse that even the hearty Roman soldiers were only required to eat it by way of punishment, and fish was the commonest and cheapest kind of food; but so Jesus lived, and His disciples. He was poor among the poorest. Not for Him was the purple and the feast of Dives. He did not come to pamper the luxury or allure the appetencies of idle men. Barley loaves and only two small fishes! But it was enough for the Lord of all; and with that scant, poor food, blessed and multiplied, He fed the hungry, and refreshed the weary, spread the table in the wilderness, and made them sit on the green grass in the sunset, and gave them that which to their hunger was sweet as manna, and sent them rejoicing on their way. (*Archdeacon Farrar.*) *Christ's acceptance of the meanest gifts:*—At a flower festival, not long ago, one little, shrinking child laid on the altar-step her tiny offering—it was but a single daisy. The little one had nothing else to give, and with even such an offering, given in a single and with a simple heart, Christ, I think, would have been well pleased. When Count Zinzendorf was a boy at school, he founded amongst his schoolfellows a little guild which he called the "Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed," and thereafter that seedling grew into the great tree of the Moravian Brotherhood whose boughs were a blessing to the world. The widow's mite! When they laughed at Saint Theresa when she wanted to build a great orphanage and had but three shillings to begin with, she answered, "With three shillings Theresa can do nothing; but with God and her three shillings there is nothing which Theresa cannot do." Do not let us imagine, then, that we are too poor, or too stupid, or too ignorant, or too obscure to do any real good in the world wherein God has placed us. Is there a greater work in this day than the work of education? Would you have thought that the chief impulse to that work, whereon we now annually spend so many millions of taxation, was given by a poor illiterate Plymouth cobbler—John Pounds? Has there been a nobler work of mercy in modern days than the purification of prisons? Yet that was done by one whom a great modern writer sneeringly patronised as the "dull, good man John Howard." Is there a grander, nobler enterprise than missions? The mission of England to India was started by a humble, itinerant shoemaker, William Carey. These men brought to Christ their humble efforts, their barley loaves, and in His hand, and under His blessing, they multiplied exceedingly. "We can never hope," you say, "to lead to such vast results." So they thought. "We cannot tell whether this or that will prosper." But do you imagine that they

ever dreamed that their little efforts would do so much? And, besides, they knew that the results are nothing, the work, everything—nothing the gift, everything the willing heart. But have you ever tried? If you bring no gift, how can God use it? The lad must bring his barley loaves to Christ before the five thousand can be fed. Have you ever attempted to do as he did? Have you, even in the smallest measure, or with the least earnest desire, tried to follow John Wesley's golden advice: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, to all the persons you can, in all the places you can, as long as ever you can." (*Ibid.*) *The young should be used as well as amused:*—The Church ought to use the young as well as instruct and amuse the young. Young people can be made to do good; they have something they can give up, they have something that when they see Jesus they will allow Jesus to take without a word. (*T. Green, M.A.*) *Distrust of self, and trust in God:*—There is really nothing little with God. In His hands the feeblest and simplest instruments are sufficient. If His blessing goes along with our efforts, there is no limit to the greatness of the work which they may accomplish. Take, *e.g.*, our endeavours to relieve the sorrows and sufferings of our fellow-creatures. What are we in the presence of such calamities? What can we say or do to alleviate the suffering or the sorrow? We are but too likely to shrink back in despair. But let us think of ourselves in such cases as instruments in His hands, with whom all things are possible; let us bring what we have. God can make use of what in itself is useless. Miserable comforters we may seem to ourselves. Yet God may send comfort through us. Or, to take another case; this thought of the greatness of little things, what an encouragement may it afford us in our missionary efforts! But, once more; the principle of which I am speaking may be applied to the work which has to be carried on in our individual souls. God does not make us holy all at once. Nor does He work His will in us solely by His own act. He requires our co-operation; He makes use of our efforts. But our feeble endeavours, our half-hearted prayers, our faintest resolutions—what are they? What can they do? They seem to us nothing; and in truth they are as nothing. But God desires them; He kindly looks on them; He blesses them, and they are effectual through Him. It is by such endeavours, inspired and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, that the saints of God have attained whatever degree of holiness they have reached. We are all tempted, when we reflect on the great work of our lives, namely, the renewing in ourselves of the image of God, to say, "What can I do?" Our best efforts are utterly inadequate; and it is right that we should feel and acknowledge this. But, such as they are, God requires them, as Christ demanded the five loaves; and He can and will bless even our imperfect efforts and work His will with them. Bring what you have, and leave it with perfect confidence in His hands. Let us trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song; He also is become our salvation. (*P. Young, M.A.*) **Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place.**—It all depends upon the season in which one comes to the north-eastern shore of the lake of Gennesaret as to whether or not he will find much grass there. The note of time ("now the passover . . . . was at hand") shows that our Lord was there in the spring. At that season the grass in that region is plentiful and green; a few months later, and it is burned up by the heat, and the country presents a dreary aspect. It cannot be said of many places in the Orient that there is much grass there. In England, and in the well-watered regions of the United States, one of the chief charms of the landscape is the soft carpet of green which covers the soil. In a characteristic Oriental scene, this charm is lacking, The grass may straggle here and there, or at special seasons it may show an unwonted luxuriance in certain places; but the universal carpet of green is chiefly conspicuous by its absence. (*S. S. Times*). *The scene on the mount:*—The disciples understood their instructions, and immediately arranged the vast throng on the sloping sides of the mountain, in ranks, a hundred in number, each rank containing fifty persons in file. The ranks, as we may easily conceive, were placed at such convenient distances from each other, that the disciples could easily pass between them. In this form the five thousand men were disposed of—the women and children being, in all probability, placed by themselves in some convenient situation. As when He created the wine at Cana, the six waterpots were set in order preparatory to that miracle, so here His request for order was obeyed, preparatory to the work which He was about to do. As the many thousands of Israel, in their encampings and marches were so arranged that all alike enjoyed the full advantage of having the tabernacle, and pillar of cloud, and brazen serpent lifted up full in their view,

so now the whole multitude, by the arrangement effected, were placed in a position to enable every man to see and to hear Him who was the True Tabernacle, the True Pillar of Cloud, and the True Brazen Serpent lifted up. He stands at the bottom of that green mountain slope, and the twelve are round about Him. Receding from the place which they occupy, fifty men are seated, each behind, but a little raised above, his companion, in file, and in close order. On the right hand there are fifty ranks thus arranged. On the left hand there are fifty ranks. Jesus stands in the centre, and His eye with ease ranges over the whole company, whilst His voice distinctly reaches them. If we may suppose the sun about to set, the surrounding mountains glowing with his departing rays, the waters of the lake still retaining the lingering reflection of the sun's fading beauty, we have before us a scene such as we may believe Jesus Himself delighted to survey, and such as we may well long to see often recurring in our fallen world—multitudes waiting for the "true bread," and the Lord Himself present to bestow it in rich abundance. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) **And Jesus took the loaves and when He had given thanks, He distributed.**—*Feeding the multitude*:—I. WHATEVER WE HAVE IS THE GIFT OF GOD: money, talents, time, influence, &c. II. WHATSOEVER GOOD THINGS GOD HAS GIVEN US, WE MUST GIVE THEM ALSO TO OTHERS. Nothing is given exclusively for self. III. NO GIFT MUST BE UNDERVALUED BECAUSE IT IS SMALL. What is insignificant to us may be made vastly useful by the blessing of God. IV. THERE IS A HUNGRY MULTITUDE AROUND US WAITING FOR OUR GIFT. 1. Some are starving for want of peace and comfort in religion—neighbours, friends, members of our own families. 2. Some are starving for want of a little kindly sympathy. 3. Some are starving in sickness and pain for the want of loving help and ministry. V. THIS GIFT MUST BE DISPENSED WITH SELF-FORGETFULNESS. It was this forgetfulness of self that made Henry Lawrence, the gentle, godly hero of the Indian Mutiny, the best beloved of all his soldiers. When he was dying, the General whispered, as his last words, "let there be no fuss about me, bury me with the men." When another hero, Sir Ralph Abercromby, had got his death-wound, in the battle of Aboukir, they placed a private soldier's blanket under his head, thus causing him much relief. He asked what it was. He was answered that "it was only a soldier's blanket!" He insisted on knowing to whom it belonged. They told him it belonged to Duncan Roy, of the 42nd. "Then see that Duncan Roy has his blanket this very night," said the dying man; he would not, to ease his own agony, deprive a common soldier of his comfort. (*H. J. W. Buxton, M.A.*) *Thankfulness and distribution*:—I. THE DUTY OF THANKSGIVING. 1. Christ is our example in this. He placed Himself voluntarily in a condition of need, and when the need was supplied as here He expressed His gratitude to God. 2. Christ is the object of our thanksgiving. This miracle expresses Christ's continuous power to relieve human want. This is now regularly done and consequently is over-looked. Sometimes He reduces men from affluence to indigence in order to teach them grateful dependence on Himself. 3. This thanksgiving is due to Christ for temporal and spiritual mercies. II. THE DUTY OF DISTRIBUTION. 1. Here also we are instructed by the example of Christ. 2. In temporal good things we must remember that we are stewards of God's bounty. 3. We must distribute our spiritual goods—(1) Personally. (2) By supporting the ministry, missions, schools, &c. (*S. Robins, M.A.*) *The maintenance of natural and spiritual life*:—This miracle differs from others—1. In that it is not so open to the cavils of unbelief. The others are often explained on the theory of Christ's superior knowledge and skill. Here this utterly breaks down. 2. The miracles of healing were wrought to draw the minds of men to Christ as Creator; this to show Himself the maintainer of both the natural and spiritual life. I. CHRIST THE PRESERVER OF MEN. 1. Of their bodies. Life can no more maintain itself than create itself. 2. Of their souls, by His Spirit. II. CHRIST EMPLOYS MEANS IN PRESERVING MEN. He consulted His disciples, He employed bread, He gave bread to the disciples for distribution. So—1. Physically Christ preserves men by the employment of natural resources utilized by intelligence and industry. 2. Spiritually by means of His Word, public worship and sacraments. III. CHRIST PRESERVES MEN SEPARATELY. There was a multitude to the disciples, but there was no multitude to Him. He saw each in the singularity of His own Being and need. He who gave the individual life of the millions of our race, maintains it second by second. It is needful to remember this—1. In order that we may recognize that our individual life is His. 2. That we may recognize His hand in all our gifts. (1) Of prosperity. (2) Of adversity. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *Christ's arithmetic*:—I. He multiplied by division, "distributed." II. He added

by subtraction, "filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves." (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Giving and receiving*:—The disciples grudged not of their little to give others some, and it grew on their hands, as the widow's oil did in the cruse. Not getting, but giving, is the way to thrive. Nothing was ever lost by liberality. (*J. Trapp.*) *A constant miracle*:—An analogy, and, so to speak, a help to the understanding of this miracle, has been found in that which year by year is accomplished in the field, where a single grain of corn multiplies itself and in the end unfolds in numerous ears. And with this analogy in view many beautiful remarks have been made; as this, that while God's every-day miracles had grown cheap in men's sight by continual repetition, He had therefore reserved something, not more wonderful, but less frequent, to arouse men's minds to a new admiration. Others have urged that here, as in the case of the water made wine, Christ did but compress into a single moment all those processes which in ordinary circumstances, the same Lord of nature, causes more slowly to succeed one another. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Christ the Lord of nature*:—He took a fragment of a barley loaf into His hand, and to teach His Church that His grasp had in it the fecundity of the earth, the moisture of the flowers, the influence of the sun, the comprehension of all times and seasons, and the excellency of all power, as He broke it, it enlarged itself far beyond those goodly ears of wheat which Pharaoh saw in his dream, and every crumb became an handful. (*Bp. Hacket.*) *Christ's use of means*:—The five loaves were almost nonentities, but He nevertheless took them. Jesus appears always to have acted on the same principle. He used what came to hand. What man could do, man must do. As far as Nature could go, Nature must perform her part. He came in where man and nature stopped. See how, at this moment, God is dealing with every one of us. He has wrought for us a free and perfect salvation, by no merit, by no act of ours. He requires in you repentance and faith. True, they both come from Him, so did "the five loaves," they came from Him. But you must give to Him first a willing and free act of your own. He "takes the loaves"; and then, over and above He feeds your soul and makes it live for ever and ever by the bread of life. You have a little grace. A mere nothing compared to what is wanting; to what it might have been if you had used well what God had given you. But God has given you something. You have some good desires, convictions of sin, power to pray, and to deny yourself, sparkles of love. Do you want this to become more? Then put what you can into Christ's hands constantly and the transforming and magnifying will multiply it. You have some thoughts, feelings, powers, capacities, actions, which you can now in a solemn way give to Jesus. Consecrate them. Do not say, "Oh, I have not got anything worth the giving; it is of no use at all." Give Him the little, and He will make it much. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Christ's economy*:—Christ did not provide great delicacies for the people, but they who saw His amazing power here were obliged to rest satisfied with barley bread, and fish without sauce. (*Calvin.*) *Christ the Bread for the world*:—I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE SIGN. "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Now, notice what a lovely glimpse we get there into the quick rising sympathy of the Master with all forms of human necessity. Before we call He answers. But, farther, He selects for the question Philip, a man who seems to have been what is called—as if it were the highest praise—an "intensely practical person"; who seems to have had little faith in anything that he could not get hold of by his senses, and who lived upon the low level of "common sense." "This He said to prove him." He hoped that the question might have shaped itself in the hearer's mind into a promise, and that he might have been able to say in answer, "Thou canst supply; we need not buy." So Christ does still. He puts problems before us too, to settle; takes us, as it were, into His confidence with interrogations that try us, whether we can rise above the level of the material and visible, or whether all our conceptions of possibilities are bounded by these. And sometimes, even though the question at first sight seems to evoke only such a response as it did here, it works more deeply down below afterwards, and we are helped by the very difficulty to rise to a clear faith. Philip's answer is significant. He was a man of figures; he believed in what you could put into tables and statistics. Yes! And, like a great many other people of his sort, he left out one small element in his calculation, and that was Jesus Christ. And so his answer went creeping along the low levels, dragging itself like a half-wounded snake, when it might have risen on the wings of faith up into the empyrean, and soared and sung. So learn that when we have to deal with Christ's working—and when have we not to deal with Christ's working?—perhaps proba-

bilities that can be tabulated are not altogether the best bases upon which to rest our calculations. Learn that the audacity of a faith that expects great things, though there be nothing visible upon which to build, is wiser and more prudent than the creeping common sense that adheres to facts which are shadows, and forgets that the one fact is that we have an Almighty Helper and Friend at our sides. Still further, under these preliminaries, let us point to the exhibition of the inadequate resource which Christ, according to the fuller narrative in the other Evangelists, insisted upon. Christ's preparation for making our poor resources adequate for anything is to drive home into our hearts the consciousness of their insufficiency. We need, first of all, to be brought to this: "All that I have is this wretched little stock; and what is that measured against the work that I have to do and the claims upon me?" Only when we are brought to that can His great power pour itself into us and fill us with rejoicing and overcoming strength. The old mystics used to say, and they said truly: "You must be emptied of yourself before you can be filled by God." And the first thing for any man to learn, in preparation for receiving a mightier power than his own into his opening heart, is to know that all his own strength is utter and absolute weakness. "What are they among so many?" And so the last of the preparations that I will touch upon is that majestic preparation for blessing by obedience. Sit you down where He bids you, and your mouths will not be long empty. Do the things He tells you, and you will get the food that you need. II. THE SIGN ITSELF. 1. As to the first, there is here, I believe, a revelation of the law of the universe, of Christ as being through all the ages the sustainer of the physical life of men. What was done then once, with the suppression of certain links in the chain, is done always with the introduction of those links. It was Christ's will that made this provision. And I believe that the teaching of Scripture is in accordance with the deepest philosophy, that the one cause of all physical phenomena is the will of a present God, howsoever that may usually conform to the ordinary methods of working which people generalize and call laws. The reason why anything is, and the reason why all things change, is the energy there and then of the indwelling God, who is in all His works, and who is the only will and power in the physical world. And I believe, further, that Scripture teaches us that that continuous will, which is the cause of all phenomena and the underlying subsistence on which all things repose, is all managed and mediated by Him who from of old was named the Word; "in whom was life, and without whom was not anything made that was made." Our Christ is Creator, our Christ is Sustainer, our Christ moves the stars and feeds the sparrows. 2. And so, secondly, there is in the sign itself a symbol of Him as the true Bread and food of the world. Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, and we feed on the sacrifice. Let your conscience, your heart, your desires, your anticipations, your understanding, your will, your whole being, feed on Him. He will be cleansing, He will be love, He will be fruition, He will be hope, He will be truth, He will be righteousness, He will be all. 3. And notice finally here, the result of this miracle as transferred to the region of symbol. "They did all eat, and were filled"; men, women, children, both sexes, all ages, all classes, found the food that they needed in the bread that came from Christ's hands. If any man wants dainties that will tickle the palates of Epicureans, let him go somewhere else. But if he wants bread, to keep the life in and to stay his hunger, let him go to this Christ, who is "human nature's daily food." The world has scoffed for eighteen centuries at the barley bread that the gospel provides; coarse by the side of its confectionery, but it is enough to give life to all who eat it. And more than that; notice the inexhaustible abundance. "They did all eat, and were filled." Other goods and other possessions perish with the using, but this increases with use. The more one eats, the more there is for him to eat. And all the world may live upon it for ever, and there will be more at the end than there was at the beginning. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *The feeding of the five thousand*:—What is it, what is it in us, that will ensure this taking of the supplies and bestow them upon us? First of all, what was it in this people? 1. They would not have sat down, you may be very sure, if they had not been very hungry. Desire draws blessing. 2. Confident expectation brings Him with all His supplies. Yes, expectation of blessing fulfils itself in a great many regions, in a great many common things of life. If a man expect to be successful, he will be in a great many of them. It is what you are making up your mind to do you will do. And in the spiritual region the measure of the expectation is the measure of the success. The expectation which has got the essential element of faith in it is the confidence in

the things unseen, as though they were present. Expectation, yea, an expectation right in the teeth of sense, is the sure way to bring down the blessings. 3. Well, then there is another last point, and that is: the use of the appropriate means, which are appropriate simply because they are appointed. "Make the men sit down; and Jesus therefore took the loaves." Well, in regard to some things in this world, yes, some outward things, we very often do come to a point where the only thing is to sit still and see the salvation of God; and in a very profound sense they also work, as well as they also serve, who only stand, or sit, and wait. But I think that this generation wants a lesson, and the Christian communities of this generation want the lesson—sit down there and be quiet, and let His grace sink into you, as it won't do with you for ever fuss, fuss, fussing, and moving from this place to the other. Why, if you go into the woods, and into a coppice, the nightingales, and the thrushes, and the whole of the quick-eyed creatures that rustle among the leaves there, shyly hide themselves there as long as your foot is rustling over the leaves; no other living creature will stir. Sit down quietly, don't even move your eyelids, and when you have sat for awhile, still as any stone, one after another they begin to peep out of their copses, and come out into the open, and in an hour's time the whole place will be alive with beauty and with happiness. Yes, and so it is in a loftier fashion in this great kingdom of our Master's. The men that go hurrying through the gospel sphere see nothing of its beauty, nothing of its delicate, recondite beauties and mysteries. You have got to be quiet. And so go ye into a desert place and rest—sit still. That does not mean any vacuous indolence, drowsing and dormant, but it means suppressing the sensuous life, the life of the enemy that belongs to the outer world, in order that the life of the spirit may rise stronger and stronger, for as the eye of the flesh closes, the eye of the spirit opens. They are like the doors in banks, you shove one open and the other shuts. And so to be quiet is to hear Christ speak. (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 12–13. **Gather up the fragments.**—*Sermon for the New Year*:—The natural thought would be—let the fragments lie; a divine munificence can again be equal to a similar emergency; henceforth we will be in sublime disdain of fragments—a niggardly economy. But Christ prevents any such bad generalization from the abundance of His great gifts, by the command, "gather up the fragments." I. Here then emerges the great law that GOD IS ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE PARTICULAR ABOUT FRAGMENTS. This law God Himself obeys. God is particular about fragments in—1. Keeping them. You cannot destroy matter. 2. In using them. The little things at the basis of nature. 3. In adorning them. You shall find even a Divine lavishing of adornment in things so minute that only a microscope can reveal them. II. We are confronted by a new year. How may we make it a happy one? By becoming ourselves OBEDIENT TO THE GREAT LAW WHICH GOD OBEYS. 1. Seize fragments of time for self-culture and in the consciousness of growth find the new year a happy one. Emerson says, "One of the illusions is that the present hour is not the critical, decisive hour. Write it on your heart that every day is the last day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doomsday." 2. Seize fragments of chance for doing good, and in that consciousness find the year a happy one. This was said by a member of one of the Protestant churches in Paris: "For you must know it is a rule in our church that when one brother has been converted he must go and fetch another brother; and when a sister has been converted, she must go and fetch another sister. That is the way 120 of us have been brought from atheism and Popery to simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." If you would but feel that "must go and fetch another"—you would find for yourself a radiant year. 3. Seize fragments of happiness as they lie about you day by day. Happiness does not come so much in nuggets as in the minuter golden particles. Do not despise them. Look for the securing of the little happiness. 4. If you have not done it yet, seize the fragment of time left you to make your peace with God through Jesus Christ. (*W. Hoyt, D.D.*) *Fragments*:—There are certain matters in society that may be called fragments, certain customs that stand isolated and yet are very closely connected with religion. I. HUMANITY TO ANIMALS. All animals must live, and are entitled to consideration. They have rights of their own. 1. The insect world. Why should we destroy a spider for killing a fly when we organize shambles for the sake of slaughtering the animals on which we live? There are many insects that we are not obliged to preserve, but which we need not go out of our way to destroy wholesale. They have just one day of existence, and it is a pity to abridge it. 2. Those animals

that stand nearest man have been comparatively left to his passions or selfishness. It is not right that they should be transported and slaughtered without the least care for their suffering. 3. The wholesale destruction of birds for the personal adornment of ladies is not only inhuman but is wasteful. The development of insects is so enormous that if they were not reduced by birds it would be fatal to our wheatfields and gardens. II. THE LAW OF HUMANITY TOWARDS SUBORDINATES IN INDUSTRY is more than a fragment, it is half a loaf. 1. The law of sympathy should regulate the law of wages as well as the law of profit. Men have no right to pay their employees at starvation rates, nor in the cheapest currency. 2. Times of payment ought to be considered and wages paid not on Saturday, when there is every temptation to spend them in the public house, but on Monday. 3. Ought not a portion of every man's wages to be secured to his wife, as his partner and the family provider, by the state? 4. According to the spirit of the gospel whoever employs men becomes responsible, as God's overseer, for their morals and instruction and happiness. We are our brothers' keepers, particularly where for our profit they are led into circumstances of such severe temptation as exist in large houses of business. 5. When young women are compelled to stand all the day it is time the law, in the interest of future generations, stepped in. (*H. W. Beecher.*) "*Fragments*" *or*, "*broken pieces?*" (see R. V.):—The general notion, I suppose, is that the "fragments" are the crumbs that fell from each man's hands as he ate, and the picture before the imagination of the ordinary reader is that of the apostles carefully collecting the *débris* of the meal from the grass where it had dropped. But the true notion is that the "broken pieces which remain over" are the unused portions into which our Lord's miracle-working hand had broken the bread, and the true picture is that of the apostles carefully putting away in store for future use the abundant provision which their Lord had made, beyond the needs of the hungry thousands. And that conception of the command teaches far more beautiful and deeper lessons than the other. I. We have that thought to which I have already referred as more strikingly brought out by the slight alteration of translation, which, by the use of "broken pieces," suggests the connection with Christ's breaking the loaves and fishes. We are taught to think of THE LARGE SURPLUS IN CHRIST'S GIFTS OVER AND ABOVE OUR NEED. Whom He feeds He feasts. His gifts answer our need, and over-answer it, for He is able to do exceeding abundantly above that which we ask or think, and neither our conceptions, nor our petitions, nor our present powers of receiving, are the real limits of the illimitable grace that is laid up for us in Christ, and which, potentially, we have each of us in our hands whenever we lay our hands on Him. II. Then there is another very simple lesson, which I draw. This command suggests for us CHRIST'S THRIFT (if I may use the word) IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF HIS MIRACULOUS POWER. Christ multiplies the bread, and yet each of the apostles has to take a basket, probably some kind of woven wicker-work article which they would carry for holding their little necessaries in their peregrinations; each apostle has to take his basket, and, perhaps emptying it of some of their humble apparel, to fill it with these bits of bread; for Christ was not going to work miracles where men's thrift and prudence could be employed. Nor does He do so now. We live by faith, and our dependence on Him can never be too absolute. Only laziness sometimes dresses itself in the garb and speaks with the tongue of faith, and pretends to be trustful when it is only slothful. "Why criest thou unto Me?" said God to Moses, "speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." True faith sets us to work. It is not to be perverted into idle and false depending upon Him to work for us, when, by the use of our own ten fingers and our own brains, guided and strengthened by His working in us, we can do the work that is set before us. III. Still further, there is another lesson here. Not only does the injunction show us Christ's thrift in the employment of the supernatural, but it teaches us our duty of THRIFT AND CARE IN THE USE OF THE SPIRITUAL GRACE BESTOWED UPON US. Christian men! be watchful stewards of that great gift of a living Christ, the food of your souls, that has been by miracle bestowed upon you. Such gathering together for future need of the unused residue of grace may be accomplished by three ways. 1. There must be a diligent use of the grace given. See that you use to the very full, in the measure of your present power of absorbing and your present need, the gift bestowed upon you. Be sure that you take in as much of Christ as you can contain before you begin to think of what to do with the overplus. If we are not careful to take what we can and to use what we need of Christ, there is little chance of our being faithful stewards of the surplus. The water in a mill-stream runs over the trough in great abundance

when the wheel is not working, and one reason why so many Christians seem to have so much more given to them in Christ than they need is because they are doing no work to use up the gift. 2. A second essential to such stewardship is the careful guarding of the grace given from whatever would injure it. Let not worldliness, business, care of the world, the sorrows of life, its joys, duties, anxieties, or pleasures—let not these so come into your hearts that they will elbow Christ out of your hearts, and dull your appetite for the True Bread that came down from heaven. 3. And, lastly, not only by use and by careful guarding, but also by earnest desire for larger gifts of the Christ who is large beyond all measure, shall we receive more and more of His sweetness and His preciousness into our hearts, and of His beauty and glory into our transfigured characters. The basket that we carry, this recipient heart of ours, is elastic. It can stretch to hold any amount that you like to put into it. The desire for more of Christ's grace will stretch its capacity, and as its capacity increases the inflowing gift greatens, and a larger Christ fills the larger room of my poor heart. IV. Finally, A SOLEMN WARNING IS IMPLIED IN THIS COMMAND, AND ITS REASON "THAT NOTHING BE LOST." Then there is a possibility of losing the gift that is freely given to us. We may waste the bread, and so, sometime or other when we are hungry, awake to the consciousness that it has dropped out of our slack hands. The abundance of Christ's grace may, so far as you are profited or enriched by it, be like the unclaimed millions of money which nobody asks for and that is of use to no living soul. You may be paupers while all God's riches in glory are at your disposal, and starving while baskets full of bread broken for us by Christ lie unused at our sides. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *Gather up the fragments*:—I. FRAGMENTS OF TRUTH. Precious fragments! with which we need not quarrel because fragmentary, for we are taught by degrees, we are fed as able to bear it. No one could reasonably complain of crumbs that they were not bread, because not each of them a whole loaf. The smallest portions of God's word are, notwithstanding their smallness, His word, and to be valued as such—not one to be lost. Precious fragments! concerning which we need not murmur, because we have the fatigue of gathering. "If any will not work neither shall he eat." II. FRAGMENTS OF TIME. Now there are two reasons which should more especially incite us to endeavour to redeem time. 1. We have need to treasure up its very minutes, for they are the fragments of a gift which God bestows. 2. For every hour of it He will call upon us to render an account, that He may "receive His own with usury." 3. And there is another reason which ought to influence us, but which is often overlooked, and that is, that in course of time we become the result of the time we live. Time leaves its mark upon us; not merely those outward marks of change and scars of decay, but those still more indelible features and lineaments of character which are constantly stamping us for eternity, and which give force to the assertion that "time has a quality, as it has a quantity." Time improved moulds and shapes the mind after the fashion of those improvements. III. Again (as connected with the thought of time, its fragments, its waste, and its use), there is also the consideration that there are certain MEANS OF GRACE, which we may regard in the light of fragments, and which have to be carefully gathered. "Gather up the fragments that remain," value and employ the holy seasons which may yet be granted you, and for which you will have to render an account. It is the same with regard to private prayer. What use have we made of the means of grace? I remember to have read a book entitled "A Dying Man's Regrets," and he was a very good and holy man, singularly devoted to the service of his God, and yet what did he say? These are his words, "Ah! if I were to return to life, I would, with the help of God, and in distrust of myself, give much more time to prayer than I have hitherto done. I would reckon much more upon the effect of that than on my own labour, which, however much it is our duty never to neglect, yet has no strength except so far as it is animated by prayer. I would especially strive to obtain in my prayers that fervour of the Holy Spirit which is not learnt in a day, but is the fruit of a long, and often a painful apprenticeship. Oh my friends" (he added, raising himself with energy on his sick bed) "lay hold of the opportunity and redeem it, cultivate new habits of prayer. Bring into prayer, with a spirit of fervour, a spirit also of order and of method that will increase its power, as it increases the power of all human things, and co-operated with the Divine agency itself." IV. Lastly, there are the ACTS OF DUTY that we are to perform, and these also often present themselves to us in very small fragments. The lives of most of us are made up of such fragments. It is not a great thing that is required of us. It is "the trivial round, the common task," that is, for the most part, "the calling

in which we are to abide," and "therein to abide with God." We are often apt to despise common things because they are so common, forgetting that we might lift them to a much higher dignity, if we but infused into them a nobler principle, doing them as in God's sight, by God's help, and to God's glory. (*J. M. Nisbet.*) *Fragments of instruction* (Sermon to the Young):—There are many fragments of truth, any one of which, perhaps, is not large enough for a whole discourse, but which ought not to be wholly lost. There are a hundred small things any one of which does not seem to be of much importance compared with the great Gospel themes, but which, taken together, amount to a great deal, *e.g.*—I. EVERY ONE SHOULD BE WILLING TO CREEP BEFORE HE WALKS. There is hardly a young man that goes out from his father's house that who does not want money before he earns it. Who does not want a reputation for being smart before he is smart? But you need not be ashamed because you do not know more than those of your age are expected to know; above all you need not be ashamed of frugality. Do not let your pride be hurt by living within your means. Make two things a matter of pride. 1. That you will not live one farthing in debt. 2. That you will be the richer if only by one shilling at the end of the year than you were at the beginning. II. EVERY ONE SHOULD EDUCATE HIMSELF. The school, books, teachers, give a man a chance, but after all he is his own schoolmaster. 1. A handworker ought not to be content with handwork, but should teach his hand to think as well. 2. Every man ought to have some general knowledge (1) of his own body and mind; (2) of the structure of the earth; (3) of the history, geography, and policy of his own country and of others; (4) of the sciences. 3. But all education does not come from reading. (1) God gave men eyes that they might see; and yet very few people see anything. (2) What was your tongue put into your head for but to inquire with? Learn the art of asking questions. III. BE CAREFUL ABOUT THE COMPANY YOU KEEP. Pick your company from those who are superior to you and can teach you something. Life will go ill with you if you look down for your company. IV. AIM AT REFINEMENT. This belongs to no place or class. You ought to be refined, not because of your trade, but because of yourself. A mechanic may be a gentleman if he likes. V. CULTIVATE CHIVALRY. Always take the side of the weak. VI. DO NOT DESPISE ETIQUETTE. Life is made a great deal pleasanter and intercourse a great deal smoother when men observe the little forms of propriety in life. VII. RESPECT womanhood. No matter how a woman looks, she is of the same sex as your mother and sister or wife and daughter. VIII. CULTIVATE THE HABIT OF UNIFORM GENEROSITY IN SOCIAL INTERCOURSE. Be on the look out to make others happy. (*Ibid.*) *The fragments that remain*:—Every dispensation of Providence is a kind of miracle. We must make the most of it. I. EVERY POSITION IN LIFE may be made great or little, as we desire to make the most or the least of it. To do the necessary duties of each station is easy enough, but to gather up all its outlying opportunities; to be ready to lend a helping hand here or give a kind word of counsel there; to fill our place in life instead of leaving it half empty; to be in our work entirely make all the difference between a useful and a useless man. II. We may have A SIGNAL VISITATION OF JOY OR SORROW. It is possible to drive it out of our thoughts and cut off all its consequences; but it is better to gather up the fragments and see what it has taught us of our strength or weakness, God and our soul. III. We may have known A NOBLE CHARACTER AND EXAMPLE. It has gone from us. Shall we blot it out of our remembrance or gather up the fragments, the sayings, doings, memories that may cheer, sustain, guide and warn. IV. Consider our feelings of RELIGION ITSELF. Few and far between may be our prayers and thoughts of serious things; but do not despise what you have. One verse from the Bible may be enough to sustain us in sore temptations; one prayer may stick closer to us than a brother; one fixed determination to do right may be a rallying point round which our whole better nature may form itself. True "we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs" of our heavenly Father's table; but His "property" is always to have mercy, and will bless and own our humbled efforts. (*Dean Stanley.*) *The fragments that remain*:—I. Fragments of TIME. Myriads waste hours, days, years, and find themselves beggars at death. II. Fragments of INFLUENCE. "No man liveth unto himself." It may be unconsciously exercised; like magnetism it never slumbers, like gravitation it knows no Sabbath. It is ever drawing to the Cross or to ruin. III. Fragments of CONSCIENCE. Our sins weaken and scatter the power Divine. Some benumb its energy, others flatter it by deceit. IV. Fragments of FAITH. Christ its faintest beams, they lead to heaven. V. Fragments of LOVE. Gather up every fragment of retiring lingering affection. VI. Fragments of CONSECRATION. As the

needle always turns to the pole, so our life should centre in God. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Love enriches itself*:—This which remained over must have immensely exceeded in bulk and quantity the original stock; and we thus have a visible symbol of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but after the most prodigal outgoings upon others abides itself far richer than it would else have done; of the multiplying which there always is in a true dispensing, of the increasing which may go along with a scattering. (*Archbishop Trench.*) *Wastefulness*:—Having by the miracle taught a lesson of beneficence, Christ now inculcates economy. I. THE SIN OF WASTEFULNESS. 1. It breaks the law which bids us "use the things of this world as not abusing them." 2. It is shameful ingratitude to our Father in heaven to waste that daily bread given to us in answer to prayer. 3. Every shilling needlessly squandered is a diminution of our power to do good. II. THE NATURE OF WASTEFULNESS. It is not confined to the destruction of the necessaries of life, but may fairly be extended to unprofitable consumption. 1. Fashion and vanity are great wasters. 2. Intemperance is waste—(1) Of bodily health. (2) Of the means of saving others from starvation. 3. Luxury is waste because (1) Frequently unnecessary. (2) Encouraging extravagance in children. III. HOW TO GUARD AGAINST WASTEFULNESS. 1. Not by niggardliness to the neglect of the duties of Christian hospitality, but in general by the rational enjoyment as against the perversion of the blessings of providence. 2. By every one "ruling well his own house," impressing servants with the sin, folly, and dishonesty of wastefulness. 3. By preventing what is perishable from being spoiled through carelessness. 4. By preventing a consumption of the fruits of the earth by overfeeding such animals as are kept chiefly for pleasure. IV. THE BENEFITS OF FRUGALITY. 1. The cultivation of good habits; temperance, charity, &c. 2. Addition to the sum of human happiness. (*J. Hewlett, D.D.*) *Fragments not to be wasted*:—1. This is the command of the last gospel of the last Sunday of the Church's year. 2. This command in its connection shows us the union of the vastness of God's liberality with the minuteness of the accuracy of His economy. He "provides you all things richly to enjoy," but He looks to see what you do with the cup of cold water. His are "the cattle on a thousand hills, but a sparrow cannot fall without His notice." 3. The text may be applied to the use of—I. THINGS THAT CAN BE MEASURED BY MONEY. II. CRUMBS OF TRUTH. III. THE MEANS OF GRACE. IV. SCANTY OPPORTUNITIES. V. LITTLE DUTIES. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Divine avoidance of waste*:—Many things that appear useless have some hidden value. In jeweller's shops every particle of filing is preserved for the assayer. Paper trimmings of large establishments become of value to the extent of thousands of pounds. In Copenhagen a hospital is supported by the money raised from cigar tips. The pieces of bread swept into the dust heap from the tables of England would, if saved and given to missions, double the means at present at their disposal. I. NOTICE THE ECONOMY IN THE DIVINE ADMINISTRATION. 1. In nature there seems to be waste in great stretches of uncultivated ground, rocky ridges, unseen flowers, unfathomed depths; and in stellar regions there seems to be infinite waste of light and force. Why all this? Because there must be no appearance of niggardliness on the part of omnipotence. Yet no part of this lavishment is really waste. No atom is lost. All is used over and over again, as vapours, heat, sand, soil, &c. 2. In the world of thought there is no waste. From Copernicus, Tycho, Brake, Kepler, Newton, &c., men now gather power to gain further knowledge. Watts, and Stephenson, and Moore are only founders of inventions on which others build. 3. In the spiritual sphere, devotion, faithfulness, endurance, suffering, is not waste. John in prison, Stephen stoned, Christ crucified, are all incentives to fealty and love. II. THE AIM IN THE DIVINE ECONOMY OF FRAGMENTS. 1. It is a benefit to man that he is required to "gather." Christ could have created more bread, but it had not been good for the disciples to live on miracles. Eden could have been kept right, but it was better for man to keep it. Birds and animals are provided with clothing and food; man has to provide for himself because a higher being. Difficulties enable us to value things more. 2. Christ here warned men of the great losses that may attend trifling neglects: Ships sink by little leaks. Constant trifling wastes may ruin the best business. 3. He showed more power in the gathered fragments than in feeding the five thousand. 4. He taught the disciples His care for those whom others would despise. (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *No waste in Nature or Art*:—Nature is a rigid economist. In her household there is no waste. Everything is utilized to the utmost. The decay of rocks forms the soil of plants; and the decay of plants forms the mould in which future plants will grow. The sunlight and carbonic acid

gas of past ages which seemed to be wasted upon a desert world, have been stored up in the form of coal for the benefit of man. The water that seems to be dissipated in the air descends in the dew and rain to refresh and quicken the earth. The matter that has served its purpose to one object goes by death and decomposition to form another object with a different purpose to serve. The materials which the animal kingdom receives from the mineral and vegetable kingdoms must be restored in order that they may be carefully circulated without diminution or waste over the whole earth. The gases that disappear in one form reappear in another. Forces are changed into their equivalents. Heat becomes motion, and motion heat. Nowhere is there any waste. In the ashes of every fire, in the decay of every plant, in the death and decomposition of every animal there is change, but not loss, death, but not waste. Everything is made the most of. The fragments of every product of nature are gathered up carefully and made to serve a useful purpose in a new form at nature's feast. Amid all her lavishness nature is very saving. The brilliant hues of flowers which the poet and artist love are not mere idle adornments, but have a practical purpose to fulfil. The beauty and fragrance which we so much admire appear only when the fertilization of the plant by insect agency is necessary; and when this task is accomplished, she withdraws them, as we put out the lights and remove the garlands when the banquet is over. In the most economical manner Nature gets her new effects not by producing new objects, but by effecting a few modifications upon the old ones; and when she makes a blossom upon an apple-tree she simply shortens and alters what would otherwise have been a common leafy branch; all the parts of the inflorescence of the commonest wayside weed, the bract, the calyx, petal, stamen, pistil, and seed, in spite of all their differences of form and colour, are but successive transformations of the leaf. Thus our Lord teaches us by the common processes of Nature the lesson of economy. In the sphere of human art we find that there is a growing tendency to economize materials. The distinguishing characteristic of our arts and manufactures is economy. Substances which our forefathers threw away are now converted into useful and valuable products. We extract beautiful colours from the dung-heap, and delicious perfumes and essences from the offal of the streets. Every day we are finding out more and more that nothing is useless; that even the waste and refuse of our manufactures may be turned to profitable account, and made to minister to the necessities or the comfort of man. By the work of our own hands, therefore, our Lord is teaching us the lesson of economy. (*H. Macmillan, LL.D.*) *The economics of Nature*:—Though the wealth of God is uncountable, He takes care even of His pence. There is no waste in his workshop. All things go towards the up-building of some newer life. Whatsoever you behold is but part of the great wheel of life everywhere returning. The cloud becomes the rain, the rain the river, the river the sea, the sea the cloud again. One of the glories of science is to abolish the word "waste." Even the rag-picker has his function to perform, a higher one perhaps than yours. It is better to gather rags than to wear overmuch finery, because those rags go to the mill and become paper, on which the lovely and heroic deeds of men are inscribed. When death comes he will make mock of your fine clothes, and you will go your way to the rag heap. He who rescues rags is often more useful than he who wears them, and he might have written across him "Gather up the fragments," &c. He gathers rags, bones, &c. He sorts them. Then they are sold and made into new materials, which in their turn come round again to rags. I take up a sheet of paper upon which to write, and I say of it, "Rags of my youth come back again—come to clothe my soul this time." (*George Dawson, M.A.*) *Utilization of waste*:—An apprentice made a gorgeous cathedral window from the fragments of glass his master threw away. When David Cox used to sketch many things on paper and then cast them aside as not being up to his ideal, they were cast into the waste-paper basket or scattered on the floor. His old housekeeper, however, from reverence to her master, collected these torn and crumpled pieces. When the gifted artist died, and his effects were sold, the old housekeeper had her relics framed and realized some thousands of pounds, on which she was able to pass the rest of her days in comfort. There was unexpected value in fragments and scraps! Were we as careful to try and save time, or to seize opportunities of winning souls, what glory might not be brought to Christ! (*Homiletic Magazine.*) *Twelve baskets*:—The word for "basket" in all the places where this miracle is mentioned (Matt. xiv; Mark vi.; Luke ix.; John 6), *kophinos*; in the two places where the later miracle of feeding is described, the word for basket is *spuris*. These two words indicate two different kinds of baskets. It was in a *spuris* basket that Paul was let

down from the walls of Damascus; so that we can hardly err in recognizing in the *spuris* the large, deep, and round woven basket which is used for so many purposes in Palestine, and into which a man could, on occasion, be packed. The *kophinos*, on the other hand, which in the classics sometimes indicates a fish-basket, seems to be the light, flat woven tray-basket, which is in use among fisher-folk and others who had light burdens to carry. (*S. S. Times.*) *Nothing lost*:—I. In all the PROCESSES OF NATURE. In the ravages of oceans, the flow of rivers, the crumbling of mountains, "nothing is lost; the drop of dew that trembles on leaf or flower, is but exhaled to fall anew, in summer thunder shower." II. OF ALL THE COUNTLESS FORMS OF LIFE that have flourished and died since the beginning—

> "The little drift of common dust,
> By the March winds disturbed and tossed,
> Though scattered by the fitful gust,
> Is changed but never lost."

III. OF ANY WORK DONE FOR GOD, however humble. Sermons, prayers, contributions, &c. (Isa. lv. 11; Acts x. 4; Matt. x. 42). What an encouragement to parents, teachers, ministers, reformers. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*)

Vers. 14–21. **Then those men when they had seen the miracle.**—*The sequel to the miracle*:—I. THE EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE ON THE MIND OF THE MULTITUDE. They, like all Jews of the time, were expecting the Prophet like unto Moses. The Divine commission of Moses was authenticated by the miraculous manna; what then could this miracle mean but that He who worked it was the antitype of Moses. And then Moses had been king as well as prophet. Who could be better qualified for "leader and commander of the people" than Jesus? Time and place were both favourable for raising the standard of rebellion, and five thousand resolute hearts formed no mean nucleus of an army which would soon include every Jewish patriot. Measures, therefore, were taken to compel Christ to yield to their wishes. 1. In this incident we have an example of zeal without knowledge. Christ was indeed a King, but had they apprehended in what sense nothing would have been further from their wishes. 2. Zeal without knowledge must at all times be most injurious to the true interests of the cause of Christ. II. THE PROCEDURE OF CHRIST (ver. 15). 1. He withdrew. (1) To frustrate their purpose. (2) To show that His kingdom was not of this world. (3) To ascend a higher throne, not by popular election, but by the cross. 2. He withdrew to pray, thus indicating the nature of the glory He sought. He had much to plead for on behalf of the multitude on whom the miracle had been lost, and in behalf of His disciples who had more than half taken the infection. Lessons: (1) Those who misuse Christ and His blessings must not wonder if they are deprived of His presence. (2) Spiritual safety is closely connected with retirement from dangerous associations. Christ not only withdrew Himself but sent the disciples away (Matt. xiv. 22; Mark vi. 45). III. THE DANGER OF THE DISCIPLES (vers. 17, 18). 1. Those who seek and find their delight in Christ's presence know the bitterness of His absence. How often are Christ's disciples tossed with tempests and constrained to hard and apparently fruitless service! 2. The Master is ever at hand when the storm is fiercest and where the labour is hardest. IV. THE ADVENT OF CHRIST. 1. Aroused their fears. 2. Elicited their prayers. 3. Secured their safety. 4. Brought them safely to shore. (*A. Beith, D.D.*) *Three views of Christ*:—I. AMID THE MOUNTAINS (ver. 15). 1. A couch of repose after the physical exhaustion of the day. 2. A temple of prayer (Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46). (1) For Himself that He might resist the temptation He had just escaped as in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 8–10), and that He might be supplied with strength for the coming miracle. (2) For the people who were as sheep without a shepherd. (3) For the disciples gone on their perilous voyage. 3. A tower of observation of His disciples as now He watches us from heaven. II. UPON THE SEA (vers. 19, 20). 1. The mysterious apparition. (1) What it was. Christ really walking on, not swimming in, the sea, not walking on the shore. There is no difficulty here to those who believe the previous miracle. (2) Why it came. To proclaim Christ Lord as the Controller of nature, as the bread had proclaimed Him its Creator. (3) When it appeared. Between three and six o'clock in the morning when the rowers were at their wits' end. So Christ interposes when our need is greatest (Amos v. 1). (4) How it was regarded. With fear, as Christ's unusual appearances often are. 2. The familiar voice. (1) What it said (ver. 20). A note

of assurance (Isa. xliii. 2; liv. 11). (2) How it acted. It dispelled their alarms. III. IN THE BOAT (ver. 21). 1. The wind was hushed (Matt. xiv. 32). To lull the soul's hurricanes when Christ steps within (chap. xiv. 27). 2. The disciples were amazed (Mark vi. 51), and led to worship (Matt. xiv. 33). Christ's supremacy over nature unmistakably betokened His Divinity. 3. The voyage was completed. Learn: 1. The dependence Jesus ever felt on prayer. 2. The notice Christ continues to take of His people. 3. The ability Christ possesses to help in the time of need. 4. The glory Christ shall yet bring to His people and to this material world. 5. The object of all Christ's manifestations to lead men to recognize His Divinity. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **This is of a truth that Prophet.**—*The distinguishing characteristics of Christ as a Teacher*:—I. THOSE WHICH CANNOT BE IMITATED. 1. His originality. 2. His miraculousness. 3. His authority. II. THOSE WHICH MUST NOT BE IMITATED. 1. His positiveness. 2. His self-assurance. 3. His self-representation. III. THOSE WHICH SHOULD BE IMITATED. 1. His naturalness. 2. His simplicity. 3. His variety. 4. His suggestiveness. 5. His definiteness. 6. His catholicity. 7. His spirituality. 8. His tenderness. 9. His faithfulness. 10. His consistency. 11. His devoutness. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The misinterpretation of the Divine sign by the perverseness of the carnal mind*:—They draw from the sign a correct conclusion (a true doctrine) and a false application (a bad moral). So with orthodox faith a false (ecclesiastical or secular) morality is often associated. (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *This is of a truth the prophet*:—1. They beheld in Jesus the fulfilment of prophecies fondly remembered, of hopes long deferred. The Law-giver who was to be a second Moses; the Deliverer who was to be a more mighty conqueror than Joshua; a King more glorious than David, wiser than Solomon, was come at last. 2. They who said so were not men learned in the Scriptures, like the Jewish scribes and rulers; book-learning, even of the highest sort, is apt to make those who have it slow in forming their judgments, backward and cold in declaring them. Nor were they men of the city, who might have gained some knowledge at second hand from those who had searched the Scriptures. But they were a crowd of rude, simple folk, come together from the hill country of Galilee, where old traditions had been handed down from age to age by word of mouth. With an instinct more true, more strong, than the opinions of the learned, they perceived that the bread which they received in such abundance could only have been supplied by God Himself, and that in Him who fed them thus God was revealed as clearly as when He spake by the profits to their forefathers. 3. Confessions of this kind, all the more impressive from their being artless and involuntary, are often to be met with in the four Gospels, and are just such as we might expect men would make on seeing of a sudden the supernatural power and wisdom of Christ (see chap. i. 49; Luke v. 8; Mark xv. 39). 4. It is not to be supposed that the like effects should be wrought in us, who have heard and read a hundred times the record of these things. Miracles the most amazing, discourses the most persuasive, the heartrending tales of sufferings inconceivable, sound in our ears as old familiar truths; and familiarity too often leads to neglect, even though it may by no means breed contempt. They who live in sight of a beautiful landscape lose in some degree the perception of its loveliness. They would like to view it with fresh eyes; as the strangers do who come to visit them. There is stealing over us a spirit of indifference, which for any saving purpose is as dangerous as the spirit of downright unbelief. 5. God does not suffer us to remain without a warning in this deadly stupor. Not by miracles, not by the visitation of angels, but in the course of His providence, by what we call the accidents of life, He arouses us and makes us see the Saviour as plainly revealed to our inward vision as He was to those men sitting on the grass and eating the bread which He gave them in the wilderness. 6. And what sort of things are they which bring us to see in His beauty and majesty that Saviour who hitherto has had no form or comeliness in our sight, so that we have even hid our faces from Him? Have we been led to look with abhorrence on one of our darling sins and yearn for the purity which once we had, and which we cannot of ourselves recover? And has a ray of comfort from Him been shed upon us, kindling a new hope in our breasts, making us embrace as a living truth what had become to us a dead form of words, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners? Or has the heavenly ray reached you by another path? It is in love that thou art chastened, that the weight of thy affliction, which is but for a little moment, may gain thee the exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I have been the Man of sorrows, and now am at God's right hand. I know thy afflictions, and even in My

glory here am touched with a feeling of them. But such is God's law, equal for all; "only through tribulation canst thou enter the kingdom here above." Have such consolations given a new turn to your thoughts, and thrown some light on the deep mystery of your life? If so, you might well exclaim, "This is of a truth the Prophet that cometh—that Herald of life and joy, so greatly needed by the sons and daughters of affliction, so longed for by me, sorrow-stricken, sick at heart as I am! This is He, the Desire of all nations!" And if, in any of these ways, the good impression has been made upon you, take care to keep it by giving good heed to it, and especially by often calling to mind the circumstances under which you first received it. Otherwise it will soon wear out like the stagnant pool of Bethesda, troubled for an instant by the angel's wing. (*W. G. Humphry, B.D.*) **When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and . . . make Him a King.**—*Christ not a King by force*:—1. Some men have greatness thrust upon them. From all such Christ separates Himself, knowing that what is done by compulsion may by compulsion be undone. So He would not have a kingdom forced upon Him, nor would He be forced on a kingdom. Wonderful words are written on His royal banner: "Put up thy sword," "My kingdom is not of this world." 2. This is the second time that He declined a crown. It is not every man who has two such chances. Everything depends on how you get hold of your kingdom. If you have offered false worship for it, it will rot in your grip; if you have been forced on reluctant hearts, they will cast you off in the spring tide of returning power. 3. There is something in this Man more than in any other man. The more His character is studied, the more independent we shall be of theological evidences. The grand claim of Christ to supremacy goes right up to the centre and necessity of things. I. NOTHING HAS TO BE DONE IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BY VIOLENCE, by mere force. Did not Christ come to be a King? Yes. What matter then the way of becoming one? Everything. A man must prove his title to his seat, or he may be unseated. 1. It is not right to do right in a wrong way. It is right that you should come to church: it would be wrong to force you to come. The end does not sanctify the means. 2. Force is powerless in all high matters. (1) You can force a man to kneel, to repeat devotional words while you stand over him sword in hand; but he defies you to make him pray. (2) You can force a man to pay his debts, but you cannot make him honest. Honesty cannot be created by force, nor dishonesty be punished by it. (3) You can compel a nation to build a church, but you cannot compel it to be religious. The very attempt to force a man to be religious destroys the temper which alone makes religion possible. II. While all this is true on the human side, the real point to be considered is that JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF WOULD NEVER REIGN BY MERE FORCE. If you could force men to Christ, you could never force Christ to men. It is the Infinite that declines. Jesus reigns by the distinct consent of the human mind. "If any man will open to Me, I will come in." "Come unto Me all ye," &c. III. If He will not be a King by force, BY WHAT MEANS WILL HE BECOME KING? 1. Preach Me, is one of His injunctions. Show My doctrine, purpose, spirit, throughout the world. That is a roundabout way, but the swing of the Divine astronomy is in it. It is not the thought of a common man. 2. Live Me: "Let your light so shine," &c.; "I have given you an example;" "Follow Me." 3. Lift Me up. "If I be lifted up," &c. (1) On the Cross of Atonement. (2) By us when we love His law, submit to His bidding, reproduce His temper, receive with unquestioning heart all the gospel of His love. IV. Now for the philosophical explanation of all this. "WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US." This Man lays hold of our entire love, and thereby secures an everlasting reign. The man who proceeded to capture human nature as this Man proceeded is presumably a true king. No adventurer could have acted as Jesus Christ. 1. Little child, Jesus would not have you forced to be good. He says, "I am knocking at the door of your heart; let Me in." 2. He makes no proposition about going out. 3. The Church, like the Master, should not rule by force, but by love. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Secret prayer*:—Secret prayer feeds the soul as secret morsels feed the body; therefore it is said to be the banquet of grace, where the soul may solace itself with God, as Esther did with Ahasuerus at the banquet of wine, and have whatsoever heart can wish or need require. While the disciples were perilling and well-nigh perishing, Christ was praying for them; so He is still for us at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (*J. Trapp.*) *Jesus on the mountain above the political designs of men*:—He alone. I. He alone THE FREE ONE who is more a King than any prince on earth. II. He alone THE CLEAR-SIGHTED ONE, who sees above all craftiness of policy. III. He alone THE SILENT BUT DECISIVE DISPOSER OF ALL THINGS. (*Lange.*) *The*

kingship of Christ:—Like Joseph our Lord suffered for the sin He so carefully avoided. The charge of claiming to be King was brought up against Him at His trial. Yet while shunning the bauble of an earthly sceptre, He was King of kings, and will for ever wear many crowns. To make Him King was of the Father, not of poor mortals. How low their ideas of Messiah's kingdom! What had loaves and fishes multiplied to do with "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"? (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **And when even was now come His disciples went down unto the sea and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum.**—*A night upon the deep*:—I. OF DISAPPOINTED HOPE. II. OF UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT. III. OF DEEPENING ALARM. IV. OF DIVINE MANIFESTATION. V. OF SUPERNATURAL DELIVERANCE. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Jesus absent in darkness*:—It is sometimes worth while to try to meet the mournful and worried state of mind in the churches, when the good are longing, and perhaps waiting, for a revival of religion to come. I. THE PICTURE. In the course of description of the scene on Lake Genesaret, it will not be difficult to suggest these points: 1. The close and rather humiliating connection between wistful souls and weary bodies. 2. The disheartening result of a rapid transition from exhilarating crowds to unromantic and lonely labour. 3. The feeling of desertion when, perhaps, Jesus is praying for us all the time. 4. Desolate frames of feeling give no release from diligent duty. Our question now is, What did those disciples do? II. THE LESSON. 1. They kept on rowing. That is, they did precisely what they would have done if Jesus had arrived. 2. They headed the boat for Capernaum. That was what He bade them do (see Matt. xiv. 22). 3. They bailed out the water if any rushed into the boat. All the worldliness in the world's sea cannot sink Christ's Church, if only the waves are kept on the outside of it. 4. They strained their eyes in every direction for the least sign of Christ's coming. 5. They cheered each other. (*C. S. Robinson.*) *The absent Christ*:—It is always dark until Jesus comes to us, or until we go to Jesus. This is the case with—I. THE AWAKENED SINNER who, in contact with Jesus, passes from darkness into light. II. THE DESPONDING CHRISTIAN (Psa. xliii., li., cxxx.). III. THE AFFLICTED CHRISTIAN. IV. THE BEREAVED. "If Thou hadst been here our brother had not died." But when He comes He is the Resurrection and the Life. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Christians in darkness when Christ is not near*:—I. CHRIST'S THOUGHTS ABOUT HIS DISCIPLES. 1. He leaves men for a time in fear and danger. (1) After the fall the whole world was thus left till Christ came in the flesh. (2) After the Incarnation He remained thirty years in obscurity. He remained far distant from Bethany till Lazarus was dead. He lingered on the mountain while His disciples were struggling with the storm. (3) At this day His people wonder at His absence, and exclaim, "Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." 2. His delay is no proof of His neglect. His delights were with the children of men before His abode was among them. When absent from Lazarus His heart was full of a brother's love. Here His purpose was to allow their extremity to become His opportunity. So when He left the world it was that the Comforter might come. And now it is only love that detains Him within the veil. 3. Never, and nowhere, do they who wait on the Lord wait in vain. To weary watchers the time seemed long but the coming was sure. "Faithful is He that promised." "He that keepeth Israel shall not slumber." II. THE DISCIPLES' THOUGHTS ABOUT CHRIST. 1. It was a matter of the heart. In knowledge they were children; and like children, too, in single-eyed, confiding love. Afterwards they became more enlightened. But their first love was not weaker than their last. 2. Observe how this child-like love operates in time of trial. (1) The waters were permitted to swell and frighten the children, although their Elder Brother held those waters in the hollow of His hand. But these true men would neither be bold in the absence of their Lord, nor faint in fear when He was at their side. (2) The storm and darkness made their hearts quiver, and all the more surely did these hearts turn and point toward the mountain-top when Jesus, the Daysman, stood laying His hand upon God. (3) But these dangers though great were material and temporal; whereas the dangers which induce us to seek a Saviour are our own sin, and the wages that it wins. But these burdens will make you doubly welcome. (4) The example of these Galileans is shown here as in a glass, that every mourner may thereby be encouraged to long for the presence of the Lord (Psa. l. 15). (5) Love to Christ in a human heart, kindled by Christ's love to man and laying hold of the love that lighted it, is the one thing needed. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *Christ, though absent, has not deserted us*:—Jesus was absent all the while. He leaveth them, as it were, in the suburbs of hell. Howbeit as the eagle when she flieth highest of all from the nest doth ever cast a jealous eye upon her young, so doth this heavenly

eagle. (*J. Trapp.*) *Night with Jesus*:—1. It was night. The disciples were alone, which made it double night. 2. It was night at sea. To be without Jesus in the day and on land was sad, but this was sadder. 3. It was a night of toil: rowing four miles in the teeth of the wind; and Christ's absence made their labour doubly hard. 4. It was a night of danger. The storm had broken loose and there was no Jesus. Let us look at these works in their more general aspect in relation to the Saint and to the Church. I. NIGHT. 1. The sinner's history is one long starless night. 2. The saint has his night, too, of sorrow, bereavement, and pain. 3. The Church, too, has her night—poverty, persecution, desertion. There shall be no night there, but there is night now. II. NIGHT WITHOUT JESUS. 1. The sinner's night is altogether without Him. 2. The saint has night when Jesus seems distant. Without Him altogether we cannot be—"Lo, I am with you always." But there are times when He is not realized; and the issue of these is to bring Him nearer. III. NIGHT WITH JESUS. With Him the darkness is as the light. For having Him we have—1. Companionship. 2. Protection. 3. Safety. 4. Comfort. 5. Strength. 6. Assurance of the coming day. IV. DAY WITH JESUS. He does not say, "Let Me go, for the day breaketh." And if His presence has made the night pleasant, what will not that presence make the coming day! (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) **They see Jesus walking on the sea.**—Does He not always walk upon it? Is not His majestic tread on the Galilean waters typical—I. OF HIS MARCH ALONG THE AGES? No figure seems more literal than that by which we speak of the waves, the current, the sea of time. How constantly is the lapse of years, obliterating races, memorials, great names, the dykes set up by arms, laws, industries and enterprise. Of the civilized nations now on earth but one in Christ's time had a name or a place except the Jews. The languages then spoken are now dead. The manners and religions have passed away. Meanwhile, Jesus has walked upon the waves. The gospel has never been submerged or been less than the one shaping, controlling power. 1. At the outset fierce and bitter persecution assailed Christianity, but from beneath the heel of the Cæsars it mounted their throne. 2. Then commenced the severer trial of corrupting prosperity; and still its ordinances, doctrines, and influence could not be wholly corrupted. 3. Invading races threatened to destroy it, but yielded to it. 4. During the dark ages it gave birth to noble charities, home life, &c. 5. In these latter ages how many and powerful have been the assailing forces, scientific and infidel; but no sooner has any fountain of knowledge become deep and clear than it has invited His tread and rolled tributary waves to His feet. 6. And lo! as centuries roll on His circuit widens. His steps lay hold on the ends of the earth and the islands of the sea. II. OF HIS WAY IN THE HEART OF MAN. 1. How fierce the waves that threaten our peace and well being! Passion, appetite, lust, pride, desire, fear. What power but Christ's can walk these waves? But let Him enter and these billows know their Lord. 2. What miracles of mercy has He not wrought in these subject souls! (1) Here was intemperance or lust. No love could stem the torrent; but Christ entered and appetite was quelled and all is now pure and peaceful. (2) In that spirit passion raged; Christ entered and vengeance has given place to love and forgiveness. 3. In every soul into which He enters, He walks as sovereign. The forces of character mould themselves at His command. III. OF HIS PATHS AS HERALD AND GUIDE TO THE LIFE ETERNAL. (*A. P. Peabody, LL.D.*) *Christ in the night storm*:—I. Many of my hearers may be just now in a FEARFUL NIGHT-STORM OF TROUBLE. 1. One is in the darkness of a mysterious providence. 2. Another is under a tempest of commercial disaster. He has lost "the rigging" of his prosperity; and his pride has come down as a top-sail comes down in a hurricane. 3. Another one is toiling with the oars against a head-sea of poverty. 4. The guiding rudder of a dear and trusted friend has been swept away by death. 5. Still another one is in a midnight of spiritual despondency, and the promise-stars seem to be all shut out under gloomy clouds. My friend A—— is making a hard voyage, with her brood of fatherless children to provide for. Friend B—— has a poor intemperate husband on board with her; and Brother C——'s little bark hardly rises out of one wave of disaster before another sweeps over it. There are whole boat-loads of disciples who are "toiling at rowing" over a dark sea of trouble. II. THE HOUR OF THE CHRISTIAN'S EXTREMITY IS THE HOUR OF CHRIST'S OPPORTUNITY. At the right moment Christ makes His appearance. We do not wonder at the disciples' astonishment and alarm. But straightway Jesus speaks unto them, and in an instant their fears vanished and "the wind ceased." Now, good friends, who are breasting a midnight sea of trouble, open the eye of faith, and see that Form on the waves! It is not an apparition; it is not a fiction of priestly fancies. It is Jesus Himself!

One who has been tried on all points as we are, and yet without sin. Christ comes to you as a sympathizing, cheering, consoling Saviour. His sweet assurance is, "Lo! I am with you. Fear not; I have redeemed thee." Receive Him into the ship. No vessel can sink or founder with Jesus on board. Let the storms rage, if God sends them. Christ can pilot you through. It is I! There may be a night coming soon on some of you, when heart and flesh shall fail you, and the only shore ahead is the shore of eternity. If Jesus is only in the bark, be not afraid. Like glorious John Wesley, you will be able to cry aloud in the dying hour, "The best of all is, God is with us!" III. THE TEACHINGS OF THIS INSPIRING SCENE TO THOSE WHO ARE IN A MID-SEA OF CONVICTIONS OF SIN AND TROUBLINGS OF CONSCIENCE. The storm of Divine threatenings against sin is breaking upon you. You acknowledge that you are guilty. Alarming passages from God's Word foam up around your distressed and anxious soul. You cannot quell this storm, or escape out of it. Toiling at the oars of self-righteousness has not sent you a furlong nearer to the "desired haven." You have found by sore experience that sin gives no rest, and that your oars are no match against God's just and broken law. Friend! Listen! There is a voice that comes sounding through the storm. Hearken to it! It is a voice of infinite love, "It is I!" "Whosoever believeth in Me shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life." If you will only admit this waiting, willing, loving Jesus into your tempest-tossed soul, the "wind will cease." Christ can allay the storm. Receive Him. Do all He asks, surrender the helm to Him, and you can then feel as the rescued disciples did when they knelt down in the drenched bottom of their little boat, and cried out, "Truly this is the Son of God!" (*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*) **It is I, be not afraid.**—*The Lord's voice to His people*:—I. PROCLAIMING HIS PRESENCE. 1. In unexpected places. 2. At unwonted times. 3. In unfamiliar forms. II. DISPELLING FEAR—1. Of danger. 2. Of death. 3. Of evil. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The recognition of Christ in the hour of death*:—The recognition of Christ coming to help and comfort in the hour of severest trial is ever the Christian's privilege. If he see Him not in the storm, he must look again and again, for he has but failed to recognize Him. This truth we would apply only to that last fearful storm which wrecks the bark in which the soul has been crossing the sea of life. I. To RECOGNIZE HIM WE MUST EXPECT HIM. 1. He has promised to be there. "Lo, I am with you alway." "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee." 2. He who has given His life for us will not fail us in that most trying moment. II. BY WHAT SIGNS MAY THE CHRISTIAN KNOW HIM? 1. The Christian soul knows Him by His visage. Infinite love breaks through every disguise when viewed by the soul fitted to recognize it. 2. Knows Him because He announces Himself: "It is I, be not afraid." 3. Knows Him because of the calm that comes with Him. Conclusion: Martyrs and Christians in all ages have borne testimony to the recognition of Christ in the last hour of life. (*Homiletic Monthly.*) *The symbolism of the voyage*:—A believer must have on the sea of life, Patience for his tackling, Hope for his anchor, Faith for his helm, the Bible for his chart, Christ for his captain, the breath of the Spirit to fill his canvas. (*J. Trapp.*) *Afraid of Christ*:—Of Him in whom was laid up all their comfort. How oft are we mistaken and befooled by our fears! (*J. Trapp.*) *Timely comfort*:—He waits to be gracious. Our extremity is His opportunity. God brings His people to the mount, with Abraham, yea, to the very brow of the hill, till their feet slip, and then delivers them. When all is given up for lost then comes He in, as oil of an engine. (*Ibid.*) *The storm on the lake*:—My experience in this region enabled me to sympathize with the disciples in their long night's contest with the wind. I have seen the face of the lake like a huge boiling cauldron. The wind howled down the valleys from the north-east and east with such fury that no efforts of rowers could have brought a boat to shore at any point along that coast. To understand the cause of these sudden and violent tempests we must remember the lake lies low—six hundred feet lower than the ocean—that water-courses have cut out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of the lake, and that these act like gigantic funnels to draw down the cold winds from the mountains. On the occasion referred to we pitched our tents on the shore, and remained for three days and nights exposed to this tremendous wind. We had to double-pin all the tent ropes, and frequently were obliged to hang with our whole weight upon them, to keep the quivering tabernacle from being carried up bodily into the air. No wonder the disciples toiled and rowed hard all that night. (*W. M. Thomson, D.D.*) *The disciples and their absent Master*:—I have observed that a shipmaster, especially when the presence of currents and the proximity of land make his burden heavy, shakes the compass

sharply, and then watches the point on which the quivering needle finally settles down. The shaking makes the master more sure that the needle points truly to its pole. In those days the magnet was not known. No trembling compass on the deck that night told the steersman how to hold his helm, after the mountains had disappeared in night; but an instrument more mysterious and equally true within those simple seamen had once been touched by divine, forgiving mercy, and pointed steadfastly now to the Source of saving power. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The pathway of the King*:—I. THE STRUGGLING TOILERS. Is it not the history of the Church in a nutshell? Is it not the symbol of life for us all? The solemn law under which we live demands persistent effort, and imposes continual antagonism upon us; there is no reason why we should regard that as evil, or think ourselves hardly used, because we are not fair-weather sailors. The end of life is to make men; the meaning of all events is to mould character. Anything that makes me stronger is a blessing, anything that develops my *morale* is the highest good that can come to me. And so be thankful if, when the boat is crossing the mouth of some glen that opens upon the lake, a sudden gust smites the sheets and sends you to the helm, and takes all your effort to keep you from sinking. Do not murmur, or think that God's Providence is strange, because many and many a time when "it is dark, and Jesus is not yet come to us," the storm of wind comes down upon the lake and threatens to drive us from our course. Let us rather recognize Him as the Lord who, in love and kindness, sends all the different kinds of weather which according to the old proverb, makes up the full summed year. The solitary crew were not so solitary as they thought. That little dancing speck on the waters which held so much blind love, and so much fear and trouble, was in His sight, as on the calm mountain-top He communed with God. No wonder that weary hearts and lonely ones, groping amidst the darkness, and fighting with the tempests and the sorrows of life, have ever found in our story a symbol that comes to them with a prophecy of hope and an assurance of help, and have rejoiced to know that they on the sea are beheld of the Christ in the sky, and that "the darkness hideth not from" His loving eye. II. THE APPROACHING CHRIST. If we look for a moment at the miraculous fact, apart from the symbolism, we have a revelation here of Christ as the Lord of the material universe, a kingdom wider in its range and profounder in its authority than that which that shouting crowd had sought to force upon Him. His will consolidates the yielding wave, or sustains His material body on the tossing surges. Two lessons may be drawn from this. One is that in His marvellous providence Christ uses all the tumults and unrest, the opposition and tempests which surround the ship that bears His followers as the means of achieving His purposes. We stand before a mystery to which we have no key when we think of these two certain facts; first, the Omnipotent redeeming will of God in Christ; and, second, the human antagonism which is able to rear itself against that. And we stand in the presence of another mystery, most blessed, and yet which we cannot unthread, when we think, as we most assuredly may, that in some mysterious fashion, He works His purposes by the very antagonism to His purposes, making even head-winds fill the sails, and planting His foot on the white crests of the angry and changeful billows. How often in the world's history has this scene repeated itself, and by a Divine irony the enemies become the helpers of Christ's cause, and what they plotted for destruction turned out rather to the furtherance of the gospel. Another lesson for our individual lives is this, that Christ, in His sweetness and His gentle sustaining help, comes near to us all across the sea of sorrow and trouble. A sweeter, a more gracious sense of His nearness to us, is ever granted to us in the time of our darkness and our grief than is possible to us in the sunny hours of joy. It is always the stormy sea that Christ comes across, to draw near to us; and they who have never experienced the tempest have yet to learn the inmost sweetness of His presence. Sorrow brings Him near to us. Do you see that sorrow does not drive you away from Him. III. THE TERROR AND THE RECOGNITION. I do not dwell upon the fact that the average man, if he fancies that anything from out of the Unseen is near him, shrinks in fear. I do not ask you whether that is not a sign, and indication of the deep conviction that lies in men's souls, of a discord between themselves and the unseen world; but I ask you if we do not often mistake the coming Master, and tremble before Him when we ought to be glad? Let no absorption in cares and duties, let no unchildlike murmurings, let no selfish abandonment to sorrow, blind you to the Lord that always comes near troubled hearts, if they will only look and see. Let no reluctance to entertain religious ideas, no fear of contact with the Unseen, no shrinking from

tho thought of Christ as a Kill-joy keep you from seeing Him as He draws near to you in your troubles. And let no sly, mocking Mephistopheles of doubt, nor any poisonous air, blowing off the foul and stagnant marshes of present materialism, make you fancy that the living Reality, treading on the flood there, is a dream or a fancy or the projection of your own imagination on to the void of space. He is real, whatever may be phenomenal and surface. The storm is not so real as the Christ, the waves not so substantial as He who stands upon them. They will pass and melt, He will abide for ever. Lift up your hearts, and be glad, because the Lord comes to you across the waters. And hearken to His voice: "It is I! Be not afraid." The encouragement not to fear follows the proclamation, "It is I!" What a thrill of glad confidence must have poured itself into their hearts, when once they rose to the height of that wondrous fact! There is no fear in the consciousness of His presence. It is His old word, "Be not afraid." And He breathes it whithersoever He comes; for His coming is the banishment of danger and the exorcism of dread. IV. THE END OF THE TEMPEST AND OF THE VOYAGE. It is not always true, it is very seldom true, that when Christ comes on board opposition ends, and the purpose is achieved. But it is always true that when Christ comes on board a new spirit comes into the men who have Him for their companion, and are conscious that they have. It makes their work easy, and makes them "more than conquerors" over what yet remains. With what a different spirit the weary men would bend their backs to the oars once more when they had the Master on board, and with what a different spirit you and I will set ourselves to our work if we are sure of His presence. The worst of trouble is gone when Christ shares it with us. Friends! Life is a voyage, anyhow, with plenty of storm, and danger, and difficulty, and weariness, and exposure, and anxiety, and dread, and sorrow, for every soul of man. But if you will take Christ on board it will be a very different thing from what it will be if you cross the wan waters alone. Without Him you will make shipwreck of yourselves; with Him your voyage may be as perilous and lonely as that of that poor Shetland woman in the *Columbine* a month ago, but He will take care of you, and you will be guided on shore, on the one little bit of beach where all the rest is iron-bound rocks, on which whoever smites will be shattered to pieces. "Then are they glad . . . where they would be." (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*)

Vers. 22–40. **The day following.**—*Jesus the Bread of Life*:—I. OUR LORD'S AVOWAL OF HIS DIVINE NATURE AND HIS HEAVENLY ERRAND. More than thirty times in this one discourse does He use the personal pronouns "Me" and "I," in such connections as that it would be blasphemy if He were anything less than really God. The Jews saw this (vers. 41, 42), the disciples also (ver. 66). II. THE SPECIAL DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL WHICH ALWAYS SEARCHES THE HEARTS OF MEN. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is what universally tests pride the most severely. In this discourse our Lord intentionally sifts His hearers. He avows with startling suddenness the most extreme views of human helplessness without vicarious redemption. Then He puts the plaintive question, "Will ye also go away?" III. THE PARAMOUNT NECESSITY OF AN ATONEMENT FOR HUMAN SINS. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." So striking are these utterances of Christ, that there can be no mistaking them. They cannot possibly be discharged of their meaning by any notion of mere pattern-setting on His part. Bread is not example, and blood is not conduct, and eating is not imitation. IV. LET US BE SATISFIED WITH THE EXPLANATION FURNISHED US HERE OF THAT SENSE OF CRAVING AND RESTLESSNESS WHICH MANY FEEL UNDER THE APPEALS OF THE GOSPEL. The soul hungers after Christ. The sound of feeding awakes deeper pangs. Every living thing must eat or die. (*C. S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Jesus the Bread of Life*:—I. THE SELFISHNESS OF MEN REGARDING JESUS CHRIST (vers. 22–24). The people before us, having "come to Capernaum seeking Jesus," desired Him only for a temporal benefit. This is like many in our day. They go to church, pretend to be religious, make a show of piety, because it is fashionable, profitable for trade, or a convenient method of getting "bread" without toil. The pious fraud is a more dangerous enemy to Christianity than outspoken infidelity. II. MEN'S SELFISHNESS IN RELIGION REBUKED (vers. 25–27). 1. By having the shallowness of their pretensions exposed (ver. 26). How keen-cutting these words are! And so it is everywhere in the Bible—hypocrisy is condemned with severity. Any one who would speak for Jesus must not be afraid to rebuke the pretender. 2. Presentation of the true motive (ver. 27). We must be sincere in seeking Christ as the Saviour of the soul—*i.e.*, "everlasting life" must be with us a deeper considera-

tion than the life of the body. To give this eternal life, or righteousness, unto the world was the purpose of Jesus' coming here: "For Him hath God the Father sealed"—*i.e.*, set apart and given authority to perform the high office of imparting to all believers the Bread of Life. To secure this, salvation must be our only motive. III. BELIEF IN CHRIST MAN'S SUPREME WORK (vers. 28, 29). It is in the human heart to think of salvation as a matter of "works" (ver. 28). The Scriptures everywhere declare that to be saved—*i.e.*, "to work the works of God," we must believe on the Son of God (ver. 29). Man's good works exclude this belief. But true belief or faith, includes good works (Eph. ii., 8–10; Jas. ii. 26). Both Jesus and Paul declare that faith saves the soul. James explains the kind of faith that saves. IV. MAN'S UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT JESUS (vers. 30, 31). From the miracle of the loaves, the multitude would gladly have received Him as a king; but, being informed that they must believe on Him as a Saviour, they demanded more evidence (vers. 30, 31), intimating that Moses, in giving the manna for long years, was greater than Jesus, who only furnished one meal. So men are always willing to exalt Christ as a great personage, but are reluctant to receive Him as their Redeemer. Yet He must be this or nothing. V. JESUS URGES THIS HIGH CLAIM (vers. 32, 33). He admits of no comparison. Moses did not give the manna (ver. 32); manna did not secure life (ver. 49); Jesus was the Bread from heaven which conferred eternal life (vers. 35, 41, 48, 50, 51). His atonement secured the Holy Spirit, who works regeneration, to experience which is to enter into life. This is what Christ means in verse 51. VI. THE CONDITIONS OF OUR SECURING JESUS AS OUR LIFE (vers. 34–36). 1. The Divine condition. The Holy Spirit must convict, enlighten, draw (vers. 37, 45). 2. The human condition. Man must come of His own free will (vers. 35, 36, 53). VII. JESUS THE EXECUTOR OF THE FATHER'S WILL (vers. 37–40). This will was to secure eternal life to all believers. Those who do not take Jesus as the source of their life perish through unbelief. All who do are kept in perfect safety. This is God's will, and Christ is able to execute it. (*A. H. Moment.*) *Jesus the Bread of Life*:—I. A TRUE MIRACLE MAY FAIL TO PRODUCE ANY RELIGION, in which case it fails of its chief purpose. This one simply stimulated an appetite for loaves and fishes, without stimulating gratitude for those already given. II. THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN GREAT MANIFESTATIONS OF POWER IS TO TURN ATTENTION TO THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST (chap. v. 36). The works of God in creation and government have no greater end than this. We do not please God by admiring His work in nature, in being awed by miracles; but in being led by the gift of daily bread to faith in Him who is the Bread of Life. III. A WONDERFUL PYRAMID OF PROMISES POINTS THE SINNER TO A PERSONAL SAVIOUR (vers. 35, 37). IV. THE PERSONAL FAITH IN CHRIST DETERMINES THE CHARACTER OF OUR PERSONAL RESURRECTION. Four times in this chapter Christ repeats this, or a similar refrain: "I will raise him up at the last day." Whether we share the resurrection of shame and everlasting contempt spoken of by Daniel, or that which causes us to shine as the brightness of the firmament, will depend on our faith in Christ now. (*The Monday Club.*) *The meat that endureth*:—I. CHRIST'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMAN HEART is seen in exposing the false motives of those who followed Him. So now He reads all secret thoughts (1 Sam. xvi. 7). The folly of hypocrisy is as great as its sinfulness. It is not hard to deceive the wisest of men; but it is impossible to deceive Christ (Rev. i. 14; John xxi. 17). II. WHAT CHRIST FORBIDS. Labour for the meat that perisheth. 1. Our Lord did not mean to encourage idleness. Labour was the lot of Adam in his innocence, and of Christ Himself. 2. Our Lord rebuked excessive attention to the body to the neglect of the soul. One thing is needful (Matt. vi. 33). III. WHAT CHRIST ADVISES. Labour for this meat that endureth. 1. How are we to labour? In the use of the appointed means. Bible study, prayer, struggling against sin, &c. 2. Labour like this is uncommon. In prosecuting it we shall have little encouragement from men, but much from Christ (Matt. xi. 12). IV. WHAT A PROMISE CHRIST HOLDS OUT (ver. 27). Whatever we need, Christ is willing to bestow. He has been sent for the very purpose. (*Bishop Ryle.*) **Tiberias.**—A city of Galilee, in the most beautiful part of it, on the western shore of the lake. It was named by Herod Antipas, in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. It was the capital of the province, from its origin until the reign of Herod Agrippa II. Many of its inhabitants were Greeks and Romans, and hence foreign customs prevailed. Our Lord, who spent much of His time in Galilee, appears never to have visited this city—probably because Herod, the murderer of John the Baptist, chiefly resided in it. After the dissolution of the State, it was for several centuries the seat of a renowned Jewish school, and one of the four sacred cities,

Here the *Mishna* was compiled (A.D. 190) by the Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh, and the *Masorah* originated in a great measure at Tiberias. Coins of the city are still extant of the times of Tiberius, Trajan, and Hadrian. The ancient name has survived in that of the modern Tubarieh, which occupies the original site. Near it are the warm baths, which the Roman writers reckoned among the greatest curiosities in the world. The population at present is between 3,000 and 4,000, and the town is the most mean and miserable in all Palestine—a picture of disgusting filth and frightful wretchedness. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*)

Vers. 24, 25. **When the people saw that Jesus was not there . . . they took shipping, and came to Capurnaum.**—*Abuse of the miracle of the loaves and fishes:*—I. A COMMENDABLE PURSUIT (ver. 24). 1. Where they sought Him. At Capernaum. Probably His abode. He has His house on earth still, and should be sought in His own ordinances. 2. How they sought Him. They lost no time and spared no trouble. 3. Why they sought Him. (1) Not because they were anxious for instruction. (2) Nor because, conscious of their spiritual necessities, they longed for the bread of life. II. A REPREHENSIBLE MOTIVE (vers. 25, 26). Not that self-regard is always improper, but here it was unjustifiable. Three things are shown here. 1. Our Lord's knowledge. 2. His faithfulness. 3. His requirement: sincerity of purpose. III. AN IMPORTANT EXHORTATION. 1. What it forbids. 2. What it enjoins. These words contain—(1) A striking contrast. (2) An encouraging assurance. (3) A decisive pledge. (*Miracles of the Lord Jesus.*) *Seeking for Jesus:*—I. THE CHARACTER OF THE STATE DESCRIBED. 1. It has a large amount of hopefulness in it. (1) Indifference is gone. (2) Some kind of faith is implied. (3) The face is turned in the right direction. 2. There is much that is doubtful, The seeker disobeys the great command of the gospel, which is to believe, for Christ is not far from any one of us. II. THE PERPLEXITIES OF THIS STATE. First seekers are very often perplexed. 1. As the result of their ignorance of the way of salvation, which is to take God at His word, and to believe that Jesus is what He is—the Atonement for sin. 2. To increase their perplexity, they are often distracted with fear. Persons in a panic act generally in the worst manner for their own safety. So the sinner, conscious of guilt and God's anger, scarce knows where to flee. 3. The mind is usually harassed with a thousand questions—about doctrine, about Satan's suggestions. 4. It is also much grieved to find that it cannot even now cease from sin, as though this could be before pardon. III. THE DANGERS OF THIS STATE. 1. Present peace and comfort is lost. 2. There is the peril of despair. 3. Seeking may die out in indifference. 4. Something short of Christ may be taken up. IV. DIRECTIONS FOR SEEKERS. 1. Give attention to the object of faith. Christ as presented in the gospel. 2. Clear away everything that would hinder your believing. (1) Cherished sin. (2) Evil company. 3. Remember that, till you have believed, your danger is of the most imminent kind. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Seeking for Jesus:*—Hear, dear friend, your true position. It is the case of a soldier on the battle-field, wounded, bleeding, life oozing away from him. He is perishing; but he is sufficiently sensible to know it and to call for help. The surgeon is on the field within hearing; the sufferer pleads for relief with many cries and entreaties. So far well; but I pray you remember that crying and weeping will not of themselves heal the sick man; the surgeon must actually come and bind up his wounds. So remember that your prayers and seekings of themselves cannot save you. Jesus must come to you, and it is madness for you to refuse Him by your unbelief. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 26, 27. **Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves. Labour not for the meat which perisheth.** *The carnal eye on the work of God:*—How different are things sometimes from what they seem! How pleasant to see a multitude in quest of the Son of God; but our pleasure disappears when we know that their wondering worship was a beggarly pursuit of material food. It was not wrong for the Jews to feel the cravings of nature, or to rejoice in the miraculous supply, if along with that went spiritual desire and gratitude. The conduct of the Jews represents the manner in which men regard the work of God in—I. MATERIAL NATURE. If there is not a perpetual miracle there is a perpetual display of that by and for which miracles have been wrought. The natural is as full of God as the supernatural; and it is an ignorant piety which cannot see God in the ordinary and regular. Nature's greatness is a display of His greatness, and its beauty of His, &c. But men estimate nature as a material machine, just the

place for man, fitted to be his home, workshop, recreation ground. They do not value the work for the sake of the worker. II. THE EVENTS OF PROVIDENCE. The Scripture doctrine is that all things are of God and have a probationary character. Job saw God in the loss as well as the gift of His children and property, and in the calamities which proceeded from the elements as well as in those which proceeded from the wickedness of men. And God's end is not merely to enable us to eat and sleep well, but to exercise us unto Godliness; to make us soft by sorrow for impression, or glad by prosperity for gratitude. But the earthly sense cleaves to us. We call things "providential" when they conduce to prosperity; but who ever does so when he loses an estate or breaks a limb? Yet the evil thing may be better than the good. III. SOCIAL GOOD. There are those who value man only in his lowest capacities and relations, never in his soul. Education is estimated for its influence on labour; morality because it would lighten the rates and give security to life and property; religion because of its relation to economy. They have no sense of the dignity and destiny of our nature; and no appreciation of mental culture and spiritual faith for their own sakes. IV. PERSONAL GODLINESS. Godliness *is* profitable; but the final end of God is not our good but His glory. That man has much to learn whose supreme solicitude is how he may be enriched by the love of God, and not how he may receive its holy impression and fulfil its holy ends. He who is saved must think more of God than of self. But when many receive the truth it is only because unbelief would be ruinous; they obey the law because obedience has its recompenses. The gospel is good news, not only because it blesses us, but because it reveals our Father. (*A. J. Morris.*) *Christ sought from sinister motives:*—Lapidaries tell us of the Chelydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue and lustre no longer than it is enclosed in gold. A fit emblem of the hypocrite, who is only good while he is enclosed in golden prosperity, safety, and felicity. (*T. Brooks.*) *The great want of mankind:*—Here are two objects set before us—the bread that perisheth and the bread that endureth unto everlasting life—material things and spiritual things—things temporal and things eternal. It is characteristic of material things that they perish, or, what is much the same thing, that our connection with them shall very soon cease. To me there is something sad in this. When I stood the other morning on Primrose Hill before breakfast, looking at the great sun, young as ever, looking down with a smile of unutterable kindness—when I looked at the green fields beyond—when I cast a look, a most affectionate look, upon the whole scene, my bosom heaved with a sigh. "Well, I shall not see many more springs. I must look on this for the last time. It must perish from my sight." You say that was weakness. Well, I cannot help it. This is a beautiful world—a world of life and joy and affection, and there is something sad in the thought that one must leave it. And we have not only the certain knowledge of it, but we have the feeling that it will be so. That at once suggests to me a contrast between myself and nature. Nature is young and old at the same time. She appears wrinkled with age every autumn, but blooming with youth every spring. She is dead every winter—alive every summer. But man becomes old, and not young again. Man dies indeed, and the gloomy winter passes over him, and there is no reviving him again in this state. The things that perish! Don't labour too much for this world. Why, it will make no difference to you forty years to-day what amount of this world you have. But spiritual things endure for ever. The human spirit is immortal—the blessings of religion are eternal. In the New Testament you will find that the word "eternal," or something equal to it, is connected with the blessings of religion. I think, then, that the lesson taught by the text is THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION. Now, where shall I go for my illustration? What shall I bring in proof of this? In the first place, I could prove and illustrate this subject from a man's own nature. Secondly, I could do so from the design of God's providence. Thirdly, I could prove it from God's Holy Word. Fourthly, from the testimony of the best and wisest and holiest men that ever lived; and in the last place, and above all, I could prove the unutterable importance of your becoming holy and good—or, in other words, the supreme importance of religion—from yonder cross—the life and death of the Son of God. Religion, goodness, purity, holiness, is the great want of man. Every echoing rock sends back the sound—the great want is religion. 1. Let us begin then with man as an individual. Stand in the right place to look at man. Don't look at him from the exchange, or market, but place man in the right light. Let the light of eternity fall upon him. Place the picture in the right light. What is man? A moral responsible being, all whose movements are watched. This is man, in himself, a sinful, fallen being,

as he knows and feels. Then there is another feature in the picture. An immortal being is man, a person bound for an endless voyage, a pilgrim on an endless journey. Well, now, I ask you what is the great want of such a being? Riches? No. Earthly enjoyments? No. Human fame and greatness and glory? No. What is his great want? Goodness, religion. What ought he to care for fame? What ought he to care for the glory and grandeur of the world? What ought he to care for the enjoyments of sense—for the heaping up of gold, so much thought of? It is religion he wants. As an intelligent, a moral, a sinful and an immortal being, it is religion he wants, and it is religion he must have, or he will be wretched in the most splendid palace, and have an aching head on the easiest pillow. But has he religion—real religion? he shall be content in the midst of poverty—he shall have peace in the midst of the storm. Gas-light is very useful in its way, but it is a poor apology for the sun. It gives light in the midst of the street, but turn the corner and you are in deep shadows directly. It goeth not down to the deep cellar. But let the sun be up and you will find light in your house. It passes through the windows, and by its rays fills the whole house with light and cheerfulness. The things that perish we are thankful for. We bless God for our health and the comforts we possess, and we use them, I hope, thankfully and prayerfully, but they are only as the star-light. Religion is to our spirits what the sun is in a temporal sense. It filleth the whole nature of man. It brings the highest subjects for the contemplation of his intellect. It opens the sublimest regions for his imagination. It meets the son of sin with a free pardon in its right hand, and as the sense of death which I have described comes over him, it points him to an eternal home and says, My child, labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. Religion alone can meet the wants of his nature. 2. And now to pass from the individual to the family, what is the great want there? What will make a family happy? A large estate? No, no. Fine apparel? Not exactly. Splendid paintings? Not altogether. Musical instruments? These things have an elevating influence, and I would not despise them. I remember what an artist friend told me some time ago. I was looking at his engravings—taken from some of the masterpieces of Italy—and I said, "Well, these are very good"; for though I was not examining them with an artist's eye, I liked them, and I knew what had influence over me. "Ah," he said, "they are companions." And so they are—refining, elevating companions; but do you know there is something more important than them—more important to a family than the fine arts, than music, paintings, costly furniture, vast estates, noble mansions? What is it? It is that the hearts of the family be good; that religion be enthroned there. Why, let religion be in your family, and you have a fountain of happiness. This would unite us all. This would create a paradise in families where there is now discord. Oh, fathers—oh, mothers—oh, children—possess religion, that you may meet again in the land of life and light, to be eternally with the Lord and with each other. 3. We have passed from the individual to the family, and now let us enter the Church. I would say, then, to you as a Church and congregation, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Labour for those mental states, those spiritual emotions, those principles of eternal life which will make the worship of God interesting and delightful to you. Let me add another thought, ere I pass on. Grant that the preacher is uninteresting—that he is cold or dull; grant that his emotions are less earnest than your own; but allow me to ask you what business have you to come to a chapel or a church to be merely passive at the hands of the preacher? Why, you are not mere harps to be played upon by the fingers of the preacher—not mere dead bodies to be galvanized into artificial life—not machines to be set in motion by the word of a man. You are thinking, living, immortal spirits. You must awaken cheerfulness within you by having religion, and then you will have no more dulness in your religious services. You have observed, perhaps, that when there has been long dry weather, clouds may float about in the sky, but will not send down a drop of water upon the parched earth. What is the reason? There is no attractive power in the earth to draw down the clouds towards it. Like draws to like. A wet earth would draw down wet clouds. A true illustration this of power in the pulpit. A congregation spiritually lifeless derives no benefit from the sermon. The feelings of the preacher are sent back to him. The cloud pours forth no rain. But let the earth be moist—let the church be in a healthy spiritual state—and the cloud will burst over it, and the Church will be baptized with the unction of the Holy One. Therefore do I say, as well to the Church as to the

family or to the individual, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." 4. And, brethen, let us pass from the individual, and the family, and the Church, to the great world. Let me, however, name two or three classes. (1) There, for instance, is that mighty class called "the people." Religion, and nothing but religion, can make the English working man what he ought to be. Why, look at your burning, parched, thirsty desert. No trees, grass, corn, flowers, grow in that place, and why? What is wanted to make it fertile? The husbandman may go there with his ploughs and harrows; he may sow the seed; but there is one great want, before which the other wants need not be mentioned. What is that want? A noble rolling river to pass through it—that is what it wants. Then would trees flourish in it, and flowers bloom, and the corn wave in the August sun. And what do English people want? Education? Yes. A better material condition? No doubt they do. Better houses to live in than some of them possess? Undoubtedly. But there is one want greater than all others, and I tell you English people will not get the houses they ought to have, or the material comforts they ought to enjoy, without it. They are always looking out for good to come to them from above—from Parliament, from orators, from the franchise; but I say to English people, "Look within." What, you don't mean to tell us that we shall never be much better off till we have better characters? I do. If you look at the history of the world you will find reason for believing that your condition will improve as you become nobler, holier, purer, more heaven-like. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life." (2) Look at the neglected ones in England. There are thousands in London who have never found their place in life—well-educated and well-disposed, but disappointed men, going up and down in the world trying to find their places, but unable to do so. Yes, I have known servants to ride on horses, and I have seen princes as servants walk. I have seen fools in high places, and scholars, gentlemen, and able men concealed in corners. I have seen weeds—worthless, ugly weeds—spread their large open leaves, and hiding beneath them the blushing rose and the delicate lily; and I have always felt disposed to brush the uncomely thing away. What do they want? They want religion; that which would cause them to trust God, to leave the world that neglects them, and patiently to do the little thing that is at hand, seeing that they cannot reach the great thing that is in the distance. Religion, the great power of religion, to keep them in the quiet path of duty. (3) I intended speaking also a word to my young friends, but I have no time left. The young man who is just commencing life's pilgrimage looks forward to success in business. God bless you, my youthful hearers, and help you to realize this; but there is one thing you want more than all. What is it? Faith in the great Redeemer, religion, goodness—that is what you want. (4) And then there is the ruined class. Character is gone, prospects are gone, health is gone, and there is nothing left but remorse. What can be done for these? Oh the beautiful vision of love—Jesus saying, "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" (*T. Jones.*) *The sermon on the loaves:*—I. A SOLEMN REPROOF (ver. 26). 1. To whom addressed? To the witnesses of the miracle. Excitement is not religion, and those who to-day cry Hallelujah! may to-morrow cry Crucify! 2. By whom spoken? By one who could search the heart, and whose mercy on the previous day gave Him a right to speak. 3. For what given. Not for seeking Him, but for seeking Him with a bad motive which was—(1) Sensational—they saw the phenomenon but were blind to its significance. (2) Sensual—they followed as the ox follows the farmer for a bunch of hay. II. AN EARNEST EXHORTATION (ver. 27). 1. Labour discommended. (1) The import: not to discourage the toil for daily bread (Gen. iii. 19; 2 Thess. iii. 10), but to condemn the spirit that attached supreme importance to earthly things (Matt. vi. 25). (2) The reason. These commodities were perishing (Col. ii. 22), and contributed at best to the support of the decaying (1 John ii. 16, 17; 2 Pet. iii. 11). 2. A labour enjoined. (1) The perfect legitimacy of human effort (Gen. ii. 15; Luke xiii. 24; xvi. 16; John ix. 4). (2) The proper object of human effort: that which is spiritual, vivifying, permanent (Matt. vi. 20). (3) The absolute necessity of human effort (Matt. vii. 15; Luke xiii. 24; Phil. ii. 12; iii. 14; Heb. iv. 11; xi. 6). III. A CLEAR DIRECTION (vers. 27–29). 1. Whence the abiding meat must be sought. (1) The accessibility of the source "Son of Man;" (2) The sufficiency of the supply; (3) The authority of the giver. 2. How the abiding meat may be got. (1) As a gift (Rom. iv. 4–6; xi. 6; Gal. ii. 16; Eph. ii. 8, 9). (2) Through the medium of faith merit is excluded (Job ix. 2, 3; Isa. lvii. 12; Rom. iii.

20; Gal. iii. 11). (3) Approved by works (Rom. ii. 13; iii. 31; vi. 16; Eph. ii. 10; Titus ii. 14; James ii. 20-26). Lessons: 1. Christ's power of reading the heart of man. 2. The supreme importance of motive in religion. 3. The transcendent value of the salvation of the soul. 4. Christ's clear conviction that faith in Himself would lead to eternal life. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Perishable and unperishable food:*—I. DECAYING FOOD loses not only—1. Its efficiency; but—2. Its healthful nature, and 3. Its very nature itself. II. THE FOOD WHICH ENDURETH has—1. Eternal efficiency. 2. Eternal freshness. 3. Eternal durability. (*Lange.*) *The preference of spiritual food to natural:*—I. THE PROHIBITION. "Labour not," &c. 1. What is understood by meat. (1) All temporal enjoyments as carnal pleasures, popular applause. Earthly riches. (2) Called here meat because it was the meat the Jews then sought for (ver. 26); because all things of this world amount really to nothing else, and to persuade them, by this notion of earthly things, not to labour so much for them (Eccles. v. 11). 2. Why called the meat which perisheth. Because—(1) We can enjoy it but awhile. (2) It perisheth while we use it (Matt. xv. 17). (3) It serves but a perishing life (1 Cor. vi. 13). 3. In what sense must we not labour for this meat? (1) Negatively. Not but that we ought to take a moderate care about earthly things; because—(*a*) It is commanded (Gen. iii. 19); (*b*) Otherwise we should be worse than infidels (1 Tim. v. 8); (*c*) We have bodies to look after; (*d*) We should not presume upon providence; (*e*) We are to endeavour to help others (1 Cor. xvi. 2). (2) Positively. (*a*) We must not labour for much of the world (Jer. xlv. 5; Isa. v. 8). (*b*) Not by unlawful means (Lev. xix. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 6). (*c*) Not with carking care and mistrust of God's providence (Psa. xxxvii. 5, 6; Matt. vi. 25). (*d*) Not for earthly things, only for themselves, but for the glory of God (Prov. iii. 9). (*e*) Not for them more than for the heavenly (Matt. v. 33). (*f*) Not so as to set our affections on them (Col. iii. 2). 4. Why are we not thus to labour for these things. Because—(1) They perish. (2) We may be deprived of them if we do (Prov. x. 22), or God may curse them to us (Mal. ii. 2). (3) God will give them without this sinful labouring (Matt. vi. 33). (4) By so doing we lose better. 5. The use. Consider: (1) How uncertain they are (1 Tim. vi. 17); in getting them (Matt. vi. 27); keeping them (Prov. xxiii. 5); enjoying them (Psa. lxxviii. 30, 31; cvi. 15); in improving them; in continuing with them (Luke xii. 20). (2) How unsatisfying: as to the senses (Eccl. i. 8. iv. 8); much more to the soul (Eccl. v. 10). (3) How dangerous. They are apt to draw us into sin (1 Tim. vi. 9), and off from duty (Prov. xxx. 9); to divert our care for our souls (Luke xxi. 34); to keep us from heaven (Psa. xvii. 14), and to throw us into hell (Matt. xix. 23-26). II. THE COMMAND. 1. What is meant by meat? Christ Himself (ver. 35); His doctrine and religion (ver. 63), which He commands to be laboured after. (1) Because they were now seeking food. (2) To show the need of Him for spiritual life (vers. 53-55); to begin it (1 Tim. v. 6; 1 John v. 11, 12); to preserve it (John xv. 4, 5); to make it comfortable. (3) To show the union between Christ and His disciples (John xvii. 21-23). 2. Why is it said to endure unto everlasting life? (1) Because it is never diminished though never so many partake of it (Matt. xi. 28). (2) It nourishes our never-dying souls (Matt. xi. 29). (3) It brings to everlasting life. (4) Christ will endure for ever (Heb. vii. 25). (5) It is by Him that we shall endure for ever (John vi. 54-58). 3. Why must we labour for this? It is the only means of our going to heaven (Acts iv. 12). For—(1) It is only through Christ that sins can be pardoned; (2) Our persons accepted (Gal. ii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 21); (3) Our lusts subdued (Act. iii. 26); (4) Our natures sanctified (John i. 16); (5) Our souls saved (Acts. xvi. 31). 4. How must we labour? (1) By believing in Him (Acts xvi. 31; John iii. 16); (2) By conforming our lives to His laws (John i. 12; xiv. 15; James ii. 26; 1 John iii. 3; Gal. v. 6; Rom. xiii. 10). Conclusion: Wherefore labour for this meat, for—1. Other things are impertinent; this necessary (Luke x. 42). 2. Others empty, this satisfying (ver. 35). 3. Others corporeal, this spiritual (ver. 63). 4. Others transcient, this everlasting (ver. 58). 5. Others uncertain, this most certain, for Christ will give it. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Spiritual labour and food:*—I. There is something FORBIDDEN. We are not to labour exclusively, or excessively, for the satisfaction of our bodily wants, for that food which only perishes in the using, and only does us a little temporary good. II. There is something COMMANDED. We ought to work hard and strive for that spiritual food—that supply for the wants of our souls, which once obtained is an everlasting possession. III. There is something PROMISED. The Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, is ready to give to every one who desires to have it, that spiritual food which endures for ever. IV. There is something DECLARED. The Son of Man, Jesus Christ, has been designated and

appointed by God the Father for this very purpose, to be the dispenser of this spiritual food to all who desire it. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The fruitful labour for eternal food* :—I. THE MEAT THAT PERISHETH. 1. What is meant by it? (1) All outward things whatsoever. The covetous soul feeds on his money; the ambitious man, chamelion like, on airy applause; the sensual man, on base pleasures. All carnal men, serpent like, eat dust—perishable things. (2) Knowledge, if it be only of perishable things, perisheth, for the world's frame and politics have an end. (3) The truths of God are indeed the food of the soul, but unless the goodness of those truths be the food of the will and the affections, and unless we are moulded into the form of those truths they too are perishable. 2. The argument against laboring for this. (1) We do not regard the lustre of things, but their continuance. All flesh is grass, and the most excellent things of Nature, wit, honour, and learning, are as the flowers of the grass. (2) In lusting after the world, the lust itself perisheth, and the immoderate seeking after it destroys us. He that is rich to-day may be poor to-morrow; he may be in credit now, with Haman, and be in discredit ere long; he may be in health now, and sick soon. 3. Consequently—(1) We should take heed that we do not redeem any perishing thing with the loss of that which does not perish—our soul. (2) We should not scruple to neglect any earthly thing to gain advantage to our souls. (3) Learn here a point of heavenly wisdom: when we are tempted to too much delight in the creature we should present to ourselves the perishing nature of outward things. II. LABOUR NOT FOR THE MEAT THAT PERISHETH. 1. Does Christ read a lecture of unthriftiness and negligence? No; He meant labour not for it—(1) Inordinately; (2) immoderately; (3) unseasonably. 2. How shall we know when our labour is immoderate, &c.? When they hinder us from or in holy things; when they keep us from holy duties; when they fill us full of distractions. 3. Why does Christ begin with this discussion? (1) Because when the soul is invested with anything that must first be removed, as thorns must be rooted before seed can be sown. (2) But here is the prerogative of Christianity: heathens can teach the negative part, but only Christ the positive. III. THE MEAT THAT ENDURETH, &c. 1. What it is? Our Saviour, as He is contained in the means of salvation with all the blessed privileges, prerogatives, and graces that we have by and in Him. 2. But why is he so considered? (1) Whatever sweetness, comfort, or strength there is in meat, it is for the comfort, &c., of the body: so whatsoever is comfortable and cherishing in Christ it is for our good. How doth the soul feed on the wonderful love of God in Christ incarnate and Christ Crucified, and on the privileges secured by Christ glorified? (2) As in bodily life there is a stomach, a power to work out of the meat that which is for strength and nourishment, so in the soul there is faith to act in the same way with Christ. (3) As our life is nourished and maintained with that which has died, so that which principally maintains the life of the soul is Christ crucified. (4) As in meat, before it can nourish us there must be an assimilation, so Christ can never nourish us till we be united to Him. (5) As we eat again day after day because there is a decay of strength, and as there are new concerns that require new strength, and consequently a need of a continual repairing of our strength by food, even so there is a perpetual need to feed upon Christ, because every day we have fresh work to do. (6) As after eating there is strength and comfort gotten for the affairs of this life, so after the soul has digested Christ it is strengthened for holy duties. 3. Wherein lies the difference between this and other meat? (1) As Christ is from heaven, so all His graces and comforts are to carry us to heaven. All other things are earthly. (2) Earthly food cannot give, but only maintain life; but Christ is such food as gives life. (3) The nourishment we have from outward food we turn to ourselves; but Christ turns us to Himself, and transforms us into His likeness. (4) All other meats are consumed, and the appetite for them eventually perishes; but Christ is never consumed, and the relish for Him will grow eternally. 4. What is wanted is to get a stomach for this meat. (1) A good stomach is produced by sharp things; so faith should be quickened by the law. (2) Exercise getting a stomach by diligence in holy exercises. (3) To whet our appetite, consider the necessity of spiritual strength and comfort. (4) Let us converse with those that are spiritual. (5) Let us remember that the table Christ has spread may be removed. 5. To make a trial whether we have, as we should do, relished Christ. If so, then—(1) We have a baser esteem of all earthly things. (2) We are strengthened to duties and against temptations and corruptions. (3) The desire is satisfied. (4) Thankfulness is engendered. IV. LABOUR FOR THIS MEAT. 1. Its necessity: we are to labour for food, the great need. 2. Its excellency; it endureth to everlasting life. 3. Its possi-

bility: Christ is—(1) Willing; (2) powerful; (3) has authority to give it. "Him hath God the Father sealed." God has become man on purpose to give it you. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *The true aim of life*:—I. IS NOT THE ATTAINMENT OF MATERIAL GOOD. Multitudes live as if it were. Nor is this mistake confined to the prosperous merchant; it is found among the poor. Strenuous efforts are put forth, but only for that which perisheth. II. CONSISTS IN THE ATTAINMENT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IN CHRIST. He is the true food of the soul. Eternal life is the result of receiving Him as the Living Bread. III. TO TEACH THIS WAS THE AIM OF CHRIST'S MISSION. "Sealed." The impress of the Father's will is in His life and words. He was sealed—1. By His miracles. 2. By His teaching. 3. By His resurrection. (*Family Churchman.*) *Going to Christ for our own ends*:—The lesson here set obviously checks any going to or following of Jesus for our own ends. And it has two main applications. 1. The first of these is plainly gross, viz., that we may not make a gain of godliness in the sense of getting direct bodily benefit by religion. A religious man is mostly assumed to be a respectable man, and a respectable man is trusted. So, alas, occasionally some people profess religion in order to get a character for respectability and to bring money into the pocket. 2. But the lesson before us has another application. We cannot be told too clearly or too often that there is another kind of covetousness, or thinking about self, which is not coarse like that which I have just mentioned, and yet leaves us short of the real special gifts which God gives through Jesus Christ. Should we not think less of a child whose only thought in connection with its parents was about what it could get from them? Should we not look upon that child as almost unnatural which was always scheming to make its father and mother show more concern for its condition? Surely we should. And, so in a figure, it is with God. We may be certain that we miss His best blessings when we set about calculating what benefits He will bestow upon us. In short, God would ever have us trust Him more, and leave all the "giving" to Him. (*Harry Jones, M.A.*) *Worldly things are disappointing and perishing*:—The fashion of this world passeth away, as the water of a river that runs by a city, or as a fair picture drawn upon the ice that melts away with it. Men come to the world's felicities as to a lottery, with heads full of hopes, but return with hearts full of blanks. (*J. Trapp.*) *Earthly pursuits end miserably*:—As a river leads a man through sweet meadows, green woods, fertile pastures, fruit-laden fields, by glorious buildings, strong forts, famous cities, yet at last brings him to the salt sea; so the stream of this world carries along through rich commodities, voluptuous delights, stately dignities, all possible content to flesh and blood, but, after all this, brings a man to death, after death to judgment, after judgment to hell. (*T. Adams.*) **Him hath God the Father sealed.**—*Christ sealed*:—I. BECAUSE THERE IS THE IMPRESSION OF GOD UPON HIM. As the seal imprints in the wax the likeness of that which is on it, so God hath imprinted on Christ His own image (chap. i. 14; Heb. i. 1–2). II. THE USE OF A SEAL IS TO APPROPRIATE AND DISTINGUISH FROM OTHER THINGS, so God hath appropriated Christ to be His own Son, and hath distinguished Him as Mediator by a special anointing and qualification above all. III. Especially by SEALING IS MEANT AUTHORITY. As a magistrate that hath the king's broad seal is authorized, so God hath authorized Christ to be a Mediator, as He was foreordained; and so, when the fulness of the time was come, He was authorized by the greatest testimony that ever was—1. By the Blessed Trinity at His baptism (Matt. iii. 37). 2. By His miracles (chap. x. 38). 3. By His resurrection (Rom. i. 4). IV. THE USE of this is—1. To bless God the Father for sealing as well as God the Son for being sealed. 2. To magnify the offices of Christ. 3. To encourage us to seek forgiveness. (*R. Sibbes, D.D.*) *Christ sealed by the Father*:—I. CHRIST WAS SEALED. To seal, when the act of a sovereign, is to impress the characters of his own signet upon any instrument by which his will is declared, and which is then treated as proceeding from him. We behold—1. The impress of Divinity upon His doctrine, in the vastness of the subjects, and the ease with which they are treated, the obscure manner in which the wisest of men have always spoken of them, and the light which brightens around them whenever our great Teacher opens His lips; in that exhibition of the secrets of the heart; in the anxious inquiries so answered as to leave us nothing more to ask; when to these I add the dignity so worthy of Divine majesty, the condescension so accordant with an infinite love, the indignation so expressive of perfect holiness;—I see upon the seal the characters peculiar to God. 2. The seal of miracles. The character of a true miracle is not that is is merely a strange and wonderful occurrence, but that it is above all human power; so extraordinary as to show an interposition of God, giving sanction to the claims of His Son. 3. We

see upon our Lord the broad and striking seal of fulfilled prophecy. 4. The seals at His crucifixion. Even his enemies were compelled to give their testimony to him. Caiaphas, Pilate, the Centurion, the people that "smote upon their breasts." The sun sinking to deep eclipse, the rending of the veil, the earthquake, the rising of the dead. 5. To the great seals of the resurrection and ascension of Christ the gift of the Holy Ghost was the public confirmation of both; and that this is an evidence which remains to this day. II. THE GREAT END FOR WHICH THIS INTERPOSITION OF GOD TOOK PLACE—that we might "labour for that meat which endureth to everlasting life." From the sacrificial death of Christ flows—1. Pardon; and here the true life of the soul begins. 2. The heavenly knowledge, which is the proper food of the renewed mind. A scientific knowledge is the food of souls intelligent, so is heavenly knowledge the food of piety. It leads up all the powers of the mind into right and vigorous exercise. 3. Love. It flows only from this—"Christ loved me." 4. Purity. Sin enfeebles; purity is strength. Conclusion: 1. If Christ is not this life and bread to your souls, how disproportionate are the means employed to save you, and the end which has in reality been accomplished! 2. The aggravated guilt which is incurred by the very signs set before us, unless they accomplish their saving end. 3. For whatever you labour beside the bread of heaven, it is "meat that perisheth." (*R. Watson.*) *The authority by which Christ as a Mediator acted:*—I. THE OFFICE OR WORK TO WHICH HIS FATHER SEALED HIM. In general to the whole work of mediation (1 Pet. iii. 18). God sealed Him—1. A commission to preach the glad tidings of salvation to sinners (Luke iv. 17–21). 2. To the priesthood. He called Him—(1) To offer Himself up a sacrifice for us (chap. x. 18; Phil. ii. 8). (2) To intercede for us (Heb. vii. 21–25). (3) To the regal office (Matt. xxviii. 18). II. THE IMPORT OF THE SEALING. 1. The validity and efficacy of His mediatorial acts. In this lies much of the believer's comfort and security. 2. The great obligation lying on Jesus to be faithful to the work He was sealed to. Christ felt this obligation (John ix. 4; v. 30). 3. His complete qualification to serve the Father's design in our recovery, in the point of—(1) Faithfulness (Heb. iii. 2); (2) Zeal (John ii. 16, 17; iv. 32); (3) Love (Heb. iii. 5, 6); (4) Wisdom (Isa. lii. 13); (5) Self-denial (John viii. 50). 4. Christ's sole authority in the Church to appoint and enjoin what He pleaseth. III. THE MANNER OF THE SEALING. 1. By solemn designation (Isa. xlii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 4; John x. 36). 2. By supereminent and unparalleled sanctification. He was anointed as well as appointed (Isa. lxi. 1, 3; Luke iv. 1; Psa. xlv. 7; John iii. 34; Col. i. 19), the type of which was the Holy oil by which kings and priests were consecrated. 3. By the Father's immediate testimony from heaven (Matt. iii.; xvii. 5). 4. In all those miraculous works wrought by Him (Acts x. 38; John v. 36; Matt. xi. 3, 5). IV. THE NECESSITY OF THE SEALING. 1. Else He had not corresponded with the types which prefigured Him, and in Him it was necessary that they should be all accomplished. Kings and High Priests had their inaugurations by solemn unctions (Heb. v. 4, 5). 2. Hereby the hearts of believers are more engaged to love the Father. Had not the Father sealed Him, He had not come. So men are bound to ascribe equal honour and glory to both (John v. 23). 3. Else we had no ground for our faith in Him (John v. 31). V. THE IMPROVEMENT OF THIS. 1. Hence we infer the unreasonableness of infidelity (John i. ii; v. 43; Isa. liii. 1). 2. How great is the sin of those who reject such as are sealed by Jesus Christ (John xvii. 18; xx. 21; Luke x. 16)! 3. How great an evil it is to intrude into the office of the ministry without a due call! It is more than Christ Himself would do. 4. Admire the grace and love both of the Father and the Son. 5. Hath God sealed Christ for you? Then draw the comfort of His sealing for you, and be restless till ye be sealed by Him. (1) Remember that God stands engaged by His own seal to confirm whatever Christ hath done in the business of our salvation. On this ground you may plead with God. (2) Get your interest in Christ sealed to you by the Spirit (Eph i. 13), the effects of which are great care to avoid sin (Eph. iv. 30); great love to God (John xiv. 22); readiness to suffer for Christ (Rom. v. 3, 5); confidence in addresses to God (1 John v. 13, 14); great humility (Gen. xvii. 1, 3). (*J. Flavel.*) *Christ's example and comfort to His disappointed servants:*—The missionary, Henry Martyn, at Dinapore, used to gather around him every week a crowd of poor Hindoos. They came eagerly, but, alas! Martyn soon perceived that they were more concerned about the loaves which he was in the habit of distributing amongst them than about the Bread of Life in the gospel! He was ready to despair, and had almost resolved to give up his preaching. Then he remembered this 26th verse, and he said to himself, "If the Lord Jesus was not ashamed of preaching to such bread-seekers, who am I, that I should

give them over in disgust?" The next time he preached on verse 27, and had the delight of being asked by two or three Hindoos, "What must we do to be saved?" (*R. Besser, D.D.*) *The bread and the sealing*:—In order to understand the Oriental aspect of this obscure passage, it is necessary to remember several closely related facts. In the East, bakers are under more immediate official investigation than any other tradesmen. Their weights are inspected by an official appointed for the purpose, and the quality of their bread is tested from time to time. In these milder days confiscation is the penalty attached to roguery in the making of bread; but it is not very long since cheating bakers were nailed up by the ear (Turkey), or even by a grim pleasantry, roasted in their own ovens (Persia). Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that Oriental bakers have been in the habit of stamping their name upon their bread, or, as an Oriental would say, of sealing (*khatham, khatama, &c.*) it, as a measure of precaution, lest they should be made to suffer for the sins of their neighbours as well as their own. The talmudic word for "baker" is *nakhtom*, or *nakhtoma*, which has been connected with *khatham*, "to seal," by no less an authority than Professor Franz Delitzsch; so that it would seem that this act of sealing or stamping bread was sufficiently characteristic in the time of our Lord to give a name to the baker. In this view, our Lord's words could be paraphrased as follows: "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life; which the Son of Man shall give unto you, even Himself the Bread of Life—for Him, the heavenly Bread, hath God the Father sealed as His own, even as those who make the bread which perisheth, stamp it with their names." It has also been pointed out that, in the Roman Church, the consecrated wafers, which the priests teach to be the real body of our Lord, are stamped with a seal which usually bears the letters I.N.R.I.,—the initials of the Latin meaning, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Another rabbinical authority calls attention to the talmudical question: "What is the seal of the holy blessed God? Rabbi Bibai in the name of Rabbi Reuben saith 'Truth.' 'But what is truth?' Rabbi Bon said, 'The loving God and King eternal.' . . . There is a story of the great synagogue weeping, praying, and fasting. At last there was a little scroll fell from the firmament to them in which was written 'Truth.' Rabbi Chinanah saith, 'Hence learn that truth is the seal of God.'" (*S. S. Times.*)

Ver. 28, 29. **Then they said unto Him, what shall we do that we might work the works of God.**—*Synagogue questioning*:—I. THE SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE AND UNBELIEF OF THE NATURAL MAN. 1. When our Lord bade His hearers, "Labour for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, they began to think of works to be done." 2. When He spoke of Himself as one sent of God and the need of faith in them, the response was, "What sign showest Thou?" and this directly after the miracle (Mark vi. 6). 3. We should remember all this in our efforts to do good and not be discouraged if our words seem thrown away. II. THE HIGH HONOUR WHICH CHRIST PUTS ON FAITH IN HIMSELF. Faith and works elsewhere seem contrasted, but here Christ declares that believing on Him is the greatest of all works. Not that He meant that there was anything meritorious in believing; but—1. That it is the act of the soul which specially pleases God. Without it it is impossible to please Him. 2. That it is the first act that God requires at a sinner's hands. 3. That there is no life in a man till he believes. III. THE FAR GREATER PRIVILEGES OF CHRIST'S HEARERS THAN OF THOSE WHO LIVED IN THE TIMES OF MOSES. The manna, wonderful as it was, was as nothing compared with the true bread. 1. The one could only feed the body; the other could satisfy the soul. 2. The one was only for the benefit of Israel; the other for the whole world. 3. Those who ate the former died and were buried, and many of them lost for ever; those who ate of the latter would be eternally saved. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *A plain answer to an important inquiry*:—I. FAITH IS THE COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OF ALL TRUE WORK. 1. There lies within it every form of holiness, as a forest may lie within an acorn. It may be microscopic in form, but it only wants development. 2. All the graces come out of faith (see Heb. xi.). II. FAITH IS IN ITSELF MOST PLEASING TO GOD. Because—1. It is the creature acknowledging its God. The man who says my own good deeds will save me sets himself up in independency of God. But when a man submits himself to God's way of salvation, the rebellious heart submits to the Divine authority, and the poor erring creature comes into its right place. 2. It accepts God's way of reconciliation. It thus shows a deference to God's wisdom, and confidence in His love, and yielding to His will. 3. It puts honour on Christ whom the Father dearly loves. That which dishonours Christ must be obnoxious to God. 4. It puts us in

a right relationship with God, *i.e.*—(1) A relationship of dependence; (2) of child-like rest. III. FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST IS THE TEST OF WORKING FOR GOD. 1. Without faith the spirit of work is wrong. Suppose you said to me, "I will spend my life in your service, but I am not going to believe what you say." All that you do must be destitute of real excellent because you begin by making God a liar in not trusting Him (i John v. 10). 2. Without faith the motive of work fails and becomes selfish; whereas faith aims at God's glory. IV. FAITH IS THE SEAL OF ALL OTHER BLESSINGS. 1. Of our election (ver. 37). If you believe in Christ you are one that the Father hath given Him. 2. Of our effectual calling. If you believe the Father hath drawn you to Christ. 3. Of our final perseverance (ver. 47). 4. Of our resurrection (ver. 39, 49). (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The people's question*:—Faith and works are both factors in the work of salvation. Faith is the life root of which works are the fruit. The Jew sought to justify himself by his works, and then inferentially organized his faith to work the works of God, with Him was to drive a bargain with God. "What good thing must I do?" Christ shows that the way to the Father was by no such circuitous route, but by faith in Himself. I. A GRAVE INQUIRY. This is not a Jewish question. It is the question of humanity. 1. Man has never been able to throw off a belief in God nor to escape the apprehensions such a belief creates. Hence, in their unrest and great mental hunger, men still ask this question. 2. You see evidences of this mental disquietude in the breaking away from the restraints of creeds, in retreats from the simplicity of the present into the traditions of the past; in the rush of various systems of mediatorial penance, in the impossibility of successfully impugning the Divine record and in the despair which ensues on its rejection. Philosophy in its wildest departures from God can neither answer this question nor escape the responsibility of discussing it. Men seem to treat it as a scoff, but they are compelled to do homage to its impressiveness in the vague worship of the unknown. II. CHRIST'S ANSWER. 1. The work of God is not the alone work of God's appointing. It is God and man mutually working. A fractured relation of the soul and God necessitates for its readjustment the correlation of two forces. (1) In this work a factor is demanded that we cannot supply. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." That which our working secures is just the willingness to receive what God alone can give. (2) The want that goes in quest of God is not God's work but ours. On the other hand, to pacify the disquieted heart by renewing it is not man's work, but God's. Our first lesson, therefore, touches the pride of our self-sufficiency. We are powerless with all our power when power is needed most. (3) Then there are things which we must cease to do. We must "cease to do evil," get clean away from all dependence on our own works. 2. The work of man. (1) To believe in Christ's mission. Christ claims to have been sent into the world by the Father to perform a specific work. Miracles were His credentials. His own profound self-consciousness of His mission explains and necessitates this supernatural signature. Now, if Jesus believed Himself to be the "Sent" and the "Son of God," and was not, He was deceived and a deceiver; but if He was, we cannot put ourselves into harmony with God otherwise than as we accept this mission. (2) Accepting the mission. What does a man do when he believes in the Person of Christ? What does a blind man do when he commits himself to a guide? He puts himself out on trust. A drowning man, when he clings to his plank, lives suspensively on that to which he clings. A penitent sinner, when he believes in Christ, does both. And this is the work of God for all men. (*John Burton.*) *The work of God*:—There was nothing peculiar about this question. All men are asking it, some listlessly, some with agonizing importunity. There is much implied in it; amongst other things that there is some alienation between God and man which must be removed. Unfallen angels do not ask it. I. MAN'S WAY OF ANSWERING THE QUESTION. 1. One man imagines that the works of God are to be performed by the members of the body, by prayers, genuflexions, &c. The result is that the man blinded goes down to death, or he is forced by experience to own that he has not found what he sought and to turn away from externals, still saying, "What shall I do?" &c. 2. The next stage he reaches is that of substituting moral for ceremonial acts. Hence the constant disposition to make social charities the test of character, and to establish an order of irreligious saints. In this delusion thousands live and die. But to others, goaded by conscience, this is not enough. "We have tried to do right, but we find our good works imperfect and marred by the sins that have run side by side with them. What shall we do?" &c. 3. The man has now been brought to the necessity of expiation. He must make good his past failures

by working the works of God. But where shall he begin? Perhaps by refraining from sin. This unexpected difficulty drives him to repentance. He will weep over his offences. But he finds that he can no more break his heart than change his life. The sinner, abandoning the impossible effort, asks in despair, "What shall I do?" 4. This is the highest ground man ever reached by himself. If he goes beyond he goes down. (1) Some accordingly descend to the lower ground of meritorious abstinence and self-mortification. Because they have not been able to appease God by renouncing sinful pleasures, they will now do it by renouncing innocent enjoyments. (2) A descent in another direction leads to a desperate transfer of responsibility. As the sinner cannot work the works of God himself, the Church or a priest shall do it for him. II. CHRIST'S WAY. The whole point here is the contrast between believing and working. They would not have been surprised had He enjoined some task. To a self-righteous spirit, difficulty, danger, pain are inducements rather than dissuasives; but a requisition to believe on Him was something different, comprehending as it did a belief of His Divine legation and authority, of His ability and willingness to save, and a full consent to be saved by Him. 1. It was this simple and implicit trust that created the difficulty, and the same feeling of incongruity is experienced now. "After spending a lifetime in working out my own salvation, must I be told at last that I have only to believe?" 2. Let this reluctance subside, and men will ask in what sense faith is the work of God. (1) Some have taught that the act of believing is meritorious, and is accepted in lieu of all the rest. But how can this be reconciled with God's justice? (2) Men have run to the opposite extreme, and held that faith dispenses with all moral obligation, which is at variance with the constant requisition of obedience. 3. The true meaning of the words may be summed up in two particulars. (1) Our access to God and restoration to His favour are entirely independent of all merit or obedience on our part. The saving benefit of the atonement is freely offered to us. Unreserved acceptance of it must, of course, exclude all reliance on any merit of our own. This is all we have to do to begin with. (2) We are saved, not in sin, but from sin, and when belief in Christ is represented as the saving work which God requires, it is not to the exclusion of good works, but rather the source from which they flow. (*J. Addison Alexander, D.D.*) *Faith and its operations*:—I. FAITH IS HERE CONSIDERED AS THE WORK WHICH GOD ENJOINS IN EVERY INDIVIDUAL. Why is it that men do not believe the testimony which God has so clearly made? 1. A wilful turning aside from God and a determination to take up with the nearest trifle is one reason. 2. The deceitfulness of the human heart is another. Sin possesses in a most astonishing degree the faculty of hiding its own deformity. 3. The reasons of this disobedience vary in different men according to their different characters and circumstances. 4. What does the Holy Spirit do when He introduces the principle of faith into the heart of man? (1) He removes every obstacle which we cherished in our natural state. (2) He fixes in us principles of obedience, and makes duty a delight. 5. What is this faith? A continual reliance on Christ as a Saviour. 6. What does this faith do? It delivers the believer from the charge and dominion of sin and purifies the heart. II. GOD'S SENDING HIS SON INTO THE WORLD. 1. This was an act of sovereignty. 2. Christ was sent as the medium of God's moral government and as the channel of salvation. 3. What a view this gives us of the mercy and love of God! 4. How this heightens the guilt of the rejection of Christ! III. THIS OBEDIENCE OF FAITH IS THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE DESIGN OF GOD AND THE COMPLETION OF THE SAVIOUR'S TRIUMPH. (*W. Howels, M.A.*) *Faith the sole saving act*:—1. The Jews inquired as though there were several works of God. Christ narrows down the terms of salvation to a single one. 2. In this as in many incidental ways our Lord teaches His Divinity. Imagine Paul or David resting the destiny of the soul on faith in himself. 3. The belief is natural to man that something must be done in order to salvation. The most supine expect to have to rouse themselves some day. Let us examine—I. THE COMMON NOTION UNDERLYING THE QUESTION. When a man begins to think of God and his relations to Him, he finds he owes Him service and obedience. His first spontaneous impulse, therefore, is to begin the performance of the work he has hitherto neglected. The law expressly affirms that the man who doeth these things shall live by them. He proposes to take the law just as it stands and to live by service. II. THE GROUND AND REASON OF CHRIST'S ANSWER. 1. Because it is too late in any case to adopt the method of salvation by works. The law demands and supposes that obedience begins at the

very beginning of existence, and continues down uninterruptedly to the end of it (Gal v. 3). If any man can show a clean record, the law gives him the reward he has earned (Rom. iv. 4, xi. 6). But no man can do this (Psa. lviii. 3; Eph. ii. 3). 2. This is the conclusive ground for Christ's declaration that the one great work which every fallen man must perform in order to salvation is faith in another work. III. THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION BY FAITH. 1. Faith is a work, a mental act of the most comprehensive and energetic species. It carries the whole man in it, heart, head, will, body, soul, spirit. 2. Yet it is not a work in the common signification, and is by Paul opposed to works, and excluded from them. It is wholly occupied with another's work. The believer deserts all his own doings, and betakes himself to what a third person has done for him, and instead of holding up prayers, almsgiving, penances, or moral efforts, he holds up the sacrificial work of Christ. 3. St. John repeats this doctrine in his first epistle (1 John iii. 22, 33). The whole duty of sinful man is here summed up and concentrated in the duty to trust in another person than himself and in another work than his own. In the matter of salvation, when there is faith in Christ there is everything; and where there is not faith in Christ there is nothing. Conclusion: 1. Faith in Christ is the appointment of God as the sole means of salvation (Acts iv. 12). 2. There are enjoyments in the human conscience that can be supplied by no other method. (1) The soul wants peace. Christ's atonement satisfies the demands of a broken law. (2) The soul wants purity. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. (*Prof. Shedd.*) *Faith and works*:—All upon which the name of Paulinism has been bestowed is contained in embryo in this verse, which at the same time forms the point of union between Paul and James. Faith is the highest kind of work, for by it man gives himself; and a free being can do nothing greater than to give himself. It is in this sense that James opposes works to a faith which is nothing more than intellectual belief; and it is in a perfectly analogous sense that Paul opposes faith, active faith, to works of mere observance. The faith of Paul is really the works of James, according to the sovereign formula of Jesus: "This is the work of God that you believe." (*F. Godet, D.D.*) *The value of faith*:—Faith will be of more use to us than any other grace, as an eye, though dim, was of more use to an Israelite (bitten by a serpent) than all the other members of his body. It is not knowledge, though angelical, nor repentance, though we could shed rivers of tears, could justify us; but only faith, whereby we look on Christ. (*T. Watson.*) *Works are useless for our salvation*:—Coin that is current in one place is valueless in another. Suppose an Indian, far in the western wilds, were to say, "I will become a trader with the whites. I will go to New York city and buy up half the goods there, and then come back and sell them, and then what a rich Indian I shall be." He then collects all his wampum beads, which are his money, and compared with other Indians he is very rich, and away he journeys to yonder city. Imagine him going into Stewart's, and offering his wampum there in exchange for their goods. They are refused. They were money in the woods—in the city they are worthless. And there are thousands of men who are carrying with them, to offer at the judgment, what is no better than the Indian's beads. They are reckoning on their generosity, their prompt payment of all their debts, their various good natural qualities; but when they present them, they will all be found worthless trash. The things that have made them strong, and valued, and important here, will there be worse than useless to them. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *Faith is trust in another*:—The daughter of a celebrated physician was once attacked by a violent and dangerous fever; but she exhibited great resignation and tranquillity. She said she was ignorant of what might effect her cure, and if it were left to herself to prescribe, she might desire remedies which would be prejudicial. Shall I not gain everything, she added, by abandoning myself entirely to my father? He desires my recovery; he knows much better than I do what is adapted to the restoration of my health; and having confidence, therefore, that everything will be done for me which can be done, I remain without solicitude either as to the means or as to the result. Religious faith, in like manner, trusts itself in the hands of God, in the full confidence that it will be well in the end. (*J. Upham.*) *The preciousness of faith*:—Faith is the vital artery of the soul. When we begin to believe we begin to love. Faith grafts the soul into Christ as the scion into the stock, and fetches all its nutriment from the blessed vine. (*T. Watson.*) *Faith and works*:—That is a very instructive anecdote which St. Simon relates respecting the last hours of the profligate Louis XIV. "One day," he says, "the king, recovering from loss of consciousness, asked his confessor,

Père Tellier, to give him absolution for all his sins. Père Tellier asked him if he suffered much. 'No,' replied the king, 'that's what troubles me. I should like to suffer more, for the expiation of my sins.'" Here was a poor mortal who had spent his days in carnality and transgression of the pure law of God. He is conscious of guilt, and feels the need of its atonement. And now, upon the very edge of eternity and brink of doom, he proposes to make his own atonement, to be his own redeemer and save his own soul, by offering up to the eternal Nemesis that was racking his conscience a few hours of finite suffering, instead of betaking himself to the infinite passion and agony of Calvary. This is a "work"; and, alas! "a dead work," as St. Paul so often denominates it. (*Prof. Shedd.*) *Faith in God*:—In the first Punic war, Hannibal laid siege to Saguntum, a rich and strongly-fortified city on the eastern coast of Spain. It was defended with a desperate obstinacy by its inhabitants; but the discipline, the energy, and the persistence of the Carthaginian army were too much for them; and, just as the city was about to fall, Alorcus, a Spanish chieftain, and a mutual friend of both the contending parties, undertook to mediate between them. He proposed to the Saguntines that they should surrender, allowing the Carthaginian general to make his own terms; and the argument he used was this: "Your city is captured, in any event. Further resistence will only bring down upon you the rage of an incensed soldiery, and horrors of a sack. Therefore surrender immediately, and take whatever Hannibal shall please to give. You cannot lose anything by the procedure, and you may gain something, even though it be a little." Now, although there is no resemblance between the government of the good and merciful God and the cruel purposes and conduct of a heathen warrior, and we shrink from bringing the two into any kind of juxtaposition, still, the advice of the wise Alorcus to the Saguntines is good advice for every sinful man in reference to his relations to eternal justice. We are all of us at the mercy of God. But the All-Holy is also the All-Merciful. He has made certain terms, and has offered certain conditions of pardon, without asking leave of His creatures, and without taking them into council; and were these terms as strict as Draco, instead of being as tender and pitiful as the tears and blood of Jesus, it would become us criminals to make no criticisms even in that extreme case, but accept them precisely as they were offered by the Sovereign and the Arbiter. (*Ibid.*) *The simplicity of faith*:—The complexity sometimes charged upon the Christian doctrine of faith is not greater than exists in any analogous or corresponding case. Tell the drowning man to be of good cheer, for you will save him, and you call upon him to perform as many acts as are included in the exercise of saving faith. For, in the first place, you invite him to believe the truth of your assertions. In the next place, you invite him to confide in your ability and willingness to save him. In the last place, you invite him to consent to your proposal by renouncing every other hope and agreeing to be saved by you. There is nothing more abstruse or difficult in saving faith. The difference is not in the essential nature of the mental acts and exercises, but in the circumstances under which they are performed. (*J. A. Alexander, D.D.*) *Creed and conduct*:—It is a very common charge against Christianity that "it puts creed above conduct." Whether there is any truth in that charge depends upon what is understood by the term "creed." When Jesus was asked directly concerning right conduct, he answered that a right belief is the basis of right conduct. If that be giving a first place to "creed," let it be borne in mind that it is Jesus Christ Himself who makes the assignment. A popular saying nowadays is that "it doesn't make any difference what a man believes if he only acts right"; but a Boston clergyman once improved on that saying by the simple change, "It doesn't make any difference what a man believes if he doesn't act right." If a man is a persistent evil-doer, the soundness of his theological convictions will not compensate for his wrong conduct. But when God has sent His Son to be a Saviour and a Guide, it makes all the difference in the world whether a sinner accepts or refuses to believe on the One who is the only Mediator between God and man. So far, a correct belief is all-essential as a basis of right conduct and of safe conduct. That is the truth as Jesus puts it. (*H. C. Trumbull, D.D.*)

Vers. 30–33. **What sign showest Thou then that we may see and believe.**—*Christ the Christian's food*:—Hewitson writes: "I think I know more of Jesus Christ than of any earthly friend." Hence one who knew Him well remarked, "One thing struck me in Mr. Hewitson. He seemed to have no gaps, no intervals in his communion with God. I used to feel, when with him, that it was being with one who

was a vine watered every moment." *Christ is the true manna*:—Christ is heavenly meat and drink. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (chap. vi. 32). Other meat and drink is terrene and earthly. Your bread grows out of the bowels of the earth. Your wine is the blood of an earthly grape. The flesh you eat is fed of the tender grass that springs out of the earth. If the earth should prove barren, you would soon feel a famine. "The king himself is served by the field" (Eccl. v. 9). It is true, the blessing comes from heaven, but all the materials of meat and drink are earthly. But Jesus Christ is the Bread of heaven and the Wine of heaven. The manna came from the clouds only; but Christ from the beautiful heaven, even from the bosom of the Father. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *Christ the gift of God to all men*:—When the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine's doctrine was impugned, and his discourses complained of before the ecclesiastical courts, he was enabled to vindicate himself with great dignity and courage; and expressions sometimes fell from his lips which, for a time, overawed and confounded his enemies. On one occasion, at a meeting of the synod of Fife, according to the account of a respectable witness, when some members were denying the Father's gift of our Lord Jesus to sinners of mankind, he rose and said, "Moderator, our Lord Jesus says of Himself, 'My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.' This He uttered to a promiscuous multitude; and let me see the man who dares to affirm that He said wrong?" This short speech, aided by the solemnity and energy with which it was delivered, made an uncommon impression on the synod, and on all that were present. *Christ gives life*:—Christ is such meat and drink as preserves from death. Other meat and drink cannot keep man from the grave. That rich man that fared deliciously every day was not made immortal. "The rich man died and was buried" (Luke xvi. 22). All that generation that fed on manna, and drank the water out of the rock, died (chap. vi. 49). But Christ preserves the soul from death (chap. vi. 50). This is the bread of God that came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. It immortalizes the soul that feeds on it. He that believeth on Me hath eternal life (ver. 51). Other meat and drink cannot preserve a living body from death, much less can it give life, and restore breath to a dead body. Put the most delicate meat, the strongest drink, into the mouth of a dead man, and they will not give him life if the soul be quite departed. They may recover from a swoon, they cannot from death. But the flesh and blood of Christ quicken the dead. Christ, by putting His flesh and blood into the mouth of the dead soul, conveys life into it. His flesh and blood make the lips of the dead to speak. "As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (chap. v. 21). If thou hast any spiritual life in thee, thou didst receive it from the enlivening virtue of Christ's flesh and blood communicated to thee by the Spirit of life. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *Christ, like the manna, is an abundant supply*:—I recollect when I was able to journey through the country preaching, I for some years stayed occasionally with a fine old English farmer. He used to have a piece of beef upon the table, I do not know how many pounds it weighed, but it was enormous. I said to him one day, "Why is it that whenever I come here you have such immense joints? Do you think that I can eat like a giant? If so, it is a great mistake. Look at that joint, there," I said; "if I were to take it home, it might last me a month." "Well," he said, "if I could get a bigger bit I would, for I am so glad to see you; and if you could eat it all, you should be heartily welcome. I want everybody that comes here to-day to feel that I will do my very best for you." He did not measure my necessities to the half-ounce, but he provided on a lavish scale. I quote this homely instance of giving heartily to show you how, on a divine scale, the Lord makes ready for His guests. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The mistakes of the Galileans*:—I. THE SECONDARY FOR THE PRIMARY (vers. 31, 32). Confounding the instrument with the agent; Moses with Jehovah. 1. The man of science falls into this mistake when he talks about forces and laws otherwise than as expressions of the Divine power and will. 2. The Christian does the same when he ascribes conversion to the eloquence of a preacher instead of to the quickening influence of the Spirit (Zech. iv. 6; John vi. 63; Eph. ii. 1). 3. Every person similarly errs who forgets that every good and perfect gift comes from God (James i. 17). II. THE SHADOWY FOR THE SUBSTANTIAL (ver. 33). This tendency followed the Jews all through their career, and there is a like tendency when religion is made a thing of forms and ceremonies. III. THE IMPERSONAL FOR THE PERSONAL (ver. 35). The Jews imagined the bread of life to be a better sort of manna (see chap. iv. 15; the same mistake). Plainly as Christ indicated this bread to be a Person they continued thinking of a thing. So do those who suppose that education,

moral culture, social refinement, &c., is the bread of life. IV. THE TRANSIENT FOR THE ETERNAL (ver. 49). 1. The manna was a temporary gift; even when the Israelites ate of it they died. The bread of life on the contrary—(1) Endures into everlasting life (ver. 27), and—(2) Will satisfy every want of the soul. Lessons: 1. The men who err most in life and religion are those who walk by sight and not by faith. 2. Christ is a greater sign than any of His miracles. 3. His best recommendation is the satisfaction He imparts. 4. Men may have a desire after Christ without faith. 5. None who come to Christ in sincerity, will depart from Him in sorrow. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The manna a type of Christ*:—I. MIRACULOUS IN THEIR ORIGIN: came down from heaven. II. COVERED WITH DEW (2 Cor. iv. 3). III. APPARENTLY INSIGNIFICANT (Isa. liii. 2). IV. MYSTERIOUS (Isa. liii. 8). V. DAILY (Exod. xvi. 21). "Give us this day" is founded on this repeated miracle. Christ's grace must be used continually. VI. GATHERED BY MAN BUT GROWN BY GOD. Human and Divine meet in conversion (chap. iv. 44), and Divine bounty never supersedes man's industry. VII. ALL GATHERING HAD ENOUGH. Sincerity not the degree of faith avails (Exod. xvi. 18). VIII. GRATUITOUS (Isa. lv. 1). IX. SUFFICIENT FOR ALL. X. OFFERED TO MURMURERS (Rom. v. 8). XI. Manna for a season the ONLY food (Acts iv. 12). XII. FURNISHED IN THE WILDERNESS (Psa. lxxviii. 19; Heb. vi. 8). (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Christ the bread of life*:—I. Christ is the bread of God in His personal Divine life (vers. 32–40). 1. The typical and the true bread of God (vers. 32, 33). 2. The false and the true appetite for this bread (vers. 34–38). 3. The liberating and quickening operation of this bread (vers. 39, 40). II. Christ GIVES the bread of life in His giving up of His flesh in His atoning death (vers. 41–51). 1. He gives it not to murmurers, but to those who are drawn and taught of the Father (vers. 41–47). 2. He gives it with the full partaking of eternal life (vers. 48–50). 3. He gives it in giving Himself (ver. 51). 4. He gives it in giving His flesh for the life of the world (ver. 51). III. Christ INSTITUTES the meal of life in making His flesh and blood a feast of thank-offering to the world (vers. 52–59). 1. The offence at the words concerning the flesh of Christ (ver. 52). 2. The heightening of the offence by the fourfold assertion concerning the flesh and blood of Christ (vers. 53–56). 3. The ground of this assertion; the life of Christ is in the Father (ver. 57). 4. The conclusion of this assertion (vers. 58, 59). IV. Christ TRANSFIGURES the meal of life into a meal of the Spirit (ver. 60–65)—1. By His exaltation (ver. 62). 2. By His sending the spirit (ver. 63). 3. By His word (ver. 63). 4. By the excision of unbelievers (ver. 64). (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *The bread of life contrasted with manna*:—1. The manna could not detain for one moment the fleeting spirit of man; but the bread of life, like the tree of life, imparted immortality. 2. That was from the air; this from the real heaven of heavens. 3. That nourished the decaying body; this the never dying soul. 4. That left the multitude, after a few hours, hungry still; he who eats of this will never hunger. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **Come down from heaven.**—I. WE HAVE A DIVINE LIFE IN CHRIST, because He has come from God to be the author of life for us. II. THIS LIFE IS NEAR (Deut. xxx. 12, 13; Rom. x. 6–8). No man could ascend up, therefore Christ came down. (*John Calvin.*) *Life in Christ*:—I. WHAT IS IT TO LIVE. 1. Anything lives when it fills up the capacity of its being. Animal life does not consist in material force but in organic vitality. In man, however, we see the added element of spiritual existence. 2. Here comes up the everlasting fact that man is not like the brute satisfied with meat and drink, but yearns for what is beyond. And as there is harmony in the universe there must be something more than the material for man. II. THE HIGHER NATURE MUST HAVE ITS FOOD, OR IT DIES. Christ saw the spiritual nature of man in all its priceless capacity and quenchless immortality, and to that He addressed Himself when He bade His hearers eat of His flesh and drink of His blood. III. EACH KIND OR NATURE IN THE UNIVERSE IS LINKED IN ITS OWN CHAIN OF DEPENDENCIES. The body depends on things material; but the moment we look on the spirit of man we must ascribe it to some higher source than matter. The affection of the human heart; the yearning for the beautiful and the good; the intellect; the sense of sin and moral freedom, whence came they? If you could take away every other proof of the existence of God, this spirit proves the Being of a moral and intelligent Source over and above the material world. IV. EACH THING IS LINKED TO THINGS OF ITS OWN KIND. 1. The soul, living, intelligent, and morally conscious, is linked to an intelligent and moral God, and by Him, and in Him alone, can it live. It cannot link itself to mere sensation and matter. 2. Jesus brings men into communion with that infinite intelligence, love, and freedom by bringing man's soul into communion with Himself, so that living

in Him we live in the Father, and as Christ becomes assimilated to our inner spiritual being, so we truly live. V. WE NOT ONLY LIVE IN, BUT BY JESUS. This brings into view His essential personality. "*I* am the Bread, the Way." "He that believeth in ME," &c. No other teacher ever so spoke. Plato or Confucius may have said, "Believe this truth," but never, "I am the truth, believe in me." Christ saves us not merely by the truth He revealed, but by Himself. VI. THIS LIFE IS A PRESENT EXPERIENCE. Not merely is going to live, but liveth. Religion is an end as well as a means. It is not simply something that helps us to live by and by, but something by which we live now. The great essential things are those we live by, not for. Bread, water, air—we do not live for them, but by them. So we live by religion, heaven, Christ, not for them. Conclusion: 1. See what an argument this is for the truth of the religion of Jesus, because it shows us how we truly live. We live by Jesus now because—(1) He fills up our higher faculties; (2) draws out our best affections; (3) gives us the truth of our higher being. 2. Have you ever really lived? (*E. H. Chapin, D.D.*) *Jewish traditions connecting the manna with the Messiah*:—There was a tradition that as the first Redeemer caused the manna to fall from heaven, even so should the second Redeemer cause the manna to fall. For this sign, then, or one like it, the people looked from Him whom they were ready to regard as Messiah (*cf.* Matt. xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11). Philo says, "When the people sought what it is which feeds the soul, for they did not, as Moses says, know what it was, they discovered by learning that it is the utterance of God and the Divine Logos from which all forms of instruction and wisdom flow in a perennial stream. And this is the heavenly food which is indicated in the sacred records under the person of the First Cause, saying, "Behold I rain on you bread out of heaven!" (Exod. xiv. 4). For in very truth God distils from above the supernal wisdom on noble and contemplative minds, and they, when they see and taste, in great joy, know what they experience, but do not know the power which dispenses the gift. Wherefore they ask, 'What is this that is sweeter than honey and whiter than snow?' But they shall all be taught by the prophet that this is the Bread which the Lord gave them to eat" (Exod. xvi. 15). (*Bp. Westcott.*)

Vers. 34, 35. **Lord, evermore give us this bread.**—I. THE VAIN PRAYER. Because—1. It recognizes not the Giver in the bread. 2. It recognizes not the Bread of Life in the giver. II. THE ANSWER OF JESUS aims to disclose their spirit—1. By insisting on the figure of the bread in His person. 2. By enlarging the figure: bread for hunger and thirst. 3. By explaining the figure: "Come to Me," "Believe on Me." (*J. P. Lange, D.D.*) *Three sayings of Christ*:—I. ABOUT HIMSELF (ver. 35). II. ABOUT THOSE WHO COME TO HIM (ver. 37). III. ABOUT THE WILL OF HIS FATHER (vers. 39, 40). (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The true hunger of the soul awakened and satisfied in Christ*:—I. MAN'S HUNGER. There is in every finite existence one great appetite. No creature is independent; it must draw life from another. In man, who is a complex being, there are various kinds of hunger. 1. Natural. (1) Bodily hunger. Even as an upright creature man was made dependent on the fruits of the ground; and now his first question is, "How am I to get bread." How much thought and labour are expended on it! It has impelled to every crime. Hunger pressed Israel into Egypt, and that involved mighty issues for both. Hunger brought Ruth into view and linked her with the royal ancestry of Christ. The greatest spiritual conflict in the world was connected with a state of hunger. The central petition of the Lord's prayer is "Give us this day," &c. (2) Mental hunger. Man's bodily appetite is typical of mental conditions. (*a*) The heart hungers for happiness. Man, when left to himself, is an unhappy being. (*b*) The intellect hungers for truth. Man has been made to inquire into, study, and know the truth of things. (*c*) The will hungers for liberty. The triumph of a man's life is to prevail over the conditions which would fetter him. (*d*) The conscience hungers for righteousness. We are made to act in accordance with the supreme law of the universe, the will of God. All altars, sacrifices, priesthoods are witnesses to that. 2. Unnatural. Great multitudes, instead of seeking for legitimate satisfaction, lay hold of false food, and drug themselves. For these Satan keeps a great variety of delusions. (1) For low natures coarse animal pleasures. (2) For intellectual natures there are the sciences, &c. (3) For light and giddy natures there is the world and all its glory. (4) For ambitious natures, principalities and powers. (5) For more serious and half-religious natures penancies, pilgrimages, rites, ceremonies, and good works. The result of eating such false bread is that the mere hunger of the soul is deadened,

and a false appetite created, which grows with what it feeds on, and this bread of death instead of supporting the soul consumes it. 3. Supernatural; the longings which exist with any degree of strength only in the renewed nature. Along with the other tastes there may be a love of sin, but this partly consists of a hatred of sin and a love of all that is good, a counting of all things but loss, so that we may gain Christ. II. THE DIVINE PROVISION. 1. On what ground does God provide for our bodily hunger? For the sake of Christ. He has tasted death for every man, and thus secured an ample day of grace and every blessing, temporal as well as spiritual. Thus in a literal sense Christ is the Bread of Life. 2. Christ is the true food for the human mind. (1) We can only see the true beauty and deep spiritual meaning of nature through Him. (2) He is the Bread of Life to the conscience. In Him the sins of the past are washed away and the law magnified and made honourable. (3) He is the Bread of Life to the heart. The heart that loves not is dead—but Jesus has revealed and communicates the love of God. (*F. Ferguson, D.D.*) *Bread and water:*—You call these common things. Their excellence has occasioned their commonness, and their commonness corresponds to a common want in humanity. I. LET US APPLY THIS SOCIALLY. Look on the greatest feast ever prepared. What are its delicacies? Simply an adaptation, decoration or adulteration of bread and water, and the seated guests are compelled to say, "This is well enough now and then, but only now and then," let us have something plain. Bread and water survive. Empires of soups, &c., which are the image and superscription of the cook's, who is bound like other fashionable slaves to produce something fresh, rise and fall; but bread and water are God's, and they endure. II. THE APPLICATION OF THIS IS OBVIOUS IN THE HIGHER SPHERES OF CULTURE. Reading and writing are the bread and water of the mind. Your duty to your child is done when you have given this; let him get the rest for himself. But fine cookery is imitated in fine intelligence, and sometimes with like results—mental indigestion. Hence we have imperfect French, caricatured German, and murdered music, and the native tongue and history passed by. When will people learn to prize bread and water and see that it is better to know a little well, than to know next to nothing about a great deal? III. THESE ILLUSTRATIONS PREPARE FOR THE HIGHEST TRUTH OF ALL, viz., that Jesus Christ is the bread and water, without which man cannot live. He never says that He is a luxury which the rich only can afford. An adventurer would not have seen in metaphors so humble a philosophy so profound. 1. Man needs Christ as a necessity and not as a luxury. You may be pleased to have flowers, but you must have bread. Jesus has often been presented as an ornament, a phenomenon; but He preached Himself, and would have others preach Him, as bread and water. 2. What has been the effect of omitting to declare Christ as bread and water? Leaving the simplicity of Christ, we have elaborated theological sciences, worked out a cunning symbolism, filled the Church with many coloured garments, and constituted splendid hierarchies. All this means that man is a fool, and prefers vanity to truth. Poor souls are left to believe that they can only get to Christ through priests, catechisms, and ecclesiastical mumbling. Take the pure Bible and read it for thyself, and thou shalt see the Lord and eat heavenly bread. 3. History furnishes a most graphic confirmation of these views. J. S. Mill says: "Let rational criticism take from us what it may, it still leaves us the Christ." Exactly: it leaves us bread. It modifies the theological cook and confectioner, but it leaves the living water. Men can't get rid of Christ, because they can't get rid of themselves. The Lord allows the chaff to be blown away, but saves every grain of wheat; yet nervous people think that the wheat is lost because the chaff is scattered. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *Bread the symbol of Christ:*—He is to the soul what bread is to the body—its food. I. Bread is NECESSARY food. Other things may be dispensed with, but all need bread. II. It is food that SUITS all—old and young, weak and strong. III. It is the most NOURISHING kind of food: nothing does so much good or is so indispensable to bodily development. IV. It is food that we NEED DAILY. Other foods are at best only occasionally required. V. It is the only food we are NEVER TIRED OF; hence it is on every table, unlike every other kind of food. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The bread of life a representation of the Saviour:*—1. All life is valuable in its degree. Vegetable life is superior to dead matter, animal to vegetable life, rational to animal, the life of God to human life. 2. This latter was man's once; but it was forfeited, and is now restored by the Spirit. Hence Scripture loves to present religion under the notion of life; not as a picture that is only resemblance, not as mechanism that is only form. 3. The relation in which Christ stands to this life. He is

"bread," its nourishment; bread, *i.e.*, "bruised corn." He becomes our Saviour by His death. 4. Bread is nothing to us unless eaten, so unless we "eat the flesh of the Son of God," &c. I. THE WAY IN WHICH WE DERIVE ADVANTAGE FROM HIM. By coming to Him or believing on Him. 1. This reminds us that Christ is accessible. "Where two or three," &c. 2. It teaches us that faith is not a notion, but a principle always attended with an application of the soul to the Redeemer. 3. This application is not a single address, but a continued exercise. "Cometh." II. THE HAPPINESS HIS FOLLOWERS SHALL ENJOY. 1. They shall never hunger nor thirst again after the world. Having tasted the provisions of God's house, their language is, "Lord, ever more give us this bread." A covetous, sensual, ambitious Christian is one the Scripture knows nothing of. 2. They shall not hunger and thirst in vain. The new creature has appetites, but ample provision is made for them. 3. They shall not hunger and thirst always. The days of imperfect enjoyment will soon be over. Conclusion: The subject is a standard by which we may estimate—1. Christ. 2. Faith. 3. The Christian. (*W. Jay.*) *The bread of life*:—I. IN WHAT SENSE IS OUR LORD THE BREAD OF LIFE? 1. He evidently intimated that there was in Him that which, if properly received, would communicate eternal life (vers. 51, 53). 2. He obviously points to His sufferings and death as that from which we were to derive our life. 3. For Him to be to us the bread of life depends on two things—(1) That we receive the full pardon of our sins; (2) that we have a meetness for glory by the sanctification of our souls. II. WHO ARE THOSE WHO DERIVE BENEFIT FROM HIM? Not all, but only those who come in faith. 1. Before we can do this we must have a sense of our need of Him. 2. Those will not come to Him who fail to see His perfections, believe in His atonement, and hear His invitation. 3. There must be moral effort. "Labour." We must evidently turn our backs resolutely on the sins we loved. 4. We must come to Him by the prescribed means—meditation on His Word and importunate prayer. III. WHAT IS THE BENEFIT of which He speaks. The believer shall never hunger or thirst—1. After sin. 2. Nor anxiously after holiness; only with such a sweet desire as serves to animate the spirit on its road to that state where it will thirst no more. (*B. Noel, M.A.*) *Bread is for common use*:—I remember what bread was to me when I was a boy. I could not wait till I was dressed in the morning, but ran and cut a slice from the loaf—all the way round, too—to keep me until breakfast; and at breakfast, if diligence in eating earned wages, I should have been well paid. And then I could not wait for dinner, but ate again, and then at dinner; and I had to eat again before tea, and at tea, and lucky if I didn't eat again after that. It was bread, bread, all the time with me, bread that I lived on and got strength from. Just so religion is the bread of life; but you make it cake—you put it away in your cupboard and never use it but when you have company. You cut it into small pieces and put it on china plates, and pass it daintily round instead of treating it as bread, common, hearty bread, to be used every hour. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The soul needs to be often fed*:—When people are being strengthened of God, they are not content with one meal on the Sabbath; they want another, and perhaps a prayer-meeting or a Sunday-school for a dessert. They are not content with just two or three minutes' prayer in the morning; they like, if they can, to slip out of business and get a word with God in the middle of the day. They delight to carry a text of Scripture in their memories to sweeten their breath all the day, and they cannot be happy unless they meditate upon the Word. I think you make a great mistake when you go galloping through the whole Bible, reading half a dozen chapters every day; you do much better when you get a text and ruminate upon it, just as the cows chew the cud. Turn the Scripture over and over, and get all the juice, sweetness, and nourishment out of it, and you will do well. The spiritually hungry man says, "I must go and hear some servant of God, and hear what God, the Lord, will speak to me. I must get as much of the heavenly food as I possibly can, for I need it so greatly." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Hunger a sign of health*:—Men who are mending find themselves hungry between meals. "Oh," the doctor says, "that is a capital sign. You will get on now." I love to see God's people when the Lord is strengthening them, for then they leave off being dainty and fault-finding, and prove the truth of Solomon's proverb, that to the hungry man every bitter thing is sweet. Then they come to Monday night prayer-meetings and week evening services. They used to be able to do very well from Sunday to Sunday, and I have known some of them get on with one meal on the Lord's day, and like it all the better if that was quickly served and soon over. When the gracious Lord strengthens His people they become very sharp-set. Somebody said

on Sunday morning to me, "Did you not feel it sweet preaching?" I replied, "I always feel it sweet preaching the gospel of the grace of God." "Ah, but," he said, "the people swallowed it all just as it came from your mouth, and they seemed so hungry after it." Truly this makes a preacher happy. (*Ibid.*) *Christ the best food:*—The old Grecians that had fed altogether on acorns before, after that bread came in amongst them they made no reckoning of their mast any more, but kept it only for swine. And leathern and iron money began to grow out of request amongst the Lacedemonians after that gold and silver came into use. So when a man hath once found the favour of God in his heart, and the love of God in Christ hath once lighted on it, and got assurance of it, he ceaseth then to be greedy of the world's trash, which is in regard of it but dross or pebble-stones to gold and diamonds, as mast to the best bread corn; yea, rather of far less worth or value to that than either of these are to it. (*Fuller.*) *Feeding on Christ:*—If anybody were to say to me, "I have a man at home who stands in my hall, and has stood there for years, but he has never eaten a mouthful of bread all the time, nor cost me a penny for food," I should say to myself. "Oh, yes, that is a bronze man, I know, or a plaster cast of a man. He has no life in him, I am sure; for if he had life in him, he would have needed bread." If we could live without eating, it would be a cheap method of existence; but I have never found out the secret, and I do not mean to make experiments. If you are trying it, and have succeeded in it so far that you can live without Christ, the bread of life, I fear your life is not that of God's people, for they all hunger and thirst after Jesus, the bread of heaven. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *False food:*—During the Irish famine of 1849 the Duke of Norfolk invented a curry-powder of which he boasted that if taken by the starving peasants it would destroy all cravings of hunger. How many remedies for the soul's hunger are mere mockeries of unsatisfying! Curry-powder is poor food at the best. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Christ an incorruptible food:*—Christ is incorruptible meat and drink. All earthly meat and drink is of a fading, perishing nature. The best bread grows mouldy in a little time; the best flesh in time putrefies and taints; the best wine grows eager and sour in a little time, and becomes unfit for the body of man; the very manna itself, when it was kept till the morning of the next day, contrary to God's command, bred worms, and stank (Exod. xvi. 20). But Jesus Christ knows no corruption. His flesh and blood is now as sweet and pleasant, after so many ages, as it was the first hour it was eaten and drank (chap. viii. 27). And it will be as far from corruption at the end of the world as now it is. The manna in the golden pot corrupted not, though kept for many generations. Christ is manna in that golden pot; the humanity in the golden pot of the Divinity shall see no corruption. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *Soul-satisfying bread:*—I. THE LORD JESUS IS TO BE RECEIVED BY EACH ONE OF US PERSONALLY FOR HIMSELF. Bread which is not eaten will not stay hunger. Water in the cup may sparkle, but it cannot slake thirst unless we drink it. How do we receive Christ. 1. By coming to Him, which represents the first act of faith. We return to the Christ from whom we have been alienated with a motion of the heart performed by desire, prayer, assent, consent, trust, obedience. 2. Believing on Him, in the sense of trusting Him. 3. Eating and drinking Him. It is monstrous that this should be taken literally, for what greater crime could there be than to eat the flesh of our Saviour? What He meant was receiving Him into our hearts. Now, in eating—(1) The food as a whole goes into our mouths; so as a whole Christ is received into our belief and trust. (2) We masticate it, and even in this way the believer thinks of Jesus and discovers His preciousness. (3) It descends into the inward parts to be digested; so Christ is to dwell and rest in the affections till His comfort is fully drawn forth. (4) The food is next assimilated; so the great truths of Christ are inwardly received till our whole nature draws from them satisfaction and strength. (5) As a man who has feasted well, and is no more hungry, rises from the table satisfied, so we feel that in our Jesus our entire nature has all it wants. (6) The two points about Christ which He says are respectively meat and drink are—(*a*) His flesh, *i.e.*, His humanity. Our soul feeds on the literal historical fact that "God was in Christ," and was made flesh and dwelt among us. (*b*) His blood, which clearly refers to His atoning death. II. WHERE JESUS IS RECEIVED HE IS SUPREMELY SATISFYING—1. To our highest and deepest wants, not to mere fancies and whims. Hungering is no shame; thirst is not sentiment. 2. Christ meets the hungering of conscience, which feels that God must punish sin, but is appeased as it perceives that it has been punished in Christ. 3. Men, when awakened, have a hunger of fear, but when they find that Christ has died for them, fear expires and love takes

its place. 4. The heart has its hunger, but in Christ its roving affections find rest. 5. There are vast desires in us all, and when we are quickened they expand, and yet are satisfied. 6. This perfect satisfaction is found only in Christ. (1) Some have tried to be satisfied with themselves. (2) Some have gone to Moses. (3) Some have dosed themselves into a torpor with the narcotics of scepticism. (4) Many stave off hunger by indifference, like the bears in winter, which are not hungry because they are asleep. Conclusion: All believers bear witness that Jesus Christ is satisfying to them. 1. They never seek additional ground of trust beyond Christ. 2. They never want to shift their confidence. 3. Christ satisfies in the hour of death. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The "I am" of Christ*:—This form of expression is not found in the synoptists. It occurs not unfrequently in St. John, and the figures with which it is connected furnish a complete study of the Lord's work. I. I am the LIGHT OF THE WORLD (chap. viii. 12). II. I am the BREAD OF LIFE (vers. 35, 41, 48, 51). III. I am THE DOOR (x. 7, 9). IV. I am THE GOOD SHEPHERD (x. 11, 14). V. I am THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (xi. 25). VI. I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE (xiv. 6). VII. I am THE TRUE VINE (xiv. 1–5). (*Bp. Westcott.*) *Spiritual assimilation*:—It is not what a man eats, but what he digests, that nourishes him. Now, so it is with that truth which is food for the mind, which is the soul's nutriment. There is a certain kind of truth which needs only to be heard, only to be received: facts about the sun or earth, about light and heat and electricity. All that you need to do in respect to these truths is to get them, to store them away in your mind. Thus, for instance, the sun is ninety-two millions of miles from the earth. Receive these facts, and you need go no farther with them. There is no necessary after process of assimilation. They are of themselves nourishment for the mind, without any such after process. But not so is it with moral truth—that truth designed to regulate and govern human action. This is worth nothing, unless it is wrought into the life; unless it be so assimilated as to lose the form of abstract truth, and become principle; unless it passes into, is converted into life. This is the way with bread, when it does any good. It does not remain bread. It turns to flesh and blood and bone. The bread of yesterday is the myriad-hued, the myriad-sided life of to-day. It is the eloquence of the orator, and the strength of the drayman. It is the skill of the artist, and the energy of the ploughman. And it is all this, through the wonderful process of assimilation, through the mysterious force of a transubstantiation, stranger than priest ever taught, or poet ever fancied. Now, the truth of this analogy furnishes an explanation of the fact that so many persons in the world have a great deal of Bible knowledge, an abundance of moral truth, without having much of spiritual life. In such cases, truth has remained truth. Doctrine lies within them, as so much doctrine. So moral truth remains as so much unassimilated knowledge in the minds of thousands. And this analogy, besides an explanation, suggests also the great duty we owe to our moral or spiritual being. It is this. The duty of assimilating the moral truth which we have received, of turning it into life. This should be our daily work. Is time nothing, and eternity everything? Do we believe this? Then we should be more careful for an estate there, than for building up one here. Is it true, that without holiness no one shall see the Lord? Do we believe this? If so, how important that this truth should be turned into a principle of action in our daily life. And we should come to place very little, if any, value upon the mere possession of truth. Many a *post mortem* examination discloses plenty of unused food within the body. Still, the man died—died, because his system did not take up and use the bread. So, many a *post mortem* moral examination, no doubt, will exhibit an abundance of moral truth within the soul. And farther than this I think we should go here. We should come to place comparatively little value upon doctrines, which we are unable to convert into life-force, from which we cannot gather spiritual guidance and strength. If the truth which we possess is not digestible, it is very poor stuff. But, without further amplification here, I ask your attention to the great matter suggested by the text—THE CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL ASSIMILATION. 1. And the first I mention is, something to be assimilated. The process denoted by this word is only the changing of one substance into another. Thus, the tree takes the air and the sunlight, and the rain, and turns them into tree, into roots and trunk, branches and fruit, into its own peculiar life. Every leaf on your vine in spring-time is an open mouth, asking for these surrounding substances, that it may convert them into life for itself. It does not want light and heat and moisture, as such. It does not lay them up as such, counting them treasures. No, but silently, surely, swiftly, it assimilates them to itself. The sunbeam, when your flower gets hold of it, is no

longer a sunbeam. No; but it is blood in the veins of your rose, it is the blush upon its cheek, it is sweet odour filling the air. Now, not otherwise is it with the life of the soul. This life, like all others, grows by the process of assimilation. But there must be something to be assimilated; and what this something is the text distinctly affirms. It is Christ, who is the bread of life, the bread which is turned into life within the soul. Christ, and not something else; not philosophy, not art, not knowledge. Where in the history of the world has any of these supported moral life? Look at ancient Egypt, ancient Greece. Christ is its food; but this means the true Christ, and a whole Christ. The soul cannot live on the Pope, or what of Christ may come through the Pope. It needs a whole Christ. Then, again, take the case where Christ is shorn of His sympathy, of His boundless love, of His ineffable yearning, and the same result is apparent. The soul starves. Its bread again is only half bread. Then there is another half Christ, the sentimental one. A Christ who is no sin-bearer, who holds no relation to the Divine law as its atonement—a Christ, of whom it can, only by the widest possible metaphor, be said, that He was made a curse—a Christ with no blood! And the same sad result of spiritual life is here again witnessed. Souls are starved. 2. The second condition is a good moral atmosphere. This implies two things. First, that your homes should be favourable to Christian life; and second, that your daily business, outside the home, should be such and so conducted as to be the same. No church, no religious privileges, can do much for any man or woman, who either has no home, or whose home is a bad one. Why, suppose you only gave your body one or two hours a week of pure atmosphere. Could you preserve health? Could you live? If you go from the church into an atmosphere of frivolity and selfisbness, of acrimony and impurity, you will be sure to arrest the process of spiritual assimilation. Shun evil and corrupt association. It is said that the Upas-tree is girt in with a circle of dead and rotting carcases of bird and beast. So, upon every side of these corrupt rings, are strewn the dead consciences, the lost souls of men. See to it, then, that you breathe the atmosphere of love and of kindness, of purity and of honesty, day by day. 3. The third condition of spiritual assimilation is activity, the exercise of the new and true life. Duty is a Divine and immutable condition of moral growth. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Selfish idleness will kill any soul. Something you must do for this world in which you live, if you would do the best for yourself. 4. A fourth condition of spiritual assimilation is thought, intelligence. Better believe half of what you do, intelligently, with your whole soul, than believe it all, languidly, ignorantly. 5. The last condition of spiritual assimilation which I mention, and the great one, is the presence of the vital principle—the vital principle which philosophy cannot find out, which chemistry cannot detect. See those two trees. One of them lifts up its bare and shrunken branches; the other is covered with leaves, and the birds sing among its branches. Yet the air, the sunshine, the moisture, all within reach of both of these trees. What makes the difference? Why, in one the vital principle is present, from the other it has departed. Take two members of the same family again. One stands before the cross, only to fall in worship. The other hunts through the soil, wet with the blood of the Saviour, for gold, and lifts up his face to blaspheme, when he finds it not. The cross is life to the one, but death remains in the case of the other. Two or three remarks in conclusion. 1. It is Christ who is the Bread of Life—not the Church, not truth, not doctrines; but Christ the personal Christ. 2. Christ being the Bread of Life, character becomes a good test of the soundness of faith. He who is pure, who is Christlike in conduct, must have partaken of Him who is the only bread of such a life. 3. Many of us are daily guilty in this matter. We transgress, year after year, the plainest laws of spiritual health and of moral growth. (*S. S. Mitchell, D.D.*) *The Bread of Life*:—Every one acknowledges the golden cornfields to be full of the highest spiritual teaching. It is as if He who gave us the Written Word, which we call the Bible—"the Book"—specially designed the harvest-field to be to it a sort of companion volume; and to that purpose filled it to overflowing with the most striking and beautiful illustrations, which should be at the same time bright enough to catch the attention of the most untutored, and profound enough to richly repay the deepest study of the thoughtful and learned. Nor would our Saviour allow this beautiful supplementary volume to be neglected or overlooked. Let us listen for a moment to what science has to tell us of the character and position of corn in the economy of nature. Corn belongs to the second great order of plants—the lily order; and according to the evolutionist's theory it is either a lily in the making, or in a degenerate and degraded form.

This latter theory is the generally accepted one. In process of the ages the corn-plant which was, and is still, of the lily order, gradually developed the invaluable property of producing corn, and did this at the expense of its beauty. It separated itself from its beautiful sisters, laid aside the glory of the coloured vesture and elegance which belonged to it as of right, and took instead the russet garments in which we see it now clad; and all in order that it might be of service in its day and generation, and give its own life and substance for the life and support of others. If this were so, what a wonderful little parable we have in its history of the law of self-sacrifice, and of the blessing and reward attending such sacrifice: for what is it that really happens to the corn as a result of its self-surrender? We call it now the "staff of life." That is its usual and well-fitting title. To be singled out from all other plants in the world as the very staff of human life were, I say, marvellous honour for so small and insignificant a plant. But more than that; in giving its life as the staff of ours it becomes itself a partaker of a nobler nature. In eating it we incorporate its nature with ours, so that it becomes part of our very selves—bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh—and in a very real sense it comes in this way to participate with us in the enjoyment of human life. What a striking illustration we have here, then, of some of our Saviour's words! Jesus said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal;" and the life-history of the corn emphasizes this truth in a way so remarkable that no one can help being impressed by it. But we have not exhausted this lesson even yet, nor have we reached a thousandth part of the honour God has designed to bestow upon the self-abasing little plant; for when the Lord Jesus Himself came down from heaven to give His life for the world, and one day stood and looked around Him for a figure by which He might signify something of His own Person and office, He could find nothing better to His purpose than the little corn-plant in its so-called degraded form and russet-dress. "I am the Bread of Life," He said, "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven." We can well appreciate the aptness of that simile. The plant that had laid aside its lily-dress, and put off all its glory—clothing itself in russet-brown, and stooping very low, that it might give its life for the many—and, moreover, that could even then only become life-giving bread by being first bruised and crushed and broken—I say we can well perceive how fitting a type in all these particulars it was of Him "who made Himself of no reputation," &c. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him," &c. (*John Crofts, M.A.*) *The Bread of Life*:—1. Every living thing is a feeding thing. That it feeds is the test and signal that it lives. 2. Moreover, every living thing, whatever it may be, whether lowest in the scale of existence, or highest, must have food appropriate to itself, or it cannot live. There is a pathetic story which comes to us from the earlier explorations of the vast island of Australia. In the central deserts of that island there grows a strange plant called the nardoo, bearing leaves like clover. The Englishmen Burk and Wells, who were making these explorations, in the failure of other food, followed the example of the natives, and began to eat the leaves and roots of this plant named nardoo. It seemed to satisfy them; it seemed to fill them with a pleasant sense of comfort and repletion. But they grew weaker every day, and more emaciated; they were not hungry, for the plant seemed to satisfy the calling of hunger. But all the effects of an unfilled hunger began to appear in them; their flesh wasted from their bones, their strength leaked till they scarcely had the energy of an infant; they could not crawl on in their journey more than a mile or two a day. At last one of them perished of starvation; the other was rescued in the last extremity of it. On analysis, it was discovered that the bread made of this plant lacked an element essential to the sustenance of a European. And so, even though they seemed fed, the explorers wasted away, and one of them died, because they were feeding on a sustenance inappropriate. 3. Now all this is true of man's higher and moral nature. The mistake men are constantly making is, that they seek to feed their higher nature upon wrong food, which may satisfy for the time, but in the long run cannot keep back the pangs of a noble spiritual hunger. 4. This is what Christ came into the world to be to men—the appropriate, satisfying, sustaining, upbuilding food for their highest nature. (1) Christ, the Bread of Life, feeds and fills the human hunger for Divine sympathy. (2) Divine forgiveness. (3) Divine helping. Lessons: 1. Do not refuse the Bread of Life because there are some things in Him you cannot understand, any more than you refuse the bread upon your tables, though there are mysteries in it that no science can explain. 2. See the adaptation to our needs of the great truth of our Lord's Divine-human nature. He could not be the Bread of

Life to us did He not possess such a nature. 3. Learn the essential meaning of religion. The essential meaning of my physical life is, that I come into contact with food. The essential meaning of my religious life is, that I as really and as utterly come into the Food of my spiritual nature—Christ. (*W. Hoyt, D.D.*)

Ver. 36. **Ye also have seen Me and believe not.**—*The reason of faith*:—1. The grand distinction of Christianity is that it makes its appeal to faith, and upon that rests the promise of salvation. 2. But this is the scandal of men. If we hold any truth by reason, perception, or on evidence what need of holding by faith? And if we hold it without such evidence what is belief, but a surrender of our proper intelligence? 3. It is proposed to show how it is that we, as intelligent beings, are called to believe, and how, as sinners, we can in the nature of things, be saved only as we believe. This text sets us at the point when seeing and believing are brought together as not united; in ver. 40 they are united. 4. It stands on the face of the language—(1) That faith is not sight but something so different that we may see and not believe; (2) That sight does not include faith or supersede the necessity of it, for after sight faith is expected; (3) That sight is supposed to furnish a ground for faith, and involving guilt when faith is not exercised. Let us look at three kinds of faith. I. Take the case of SIGHT. It has been a great question how it is we perceive objects. Berkeley denied that we saw them at all. The persons who saw Christ had only certain pictures cast in the back of the eye which were mere subjective impressions. How then do we bridge the gulf between sensations and their objects; how it is that having a true picture in the back of the eye we make it a tree. Some deny the possibility of any solution; but the best solutions conceive the soul to take these forms as more than objects perceived, that we complete sensation or issue it in perception by assigning reality to the distant object. What is this but the exercise of a sense faith. We thus see by faith. II. Take that FAITH WHICH, after perception is completed, ASSIGNS TRUTH TO THE THINGS SEEN, and takes them to be historic verities. Thus after Christ had been seen in the facts of His life, it became a question what to make of those facts—whether there could have been conspiracy or self-imposition in the miracles. The mere seeing of a wonder never concludes the mind of the spectator. How many testify to having seen the most fantastic wonders, and yet they very commonly conclude by saying they know not what to make of them, doubting whether sleight of hand, ventriloquism, &c., may not account for them. The evidence to one who saw Christ was as perfect as it could be; but all that can be said is that a given impression has been made, and that impression is practically nought till an act of intellectual assent is added. Then the impression becomes to the mind a real and historical fact, a sentence of credit passed. III. We come now to CHRISTIAN FAITH. This begins just where the last-named faith ends. That decided the greatest fact of history, viz., that Christ actually was. But what is now wanted and justified and even required by the facts of His life is a faith that goes beyond the mere evidence of proportional verities, viz., the faith of a transaction; and Christian faith is the act of trust by which one being, a sinner, commits herself to another Being, a Saviour. In this faith—1. Everything is presupposed that makes the act intelligent and rational. That Christ was what He declared Himself to be and can do what He offered to do, and that we can commit ourselves to Him. 2. The matters included in this act are the surrender of our mere self care, the ceasing to live from our own point of separated will, a complete admission of the mind of Christ, a consenting to live as infolded in His spirit. 3. Great results will follow. (1) The believer will be as one possessed by Christ, created anew in Christ Jesus. (2) New evidence will be created. As in trying a physician new evidence is obtained from the successful management of the disease, so the soul that trusts itself to Christ knows Him with a new kind of knowledge; has the witness in himself. Lessons. 1. The mistake is here corrected that the gospel is a theorem to be thought out and not a new premiss of fact communicated by God to be received of men in all the threefold gradations of faith. 2. We discover that the requirement of faith, as a condition of salvation, is not arbitrary but essential for deliverance from sin. What we want is God, to be united to Him and thus to be quickened, raised, made partakers of the Divine Nature. 3. We perceive that mere impressions can never amount to faith, inasmuch as it is the commitment of our being to the Being of Christ our Saviour. 4. It is plain that what is wanted in the Christian world is more faith. We dabble too much in reason. We shall never recover the true apostolic energy without it. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *Christ the true bread must be*

both seen and appropriated :—Christians grow weak because they let their meat and drink stand by them. It is not the flesh in the pot, but the flesh in the stomach, that gives nourishment. It is not the drink in the vessel, but the drink taken down, that revives. Stir up spiritual hunger, and that will make you feed heartily on Christ. Eat and drink Christ by meditation, eat and drink Him by application. Let your faith draw in Christ in every ordinance. Keep your spiritual meals as constantly as you do your other meals. Your eating will help you to a stomach. Satisfaction and hunger are mutual helps one to another. Eating and drinking other meat takes away the appetite, but it increaseth the spiritual appetite. Fixed times of spiritual feeding every day are marvellous profitable. When you have prayed, call your heart to account what it hath taken in of Christ. When you have been reading, ask it what nourishment it hath received from the word. When the Lord's Supper is over, inquire what refreshment is received. Put yourselves forward to frequent, constant, actual feeding. It is a pity such precious meat and drink should stand in corners when the soul hath so much need of it. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *Christian faith* :—If a man comes to a banker with a letter of credit from some other banker, that letter may be read and seen to be a real letter. The signature also may be approved, and the credit of the drawing party honoured by the other, as being wholly reliable. So far what is done is merely opinionative or notional, and there is no transactional faith. And yet there is a good preparation for this; just that is done which makes it intelligent. When the receiving party, therefore, accepts the letter, and entrust himself actually to the drawing party in so much money, there is the real act of faith, an act which answers to the operative, or transactional faith of the disciple. Another and perhaps better illustration may be taken from the patient or sick person as related to his physician. He sends for a physician, just because he has been led to have a certain favourable opinion of his faithfulness and capacity. But the suffering him to feel his pulse, investigate his symptoms, and tell the diagnosis of his disease, imports nothing. It is only the committing of his being and life to this other being, consenting to receive and take his medicines, that imports a real faith, the faith of a transaction. In the same manner Christian faith is the faith of a transaction. It is not the committing of one's thought, in assent to any proposition, but the trusting of one's being to a being, there to be rested, kept, guided, moulded, governed, and possessed for ever. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*)

Ver. 37. **All that the Father hath given Me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.**—*The certainty and freeness of Divine grace* :—I. GRACE TRIUMPHANT IN SPECIALITY. 1. Christ leads us up to the original position of all things. All men are naturally from the beginning in the hand of the Father as Creator, Governor, and Source and Fountain of election. 2. He proceeds to inform us of a great transaction. That His Father put His people into the hands of His Son as the Mediator. Here was the Father's condescension in giving, and the Son's compassion in receiving. 3. He assures us that this transaction in eternity involves a certain change in time. The only token of election is the definite open choosing of Christ. 4. He hints at a power possessed by Him to constrain wanderers to return. Not that any force is used, but by His messengers, Word, and Spirit, He sweetly and graciously compels men to come in accordance with the laws of the human mind, and without impairing human freedom. We are made willing in the day of Christ's power. 5. He declares that there is no exception to this rule of grace. Not some but all, individually and collectively. II. GRACE TRIUMPHANT IN ITS LIBERALITY. 1. The liberality of its character: "him that cometh," the rich, poor, great, obscure, moral, debauched. 2. The liberality of the coming: no adjective or adverb to qualify. Not coming to the sacraments or worship, but to Christ. Some come at once; some are months in coming; some come running; some creeping; some carried; some with long prayers; some with only two words; some fearfully; some hopefully, but none are cast out. 3. The liberality of the time. It doesn't say when. He may be seventy or only seven; at any season; on any day. 4. The liberality of the duration. "Never cast thee out," neither at first nor to the last. 5. Something of the liberality is seen in the certainty, "in no wise." It is not a hope as to whether Christ will accept you. You cannot perish if you go. 6. There is great liberality if you will notice the personality. In the first clause, where everything is special, Jesus used the large word "all"; in the second, which is general. He uses the little word "him." Why? Because sinners want something that will suit their case. This means me. (*C. H.*

Spurgeon.) *An account of the persons that come to Christ* :—1. What is meant by coming to Christ? (1) An outward coming in application of the means. When we come to His ordinances we come to Him. (2) Closing with Christ, embracing Him, believing on Him, and submitting to Him. Coming not with the feet but with the heart. 2. What is meant by the Father giving men to Christ? (1) In God's eternal purpose and counsel. (2) In the drawing of our hearts to Him when God by His Spirit persuades us to close with Christ. This giving is mutual: Christ is given to us and we to Him, so there is a marriage-knot drawn and contracted between us. I. ALL THAT THE FATHER HATH GIVEN ME SHALL COME TO ME. 1. This is an expression of some latitude and universality—"all" (Eph. i. 4, 5; 2 Pet. iii. 9). From which we learn how to make our calling and election sure, viz., by closing with the conditions of the gospel. We may know whether we are given to Christ by coming to Him. 2. This is an expression of restriction. None come to Christ but such as are given to Him (John vi. 44; 2 Cor. iii. 5; Phil. ii. 13). The reasons why none come to Christ but those whom God gives to Him are —(1) Because all others are ignorant of Him, and without the knowledge of Christ there is no coming to Him (Matt. xvi. 16, 17). (2) There is a perverseness in their wills and affections, so that though many know Him, they hang off from Him (John iii. 19), so there must also be a drawing of their hearts which is the work of God alone. 3. From the word "come" we learn that men by nature are distant from Christ. 4. From the word "given" we see that all men are in the hands of God, for none can give what they have not got. II. CHRIST'S ENTERTAINMENT OF THOSE WHO COME TO HIM. 1. His reception. (1) He will take them into friendship with Himself (Matt. xi. 28; Isa. lv. 7; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). (2) None excepted (Rev. xxii. 17). There is nothing to exclude (Isa. i. 18; 1 Tim. i. 15). (3) What an encouragement to all men to close with Christ. (*a*) The nature of our sins cannot exclude us, since Paul, Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, &c., found mercy (Psa. xxv. 11). The ground of God's pardon is not our sin, but His grace (Isa. xliv. 3, 24, 25). (*b*) Nor the number of our sins (Hos. xiv. 4; Jer. iii. 1). (*c*) Nor any supposed imperfection in our humiliation. We are humbled sufficiently if we come. (4) Consider the great advantage of coming. (*a*) Pardon and the life of justification (Isa. lv. 7; Mic. vii. 19). (*b*) Power over sin and the life of sanctification. (*c*) Comfort and peace of conscience. (5) To enlarge, we may come not only in conversion, but after it, for assurance, greater measures of grace, and progress. Let us then come boldly (Heb. iv. 16). 2. His custody and preservation. "I will keep him in." (*T. Horton, D.D.*) *The Father's gift the sinner's privilege* :—I. THE EXPRESSION. "All that the Father," &c. 1. Number. Who can measure the amplitude of "all"? 2. Definiteness. Not one more or less. 3. Relation. The Father sends His Son to men and men to His Son. The conditions of this relation are the Incarnation and Atonement on the part of Christ; coming or believing on the part of men. 4. Donation. This was mediatorial. 5. Value. What must be the worth of that which the Father could give and Christ accept? II. THE PROMISE. "Shall come unto Me." 1. The certainty. "He shall see of the travail of His soul." 2. The act. (1) Externally, they shall be brought in the providence of God under the means of grace. (2) Spiritually. If you have come to Christ you have entered into the meaning of four words—conviction of sin, the suitableness of Christ, venturing on Christ, continual coming to Christ. III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT. "I will in no wise cast out." 1. Personality. "Him." Sin is personal, so must salvation be. 2. Extent. Christianity is the only universal religion; it can take root everywhere because it makes its offer to everybody. 3. The removal of doubts. (1) On the part of sinners. (*a*) When they have been called late in life; but remember the dying thief. (*b*) Sin suggests doubts. It is not what you have been, but what you are willing to be. (*c*) Unworthiness and infirmity create doubts. (*d*) Doubts arise from ignorance. All these are removed by the invitation. (2) On the part of saints. (*a*) Many feel a sense of inward corruption. (*b*) Others are conscious of stupidity and perverseness. (*c*) Lowness of attainment suggests doubts; and (*d*) Remaining guilt and imperfection. But what are these in the light of the promise, "Him that," &c.? (*Dr. Andrews.*) *Encouragement to seekers from the purposes and promises of God* :—I. GOD'S GRACIOUS PURPOSE. 1. God the Father is the prime Mover in the scheme of redemption. Beware of regarding the Father as an enemy and the Son as a friend. The Father's love is perpetually magnified in Scripture. 2. The Father hath given His Son a multitude which no man can number. 3. This gift was a very burdensome one to the Son. A ransom must be paid and satisfaction given. 4. The acceptance of the gift was most willing, for

the Son gave Himself to receive it (Eph. v. 25). II. THE ARTICLE OF THE COVENANT which secures the actual union of His people to the Redeemer. "Shall come unto Me." 1. What is meant by coming to Christ? (1) Seeking, implying a sense of need, danger, misery, condemnation, ruin. (2) Finding, including an enlightened understanding, and the revelation of the Saviour as suited to the sinner's necessities. (3) Appropriation. 2. The instrument of calling sinners is the Word, the Law with its warnings and threatenings, the gospel with its invitations and promises. 3. The effectual agent is the Spirit. We preach like Ezekiel to dry bones until the heavenly breath breathes upon them. III. THE PROMISE. "Him that cometh," &c. The preacher's commission is as unlimited as this promise. "Go ye into all the world," &c. 1. Our encouragement to go forth under this commission is drawn from our knowledge of God's purpose. This assures us that our labour shall not be in vain. 2. No degree or kind of guilt will be a bar to the sinner's reception if he will but come. 3. Surely then the expostulation is timely, "Why will ye die?" (1) Why go on in ways you know to be ruinous? (2) Why keep away from Jesus when you are sure of a welcome? 4. Whose fault will it be if you perish? Yours, not God's. (*W. Hancock, M.A.*) *Comers welcomed*:—I. GROUNDS ON WHICH THEY FEAR REJECTION. 1. Supposed omission from the number of the given, in which case they deem it hopeless to come. 2. Greatness of guilt—they are too bad to be received. 3. Absence of merit—they are not good enough to be accepted. 4. Lateness of repenting—they are too old to be welcomed. 5. Defects in believing—their faith is too feeble or not of the right sort. II. REASONS WHY THEY ARE SURE OF A WELCOME. Christ will not cast them out. 1. For their sakes. He knows—(1) The value of the soul. (2) The greatness of the peril. (3) The blessedness of salvation. 2. For His Father's sake. To do so would be to place dishonour upon Him whose will He had been sent to perform. 3. For His own sake. Since every sinner saved is—(1) An increase to His glory. (2) A triumph of His grace. (3) A trophy of His power. (4) A subject added to His empire. 4. For the world's sake. How could the gospel prevail if it got noised abroad that one was rejected. Lessons—1. Despair for none. 2. Hope for all. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *High doctrine and broad doctrine*:—Consider—I. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE. 1. If all that the Father giveth to Christ shall come to Him, then some shall come, and why should you not be among them? One says, "Suppose I am not one of the elect"; but suppose you are—or, better still, leave off supposing altogether and go to Christ and see. 2. Those who come to Christ come because of the Father and the Son. They come to Christ not because of any good in them, but because of the Father's gift. There never was a soul who wanted to come but Jesus wanted him to come a hundred times as much. 3. They are all saved because they come to Christ, and not otherwise. There is no way of salvation for peculiar people. The King's highway is for all. 4. If I come to Christ, it is most clear that the Father gave me to Christ. II. THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL. 1. "Him that cometh," &c., is one of the most generous of gospel texts. Generous—(1) As to the character to whom the promise is made. "Him," the atrocious sinner, the backslider, you. (2) The text gives no limit to the coming, save that they must come to Christ. Some come running, some limping, &c. (3) There is no limit as to time. Young and old. 2. The blessed certainty of salvation —*lit.* "I will not, not," or "never, never cast out." 3. The personality of the text —"Him," that is, thee. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Coming to Christ*:—Every stage of the Redeemer's life confirmed the delightful fact, that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world," &c. I. THE OBJECT OF APPROACH. Prophets spake of Him, that around Him should throng the sons and daughters of woe. Jacob said, when dying, "Unto Him shall the gathering together of the people be." Isaiah said, "Unto Him shall men come"; and He Himself said, "All that the Father hath given Me," &c. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." He possesses qualifications to relieve our wants, in opposition to all assumed characters. 1. He is infinitely wise. 2. He is of illimitable power. 3. He is of boundless compassion: and by possession of these, He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. II. THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH WE ARE TO COME. 1. For instruction. We are ignorant of ourselves—of God—of Christ—of the way of salvation. He is the light of the world—the great prophet. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," &c. 2. For pardon. We are guilty, and need pardon. "Him hath God exalted with His right hand," &c. "In whom we have redemption through His blood—the forgiveness of sins," &c. Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. 3. For strength. We have duties to per-

form, difficulties to encounter, trials to endure. Without Him we can do nothing: but He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and always remember as a check to indolence and supineness, that though without Him we can do nothing, "we can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth us." 4. For peace. He is the Prince of Peace. "My peace I leave with you," &c.; and we, as ministers of Christ, preach peace through the blood of His cross. 5. For eternal life. "I give unto My sheep eternal life." He is the record, "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." III. How we are to come. A bodily act is not intended; many do this, and not come at all. Jesus said, when they thronged around Him, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life"; but a spiritual act is meant; and does it not remind us that we are naturally at a distance, not locally, but spiritually; and hence arises the necessity of the agency of the Holy Spirit—"No man can come unto Me," &c. 1. We come by prayer: "Hence," says Paul, "let us come boldly to the throne of grace." 2. By faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God," &c. (1) It regards His Divinity. (2) His humanity. (3) That He is the appointed medium of approach—"I am the way, the truth, and the life." 3. With humility on account of our sin. 4. Contrition. Not sorrow merely for its consequences, but from a view of its nature, and the Being against whom it is committed. "That godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation," &c. IV. The certainty of acceptance. "I will in no wise cast out." 1. From the promises and invitations of Scripture. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." "Ho, every one that thirsteth." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour." "Wherefore, He also is able to save to the uttermost." "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure." "Not willing that any should perish," &c. 2. From the examples of the Scripture. There stands a Manasseh, a Magdalen, St. Luke, a Thief on the Cross, and a Saul of Tarsus. Go to heaven, and ask if Jesus was willing to receive them? The question shall give a fresh impulse to the song, while they swell the strains, and cry, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Go to the regions of darkness, and ask of them, Is one there that applied to Him? and, while anguish swells their bosoms, they will answer, No; we despised and rejected Him, and would not have Him to reign over us. Go to the north, east, west, and south, and ask believers whether Jesus did not receive them graciously. They will all give their testimony—While a great way off, He ran and met me, and fell upon my neck and kissed me. Conclusion: address to those already come—those coming—and those at a distance. (*The Pulpit.*) *Coming to Christ:*—I have read of an artist who wanted to paint a picture of the prodigal son. He searched through the mad-houses, and the poor-houses, and the prisons, to find a man wretched enough to represent the prodigal, but he could not find one. One day he was walking down the streets and met a man whom He thought would do. He told the poor beggar he would pay him well if he came to his room and sat for his portrait. The man agreed, and the day was appointed for him to come. The day came, and a man put in his appearance at the artist's room. "You made an appointment with me," he said, when he was shown into the studio. The artist looked at him, and said, "I never saw you before." "Yes," he said, "I agreed to meet you to-day at ten o'clock." "You must be mistaken; it must have been some other artist; I was to see a beggar here at this hour." "Well," said the man, "I am he." "You?" "Yes." "Why, what have you been doing?" "Well, I thought I would dress myself up a bit before I got painted." "Then," said the artist, "I do not want you; I wanted you as you were; now you are no use to me." That is the way Christ wants every poor sinner, just as he is. (*D. L. Moody.*) *Coming to Christ:*—"My next step," said an anxious inquirer, "is to get deeper conviction." "No," said a Christian friend, "your next step is to go to Christ just as you are. He does not say, come to conviction, come to a deeper sense of sin, which you have been labouring to get, but 'Come unto Me.'" "Ah," she exclaimed, "I see it now. Oh, how self-righteous I have been, really refusing Christ, while all the time I thought I was preparing to come to Him." "Will you go to Jesus now?" Humbly, yet decisively, she responded, "Yes, I will." And the Lord in the richness of His grace and mercy enabled her to do so. (*Clerical Library.*) *Christ the Saviour of all who come to Him:*—I. Our duty to Christ. To come to Him. 1. How. (1) By repentance (Matt. xi. 28; Mark i. 15). (2) By faith. (*a*) Assenting to Him (Heb. xi. 6) that He is an only (Acts iv. 12) and all-sufficient Saviour (Heb. vii. 12). (*b*) Receiving Him (John i. 12) for our Priest, to atone (Heb. ix. 12) and to make intercession (Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1); for our Prophet (Deut. xviii. 15; Acts iii. 22), to make known God's will and to enable us

to know it (John xvi. 13); for our King (Isa. ix. 6; John xviii. 36; Matt. xxviii. 18), to subdue our enemies (Heb. ii. 14), to rule over us (Psa. cx. 1–3). 2. What for. (1) Pardon (Acts v. 31). (2) Acceptance (Rom. v. 1). (3) Purity (Titus ii. 14; Acts iii. 26). (4) Eternal life (John v. 40; Matt. xi. 28). II. CHRIST'S PROMISE, that if we come to Him He will in no wise cast us out. 1. What are we to understand by this? That He will receive us (Titus ii. 14) into—(1) The number of His people (1 Peter ii. 9); (2) His love and favour (John xiii. 1); (3) His care and protection (John xvii. 12); (4) An interest in his death and passion; (5) A participation of His grace and spirit (John xvi. 7); (6) His intercession (John xvii. 9); (7) His presence and glory (John xvii. 24). 2. How does this appear. (1) We have His promise. (2) This was the end of His coming (John iii. 16; vi. 39, 40). III. MOTIVES TO COME TO CHRIST. 1. Are we in debt? He will be our Surety (Heb. vii. 22). 2. Are we in prison? He will be our Redeemer. 3. Are we sick? He will be our Physician (Matt. ix. 12). 4. Are we arraigned? He will be our Advocate, (1 John ii. 1). 5. Are we condemned? He will be our Saviour (Rom. viii. 34). 6. Are we estranged from God? He will be our Mediator (1 Tim. ii. 5). 7. Are we in misery? He will be our Comforter (Psa. xciv. 19). 8. Are we weary? He will give us rest (Matt. xi. 28). Wherefore come to Him. (1) Presently. (2) Cheerfully. (3) Sincerely. (4) Resolutely. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *The all-important advent*:—I. THE EVENT. There are various advents. 1. The incarnation. 2. Through the Spirit. 3. At the judgment. 4. That of our text—a man's coming to Christ. This is dependent on the first, is made effectual through the second, and secures that the third shall be blessed and glorious. II. THE CONSEQUENCE. Those who come will not be cast out. 1. Because it is not in Christ's nature to do so. 2. Because He has shed His blood for this very purpose. 3. Because He has said it, which is enough. III. THE MANNER. 1. Direct—not through any mediator. 2. As you are. 3. As you can. 4. Now. (*J. Vaughan, M.A.*) *Coming unto Jesus*:—Take every other verse out of the Scriptures, and leave but this, and you have a foundation on which a world of souls may build their hopes and never be put to shame. Hear it, impenitent sinners, alarmed souls, desponding believers, rejoicing saints. I. THE PERSON POINTED OUT. What is meant by coming to Him. 1. Negatively. (1) Not to the Scriptures, they only testify of Him (chap. v. 39, 40). (2) Not the Church, that is only a means, not the fountain of grace. (3) Not prayer, that is a well of salvation but not salvation. (4) Vers. 5, 22–24, show how possible it is to come, and yet not to come to Christ Himself. 2. Positively. Christ addresses the spiritual part of man's nature, and the invitation implies—(1) A forsaking of sin. To come to is to come from (2 Cor. vi. 14–18). (2) A renouncing of self. (3) Faith which worketh by love (vers. 35, 68, 69). II. THE ASSURANCE GIVEN CONCERNING THE PERSON INDICATED. 1. The assurance itself. (1) It is unrestricted. (2) Personal. (3) Based upon the good "will" of Christ. (4) Emphatic, "in no wise." 2. The grounds of the assurance. (1) The purposes of the Father. (2) The death of Christ. (3) The resurrection of Christ. (4) The work of the Spirit. (5) All God's attributes make it sure. Conclusion: 1. What say you to this? 2. Transpose the text, "Him that cometh not to Me I will cast out." (*S. Miller.*) *The gospel welcome*:—I. THE STATES OF MIND WITH WHICH WE SHOULD COME. The previous part of the text need prove no stumbling-block. All it affirms is that those whom the Father gives do come to Christ. Put the two together and they affirm the absolute freeness of the Divine grace, and exhibit that grace as acting in concurrence with our voluntary powers. Salvation is neither arbitrary, mechanical, nor compulsory. We must come—1. With childlike and dependent trust. (1) The primary element of all true faith, which is the movement of mind and heart towards God, is simple reliance on the gospel testimony that Christ is all-sufficient for the purposes of salvation. (2) The great strength and stay of this faith is that it enables the soul to rely exclusively upon a personal Redeemer. (3) This absolute casting of ourselves on Christ is not offered as a permission, but as a positive command. 2. With chastened humility and godly sorrow, repentance and faith stand together in the gospel commission, and are always united in the experience of the faithful. "Going and weeping." The prodigal. 3. In the spirit of total self-renunciation. Leave self, righteousness, sin, &c., and come to ME. II. THE ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONFIDENCE we have in coming to Christ. 1. "Him that cometh" or is coming, in the very act of coming now. It is a constantly repeated act; alike necessary in regeneration and sanctification. This includes all of whatsoever country, church, condition, rank. (1) Hear it, ye young. There is a sense in which your coming to Christ may be too late, but

there is none in which it can be too early. (2) Ye middle aged whom harassing cares disquiet. He will allow for everything but a refusal to come. (3) Ye aged. Perhaps the harvest is passed and ye are not saved. 2. "In no wise." (1) But I have stayed away too long. (2) I am a backslider. No matter. 3. Has Jesus ever cast any one out? No. (1) All the glorious perfections of His nature bend Him to welcome you. (2) The mighty price paid for your redemption. (3) The purpose and promises of God. Conclusion: Not to come is to be rejected; not to be saved is to be lost; there is no middle state. (*D. Moore, M.A.*) *Invitations of the gospel—the sinner's warrant*:—In the courts of law if a man be called as a witness, no sooner is his name mentioned, though he may be at the end of the court, than he begins to force his way up to the witness-box. Nobody says, "Why is this man pushing here?" or, if they should say, "Who are you?" it would be a sufficient answer to say, "My name was called." "But you are not rich, you have no gold ring upon your finger!" "No, but that is not my right of way, but I was called." "Sir, you are not a man of repute, or rank, or character!" "It matters not, I was called. Make way." So make way, ye doubts and fears, make way, ye devils of the infernal lake, Christ calls the sinner. Sinner, come, for though thou hast nought to recommend thee, yet it is written, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The essential in religion*:—I. WHAT TRUE RELIGION IS. 1. Negatively. (1) It cannot consist in any feeling of moral fitness. What need of coming to Christ if our own nature is morally sufficient? (2) Nor in the observance of external ritual. The source of the corruptions of Christianity is the tendency to put form for faith. (3) Nor in simple orthodoxy. 2. Positively. A living relation with a living Christ. II. THE METHOD OF GAINING TRUE RELIGION. 1. Not thronging about Christ. 2. But coming to Christ by faith. III. THE PROOF OF THE POSSESSION OF TRUE RELIGION. 1. Not in an old experience preserved in the memory. 2. Nor in a present release from the fear of death. 3. Nor in the fervent glow of feeling (these may accompany it), but in the present proneness of the soul on these words of Christ. Conclusion: Why will you not come to Christ? 1. Is it because you are afraid of ridicule and what others may say? "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed." 2. Is it because of the inconsistencies of Christians? "Every man shall give account of himself to God." 3. Is it because you are not willing to give up all to Christ? "What shall it profit a man," &c. 4. Is it because you are thinking you will do as well as you can, and that God ought to be satisfied with that? "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." 5. Is it because you are postponing the matter without any definite reason? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," &c. 6. Is it because you fear you will not be accepted? "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." (*W. Hoyt.*) *Scripture difficulties*:—To thread a needle in the dark is a thing which no one can do. The difficulty and impossibility, however, does not lie in the thing itself, but in the circumstances under which it is attempted. Only let there be light, and the thing is not only possible, but perfectly easy. This will serve to illustrate our inability to reconcile, understand, and explain certain mysteries in Divine things; for instance, to reconcile God's fixed decrees and infallible foreknowledge with man's free will and responsibility. Our Lord plainly declares, that "no man can come to Him except the Father draw him"; but, at the same time, He gives the widest and most unlimited invitation—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And He charges it as entirely their own fault, if any refuse to come, and so perish: "Ye are not willing to come to Me, that ye might have life." (*W. Hancock.*) I was cruising one day in the western Highlands. It had been a splendid day, and the glorious scenery had made our journey like an excursion to Fairy Land; but it came to an end, for darkness and night asserted their primeval sovereignty. Right ahead was a vast headland of the isle of Arran. How it frowned against the evening sky! The mighty rock seemed to overhang the sea. Just at its base was a little bay, and into this we steamed, and there we lay at anchorage all night, safe from every wind that might happen to be seeking out its prey. In that calm loch we seemed to lie in the mountain's lap while its broad shoulders screened us from the wind. Now, the first part of my text, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me," rises like a huge headland high into the heavens. Who shall scale its height? Upon some it seems to frown darkly. But here at the bottom lies the placid, glassy lake of infinite love and mercy: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Steam into it, and be safe under the shadow of the

great rock. You will be the better for the mountain-truth as your barque snugly reposes within the glittering waters at its foot; while you may thank God that the text is not all mountain to repel you, you will be grateful that there is enough of it to secure you. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Character not needed for salvation*:—In the mission at George Yard, Whitechapel, a converted street-singer, who had experienced much difficulty in getting work for want of a "character," but who afterwards became a licensed hawker and distributed tracts as he walked along, said: "Bless God. I have found out that Jesus will take a man without a character." (*J. F. B. Tinling, B.A.*) *The essence of the gospel*:—Pluck a green leaf from a bough and look at it. That leaf, science tells us, is the typical tree. The tree is built upon the pattern of that leaf. The tree is only the leaf expanded, and with its various parts altered to suit new requirements; but the idea manifest in the leaf is the idea according to which the tree is made and shaped. For instance, science tells us that the seed—the starting-point of life to the tree—is only a leaf rolled tight and changed in tissue and in contents, and so fitted for its special uses. The tree-trunk is only the leaf-stem made to take columnar form, and greatly lengthened and strengthened and enlarged. All the mingling mass of branch and bough and twig, lifting their manifold tracery against the sky, is but the reproduction and increasing of the delicate tangle of veins striking through the green substance of the leaf. In short, the tree is only the leaf cut in larger pattern. Everything in the huge tree is adjusted to the method of the little leaf. In the leaf you have the tree in germ and type. So it is, it has seemed to me, with this short text I have read to you, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." It is the typical gospel. In this text we have the whole great gospel in germ and type. The entire system of the revelation of salvation is shaped after the pattern of this text. (*W. Hoyt.*) *The accessibleness of Christ*:—Have you never read the story of the good ship that had been a long time at sea, and the captain had lost his reckoning; he drifted up the mouth of the great river Amazon, and, after he had been sailing for a long time up the river without knowing that he was in a river at all, they ran short of water. When another vessel was seen, they signalled her, and when they got near enough for speaking they cried, "Water! We are dying for water!" They were greatly surprised when the answer came back, "Dip it up! Dip it up! You are in a river. It is all around you." They had nothing to do but to fling the bucket overboard, and have as much water as ever they liked. And here are poor souls crying out, "Lord, what must I do to be saved?" when the great work is done, and all that remains to them is to receive the free gift of eternal life. What must you do? You have done enough for one life-time, for you have undone yourself by your doing. That is not the question. It is, "Lord, what hast thou done?" And the answer is, "It is finished. I have done it all. Only come and trust Me." Sinner, you are in a river of grace and mercy. Over with the bucket, man, and drink to the full. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Human perversity*:—If a compassionate prince wrote over his palace gate—"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," would poor beggars reading it need to have these words explained before they could understand them? And if the good man kept his word, and received all who asked his help, would his porch be ever empty night or day? Yet has Jesus, the Prince of Life, emblazoned these words in large, shining letters above His gates of grace, and ever kept His promise to help all the destitute and miserable who come to Him, and thousands of sinners are found to this hour who will not understand them, and millions of sinners who care nothing about them. (*H. G. Guiness.*) *Abundant mercy*:—You say, "Do not get the invitation too large, for there is nothing more awkward than to have more guests than accommodation." I know it. The Seamen's Friend Society are inviting all the sailors. The Tract Society is inviting all the destitute. The Sabbath schools are inviting all the children. The American and Foreign Christian Union is inviting all the Roman Catholics. The Missionary Society is inviting all the heathen. The printing-presses of Bible Societies are going night and day, doing nothing but printing invitations to this great gospel banquet. And are you not afraid that there will be more guests than accommodation? No! All who have been invited will not half fill up the table of God's supply. There are chairs for more. There are cups for more. God could with one feather of His wing cover up all those who have come; and when He spreads out both wings, they cover all the earth and all the heavens. (*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*) *None cast out by Christ*:—In some of the hotels on the road to the lead and gold mines of California, there is constantly to be found in the register the names of persons with "D.B." opposite to them. This means "dead broke," and it is the custom never to refuse

a meal to these poor fellows who have risked and lost their all in these precarious ventures. (*H. O. Mackey.*) *Whosoever comes is saved*:—A messenger came to a Sunday-school superintendent and said: "Hasten as quick as you can, there is a boy in a garret that wants to see you: he is dying." The Sunday-school superintendent hastened to the place, and in the garret, in the straw, lay a boy who had been crushed by a cart. He was dying; and as the superintendent entered, the boy said: "Oh! I am so glad you have come. Didn't I hear you say the other Sunday that 'whomsoever comes to God he would be saved?'" "Yes," replied the superintendent, "I said about that." "Well," said the boy, "then I am saved. I have been a bad boy, but I have been thinking of that, and I have been saying that over to myself, and I am saved." After he had seen his superintendent, his strength seemed to fail, and in a few moments he expired, and the last words on his lips were: "Whomsoever cometh to God, He will in no wise be cast out." He did not get the words exactly right, but he got the spirit. *Mercy for all*:—Men are going to ruin; but not like the boat that was seen shooting the rapid, and had reached a point above the cataract where no power could stem the raging current. To the horror of those who watched it shooting on to destruction, a man was seen on board, and asleep. The spectators ran along the banks. They cried; they shouted; and the sleeper awoke at length to take in all his danger at one fearful glance. To spring to his feet, to throw himself on the bench, to seize the oars, to strain every nerve in superhuman efforts to turn the boat's head to the shore, was the work of an instant. But in vain. Away went the bark to its doom, like an arrow from the bow. It hangs a moment on the edge of the gulf; and then, is gone for ever. Suppose a man to be as near hell!—if I could awaken him, I would. The dying thief was saved in the act of going over into perdition. Christ caught and saved him there. And He who is mighty to save, saving at the uttermost can save, though all our life were wasted to its last breath, if that last breath is spent in gasping out St. Peter's cry, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) *A Saviour for the lost*:—"I am lost," said Mr. Whitefield's brother to the Countess of Huntingdon. "I am delighted to hear it," said the Countess. "Oh," cried he, "what a dreadful thing to say!" "Nay," said she, "'for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'; therefore I know He is come to save you." O sinner, it would be unreasonable to despair. The more broken thou art, the more ruined thou art, the more vile thou art in thine own esteem, so much the more room is there for the display of infinite mercy and power. *The gospel for dying hours*:—You may know the name of Mr. Durham, the author of a famous book on Solomon's Song, one of the most earnest of Scotland's ancient preachers. Some days before he died he seemed to be in some perplexity about his future well-being, and said to his friend Mr. Carstairs, "Dear brother, for all that I have written or preached, there is but one Scripture which I can now remember or dare grip unto now that I am hastening to the grave. It is this—'Whosoever cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.' Pray tell me if I dare lay the weight of my salvation upon it." Mr. Carstairs justly replied, "Brother, you may depend upon it, though you had a thousand salvations at hazard." You see it was a plain, sinner's text that He rested on. Just as Dr. Guthrie wanted them to sing a bairn's hymn, so do dying saints need the plain elementary doctrines of the gospel to rest upon. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Jesus a great Saviour*:—Remember He never did cast any one out. Never yet! Never one! I have declared this everywhere, and I have said, "If Jesus Christ casts any one of you out when you come to Him, pray let me know; for I do not want to go up and down the country telling lies." Again I give the challenge. If my Lord does cast out one poor soul that comes to Him, let me know it, and I will give up preaching. I should not have the face to come forward and preach Christ after that; for He Himself has said it, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"; and He would be a false Christ if He acted contrary to His word. He cannot cast you out; why should He? "Oh, but then I am so bad." So much the less likely is He to refuse you, for there is the more room for His grace. (*Ibid.*) *Christ never fails*:—When a man brings out a patent medicine, he publishes verifications of the efficacy of his physic. He gets a number of cases, and he advertises them. I suppose they are genuine. I should not like to be hanged if they were not. I suppose, therefore, they are all accurate and authentic. But there is one thing which you never knew a medicine advertiser do: he never advertises the failures of the medicine. The number of persons that have been induced to buy the remedy, and have derived no good from it: if these were all advertised, it might occupy more room in the newspaper than those who write of a

cure. My Lord Jesus Christ is a Physician who never had a failure yet—never once. Never did a soul wash in Christ's blood without being made whiter than snow. Never did a man, besotted with the worst of vice, trust in Jesus without receiving power to conquer his evil habits. Not even in the lowest pit of hell is there one that dares to say, "I trusted Christ, and I am lost. I sought His face with all my heart, and He cast me away." There is not a man living that could say that, unless he dared to lie; for not one has with heart and soul sought the Saviour, and trusted in Him, and then had a negative from Him. He must save you if you trust Him. As surely as He lives He must save you, for He has put it, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." I will repeat it, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." You have never come if He has not received you; for He must save those who trust in Him. (*Ibid.*) *The forgiving mercy of God*:—It is reported of Julius Cæsar, that he never entertained hatred against any so deeply but he was willing to lay down the same upon the tender of submission. As when C. Memnius put in for the consulship, he befriended him before others of the competition, notwithstanding that Memnius had made bitter invectives against him. Thus the great God of Heaven, to whom all the Cæsars and kings of the earth are tributaries and homagers, doth never hate so irreconcilably but that true humiliation will work a reconciliation—let but the sinner appear before Him in a submissive posture, and His anger will be soon appeased. (*J. Spencer.*) *How to come to Christ*:—At a gathering in the West End of London the Rev. Cæsar Malan found himself seated by a young lady. In the course of conversation he asked her if she were a Christian. She turned upon him, and somewhat sharply replied, "That's a subject I don't care to have discussed here this evening." "Well," answered Mr. Malan, with inimitable sweetness of manner, "I will not persist in *speaking* of it, but I shall pray that you may give your heart to Christ, and become a useful worker for Him." A fortnight afterwards they met again, and this time the young lady approached the minister with marked courtesy, and said, "The question you asked me the other evening has abided with me ever since, and caused me very great trouble. I have been trying in vain in all directions to find the Saviour, and I come now to ask you to help me to find Him. I am sorry for the way in which I previously spoke to you, and now come for help." Mr. Malan answered her, "Come to Him just as you are." "But will He receive me just as I am, and now?" "Oh, yes," said Mr. Malan, "gladly will He do so." They then knelt together and prayed, and she soon experienced the holy joy of a full forgiveness through the blood of Christ. The young lady's name was Charlotte Elliot, and to her the whole Church is indebted for the pathetic hymn commencing, "Just as I am, without one plea. (*Ira D. Sankey.*) *None cast out*:—I went the other day to St. Cross Hospital near Winchester. There they give away a piece of bread to everybody who knocks at the door. I knocked as bold as brass. Why should I not? I did not humble myself particularly and make anything special of it. It was for all, and I came and received as one of the people who were willing to knock. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The comfort of the gospel in a dying hour*:—When the great Bishop Butler was lying on his death-bed, he was observed to be unusually pensive and dejected, and on being asked the cause, he replied, "Though I have endeavoured to avoid sin and please God to the utmost of my power, yet from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am still afraid to die." A friend who stood by read him this text. "Ah," said the dying man, I have read that a thousand times, but I never felt its full force till this moment, and now I die happy. (*Dean Stanley.*)

Vers. 38–40. **For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.**—*The love of the Father*:—The amazing love of the Father appears—I. IN HIS SPARING THIS GUILTY WORLD, though He spared not the angels that sinned. His mercy is seen in man's long day of grace, and in thy day of grace, sinner. Accept it ere the dawn of the day of judgment. II. IN CHOOSING AND DRAWING GUILTY MEN TO BE SAVED. To give men liberty to be saved is love indeed; to provide a ransom is love higher still; but its loftiest height is seen in the drawing operations of Father, Son, and Spirit. But for this men would not come at all. III. IN HIS GIVING CHRIST TO BE THE WAY OF SALVATION (chap. iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32). Had He shot down a beam of heavenly light, or caused us to hear a heavenly note, this would have left us inexcusable; but He gave the best of His treasures. He resolved that all salvation should be found in the Son, and avoided leaving any details to us. IV. IN HIS REVEALING HIMSELF TO US THROUGH CHRIST (chap. xiv. 9, 10). Not through an interpreter, but through One who shared His

nature and was the perfect embodiment of His will. V. IN APPOINTING THE ETERNAL REWARD FOR REDEEMED SINNERS THROUGH CHRIST (ver. 39, 40). (*A. A. Bonar.*) *The purpose of Christ's coming*:—I. CHRIST CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN. 1. How does it appear that He was originally in heaven? (vers. 33, 51, 62). (1) He had a real existence before He was born (chap. i. 15; viii. 58). (2) He was before the world (Heb. i. 8); for He made the world (Heb. i. 2, 8, 10; Col. i. 14–16; John i. 1, 2). (3) The existence He had before was purely Divine (Phil. ii. 6–7; Acts xx. 28). (4) The Divine nature was communicated to Him from the Father (chap. v. 26, vii. 29, xvi. 15; Heb. i. 3). (5) Hence He is said to be in heaven by reason of His Divine essence, which He always had from and with the Father (chap. vi. 62). 2. What are we to understand by His coming down from heaven? His assuming our human nature, and in it conversing upon earth (chap. i. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16). II. As Christ came from heaven, so HE CAME NOT TO DO HIS OWN WILL, BUT HIS THAT SENT HIM. 1. Christ's will as He is God is no way different from the Father's. 2. As man His will was distinct from the Father's, but still subordinate to it (Luke xxii. 42); and therefore though He had a will of His own as man, yet He came not to fulfil that. 3. But our Saviour speaks not here of Himself, either as God or man, but as God-man, Mediator, one sent from the Father to do His will. From hence it follows—1. That God's will only is the fountain of man's happiness and salvation. For—(1) God made man upright and happy (Eccles. vii. 29). (2) Man made himself sinful and miserable (Hos. xiii. 9). (3) But he cannot make himself happy again (Jer. x. 23). (4) And as man cannot, so none but God can. None else could find out a way, and none else effect it when found. (5) God hath no other motive but His own will and pleasure to save man (Eph. i. 5). (*a*) Man himself could be no motive (Deut. vii. 7, 8). (*b*) Neither could the hope of glory be so, God receiving nothing thereby (Job xxii. 2, 3; Psa. xvi. 2). 2. That Christ came to accomplish the will of God. (1) By acquainting us with what is necessary to be known or done in order to be saved (chap. xiv. 2). (2) By giving us, in His own person, a perfect example (1 Pet. ii. 21; Matt. xi. 30). (3) By enabling us sincerely to perform whatsoever is enjoined us (chap. xv. 5; Philip. iv. 13). (4) By dying for us (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 16). (5) By continuing to intercede for us (Heb. vii. 25; John i. 1, 2). III. USES. 1. Give God the glory of your salvation. 2. Bless Him for all the means of it. (1) For sending His Son to die for us. (2) For sending His Spirit to live within us. (3) For vouchsafing to us the means of grace. 3. Trust Him only for the accomplishment of your salvation. (1) By the pardon of your sins. (2) The strengthening of your graces (Phil. ii. 13). (3) Power to persevere (Matt. x. 22). 4. Hence learn also of your Saviour—(1) To submit your wills to God's (1 Sam. iii. 18). (2) To do the will of Him who sent you hither. And it is His will—(1) That you repent (Acts xvii. 30). (2) That you turn from your sins (Ezek. xviii. 30, xxxiii. 11). (3) That you love the Lord with all your hearts (Matt. xxii. 37). (4) That you earnestly endeavour to work out your salvation (Phil. ii. 12). (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Perfect obedience*:—In a daring inroad beyond the Tigris, Abu Taher advanced to the gates of the capital with no more than five hundred horse. By the special order of Moctador the bridges had been broken down, and the person or head of the rebel was expected every hour by the Commander of the Faithful. His lieutenant, from a motive of fear or pity, apprised Abu Taher of his danger, and recommended a speedy escape. "Your master," said the intrepid Carmathian to the messenger, "is at the head of thirty thousand soldiers; three such men as these are wanting in his host." At the same instant, turning to three of his companions, he commanded the first to plunge a dagger into his own breast, the second to leap into the Tigris, and the third to cast himself headlong down a precipice. They obeyed without a murmur. "Relate what you have seen," continued the Imam. "Before the evening your general shall be chained among my dogs." Before evening the camp was surprised and the menace executed. (*Gibbon.*) *To do the will of God is the true end of life*:—The end of life is not to do good, although many of us think so. It is not to win souls, although I once thought so. The end of life is to do the will of God whatever it may be. (*Professor Drummond.*) **This is the Father's will . . . that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.** *The Father's will*:—I. THE DIVINE SIDE OF THE WORK OF SALVATION. 1. How sovereign its character. The Father's will is independent, omnipotent, unchangeable, perfect, full of love. 2. The obedient servant of that will (ver. 38). Christ came not to do His own will, His own private purposes, but "the commandment of the Father" (Psa. xl.). To this end He took on Him the form of a servant (Isa.

xlii.). (1) This was needful as an example for us; (2) and that we may know that Christ is no amateur Saviour. He has come willingly enough, but the reason was the Father's will. So that when Christ forgives or receives it is the Father's will. 3. God's will was that His Son should have disciples, a flock, members, a bride, brethren. 4. These persons Jesus undertook to keep, and to raise them up at the last day. II. THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE WORK OF SALVATION (ver. 40). 1. This is still based on the Divine will. 2. The same obedient servant is engaged in it. 3. The terms are "seeing and believing on the Son." We cannot see Christ with our natural organs, but we can read and hear about Him. The eyes of our understanding discern Him; the sense of faith recognizes Him. 4. These terms are open to all. "Every one," the man of great or of little faith, rich or poor, &c. None are excluded but those who exclude themselves. 5. Those who believe in Jesus are in a present state of safety. They have everlasting life. Conclusion: 1. Never fear that there is anything in the secret purposes of God which can contradict His open promises. Never dream if you are a believer that any dark decree can shut you out from the benefits of grace. 2. Fear not that your believing will end in failure. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Doing God's will in our daily work* (text, and Mark vi. 3):—Scripture speaks of Christ as the Servant of the Lord. But not till most of His brief history had passed did He begin to preach the gospel. For thirty years He was engaged in the everyday duties of life. I. OUR DAILY WORK MAY BE TRUE SERVICE FOR GOD. Housework, the innumerable details of a mother's lot, manual labour, a sufferer's duties, commercial life, brain-toil—for these we may be as truly sent of God as an apostle or a prophet. 1. God's providential appointment shows where He wants our work. That we have our particular gifts, that our training fits us for a special post, that circumstances uncontrolled by us have brought us to a certain position, that our position involves definite duties—what are these but God pointing to what He requires us to do. 2. It were unlikely that most of our life should be necessarily spent on what has no vital bearing on eternity. No small feature of the blessedness of heaven is that there they serve Him. Consecration to Christ involves that He be glorified by our entire being. He claims us wholly. It is said that there is a point in the upper air where the discordant sounds of earth blend in harmony, the noise of the streets cannot be distinguished from the murmur of the sea, nor the shout of the battle from the chime of bells, nor the mirthful song from the sufferer's moan—there they are one; so the varied parts of our life may blend in a harmonious voice of praise ceaselessly rising to our exalted Lord, as by Himself the will of God was done as truly at the carpenter's bench as in the most solemn agony of the garden and the cross. II. SOME OF THE DIRECTIONS IN WHICH THIS DIVINE SERVICE MAY BE RENDERED. 1. Our daily toil tends to the well-being of others. The domestic servant contributes to the comfort of the home, the mechanic serves many a real human need, the teacher by voice or pen spreads knowledge, the physician and the nurse heal the body, the artist trains some of the higher faculties of the mind, the merchant produces or makes earth's productions available; there is no right calling which does not in some way benefit mankind. 2. And daily toil presents the best opportunity for manifesting the religion of Christ. 3. Daily toil is one of the great schools for training spiritual life. III. THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS SERVICE SHOWS THE SACREDNESS OF OUR WORK-DAY LIFE. 1. That all work may be Divine may well reconcile us to tasks that seem lowly. 2. This suggests a searching test of our belonging to Christ. For what is it to be Christ's, but to share His life. If we are only Christians on Sundays we are not Christ's. 3. This shows God's way to larger service presently. Was it not because He did the will of Him that sent Him in that humble village home, that He learnt to say in trial more awful than man can know, "Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt"? (*C. New.*) *The believer's safety*:—I. CHRIST WILL LOSE NONE THAT ARE GIVEN TO HIM. 1. How doth God give us to Christ? (1) By making us sensible of our sin and misery (Jer. viii. 6; John xvi. 7, 8). (2) By making us humble (Isa. lxiv. 6; Matt. v. 3, xi. 28). (3) By inclining us to piety by His preventing grace (James iv. 6). (4) By convincing us that Christ was sent to be our Saviour. 2. How shall those not be lost? They shall have—(1) Their sins pardoned (1 John ii. 1–2). (2) Their hearts renewed (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Tit. iii. 5). (3) God reconciled (Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 18). (4) Their graces confirmed (Luke xxii. 32). (5) And so their souls eternally saved. (6) This Christ is able (Heb. vii. 25) and willing (Luke xiii. 34) to do. II. CHRIST'S CARE OVER HIS PEOPLE REACHES TO THE DAY OF THEIR RESURRECTION. 1. God's justice will raise the wicked—(1) To judge (Eccl. xii. 14; 2 Cor. v. 10). (2) To condemn. (3) To punish (Matt. xxv.

46). 2. Christ will raise the saints to bless them—(1) With freedom from all evil (Rev. xxi. 4). (2) With the confluence of all good (1 Cor. ii. 9). III. USES. 1. Carefully attend those means which God gives to bring your souls to Christ. 2. Commit your souls only to Christ's care (1 Pet. iv. 19). 3. Live as becomes Christians. (*Bp. Beveridge.*) *Christ our keeper* :—The next thing we learn here is that all these persons Jesus Christ undertook to keep. He should "lose nothing." This is a very remarkable expression. The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, has taken all those who were given of the Father to Him into His custody. He is the surety; He is responsible for them, and He keeps them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **The last day.** I. EACH MAN HAS HIS LAST DAY. To each a sun rises of which he never sees the setting, or a sun sets of which he never sees the rising. II. FAMILIES HAVE THEIR LAST DAY. Households part never to meet again. Ancient lines dating back beyond the Conquest, at last come to an end. The ancestral mansion is vacant, the title is extinct, the estates revert to the state. In almost every community "there is one alone, he hath neither child nor brother," and his last day will be the last day of his name and race. III. STATES ALSO HAVE THEIR LAST DAY. Where are the thrones of Carthage and Tyre, of Assyria and Egypt, of Macedon and Rome? One sun arose on them still breathing, the next found them only matters of history. In the interval they had passed from something to nothing. And other states occupied their places; not a few of whom, in their turn, have expired and been laid away in the cemeteries of history. IV. THE WORLD WILL HAVE ITS LAST DAY. We have the best authority for saying that the time will come when the human race will disappear in a body from the earth, and the planet itself and all things therein be burned up. Exactly when this greatest of last days will come we are not informed. The month, the year, the century, the millennium even, in which it will occur, is not foretold. So little hint is given of its exact locality in history, that its actual advent will take the world by surprise. Up rolls the last sun from the east as brightly and steadily as usual. Men get them to their business, their pleasures, without a thought of change. (*E. F. Burr.*) *The resurrection of believers* :—When a farmer holds in his hand the first ripe sheaf of corn he has in possession an unassailable proof that he will have a harvest. More decisive and satisfactory evidence to that effect could not be desired by any reasonable man. Long before this time the precious seed had been cast into the dark bosom of the earth, when no tokens were visible that nature possessed any power of life. But in due season the sun began to warm the sleeping world, the gentle rain from heaven fell upon the place beneath, and the winds of the south whispered of a coming revival. Soon there was first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear, soon the first ripe sheaf telling of a harvest at hand. Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept, the infallible proof that we shall have a resurrection from the gloomy winter of death. (*Archibald Craig.*) *The resurrection of believers a certainty* :—Trees, in the winter time, appear to the view of all men as if they were withered and quite dead, yet when the springtime comes, they become alive again, and, as before, do bring forth their buds, blossoms, leaves, and fruit, The reason is because the body, grain, and arms of the tree are all joined and fastened to the root where the sap lies all the winter time, and from thence, by reason of so near conjunction, it is derived in the springtime to all parts of the tree. Even so the bodies of men have their winter also, and that is in death, in which time they are turned into dust, and so remain for a time. Yet in the springtime, that is, in the last day, at the resurrection of all flesh, by means of the mystical union with Christ, His Divine and quickening virtue shall stream from thence to all the bodies of His members, and cause them to live again, and that to life eternal. (*Strode.*)

Vers. 41–51. **The Jews then murmured at Him because He said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.**—*Weighty truths* :—1. THAT CHRIST'S LOWLY CONDITION IS A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO THE NATURAL MAN. 1. Had He come as a conqueror with royal favours for His followers they would have received Him willingly; but their pride refused to believe that the lowly prophet was from God. 2. There is nothing surprising in this. It is human nature showing itself in its true colours (1 Cor. i. 23). Thousands reject the gospel because of its humbling doctrines. Christ's teaching and example they admire, but His blood they cannot away with. II. MAN'S NATURAL INABILITY TO REPENT AND BELIEVE, until the Father draws him. We are spiritually dead and without the power to give ourselves life. The will of man is the part of him that is in fault. It would not be true to say that a man has a wish to come, but no power; it is that a man has no power because he has no

desire. III. THE SALVATION OF A BELIEVER IS A PRESENT THING. It is not said that he shall have life at the judgment day, but that he has it now. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *Four enigmas solved*:—I. The enigma of CHRIST'S HEAVENLY ORIGIN (vers. 41–43). 1. The mystery propounded. The difficulty was not that the Messiah's origin should be mysterious. The popular opinion, based on Dan. vii. 13, was that when Christ came no one should know whence He was (vii. 27). But the Jews supposed that they knew exactly whence Jesus was, and that He should have come down from heaven seemed absurd. 2. The mystery resolved. What to the learned Scripturists of His day was a puzzle He left a puzzle. To have refuted their objections by a declaration of what took place at Bethlehem would only have increased their incredulity. The true method of faith is not to believe that Christ is Divine because the Incarnation story is authentic: but that Christ having been powerfully declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection (Rom. i. 4), the account given of His conception must be correct. II. The enigma of MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY (vers. 43–45). 1. The difficulty set forth. Christ blamed His hearers for their unbelief (ver. 36), and yet affirmed (ver. 44). This is what the intellect of centuries has wrestled with. 2. The difficulty set aside. (1) Not by denying the fact of man's responsibility (chap. v. 40, vi. 36). This the Scripture often declares (Rom. i. 18, vi. 23: Eph. v. 6; 1 Pet. iii. 12) and conscience confirms. (2) Not by explaining away the alleged necessity of Divine grace (vers. 37, 44, 45). But—(3) By showing that the Father's drawing interferes not with human freedom. In naming it a "drawing" and a "teaching" Christ makes it a moral suasion. III. Enigma of SAVING FAITH (vers. 46, 47). 1. The perplexity stated. If no one could come to Him without first hearing and learning of the Father, then no one could come (Exod. xxxiii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 16). This, though not expressed, was clearly the hearer's thoughts. 2. The perplexity recognized. He admitted that no one had ever seen the Father. 3. The perplexity removed. He, the Son, had seen the Father (vers. 19; i. 18; xvi. 28). Hence to hear and learn of the Father was to hear and learn of Him whom He had sent. To learn of the Father one must be a disciple of Christ. IV. The enigma of ETERNAL LIFE (vers. 47–51). 1. The riddle proposed. The manna had only supported physical life for a few years, and those who had partaken of it were dead. The Jews were at a loss to know how Christ could do more for them than Moses. 2. The riddle read. (1) The bread of life was a living, spiritual Person (ver. 48). (2) It was in itself living and life-giving. (3) When eaten by the soul it communicates to the soul the life itself contained. (4) The soul thus vivified could not die. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Reason and faith*:—There is nothing so truly reasonable as to exclude reason from the province of faith; and nothing so truly irrational as to lose sight of reason in things which are not necessarily of faith. The two excesses are equally dangerous—to shut out reason, or to make it all in all. Faith tells us what the senses cannot tell; but it never contradicts them; it is above, and not against them. (*Pascal.*) *Murmuring a great sin*:—Consider that murmuring is a mercy-embittering sin, a mercy-souring sin. As the sweetest things put into a sour vessel sours them, or put into a bitter vessel embitters them, so murmuring puts gall and wormwood into every cup of mercy that God gives into our hands. The murmurer writes "Marah," that is, bitterness, upon all his mercies, and he reads and tastes bitterness in them all. As "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet," so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter. (*T. Brook.*) *Murmuring a hydra-headed sin*:—As the River Nile bringeth forth many crocodiles, and the scorpion many serpents, at one birth, so murmuring is a sin that breeds and brings forth many sins at once. It is like the monster hydra—cut off one head and many will rise up in its room. It is the mother of harlots, the mother of all abominations, a sin that breeds many other sins, viz., disobedience, contempt, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, rebellion, cursing, carnality; yea, it charges God with folly, yea, with blasphemy. The language of a murmuring soul is this, "Surely God might have done this sooner, and that wiser, and the other thing better." (*T. Brooks.*) **No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.**—*Coming to Christ*:—I. THE RELIGIOUS ACTION OF WHICH CHRIST SPEAKS. Coming to Him—a frequent Scriptural phrase expressive of the first step in religion. 1. Its nature. An act of the soul. There was no impediment to a literal approach. He was always accessible. Coming is used for faith in Christ as prophet, priest, and king, and living on His fulness for all spiritual purposes. 2. Its importance. (1) Implied in the invitation of Scripture, "Come unto Me." (2) In the promises (ver. 37). (3) In the directions, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." (4) In the decisions, "If

ye believe not ye shall die." II. THE INABILITY OF MAN TO PERFORM IT OF HIMSELF. Whence does this arise? 1. Not from any Divine decree, for it would be neither just nor reasonable to command men to believe and to decree that they should not. But—2. From the depravity of the heart. 3. And in some cases carnal policy operates to fetter the mind to its moral powers. Success in life is the one thing needful. 4. From religious mistakes. Some imagine that they have come in sacramental actions, or by the repetition of certain words, or by good works. III. THE DIVINE AGENCY BY WHICH IT IS ACCOMPLISHED. 1. The Father. He draws by moral and persuasive means. He draws man as guilty that He may be pardoned; as ignorant, that he may be instructed, &c. 2. The process is generally conviction of sin, desire for salvation, direction to the cross, discovery of a Saviour, trust, safety, rest. IV. THE DELIVERANCE PROMISED. 1. The solemn event which the language implies. We must die. 2. The resurrection promised. The event is general, but the benefit is particular. 3. The agency by which it is effected. "I," which shows the dignity and power of Christ. 4. The period of its performance—"the last day." The day for which all others were made, and to which they are introductory. Conclusion: 1. In coming to Christ nothing can prevent your salvation (chap. x. 27–29). 2. In turning from Him nothing can save you from perdition. (*J. E. Good.*) *The Christian now drawn to Christ, and hereafter to be raised by Him:*—I. OUR COMING TO CHRIST. 1. This is not to be understood corporeally. It was not so taken by Himself. "Ye will not come," and yet many literally come from captiousness, curiosity, for loaves and fishes, and under temporary emotion, and after awhile "went back." 2. But the expression is taken from the body, and there is hardly a part of it that has not been used to hold forth the operations of faith. Sometimes the reference is—(1) To the eye; then believing is seeing Christ. (2) To the ear; then believing is hearing Him. (3) To the taste; then believing is eating His flesh and drinking His blood. (4) To the head; then believing is knowing Him. (5) To the feet; then believing is coming to Him. 3. This coming to Christ implies—(1) Absence. Else why come? (2) Accessibleness. How can we come unless we can approach Him? "Lo, I am with you alway." (3) Application. We come to Him—(*a*) As the way that we may walk with Him; (*b*) As to a refuge that we may enter Him; (*c*) As to a fountain that we may be cleansed; (*d*) As a foundation on which we may build; (*e*) As to a physician for cure; (*f*) As our prophet, priest, and king, to be taught, saved, and ruled over by Him. 4. Faith is trust, confidence. II. MAN'S INABILITY WITHOUT DIVINE AGENCY. 1. This is a very unwelcome doctrine, even to those who admit human depravity; but it is wrapped up in that depravity. 2. This is a Scriptural doctrine—"In our flesh dwelleth no good thing." 3. This is a doctrine based upon the nature of things. As we cannot perform natural actions without the concurrence of nature, how can we perform spiritual actions without the concurrence of the Spirit? 4. This is a doctrine of importance. (1) It serves to show those who are the subjects of this work what is their duty to bless and praise God for His sovereign grace. (2) It serves to show sinners their duty to pray to Him who wills all men to be saved. III. THE INFLUENCE BY WHICH THE SOUL IS BROUGHT TO THE SAVIOUR. In a general way the Father draws thus. 1. There is a confliction of sin. 2. This produces distress and fear. 3. Hence renunciation and despair. 4. Yet along with this is hope. 5. Concurrently new desires after Jesus. 6. Reception of Jesus as a Saviour, and reliance on His salvation. IV. THE FINAL BLESSEDNESS RESULTING FROM THIS. 1. The speciality of this reference. He will raise all, but the privilege is limited to some. 2. The memory of this blessedness. It is the completion of the blessedness of a persevering Christian life. Without the body the Christian man would be incomplete. Man will be raised infinitely improved. 3. The Author of it. Christ is not only the model of this resurrection, but its accomplisher. 4. Its certainty. If it were not so, He would have told them. "Because I live ye shall live also." (*W. Jay.*) *Human inability:*—I. MAN'S INABILITY. Wherein does this consist? 1. Not in any physical defect. If in coming to Christ moving the body should be any assistance, or includes the utterance of a prayer, man can come. 2. Nor in any mental lack. Man can believe in the Bible and in Christ as in anything else. But—3. In his nature, which is so debased by the Fall that it is impossible for him to come without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. To enter into the subject of this inability note—(1) It lies in the obstinacy of the human will, which is set on mischief and disinclined to that which is good. (2) The understanding is darkened so that it cannot perceive the things of God until opened by the Holy Spirit. (3) The affections are depraved and must be renewed. We

love that we ought to hate, and hate that we ought to love. (4) Conscience has been impaired by the Fall, and must be repaired. 4. So that while largely this is a question of the will, it is not exclusively so, for sometimes even in the regenerate there is will without power, much more in those who are dead in trespasses and sins. 5. Were it otherwise, how are we to account for the uniform testimony of the Scriptures that our salvation is wholly due to God? 6. This doctrine is condemned for its hurtful tendency. But what doctrine is there that will not hurt a man if he chooses to make hurt of it? So with this otherwise it only hurts Satan's kingdom. 7. You are not warranted in saying, "If I cannot save myself and cannot come to Christ, I must sit still and do nothing." There are many things you can do. (1) To be found continually in the house of God is in your power. (2) To study the Word of God. (3) To renounce outward sin. (4) To make your life honest, sober, righteous. 8. But your want of power is no excuse, seeing you have no desire to come, and are living in wilful rebellion. Suppose a liar has been a liar so long that he says he has no power to speak the truth, is that an excuse? If a drunkard has become so foully a drunkard that he cannot pass a public-house, do you therefore excuse him? No; because his inability to reform lies in his nature, which he has no desire to conquer. II. THE FATHER'S DRAWINGS. 1. God draws men by the preaching of the gospel, but not by this alone, for the men of Capernaum had the gospel in its fulness, and attested by miracles. There is such a thing as being drawn by a minister without being drawn by God. 2. Clearly it is a Divine drawing, a sending out of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity. 3. In this there is no compulsion. Christ saves no one against his will. 4. How then does the Holy Spirit draw him? By making him willing. He goes to the secret fountain of the heart and he knows how, by some mysterious operation, to turn the will in an opposite direction. But he is saved with full consent, for he is made willing in the day of God's power. "Draw me and I will run after Thee." 5. How this is done is a mystery, but the apparent way is: (1) He finds a man with a good opinion of himself—an effectual barrier to coming to Christ—and lays bare the man's heart, full of sin, so that he stands aghast. (2) The man says I will try and reform—another barrier—but the Holy Spirit shows him he cannot do this. (3) The heart sinks, and the man is ready to despair—then the Spirit shows him the Cross and enables him to believe. III. APPLICATION: 1. One says, "If all this be true, what is to become of my religion? I must give it up and begin again." That will be better than building on the sand of your ability, and as soon as you say, "I cannot come to Christ; Lord draw me," grace is begun in your heart, and God will not leave you till the work is finished. 2. Careless sinner, thy salvation hangs in God's hand, and He is the God thou art grieving every day. Does not this make them tremble. If so the Spirit has begun to draw. 3. Some of you are conscious that you are coming to Christ. It is the Father's doing—"With lovingkindness have I drawn thee." 4. Rejoice in this love those of you who have come. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Things to be remembered:*—I. We must never suppose that the doctrine of this verse TAKES AWAY MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY to God for his soul. On the contrary, the Bible always distinctly declares that if any man is lost, it is his own fault (Mark viii. 36). If we cannot reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility now, we need not doubt that it will be all plain at the last day. II. Nor does Christ's teaching here LIMIT THE OFFERS OF SALVATION TO SINNERS. On the contrary, we must hold firmly that pardon and peace are to be offered freely through Christ to all without exception. We never know who they are that God will draw, and have nothing to do with it. Our duty is to invite all, and leave it to God to choose the vessels of mercy. III. We must not suppose THAT WE, OR ANYBODY ELSE, ARE DRAWN, UNLESS WE COME TO CHRIST BY FAITH. This is the grand mark and evidence of any one being the subject of the Father's drawing work. If "drawn" he comes to Christ, believes, and lives. Where there is no faith and love, there may be talk, self-conceit, and high profession. But there is no "drawing" of the Father. IV. We must always remember THAT GOD ORDINARILY WORKS BY MEANS, and specially by such means as He Himself has appointed. No doubt He acts as a sovereign. But we must carefully maintain the great principle that God ordinarily draws through the instrumentality of His Word. The man that neglects the public preaching and private reading of God's Word, has no right to expect that God will draw him. The thing is possible, but highly improbable. V. WE MUST NEVER ALLOW OURSELVES OR OTHERS TO WASTE TIME IN TRYING TO FIND out, as a first question, WHETHER WE ARE DRAWN OF GOD the Father, elect, chosen, and the like. The first and main question is, whether we have come to Christ by

faith. If we have, let us take comfort and be thankful. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The drawing of the Father*:—Man is like a waggon sunk in the mire under a heavy load, and Divine love is the strong team which draws it up and draws it forward. (*R. Besser, D.D.*) Just as the magnet does not attract everything, but only iron, so there must be in man a disposedness of heart, before God's drawing can take hold of him. (*Theophylact.*) *A man cannot come to Christ unassisted by the Holy Spirit*:—I have seen a captive eagle, caged far from its distant home, as he sat mournful-like on his perch, turn his eye sometimes heavenwards; there he would sit in silence, like one wrapt in thought, gazing through the bars of his cage up into the blue sky; and after a while, as if noble but sleeping instincts had suddenly awoke, he would start and spread out his broad sails, and leap upward, revealing an iron chain that, usually covered by his plumage, drew him back again to his place. But though this bird of heaven knew the way to soar aloft, and sometimes, under the influence of old instincts, decayed, but not altogether dead, felt the thirst of freedom, freedom was not for him, till a power greater than his own proclaimed liberty to the captive, and shattered the shackles that bound him to his perch. Nor is there freedom for us till the Holy Spirit sets us free, and by the lightning force of truth, breaks the chains that bind us to sin. (*Dr. Guthrie.*) *Why men cannot come to Christ*:—You see a mother with her babe in her arm. You put a knife into her hand and tell her to stab that babe to the heart. She replies, very truthfully, "I cannot." Now, so far as her bodily power is concerned she can if she pleases, there is the knife, and there is the child. But she is quite correct when she says she cannot do it. Her nature as a mother forbids her doing that from which her soul revolts. It is even so with a sinner. Coming to Christ is so obnoxious to human nature that, although so far as physical and mental forces are concerned men could come if they would, it is strictly correct to say that they cannot and will not unless the Father who hath sent Christ doth draw them. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **And they shall be all taught of God.**—*The teachings of God opened*:—I. WHAT IS IMPORTED BY OUR BEING TAUGHT OF GOD. 1. Negatively. The text is not to be understood (1) of any extraordinary, visional appearances, or miraculous and immediate voice of God (Numb. xii. 8; Heb. i. 1, 2), (2) nor as opposite to or exclusive of the teachings of men. Saul was taught of God (Gal. i. 12). Yet the ministry of Ananias was honoured (Acts ix. 4, 17). 2. Positively: the teachings of God (2 Cor. iv. 6: John xiv. 26) are—(1) The sanctifying impressions of the Holy Spirit by virtue of which the soul receives marvellous light and insight into spiritual things, and this not only at conversion but continuously (1 John ii. 27; John vii. 17; Jer. xxxi. 33). Sanctification gives the soul experience of the truths of Scripture. (2) The gracious assistances of the Spirit as our need requires (Matt. x. 19; John xiv. 26). II. WHAT THOSE SPECIAL TRUTHS ARE WHICH BELIEVERS LEARN. 1. That there is abundantly more evil in their natures than they ever discerned before (John xvi. 8–9). There is threefold knowledge of sin. (1) Traditional in the rude multitude; (2) discursive in the more rational; (3) intuitive in the divinely enlightened. 2. The wrath and misery which hang over the world in consequence of sin. Scripture threatenings were before slighted (Isa. xxviii. 15; Psa. l. 21); now they see that the wages of sin is death (Rom. vi.). 3. That deliverance from sin is the greatest business man has to do in this world (Acts xvi. 30). 4. That though it be obligatory to strive after salvation, yet one's own strength is insufficient to attain it. 5. That though the case be sad it is not remediless. There is a door of hope and way of escape. 6. That there is a fulness of saving power in Christ whereby any soul that duly receives Him may be delivered from all its guilt and misery (Heb. vii. 25; Col. i. 19; Matt. xxviii. 18). 7. That we can never reap any benefit from the blood of Christ without union with Christ (1 John v. 12; Eph. iv. 16). 8. That whatever is necessary in order to this union is to be obtained in the way of prayer (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). 9. To abandon their former ways and companions (Isa. lv. 7; 2 Cor. v. 17; Psa. cxix. 115), and to see the beauty and excellency of the ways and people of God (Psa. xvi. 3; Zech. viii. 23). 10. That whatever difficulties there may be in religion they must not be discouraged or return to sin (Luke ix. 62; 1 Cor. ix. 24). III. WHAT ARE THE PROPERTIES OF DIVINE TEACHING. God teaches—1. Powerfully (2 Cor. x. 4; 1 Thess. i. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xiv. 25). 2. Sweetly (Song of Solomon i. 3; v. 16). 3. Clearly (2 Cor. iii. 16; Luke xxiv. 45). 4. Infallibly (John xiv. 13). 5. Abidingly (Psa. cxix. 98; Jer. xxxi. 33). 6. Savingly (2 Tim. iii. 15; John xvii. 3). 7. Penetratively (Matt. xi. 25; Isa. xxxii. 4). 8. Transformingly (2 Cor. iii. 18; Rom. vi. 17). IV. WHAT INFLUENCE DIVINE TEACHINGS HAVE UPON SOULS IN BRINGING THEM TO CHRIST. 1. They have an influence upon the means (2 Cor. iii. 6; 1 Cor. iii. 7).

2. Upon the mind to remove what hindered it from Christ. 3. They powerfully allure the sinner to Christ (Hos. ii. 14). V. WHY IS IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY MAN TO COME TO CHRIST WITHOUT THE FATHER'S TEACHINGS. Because—1. Of the power of sin (1) Sin is co-natural with the soul (Psa. li. 4; Isa. xlviii. 8). (2) The power of sin hath been strengthened by long continued custom which gives it the force of a second nature (Jer. xv. 23). (3) Sin is the delight of the sinner (Prov. x. 23). 2. Of the indisposition of man (1 Cor. ii. 14). Before he can come to Christ—(1) His blind understanding must be enlightened, which is the work of God (2 Cor. iv. 6; Rev. iii. 17; Eph. v. 8). (2) His hard heart must be broken and melted (Acts v. 31: Ezek. xxxvi. 26). (3) His stiff and obstinate will must be conquered (Phil. ii. 13). 3. Of the nature of faith, everything in which is supernatural. (1) The habit (Eph. ii. 8). (2) The light (Heb. xi. 1, 27). (3) The adventures (Rom. iv. 18). (4) The self-denial (Matt. v. 29). (5) The victories (Heb. xi. 33–34; Acts xv. 9; 1 John v. 4). (*John Flavel.*) *The Christian taught of God*:—I. THE RECIPIENTS OF THE TEACHING. The people of God; all of them, from the least to the greatest; and that not only instrumentally but directly. II. ITS SUBJECTS. Spiritual things generally, called—1. "Things of God," pertaining to Him and our relationship to Him. His nature and ours; His moral character and ours; His sovereignty and our dependence and duty; His salvation and our need of it. 2. "Things of Christ," relating to His person, offices and work. 3. "Things of the Spirit," our need of Him; the reality of His influence; His indwelling. III. ITS NECESSITY. 1. They must be taught. Why so? (1) Because an all-wise God has ordained it. (2) Because our ignorance and spiritual darkness require it. (3) Because this knowledge is the germ of everything of a saving and holy character in a sinner's heart. 2. None but God can effectually teach them. (1) He does not supersede the teaching of His servants, but energizes it. (2) When the ordinary means fail He does His own teaching. IV. ITS MEANS. 1. His written Word. (1) To this all others are subsidiary, and are only helpful so far as they are related to it. Preaching; creeds. (2) This excludes tradition, modern, so called, inspiration. (3) But the written Word is not sufficient without the aid of the Holy Spirit to act upon the heart and to apply its truths. 2. His providence. The man of commerce forgets, *e.g.*, that "they that will be rich fall into a temptation and a snare," and the God of providence by a calamity brings it to his mind. 3. The Christian's inward experience. This harmonizes wonderfully with Scripture, throwing light upon it, and confirming it. V. ITS EFFECT. God teaches that He may—1. Save. 2. Comfort. 3. Sanctify. 4. Make useful. 5. Make meet for heaven. (*C. Bradley, M.A.*) *Divine light necessary to our salvation*:—The gospel is a picture of God's free grace to sinners. Were we in a room hung with the finest paintings, and adorned with the most exquisite statues, we could not see one of them if all light were excluded. Now the blessed Spirit's illumination is the same to the mind that outward light is to the bodily eyes. A compass is of no use to the mariner unless he have light to see it by. (*Toplady.*) *Conviction by the Holy Spirit necessary to conversion*:—Take the cold iron, and attempt to weld it, if you can, into a certain shape. How fruitless the effort! Lay it on the anvil, seize the blacksmith's hammer with all your might, let blow after blow fall upon it, and you will have done nothing; but put it in the fire, let it be softened and made malleable, then lay it on the anvil, and each stroke shall have a mighty effect, so that you may fashion it into any form you may desire; so take your heart, not cold as it is, not stony as it is by nature, but put it into the furnace; there let it be molten, and after that it can be turned like wax to the seal, and fashioned into the image of Jesus Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Divine teaching necessary*:—No human teacher can do it. Conscience cannot do it. Law in none of its forms, human or Divine, can do it. Nay, the gospel itself cannot do it. Although the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, yet, unless the Spirit of God draws forth that sword, it lies powerless in its sheath. Only when the Spirit of God wields it, is it quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, a discerner of the thoughts and purposes of the heart. Therefore, as the work of convincing the world of sin is one which nothing less than the Spirit of God can effect—and which yet must be effected thoroughly, if sin is to be driven out from the world—our Saviour was mercifully pleased to send the Comforter to produce this conviction in mankind. (*Archdeacon Hare.*) *Taught of God*:—I. THE PERSONS TO WHOM THE PROMISE IS MADE. 1. They must be living ones or they cannot be taught anything. They become so by being quickened together with Christ (Eph. ii. 5). 2. They are described in Isa. liv. 13. 3. All

that the Father hath given Christ (vers. 37, 39). Given (1) in the covenant of grace to preserve and to teach; (2) in effectual calling (chap. xvii. 6). 4. In short, they are those who are loved by the Father, redeemed by the Son and quickened by the Spirit. II. WHAT SHALL THEY BE TAUGHT? 1. To know themselves (1) as sinful (Luke xv. 18; Rom. vii. 18). (2) Their own helplessness (Isa. xxxviii. 14; Matt. xiv. 30; John xv. 5). (3) Their own ignorance (Psa. xxv. 5; Job. xxxvi. 22). 2. To know Christ as their way of life and salvation. (1) The suitableness of His righteousness (Isa. xlv. 24). (2) The completeness of His atonement (Heb. i. 26). (3) The riches and efficacy of His grace (John i. 16; Titus ii. 12). (4) In short to embrace Him as their wisdom, &c. (1 Cor. i. 36), and their Saviour from the charge, punishment, guilt, love, and dominion of sin. 3. To use the means of grace—(1) Prayer; (2) Reading and hearing God's Word. (3) The Lord's Supper. (*S. Barnard.*) *The character of faith*:—The text shows us—I. WHAT FAITH IS. Coming to Christ. II. THE REASONABLENESS OF FAITH. It is not the offspring of a diseased imagination, but the result of Divine teaching. III. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST. All God's teaching is designed to make us feel our need of Christ. (*Preacher's Analyst.*)

Vers. 47–58. **He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.**—*Everlasting life*:—I. THE BLESSING, "everlasting life." Everlasting life was never proposed in the schools of philosophy to the faith of man, or urged as a principle or motive to holiness. Those who taught were not sure of it themselves. What does it mean? We may take three views of it. 1. It is opposed to eternal death. Eternal death does not mean annihilation or destruction of being, but of well-being, of happiness and of hope. So eternal life is not mere existence, but complete well-being. 2. It is distinguished from natural life: is a state of freedom from all possible evil, and the possession of all possible good. 3. Its complete spirituality. The people of God are now quickened and made alive. They have spiritual appetites, senses, powers, passions. They can perform spiritual exercises. But it doth not yet appear what we shall be. II. THE OWNER OF THIS BLESSING. "He that believeth on Me." 1. The object of this faith—the Lord Jesus. How surprised would you be did Paul, or Peter, or James express themselves in this way! But they well knew that salvation was not in them. Thus they preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. 2. Its nature. Belief is the giving assent to a declaration as true. But credence in itself is much like knowledge. We may know a thing, and not possess it, or pursue it. Faith always operates towards Christ as its object in a way of trust and dependence, and in a way of application too. III. THE SEASON OF POSSESSION—now. Not he shall have, but he "hath." The believer has everlasting life—1. As his aim. The mariner has the port in his eye from the day he sails till he enters the desired haven. So is it with the Christian. 2. In promise. "In my Father's house," &c.; "When He who is our life," &c. 3. In trust. And who is the trustee? The Lord Jesus, our Forerunner. He is gone to take possession. 4. In participation. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." But Christians have this Spirit, and by this Spirit is the Christian sealed to the day of redemption. 5. When are Christians peculiarly indulged with these anticipations? (1) When they are alone. "When I remember Thee on my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches." (2) In the sanctuary services. "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." (3) In trouble. God acts upon the principle of the truest friendship, He is most near in the time of trouble. (4) In death. IV. THE GROUND OF THEIR CONFIDENCE. The fulness of their assurance: "Verily, verily, I say unto you," &c. Here it is truth itself that speaks; and yet Christ employs a double asseveration, so that we may learn—1. The duty of belief, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." 2. The importance of our having the full assurance of understanding, and the full assurance of faith, to establish our hearts with grace. (*W. Jay.*) *Believing must be on Christ only*:—As the eye seeks for no other light than that of the sun, and joins no candles with it to dishonour the sufficiency of its beams, so no created thing must be joined with Christ as an object of faith. Who would join the weakness of a bulrush with the strength of a rock for his protection! Who would fetch water from a muddy pond to make a pure fountain in his garden more pleasant! Address yourselves only to Him to find a medicine for your miseries and comfort in your troubles, (*S. Charnock.*) *Certain salvation by believing*:—One walking with me observed, with some emphasis, "I do not believe as you do. I am an Agnostic." "Oh," I said to him. "Yes. That is a Greek word, is it not? The

Latin word, I think, is ignoramus." He did not like it at all. Yet I only translated his language from Greek to Latin. These are queer waters to get into, when all your philosophy brings you is the confession that you know nothing, and the stolidity which enables you to glory in your ignorance. As for those of us who rest in Jesus, we know and have believed something; for we have been taught eternal verities by Him who cannot lie. Our Master was not wont to say, "It may be," or "It may not be"; but He had an authoritative style, and testified, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of what He hath taught us shall cease to be the creed of our souls. We feel safe in this assurance; but should we quit it, we should expect soon to find ourselves in troubled waters. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith in Christ must be personal*:—In Gideon's camp every soldier had his own pitcher; among Solomon's men of valour every man wore his own sword; the five wise virgins had every one oil in her own lamp. Whosoever will go to God must have a faith of his own; it must be "*Thy* faith hath saved thee." (*J. Spencer.*) *Faith, though weak, saves the soul*:—Faith is the eye by which we look to Jesus. A dim-sighted eye is still an eye; a weeping eye is still an eye. Faith is the hand with which we lay hold of Jesus. A trembling hand is still a hand. And he is a believer, whose heart within him trembles when he touches the hem of the Saviour's garment that he may be healed. Faith is the tongue by which we taste how good the Lord is. A feverish tongue. And even then we may believe, when we are without the smallest portion of comfort; for our faith is founded, not upon feelings, but upon the promises of God. Faith is the foot by which we go to Jesus. A lame foot is still a foot. He who comes slowly, nevertheless comes. (*H. Müller.*) *Everlasting life*:—I. IN CHRIST'S PURCHASE. II. IN GOD'S PROMISE. III. IN THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT. Conclusions: 1. The exclusiveness of the gospel. Without faith in Christ there is no salvation for any sinner. 2. The charity of the gospel. With faith there is salvation for all. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **I am that Bread of Life.**—*The Bread of Life*:—I. THE STAFF OF LIFE. 1. Christ is the life. 2. Where Christ is unknown there can be no life. (1) Heathenism is death. (2) Unbelief. (3) Formalism. 3. This life is worth everything and is to be obtained for nothing. 4. This life supports, not by talking about it, believing in statements concerning it, but by having and enjoying it. II. The staff of life is USED ONLY BY FAITH. Faith—1. Receives. 2. Handles. 3. Tastes. 4. Digests. 5. Enjoys. 6. Grows thereby. III. PARTICIPATION IN IT IS THE PRIVILEGE OF THE LORD'S FAMILY. It is household bread. 1. The ungodly are self-excluded. 2. The qualification is the robe of righteousness, worn only by the Lord's children. 3. The children participate through—(1) The Word; (2) the sacrament. (*J. Irons.*) *The bread of life*:—I. A REPRESENTATION OF OUR SAVIOUR. 1. Life is more valuable than all beside. 2. The Scripture represents religion as life. 3. How many people look like life, having the form of godliness without the power. 4. The relation of Christ to this life. Bread which—(1) nourishes; (2) is corn bruised: so Christ was bruised for our iniquities; (3) must be eaten, or is nothing to us: so Christ is nothing till applied. II. THE MEANS OF DERIVING THIS BENEFIT: coming to Christ and believing on Him. This reminds us—1. That Christ is accessible. 2. That faith is not mere sentiment, but a principle of life. 3. Faith is not an isolated but a continuous act. III. THE HAPPINESS HIS FOLLOWERS SHALL ENJOY. 1. They shall never thirst for the world. Worldly men desire nothing else. 2. They shall not hunger or thirst in vain. The new creature has wants and appetites, but ample provision is made for their complete satisfaction. 3. They will not hunger or thirst always. "I shall be satisfied," &c. Application: The subject is a standard by which we may estimate—1. Christ. 2. Our faith. 3. The Christian. (*Preacher's Analyst.*) *Christ the bread of life*:—The analogy between Christ and corporal meat stands in these three particulars: 1. Sustentation. Corporal meat is for the preservation of the natural life. The natural life is maintained by meat, through the concurrence of God's blessing. It is *pabulum vitæ*. Hence bread, under which all other provision is comprehended, is called the staff of life (Isa. iii. 1). Keep the strongest man from meat but a few days, and the life will extinguish and go out (1 Sam. xxx. 12). Jesus Christ is the maintainer and preserver of the spiritual life. As He give it at first, so He upholds it. It is by continual influences from Him that the life is kept from expiring. If He withdraw His influx never so little, the soul is at the giving up of the ghost, even half-dead. 2. Vegetation. Corporal meat is good for growth. It is by meat that the body is brought from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, from youth to a perfect man. Jesus Christ is

He that carries on a Christian from infancy to perfection. All the soul's growth and increase is from Christ. So the apostle, "From Him the whole body having nourishment ministered," &c. (Col. ii. 19). The branches live and increase by virtue of the sap which is derived from the root. Christians grow by virtue of the sap which is to them derived from Jesus Christ. Every part grows by Christ. 3. Reparation. Meat is a repairer of nature's decays. When by some violent sickness the spirits are consumed, the body wasted, the strength lost, meat, fitly and seasonably taken, helps, through the Divine blessing, to recall all again: "his spirit came to him again" (1 Sam. xxx. 12). Jesus Christ is the repairer of the soul's decays. Sometimes a believer, through the neglect of his duty, through surfeiting upon sin, brings spiritual languishings upon himself; his strength is decayed, his vigour is abated, his pulse beats very weakly, he can scarcely creep in the ways of God. In such a case Jesus Christ recovers him, repairs his breaches, and renews his strength, as in former times. The Psalmist speaks of this: "He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (Psa. xxiii. 3). The saints have every day experience of this restoring virtue of Christ. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *Christ alone is the bread of life:*—Some have tried to stay their hunger by the narcotics of scepticism, and others have endeavoured to get eat through the drugs of fatalism. Many stave off hunger by indifference, like the bears in winter, who are not hungry, because they are asleep. But depend upon it the only way to meet hunger is to get bread, and the only way to meet your soul's want is to get Christ, in whom there is enough and to spare, but nowhere else. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Your fathers did eat manna.**—*The bread of life and manna:*—The Palestine Exploration Society, when they came to *Tel Hum* (Capernaum), found what they believed to be the synagogue in which Jesus delivered His discourse. In turning over the stones, it was with peculiarly sacred feelings that they found a large block with a pot of manna engraved on its face. Every synagogue had its symbol—one a lamb, another a candlestick, and this, the pot of manna. We can see Jesus in His synagogue pointing with His finger to this device over the main entrance, and saying, "Our fathers did eat manna," &c. (*W. Baxendale.*) **If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.**—*Christ the chosen food of earnest Christians:*—When alone with Christ, it was heaven below; and in the prayer-meetings, when God's people were warm at heart, how you delighted to unite with them! The preaching was marrow and fatness to you. You did not mind walking a long way on a wet night to hear about your Lord and Master then. It may be there was no cushion to the seat, or you had to stand in the aisle. You did not mind that. You are getting wonderfully dainty now; you cannot hear the poor preacher whose voice was once like music to you. You cannot enjoy the things of God as once you did. Whose fault is that? The kitchen is the same, and the food the same: the appetite has gone, I fear. How ravenous I was after God's Word! how I would wake early in the morning to read those books that are full of the deep things of God! I wanted none of your nonsensical novels, nor your weekly tales, for which some of you pine, like children for sugarsticks. Then one fed on manna that came from heaven, on Christ Himself. Those were good times in which everything was delightful. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The food of the soul:*—Few passages have been so wrested as this. Men have turned meat into poison. I. WHAT THESE VERSES DO NOT MEAN. 1. Literal eating and drinking, or partaking of the Lord's Supper. We may eat that, and yet not partake of Him. For—(1) A literal eating and drinking would have been revolting to the Jews and contradictory to their law. (2) To take this literal view would be to interpose a bodily act between the soul and salvation, for which there is no precedent in Scripture. (3) It would involve most blasphemous and profane consequences. It would shut out from heaven the penitent thief, and admit to heaven thousands of godless communicants. 2. This view arises from man's morbid habit of paltry and carnal sense on Scriptural expressions. Men dislike that which makes the state of the heart the principal thing. II. WHAT THEY DO MEAN. 1. "Flesh and blood" means Christ's sacrifice. 2. "Eating and drinking" means reception of Christ's sacrifice. III. THE PRACTICAL LESSONS THEY SUGGEST. 1. That faith in Christ's atonement is necessary to salvation. 2. That faith in the atonement unites us to the Saviour and entitles us to the highest privileges. 3. That faith in the atonement is—(1) A personal act; (2) a daily act; (3) a conscious act. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The food of the soul:*—I. In Christ alone can we have any CERTAIN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE. 1. Soul hungers for the knowledge which pertains to its nature and its relation to its Creator and destiny. 2. Christ is the Truth, and satisfies this hunger. II. Christ

is the food of the soul, because He alone SATISFIES OUR MORAL NATURES. 1. There is a sense in which every man hungers after righteousness. We seek to relieve our troubled consciences—(1) By extenuating our faults; (2) by forgetting them; (3) by seeking pardon through priests. 2. But there is no satisfaction but in Christ. He sustains—(1) By justifying grace; (2) by positive holiness. III. Christ is the bread of life in that from Him we have the HOPE OF THE LIFE EVERLASTING. 1. No human speculation regarding the future, however pleasing, can kindle real hope. 2. Christ hath brought life and immortality to light, and is "in us the hope of glory." (*J. M. Ludlow, D.D.*) *The food that Jesus gave to His own*:—1. To finish His work was bread to Himself; His work finished is bread to His people. 2. His words were startling but necessary. The rock must be laid down although superficial disciples may stumble, for it is the foundation of the true disciples' faith and hope. 3. The Lord's Supper is not the subject here. Both sacraments are omitted in John, but he records the fundamental doctrines on which they rest. In the conversation with Nicodemus we have the ground of the one; here the ground of the other. Wanting Christ's sacrifice for sin the Supper would have contained nothing for us, and wanting faith in Christ crucified, we can get nothing from the sacrament. 4. Hunger centres naturally in human souls, and men have attempted to satisfy it—(1) With the good things of this life; (2) with the inanities of self-righteousness. In the text Christ shows the satisfaction of this hunger. We have—I. ON THE PART OF CHRIST—1. His incarnation: the Son as Man. Not man, a man, a son of man. Neither a son of man nor a Son of God could be our Saviour. The one is near, but has no power; the other has power, but is not near. The Incarnation combines nearness with power to save. 2. His sacrifice. The Incarnation could not save us. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Christ converged all the testimonies from Abel's sacrifice to His last passover on Himself, the Lamb of God. II. ON THE PART OF CHRISTIANS. They believe and live. Although it is a spiritual and not a material food, it is a real supply of a real hunger. The soul's hunger for righteousness and peace and God is a greater thing than bodily hunger, and must have a corresponding supply. This is found by the believer. Christ's incarnation brings God near to Him, and His sacrifice brings peace and righteousness. The believer thus has the life of God in Christ. This life is—1. Present. 2. Everlasting. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The vital relation to Christ*:—I. HE PRESSES THE GREAT DUTY OF CLOSING WITH HIM WHICH HE HAD ALREADY SET BEFORE THEM. 1. This He did by representing to them the danger to which they would expose themselves if they declined (ver. 53). 2. By directly announcing the blessings which are to be obtained by obedience (vers. 54, 55). To partake of Christ by faith secures—(1) "Eternal life"; (2) the resurrection of the last day. II. HE STATES AND ILLUSTRATES THE RELATION IN WHICH, WHEN THEY CLOSE WITH HIM BY FAITH, HE STANDS TO BELIEVING MEN. 1. It is a mutual indwelling of believers in Christ and of Christ in them (ver. 56). 2. It is a relation of the same kind as subsists between Christ and the Father (ver. 57). 3. It is a relation, the certain effects of which is life for evermore (ver. 58). (*J. A. Beith, D.D.*) **Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man.**—*Eating Christ's flesh*:—I. THE MEANING OF THE TEXT. 1. The Romanist holds that it refers to a participation of Christ's body in the sacrament. But it cannot mean that; for—(1) The Lord's Supper had not been instituted, and as Christ refers to a present duty and privilege, He could not refer to something that did not then exist. (2) Judas partook of the Lord's Supper; had he eternal life? (3) The dying thief did not partake of the Lord's Supper, but he had eternal life. 2. The true meaning. Christ had said many things about bread, about Himself as the true bread, and about their eating Him as this bread; and in ver. 51 He declares that this bread and His flesh are one and the same thing. Let us, then, try to understand—(1) What bread means. In ver. 35 belief, not literal participation, is the process by which we become partakers of everlasting life. But belief presupposes the existence of something to be believed. Then what is there in Christ that I am to believe? Why, that He is the bread of life. It follows that by "bread" we are to understand truth, and by eating reception of that truth. The bread of life, then, is the doctrine of life—the revelation made by Him who "hath abolished death," &c. This is confirmed by the fact—(*a*) That the Old Testament speaks of doctrine as meat and drink: "Wisdom hath killed her beast, . . . and she crieth, Come and eat of my bread, and drink of the wine," &c.; and nothing was more common among the Jews than the representation of doctrine under this form. How natural, then, that the greatest Jewish teachers should have used this familiar figure to

signify "I am the doctrine of life." (*b*) In ver. 63 Christ fully meets the difficulty; and that He was correctly understood is seen by ver. 68. Note, then—(*a*) That if bread means doctrine, then flesh means doctrine; (*b*) that I am not confounding Christ's doctrines with Himself, but expounding them. It is one of the great doctrines of this book, and let those who deny Christ's Divinity look to it, that He is evermore the subject of His own discourse. You might as well take the light out of the sun, and call it the sun still, as take Christ out of His teaching and call it His teaching still. Christ and His doctrine are the same: "I am the truth." (2) What eating and drinking mean. (*a*) A sense of need—appetite. (*b*) Activity towards some appropriate object for the supply of that need. (*c*) Enjoyment in the use of the object. (*d*) Resultant strength. This is eating and drinking literally. Spiritually, meat and drink are before us in the form of doctrine. (i.) There is hungering and thirsting after it. (ii.) There is action toward Christ to get that need supplied: what He commands we obey; what He promises we expect; what He offers we accept. (iii.) Then there is delight in Christ. (iv.) Finally, spiritual strength: temptation is resisted, trial endured, work done for God and man; and the evidence of a man's living on Christ is his living for Christ. II. Let me ENFORCE THE SENTIMENT OF THE TEXT. 1. There is a lesson of obligation. You have heard of Christ, His incarnation, death, resurrection, &c. What has come out of the hearing? Hunger and thirst? You feel uneasy often, and fear. I want that uneasiness and fear to develop into a sense of spiritual need. Let this stimulate action towards Christ; then joy in Christ; then doing what Christ enjoins and avoiding what Christ forbids. 2. A lesson of privilege. (1) The believer dwells in Christ; hence his safety. (2) Christ dwells in him; hence his honour. (3) Hence the believer's satisfaction "shall never hunger or thirst." (4) To crown it all, "eternal life." Life is the fullest capacity for enjoyment; then what must eternal life be? (*W. Brock, D.D.*) *Truly eating the flesh of Jesus*:—I. WHAT IS MEANT BY EATING THE FLESH AND DRINKING THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? 1. What is necessary to it? (1) We must believe in the reality of Christ; not that He was a myth, but that He was very God incarnate, who lived, died, and rose again, and is now in His proper personality, sitting at the right hand of God, from whence He will come to be our Judge. (2) We must believe in the death of Christ, "blood," not as an example, but as the expiation of sin, a propitiation through faith in His blood. 2. What is this act? (1) Appropriation. A man not only believes that bread is proper food, he takes it. So we cannot feed on Christ until we make Him our own, and for our individual selves: for we cannot eat for anybody else. (2) Receiving into oneself. Bread is taken not to be laid aside or exhibited. Every one must do this from the empress to the pauper: so the poorest and the richest must receive Christ by faith. (3) Assimilation. Faith is to the soul what the gastric juices are to the body; and so Christ by faith is taken up into the understanding and heart, and becomes part of the renewed man. He becomes our life. 3. Remarks to set this forth in a clearer manner. (1) Christ is as needful to the soul as bread is to the body. (2) Meat and drink do really satisfy. The supply of Christ is as real as the need of Him. (3) A hungry man is not appeased by talking about feeding, but by eating. So Christ beckons you to a banquet not to look on, but to feast. (4) In healthy eating there is a relish. (5) Eating times as to the body come several times a day, so take care that you partake of Christ often. Do not live on old experiences. (6) It is well to have set times for eating. People are not likely to flourish who have no regular meals. So there should be appointed times for communion with Christ. (7) The flesh and blood of Christ are foods suitable for all conditions, for babes in Christ as well as old men, for sick Christians and healthy. II. WHAT ARE THE VIRTUES OF THIS EATING AND DRINKING? 1. Life is essential (ver. 53). If you have no life in you you have nothing that is good. The sinner is dead, and there is no life to be "developed" and "educated" in him. Any good that may come to him must be by impartation, and it can never come to him but by eating the flesh, &c. Convictions of sin are of no use, nor ordinances, nor profession, nor morality. This is vital (ver. 54) for soul and body. 2. Substantial. "Meat indeed," &c. The Jewish feasting was a mere shadow: so is pleasure, &c. 3. It produces union (ver. 56). (1) To live in Christ is the peace of justification. (2) For Christ to live in us is the peace of sanctification. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The meat and drink of the new nature*:—I. WHAT CHRIST MUST BE TO US. Our meat and drink, our everything. 1. The doctrine of God incarnate must be the food of our soul. 2. We must feed on Christ's sufferings. 3. This meat is not intended to be looked at, but to feed upon by the heart's belief. 4. By this means the believer realizes union with Christ. II.

WHAT IS BOUND UP IN THIS EATING AND DRINKING? 1. He who has not so eaten and drank has no spiritual life at all. 2. All who have received Jesus in this manner have eternal life. 3. They have efficient nourishment and satisfaction. 4. Christ dwells in them and is their strength. 5. They live in Christ and are secure. III. WHAT REFLECTIONS ARISE OUT OF THIS TRUTH? If I have a life that feeds on Christ! 1. What a wonderful life it must be! 2. How strong it must be! 3. How immortal it must be!—4. How it must develop! 5. What company he that is fed must keep. (*Ibid.*) *Meat and drink indeed*:—I. HOW CAN THE LORD JESUS GIVE US HIS FLESH TO EAT? 1. In all Christ said He realized that the body is not the man. He was always seeking to win the soul's faith which would be the man's life. We have bodies; we are souls. 2. Since we are spirits there is fitting food for us, and Christ warns us off from fleshly ideas by saying, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." Christ is the soul's food in His humanity, character, example, sacrifice, spiritual communions. 3. Nothing else can satisfy like this. Every receptive faculty of our soul can live on that incarnate life and renew strength. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." 4. Christ is the food of the soul in that He provides and adapts God for man. (1) "In" God "we live, and move, and have our being." (2) But man has failed to live in God. "God is not in all his thoughts." Our souls have lost their home food, preferring to it "the husks which the swine do eat." (3) But God graciously offers Himself to us in Christ Jesus. II. HOW CAN WE BE SAID TO EAT THE FLESH OF THE LORD JESUS. We are obliged to speak of spiritual powers in language only worthy to represent the bodily powers. 1. There is a soul eye which receives the impression of the beauties of the Divine handiwork. The physical eye sees all things alike. 2. The soul ear can catch Divine harmonies to which the physical ear is deaf. 3. The hand of the soul gives all the meaning to what is done by the physical hand. 4. Christ only extended this when He represented the soul as having a mouth and a faculty of digestion. Eating and drinking is a going out of ourselves to lay hold of something outside ourselves that it may become part of ourselves. Men do not live on themselves. Only God being an all-sufficient Spirit can do that. The relation of the soul to outside food we call eating and drinking, believing, thinking, loving, communing. "Man does not live by bread alone." We eat the flesh of Jesus—1. By the appropriations of faith. Whatever we believe we take into ourselves. 2. By the cherishing of thoughts; by meditations on the perfections of Christ. 3. By the communings of love. We know how two lovely souls in close fellowship nourish in one another all that is lovely, pure, and good. Conclusion: 1. What a dignity our Lord has put on the most ordinary acts of life. 2. Lest we should lose this sacredness out of our common eating and drinking, Christ has set apart one eating time peculiar to Himself. (*R. Tuck, B.A.*) *Meat and drink indeed*:—I. WHAT IS HERE UNDERSTOOD BY FLESH AND BLOOD? 1. Not as the Capernaites did, in a carnal sense, but in a spiritual. 2. As symbolizing the effects of His body broken and His blood shed, or the merits of His death and passion, as (1) The pardon of sin by His merit (Matt. xxvi. 28). (2) The purification of our hearts by His Spirit. 3. The glorification of our souls in His presence (chap. xvii. 24). II. IN WHAT SENSE ARE THEY SAID TO BE MEAT AND DRINK? 1. Is the body preserved in health by meat and drink? 2. Made strong? 3. Kept in life? 4. Refreshed? So is the soul by the merits of Christ. III. How is it called meat INDEED, and drink INDEED? 1. Negatively. Not as if Christ's body was really meat for the body, nor as if His body and blood were substantially turned into real meat and drink, nor as if He referred to any corporeal eating of Himself in the sacraments, as the Papists hold, basing transubstantiation on this text; not considering (1) That He speaks not of a sacramental, but of a spiritual eating, as appears (*a*) in that the sacrament was not ordained (chap. vi. 4; vii. 2). (*b*) In that he that eateth not of this bread shall die (ver. 53), whereas every one that eateth it shall live (vers. 51, 54, 56). (2) Suppose the Sacrament referred to it, it would not import any transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, but rather the transubstantiation of the body and blood of Christ into bread and wine. 2. Positively; because it really, and not only in show, does that for the soul which food does for the body (see chap. xv. 1). Nay, in some sense, Christ is more really our meat than bread can be. (1) He nourishes our souls, this only our bodies. (2) He so nourishes us that we shall be for ever satisfied (ver. 35), this not. (3) Bodily food so preserves our lives that sometimes it destroys them; but never so Christ. (4) Food preserves but our natural, Christ nourishes us to an eternal life (vers. 51, 58). USES. 1. (ver. 27). 2. Do not only labour for it, but feed upon it—(1) Believingly (ver. 35). 2. Thankfully. (*Bp.*

Beveridge.) *Meat and drink indeed* :—I. THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF CHRIST AND MEAT AND DRINK. 1. Both are necessary, the one for the soul, the other for the body. 2. Both are sweet and desirable to the hungry and thirsty. 3. Both have to undergo an alteration before they actually nourish. Corn has to be ground, and Christ had to suffer. 4. Both have a natural union with us. 5. Both must be frequently partaken of. II. THE TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST'S FLESH AND BLOOD. 1. They were assumed into the nearest union with the second Person in the Holy Trinity. 2. They were offered up to God as the great sacrifice for our sins and purchase of our peace (Col. i. 20; Eph. v. 2). 3. They are the great medium of conveyance of all blessings and mercies to believers (Col. i. 14–19). USES. 1. Of information. (1) See here the love of the Saviour. (2) Learn hence a ground of content in the lowest condition. (3) Learn the necessity of faith. What is a feast to him who cannot taste it? (4) How excellent are gospel ordinances which set Christ forth. 2. Of exhortation. (1) Come with hungry appetites. (2) Feed heartily on Christ. (*J. Flavel.*) *The food that gives life* :—I. THE FOOD. Familiarity with these words and mental indolence have dulled our sense of their strangeness. However unintelligible to their hearers, they must have been felt as putting forth strange claims. On any other lips they would have been felt to have been absurd and blasphemous. Upon Christ's lips they are that or something very wonderful. He presents the food of the soul in two forms. 1. He proposes Himself. "He that eateth Me." (1) Here you come across the great characteristic of Christianity, that it is all in the personal Christ. The great note is, "I bear witness of Myself." (2) He sets Himself forth here as the sufficient nourishment for my whole nature. (*a*) Do I want truth of any kind except mere physical or mathematical truth? I get it here, social, ethical, spiritual, religious. He is Wisdom: He is Truth. (*b*) Does my heart want nourishing with the selected elixir of love? His love is the only food for the hungry heart which does not bring bitterness or turn to ashes. (*c*) Does my will want for its strength some law known to be good and deeply loved. I must go to the Master, and in His loving personality find the authority which sways, and by swaying emancipates the human will. (3) He proposes Himself as the food for the whole world. If He is enough for me He is enough for all, and comes in living contact with all the generations right on to the end of time. 2. He offers His flesh and blood; His earthly life and violent death. It is not enough to speak in general terms of the personal Christ as being the food of the spirit. We must feed upon the dying Christ, and lay hold of His sacrifice, and realize that His shed blood transfused in mystical fashion into the veins of our spirits is there the throbbing source of life which circulates through the whole of the inmost being. II. THE ACT OF EATING THIS FOOD. The metaphysical language is familiar in many applications. We speak of tasting sorrow, eating bitter bread, feeding on love. 1. This participation is effected by faith. (1) "He that cometh . . . believeth." By the simple act of trust in Him. You may be beside Him for a thousand years, and if there is no faith there is no union. You may be separated from Him, as we are, in time by nineteen centuries; in condition, by the difference between mortality and glory; in distance, by all the measureless space between the footstool and the throne; and if there go from your heart an electric wire, howsoever slender and fragile, you are knit to Him and derive into your heart the fulness of His cleansing power. (2) This trust is the activity of the whole nature, for faith has in it intellect, affection, and will. 2. The original expression is employed to describe the act of eating by ruminating animals; a leisurely and pleasurable partaking; an act slow and meditative and repeated, which dwells upon Him. The reason why so many Christians are such poor weaklings is because they do not thus feed on Christ. The cheap tripper cannot take in the beauty of the landscape. You cannot know any man in a hurried interview, so in these hurrying days how few of us ruminate about Christ. 3. Our Lord here uses a grammatical form which indicates the continual persistance of this meditative faith. Yesterday's portion will not stay to-day's hunger. III. THE CONSEQUENT LIFE. 1. Separate from Christ we are dead. We may live the life of animals, an intellectual life, a life of desires and hopes and fears, a moral life; but the true life of man is not in these. It is only that which comes by union with and derivation from God. 2. Bread nourishes life, this bread communicates life. The indwelling Christ is the source of life to me. 3. This spiritual life in the present has, as its necessary consequence, a future completion. If Christ is in my heart the life He brings can never stop its regenerative and transforming activities until it has influenced the whole of my nature to the very circumference (ver. 54).

(*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) *We must feed upon Christ*:—Why should we be hungering and thirsting, when Christ has given us His flesh to be meat indeed, and His blood to be drink indeed? Why should we be hanging down our heads like bulrushes to-day, when the Lord loves us, and would have His joy to be in us, that our joy may be full? Why are we so dispirited by our infirmities, when we know that Jehovah is our strength and our song, He also has become our salvation? I tell you, brethren, we do not possess our possessions. We are like an Israelite who should say, "Yes, those terraces of land are mine. Those vineyards and olives and figs and pomegranates are mine. Those fields of wheat and barley are mine; yet I am starving." Why do you not drink the blood of the grapes? He answers, "I can scarcely tell you why, but so it is—I walk through the vineyards, and I admire the clusters, but I never taste them. I gather the harvest, and I thrash it on the barn-floor; but I never grind it into corn, nor comfort my heart with a morsel of bread." Surely this is wretched work! Is it not folly carried to an extreme? I trust the children of God will not copy this madness. Let our prayer be that we may use and enjoy to the utmost all that the Lord has given us in His grace. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *"No life" without feeding upon Christ*:—You know the modern theory that there are germs alike in all men which only need developing. This is a philosophical notion, but it is not God's way of putting it. He says, "No life in you." No, not an atom of true life. The sinner is dead, and in him is no life whatever. If ever there is to be any good thing come into him it will have to come into him; it must be an importation, and it can never come into him except in connection with his eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. (*Ibid.*) *The blood of Christ our only hope*:—It is recorded of Samuel Pearce, a useful and much blessed minister at Birmingham, that, at the time of his conversion, having read Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," he took up the idea suggested in that book, and resolved formally to dedicate himself to the Lord. He drew up a covenant accordingly, and to make it more solemn and binding he signed it with blood drawn from his own body. But afterwards, failing in his vows, he was plunged into great distress. Driven therefore into a more complete examination of his motives, he was led to see that he had been relying too much on his own strength; and, carrying the blood-signed covenant to the top of his father's house, he tore it into pieces and scattered it to the winds, and resolved henceforth to depend upon the peace-making and peace-keeping blood of Christ. *Christ the true food and drink of believers*:—In respect of that typical meat which the Jews had lately spoken of (ver. 31), "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert," &c., our Saviour tells them that is but typical bread, but His flesh is bread indeed; it is the real substance, of which that was but a mere type and shadow. Thus for explication. The observation is this. 1. That the Lord Jesus Christ is really and truly the food and meat of believers. Flesh is here put for the whole person of Christ. Jesus Christ, as He is held out in the Scriptures, is the true, real, and very meat of believing Christians; Christ, as He is propounded in the gospel, dead, broken, crucified. Christ, in all His perfection, completeness, fulness, is meat indeed to a true believer. It is the very scope of this sermon, from ver. 27 to 59, in which this truth is inculcated over and over again, and all objections answered which the carnal reason and unbelief of man's heart can make against it. All other food, in respect of this, is but "*cibi tantummodo umbra et vana imago*," as Cameron saith. As natural life, in respect of the spiritual, is but a shadow of life; so the meat that is appointed for the natural life, if compared with the meat of the spiritual life, is but a very image of meat. Christ's flesh is real meat. 2. The blood of Jesus Christ is drink indeed. Blood is here put for the whole person, as flesh was. And it is rather His blood is drink than that He is drink; because the great efficacy of all Christ did lies principally in His blood (Heb. ix. 22). And in the same respects as His flesh is said to be meat indeed, His blood is said to be drink indeed. And those three things which concur to the act of eating His flesh concur also to this act of drinking His blood, the mystical union, saving faith, the ordinances. (*Ralph Robinson.*) *How Christ is to be fed upon*:—1. In the ordinances. These are the conduits. Jesus Christ hath instituted and appointed His ordinances to be the means of carrying His nourishing virtue to the soul. The ordinances are the dishes of gold upon which this heavenly meat is brought. Prayer, reading, preaching, meditation, holy conference, the sacrament; in these Christ presents Himself to the soul. He that forsakes these can expect no feeding from Christ. "In this mountain will the Lord of hosts make a feast of fat things," &c. (Isa. xxv. 6). The feast is made in the mountain of God's house, and the ordi-

nances are the dishes on which this meat is set and the knives by which it is carved out to the soul. 2. Saving lively faith. This is the instrument. What the hand and mouth and stomach are in the corporal eating that is faith in this spiritual eating. Faith is the hand that takes this meat, the mouth that eats it, and the stomach that digests it. Yea, faith is as the veins and arteries that do disperse and carry this nourishment to every power of the soul. This is abundantly cleared in this very chapter (ver. 35), "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." "Cometh" is expounded by "believeth." Eating and drinking are here put for believing. *Crede et manducasti.* He that believes eats, and he that eats not it is because he believes not; *Hic edere est credere.* (*Ibid.*) *We must feed upon Christ for ourselves:*—Dr. Bonar, in his "Memoir of M'Cheyne," says of him: "He seems invariably to have applied for his personal benefit what he gave out to his people. We have already noticed how he used to feed on the Word, not in order to prepare himself for the people, but for personal edification. To do so was a fundamental rule with him; and all pastors will feel that, if they are to prosper in their own souls, they must so use the Word—sternly refusing to admit the idea of feeding others until satiated themselves. And for similar ends it is needful that we let the truth we hear preached sink down into our own souls. We, as well as our people, must drink in the falling showers. Mr. M'Cheyne did so. It is common to find him speaking thus: 'July 31, Sabbath afternoon—on Judas betraying Christ; much more tenderness than ever I felt before. Oh, that I might abide in the bosom of Him who washed Judas' feet, and dipped His hand in the same dish with him, and warned him, and grieved over him—that I might catch the infection of His love, of His tenderness, so wonderful, so unfathomable!'" (*Sword and Trowel.*)

Ver. 59. **These things said He in the synagogues.**—I. The OCCASION of this wonderful revelation to the Church. The desire of the Jews to have the miracle of the manna repeated. Those of larger views may have had the supply of an army in thought. II. The DESIGN was to quench for ever any such ambition. If you desire a warrior leader I am not of that kind. III. The SUBSTANCE showed that man's true peace lay not in things of sense. Christ's errand was to bestow spiritual blessings on all mankind. To this end He must die as a vicarious sacrifice. To participate in the blessings of this sacrifice there must be faith. The discourse is a complete *resumé* of the gospel plan of salvation. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Capernaum* was a busy bright little town; a station on the great road; a garrison for Roman troops; a port for collecting dues by land and lake; a place of tanners, dyers, soap-boilers; a market for oilmen, shepherds, cheesemongers, fruit grocers; a halting ground for the buyers and sellers of every kind, the corn-chandlers, the fishermen, the woolstaplers, the vinters, and the gardeners. Being the first town on the Lake of Tiberias as you ride in from Damascus, as Arona is the first town on Lago Maggiore as you come from Turin, it was the port at which any one coming that way would embark for cities lying south and east on the shore. Standing on a hill of limestone, rough and rich with the flow of the basaltic rocks from higher volcanic hills; having the rich plain and cool lake of Gennesareth at its feet, with the palm, the orange, and the pomegranate blooming everywhere about, Capernaum became, like Como or Palanza nearer home, a retreat for the rich as well as a field of labour for the poor. Most of the Jewish inhabitants, net-makers, fishermen, farmers, were believers in a physical Messiah; followers of Herod, of Judas, of Simon, of John; Jews of an earnest and yet of a most worldly type. The strangers who dwelt among those Jews, like every one trained in the Hellenic schools, were liberal and tolerant in affairs of faith. Had not the Roman governor built a synagogue for the Jews at his own expense? "Capernaum, properly spelt Caphar na Hum, was one of the towns most favoured by the Lord. It was the first place to which He came after His baptism by John. There He dwelt for a little while with His early disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John. Here lived the good nobleman whose son He cured. There too He healed the demoniac in the synagogue, relieved the mother-in-law of Peter, healed the man sick of the palsy, and restored the withered hand. There He made whole the centurion's servant, and raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. From the blue waters of the lake He obtained the tribute money, and on its slimy shores, among the brambles and vines, He spoke the parables of the Tares, of the Sower, of the Treasure, of the Merchant, of the Net. In the White Synagogue, built by the Roman soldier, He pronounced His discourses on Faith, on Fasting, on

Humility of Spirit, on Brotherly Love. Near to Capernaum He fed the five thousand, walked on the sea, and preached His Sermon on the Mount. He loved the busy, basaltic town, and after His expulsion from Nazareth He made it the scene of His ministry. In the words of St. Matthew, a native of the place, it became His own city. Where, then, was this favoured spot? Strange to say, the great Churches of East and West, while bent on fixing the sites of events in the sacred story . . . kept no clear record of the scene of so many miracles and sermons as Capernaum." (*Hepworth Dixon.*)

Vers. 60–65. **Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?**—*The defection of the disciples*:—I. OCCASIONED BY A HARD SAYING (ver. 60). It was unquestionably hard (vers. 51, 53, 57). 1. Difficult to understand even for Christians (John xiv. 17, 26; 1 John ii. 20, 27), but especially for unbelievers (1 Cor. ii. 14). 2. Difficult to receive, demanding humility, self-abnegation (Matt. xvi. 24), whole-hearted surrender (Rom. xiii. 14; Eph. iv, 22; Col. iii. 8), none of which is easy for the unrenewed. 3. Difficult to practice. II. ARRESTED BY A HIGH SAYING (ver. 62). 1. Retrospective (John iii. 13; vi. 38, 51; vii. 29; viii. 38); referring to His pre-existent condition. 2. Predictive; foretelling His ascension. 3. Anticipative; cherishing the hope that His exaltation would resolve difficulties (Matt. xxviii. 17). III. INSTRUCTED BY A DEEP SAYING (ver. 63). 1. The announcement of a truth. Only spirit can impart life. 2. The removal of an error that literal eating was meant. 3. The illustration of a principle. Wrong understanding a stumbling block; right understanding of the same words life. IV. WARNED BY A SHARP SAYING (ver. 64). 1. Discriminating. Christ, then as now, distinguished between those who believed and those who believed not. 2. Informing. Christ, then as now, showed that He was perfectly acquainted with characters, works, and ways (Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19; iii. 1, 8, 15) of His professed followers. 3. Reproving of their guilt. Christ never regarded unbelief as an accident, misfortune, disease, but always as a sin. 4. Sorrowing (Mark iii. 5; vi. 6). V. EXPLAINED BY A DARK SAYING (ver. 65). 1. A rebuke to their self-sufficiency. They deemed themselves competent to pronounce judgment on Christ, to gauge His utterances, to estimate the value of His teaching, and to determine His position in God's kingdom. Christ assures them they could do none of these things without Divine assistance. 2. A declaration of their irreligion. They were yet in their unrenewed condition, and therefore incapable of receiving the truth. Learn—1. The sin of stumbling at Christ's words. 2. To wait for further light on religious difficulties. 3. The danger of literalism. 4. The propriety of self-examination as to whether one truly believes. 5. The possibility of repeating the sin of Judas. 6. The need of daily prayer for Divine grace. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Hard sayings*:—I. For the SELF-RIGHTEOUS to feel he deserves eternal punishment. II. For the LAODICEAN increased in goods to feel that he is a beggar. III. For the WISE AND PRUDENT to believe he is a fool. IV. For the MAN OF PLEASURE to believe that he is selling his soul for ashes. V. For THE CARNAL MIND to know that he must owe his salvation to the blood of a crucified Galilean. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **Doth this offend you?**—*A certain test*:—I. OF WHAT IS GOOD? That which the unrenewed hate to do. II. OF WHAT IS TRUE? That which the unrenewed hate to hear. III. OF WHAT IS HEAVENLY? That which the unrenewed hate to become. (*Ibid.*) **It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**—*Christianity a vital force*:—Christianity is a latent spiritual power, designed and adapted to translate men from a lower and physical life into a higher and spiritual life. If this be so—I. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN LIFE? 1. It is the life of the human soul, derived not from natural laws, or the incitements of society, nor from any human causes, but distinctively a life derived from God; not an occasional excitement, but the indwelling of a Divine influence. 2. Under such influence is developed a personal experience differing from any that could otherwise be developed, which awakens in us a likeness to Christ's nature and habits in—(1) Purity; (2) Love; (3) Activity. II. SOME GOOD REASONS WHY ONE SHOULD ENTER IN THIS LIFE. Most have some conception of a character. With one it is wealth, with another learning, with others art, eloquence, home life. But these are not you. There is a living, controlling being behind all achievements: character is the fashioning of that. I urge you, therefore, to accept the Christian ideal—the man in Christ Jesus—because—1. The Divine power, as a living influence on your souls, is the only reconstructive force adequate to your

needs. Those ideals which men form, exterior to themselves, have no transforming power upon their dispositions. What man needs is a perfect control of his animal nature, his selfishness, pride, sensuality. 2. This developing power reveals the only harmonizing elements around which all of a man's nature can reorganize itself. Love is the only point of crystallization. (1) Crown pride and there are many faculties which say, "I will not bow down to pride." (2) Crown vanity, and many parts of the soul will say, "I am higher than thou." (3) Crown reason, and many feelings will rebel. (4) Crown beauty, and there is not one faculty that under stress of trial will cry, "O Beauty, save me!" (5) Crown conscience, and many faculties indeed will follow; but conscience is a despot. (6) But crown love, and all will acknowledge his supremacy. 3. It is only in a character fashioned on the model of Christ that we can find relief from things seemingly or really antagonistic. (1) Aspiration and content. (2) Conscience and peace. (3) Hope and fear. 4. The Divine power in the soul harmonizes man with his fellow-men. 5. This Divine power gives to the whole economy of life and flow of events a reconciliation which nothing else can. Christ is not working for results that appear in this life alone, but for those that shall appear in the life hereafter. You do not care what befalls you, so long as you have the certainty that the end of it shall be right. This redeems death from being a catastrophe, and exalts it into a victory. Conclusion: If this view be correct—1. There is a very great difference between reasoning upon Christianity and testing Christianity. No man is competent to determine questions in regard to it until he has put his whole soul into the attitude of Christ. There are multitudes asking for arguments; Christ says, "The words that I speak unto you," &c. 2. Is there not reason to fear that many persons who believe themselves to be safe come far short of true Christian life? No man is a Christian, whatever his morality, &c., until Christ's Spirit dwells in him. 3. No man can come into this position by his own power. But open your heart and the Spirit will come in with His vivific power. (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The influence of the Spirit*:—I. EXPLAIN THE PASSAGE. When it is said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth"—1. It is not to be understood of the Holy Spirit exclusively, for the same work is ascribed to the Father and the Son. 2. The spirit does not quicken universally. "The wind bloweth where it listeth;" we read of those who were "full of the Holy Ghost," and of others which were "sensual, not having the Spirit." 3. Yet the Holy Spirit quickens all who are quickened (Ezek. xxxvii. 7; Rom. viii. 12). 4. He quickens men in their several stations: ministers to preach with clearness and fervour; private Christians to hear, receive, and do. 5. Though the Spirit can do this immediately, yet He generally does it by the use of means, and principally by the Word. II. THE SUBJECTS OF HIS INFLUENCE. He quickens—1. Our attention, as in the case of Lydia. 2. Our judgment (Isa. iv. 4). He leads us to distinguish between good and evil, to discern the reality of grace. 3. The will, to choose, embrace and cleave to that which is good. 4. The conscience, stirring it up to the faithful and vigorous discharge of duty. 5. The memory, to receive and retain Divine truths, to recollect God's dealings with us and our conduct towards Him. 6. The gifts of ministers and private Christians, that they may be ready in prayer, preaching, and conference, and also those graces which He has implanted—fear, love, faith, zeal, &c. 7. The dead bodies of the saints (Rom. viii. 11). III. THE ENDS FOR WHICH HE QUICKENS. 1. To consideration, without which we should be utterly thoughtless about our spiritual concerns (Jer. xxiii. 20). 2. To useful inquiries. 3. To fervent and importunate prayer. 4. To holiness of heart and newness of life. 5. To all acts of evangelical obedience. IV. IMPROVEMENT. 1. Learn the proper Deity of the Spirit. He that doeth the works of Deity must have the perfections of Deity. 2. See why God's words and ordinances have no greater efficacy. The most persuasive address is not sufficient without the influence of the Spirit. 3. Let us earnestly pray for His quickenings. 4. Let us join in the use of means. 5. Grieve not the Spirit. (*B. Beddome, M.A.*) *The necessity of the Holy Spirit*:—However learned, godly, and eloquent a minister may be, he is nothing without the Holy Spirit. The bell in the steeple may be well hung, fairly fashioned, and of soundest metal, but it is dumb until the ringer makes it speak; and in like manner the preacher has no voice of quickening for the dead in sin, of comfort for living saints until the Divine Spirit gives him a gracious pull, and bids him speak with power. Hence the need of prayer from both preacher and hearers. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The Spirit a Quickener*:—I. IN THE PHYSICAL CREATION. He brooded over dark

chaos and quickened it into life, order, beauty, and fruitfulness. This vitalizing power has never left His realm. II. IN THE MORAL WORLD. "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding." He implants instincts and affinities that respond to the touch of God. III. IN THE CHOSEN PEOPLE. He inspired poets to sing, prophets to teach, judges to rule, and warriors to fight. IV. IN THE REVELATION OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH. Eye and ear are inadequate vehicles. 1. He was the efficient Agent in the Incarnation, and from that hour until now if Christ is born in a soul, the hope of glory, it is by the same Spirit. 2. Like a dove He descended on Jesus at His baptism, fitting Him for all His future work. 3. In bringing Him from the dead (Rom. viii. 11), and in the impartation of Pentecostal power the same fact is corroborated. 4. The personal and local Christ departed, for it was expedient for Him to give way for the Spirit. The dull eyes of the disciples were opened, and they were transformed into heroes of faith. 5. Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, therefore your dust will be re-animated by Deity. Conclusion: The highest need of the Church is the overjoying power of the Holy Ghost. (*J. S. Kennard, D.D.*) *The Spirit and Life*:—I. THE LIFE OF THE SOUL IS DERIVED FROM A SPIRITUAL SOURCE. 1. The Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is the Communicator of life—(1) Physical (Gen. i. 2; Psa. xxxiii. 6). (2) Intellectual (Prov. viii. 12, 14; Job. xxxii. 8). (3) Spiritual (Acts ii. 36–38). 2. The spirit of the new man inspires him to attend to the things that are appropriate to his life, and so he grows in grace (Rom. viii. 5). 3. A careful consideration of the ordinances of Christianity, and their underlying truths, are conducive to spiritual results. (1) Baptism, the symbol of death to sin, separation from the world, and the commencement of a new life. (2) The Lord's Supper, the memorial of the sublimest self-sacrifice. (3) The Scriptures, which contain the will of God and eternal life. II. LIFE FROM THE FLESH IS IMPOSSIBLE (Gal. v. 17). 1. However imperceptible the path of a soul under the control of the unregenerate senses is a downward one (Rom. viii. 8). 2. The fleshly spirit divided Jewish society into hypocritical formalists and icy sceptics; and the same spirit has continued to work in priestly corruptions and theoretical and practical infidelity within and without the Church. III. THE POWER OF CHRIST'S WORDS IS SPIRITUAL. 1. They are spiritual in their nature. 2. They are life-giving. Flesh and Spirit. (1) Flesh here means the outward and sensuous, which appeals to the eye, ear, &c. There was much of this in the old Jewish faith; but whenever they rested in it it profited them nothing. (2) Spirit does not mean the Holy Spirit, but the inward part of religion which the soul understands and lives upon. I. THE UNPROFITABLE FLESH. The external observances of religion in themselves. 1. The "real Presence." If Christ were really eaten carnally, then He could only profit carnally like other food. Does grace operate through the stomach? On the contrary, the real reception consists in belief in the Incarnation, trust in the death, realization of the spiritual indwelling of Christ. 2. Baptism. The putting away of the filth of the flesh is nought, the answer of a good conscience towards God is the vitality of baptism. 3. Apostolical succession. The mere fleshly connection between bishop and bishop, established by successive laying on of hands, supposing it could be proved, is valueless: the apostles' successors are those who preach apostolic doctrine, display apostolic piety, and do apostolic work. 4. The value of ornate worship must be determined by what in it is sensuous and what spiritual. 5. The same applies to architecture and symbolism: do they gratify a carnal taste or minister to spiritual life? 6. Eloquence often excites the same emotions as the theatre is as sounding brass, and only profits as the vehicle of a truth that moves the inmost soul. 7. Revivalistic movements frequently engender a mere carnal enthusiasm, and, unless their excitements stir the spirits of a man towards God and holiness, they are based upon a lie. 8. Prayer and ordinances of any kind as mere matters of form and habit profit nothing. Their power lies wholly in their spirituality. II. THE QUICKENING SPIRIT. 1. It is the spiritual nature which quickens a man. He who has not received this from the Holy Ghost is dead in trespasses and sins. 2. This quickens all ordinances and makes them vitalizing means of grace. 3. So with spiritual acts and moral duties. 4. This spiritual nature has for its Author the Divine Father and is the actual operation of the Holy Spirit. 5. The mark by which it is discovered is faith. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Spirit and life*:—I. THE WORDS OF CHRIST PERTAIN TO AND REVEAL THE SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL. 1. Spirit and life are closely related to each other. The Spirit originates, the life perpetuates. 2. Words strictly speaking cannot be Spirit; they represent or manifest; as Christ said, "I am the Door." The words of man express

his thoughts and reveal his inmost being. How easy to detect the style of Johnson, Macaulay, or Carlyle. The words of Christ reveal His Spirit of wisdom and love. 3. Valuable as are the works of literature, &c., Christ's words do not pertain to them. They are of a prior and higher realm. They do not teach science, but they give light and life to men that he may pursue the most profound investigations. Hence under the shadow of the Cross alone flourish literary and scientific institutions of the highest character. II. THE WORDS OF CHRIST ARE ACCOMPANIED BY AN UNSEEN SPIRITUAL POWER, which is indissolubly joined to them, and thus they become spirit and life. How the spiritual can be joined to the material we can't explain. Where are the cords which bind this earth to yonder sun? What is it that gives the minute seed the power to develop? Life. But what is life? The chemist says a grain of wheat is so much carbon, &c. I ask him to make one, and he takes the various substances in their due proportions, and the result looks like a grain of wheat. It has the same colour, weight, form. But plant it—it will not grow. But the grain that God made, though kept in Egypt's catacombs for three thousand years, will, because it has life. So with the words of Christ. They are like other words, but God has joined with them a spirit and life which affect the heart of man. III. THE POWER OF THIS WORD IS SEEN IN THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE. 1. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." The great worlds are God's conceptions materialized that finite minds may catch a glimpse of His almightiness and wisdom. Think of all this as the product of a word and who can estimate its power? 2. More than this, "He upholdeth all things by the word of His power." 3. Great as is the creation and preservation of worlds there is something higher in life. The one is passive the other active. In Christ was life and He breathed into man a living soul. His Word perpetuates natural life, and how numberless are its forms and varieties! What endless gradations in the character of that life from the worm to the man, from life for a moment to life everlasting. IV. The text, however, refers to SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DECLARES THAT THE WORDS OF CHRIST ORIGINATE AND PERPETUATE THAT LIFE. 1. Were there no such declaration we might infer it. Unless needed to awaken man's sensibilities, why did God stoop to Mount Sinai and Christ to the manger and the cross? 2. Everywhere religion is spoken of as life. Ezekiel's mystic river and valley of dry bones. 3. The words of great men have frequently given to nations increasing influences: Homer, Aristotle, &c., for Greece; Bacon, Shakespeare, &c., for England. But if God speaks, how powerful must His words effect the hearts and lives of men! Even fancied Divine words, as of the oracle to Alexander or of the imaginings of Joan of Arc inspired almost irresistible power. 4. During His earthly abode, Jesus showed how truly His words were spirit and life. He healed the sick and raised the dead with a word. And how simple were His words, apparently without any effort. How quietly he calmed the winds and multiplied the bread. And His words reached spirit as well as matter. "Whether is it easier to say thy sins be forgiven thee," &c. 5. The same power accompanies His words as spoken by His servants. They have revolutionized the world. Idolatry disappeared before the Bible. The Cross was exalted above the eagle. Great reforms have always been preceded and accompanied by the study of God's Word. (*Bp. M. Simpson.*) *Christ's great ideas*:—Christ came into the world to introduce three great ideas, into which all His teachings could be classified. I. The first was simple in form and sublime in sentiment; He came into the world to teach THAT GOD IS OUR FATHER, and urged that idea continually. Over all things was a sustaining power, and this over the most precious of all truths in regard to the being of God. The only prayer Christ ever taught began, "Our Father which art in heaven." II. THE IDEAL OF A TRUE MAN. No one else ever did that or had ever attempted it—even in outline. He could tell us what a true man was because He was Himself a True Man. Eighteen centuries have criticised that life only to render it more radiant and excellent. III. THE PERFECTIBILITY OF SINFUL MAN. No one had so clearly shown that man was a sinful being, or been more outspoken in regard to the awful consequences of wrong doing, and yet He affirms that fallen humanity can be lifted up and made holy. Sin was an obstacle to eternal life, but Jesus Christ had pledged Himself to remove it. He promises that if we will come to Him our sins shall be forgiven; that they shall be flung far from remembrance into the backward depths of space. His words will live and never change. (*H. M. Scudder, D.D.*) *The honesty of Jesus*:—1. Christ's teaching was honesty itself compared with that of the scribes; and now no book has a ring so decidedly clear and genuine as the New Testament. 2. Yet honesty is not the whole of the significant quality of

Christ's life and words. A man may be quite honest but greatly mistaken. It is a great thing to have a candid mind not obscured by prejudice or broken by passion. 3. But this is not enough. The position of a mirror in the light, and its angle towards the object to be seen in it is as important as its clearness. We cannot hope to gain true representations if we persist in holding ourselves at a wrong personal angle towards truths. But Jesus always kept Himself in a relation so true to men that in His thoughts and judgments, all objects are represented in their simple reality. His words are not only clear and honest, they correspond to the truth of things. I. Let me DESCRIBE THIS CHARACTERISTIC. 1. In the conversations of Jesus. He quietly brushes aside Jewish notions and personal deceptions and touches with saving power the real lives of the people. They might for years have concealed their real self, but when Jesus came they became real. It was so with Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the publican, the Pharisee, the disciples. 2. In the teachings of Jesus. (1) They went to the moral core of their being, and insisted on their becoming true men at heart. (2) His doctrine of God has the same practical relation to human life. The doctrine of Jesus means real righteousness, justice, love, in God as in man. He did not come to teach a comprehensive system of philosophy, a subtle science of nature, or some perfect scheme of divinity. He represented God on earth, and realized in His life and death the whole eternal disposition of God towards man. II. Some pertinent APPLICATIONS OF THIS TRUTH. Two facts are forcing themselves on our notice. 1. Ecclesiastical Christianity and dogmatic Christianity have less influence to-day than ever they had. 2. Never has a real Christianity of real life been more honoured or loved. 3. It requires therefore no prophet to predict that the church of the future will not be altogether the church of the past. It will not be a church of vested ecclesiastical pretension or formal and one sided orthodoxism, but a gospel of the Son of God in the hearts of men, preached through the conduct of life. 4. If we have any doubt as to what this real gospel is we may find it in the New Testament, if we read it with a willing mind; but to practice it means something much harder than coming to church, singing hymns or discussing doctrines. It is Christ loved, chosen, and obeyed as Saviour and Lord. (*Newman Smyth, D.D.*)

Vers. 66–69. **From that time many of His disciples went back.** Those who are mentioned in regard to—I. THE CHARACTER THEY ASSUMED. Disciples. This term was first used to designate the Apostles; then it was applied to or assumed by many whom our Lord had to distinguish from His "disciples indeed." How many there are who are Christians only in name! II. THE COURSE THEY PURSUED. They went away from Him. 1. They relinquished all attendance on His ministry. 2. Disowned all attachment to His person. 3. Repudiated all sympathy with His design. 4. Threw off His authority. III. THE REASONS WHICH OPERATED LEADING THE MEN TO GO ASTRAY. Because He insisted—1. That all secular concerns were subservient to the salvation of the soul, which offended their avarice. 2. That all things pertaining to salvation belonged to God alone, which wounded their self-righteousness. 3. That they could not come to God except by Himself, which went counter to all their theological prepossessions. 4. That unless there was constant progressive fellowship with Himself experimentally they could not obtain everlasting life. IV. THE DANGER THEY INCURRED. Where should they go? To go away from Christ a footstep was to go to perdition. (*W. Brock, D.D.*) *The touching appeal.* I. THE FACT RECORDED. 1. The designation given them. Disciples. 2. Their number was considerable. 3. The period of their desertion—"From that time;" the delivery of the discourse. II. THE APPEAL MADE WAS—1. Touching. 2. Seasonable. When others turn their backs it is well to warn those who remain. 3. Important. Backsliding is a sin of peculiar aggravation. III. THE ANSWER GIVEN. 1. To whom shall we go? (1) To the scribes and Pharisees? They are blind guides. (2) To heathen philosophers? Their foolish hearts are darkened. (3) To the law? It thunders above our guilty heads its anathema. (4) To the world? It has proved itself deceitful. (5) To the ways of sin? The end of them is death. 2. "Thou hast the words of Eternal life—we will stay with Thee, the Son of the living God for—(1) Pardon; (2) purity; (3) wisdom; (4) strength; (5) consolation. (*Anon.*) *A home question and a right answer:*—I. THE REASON FOR THE QUESTION. It was asked because—1. It was a season of defection. In all churches and ages there have been times of flocking in and flying out; ebbs and floods; and it is well at such seasons that decisive questions should be put. 2. It was a season of defection among the disciples; not merely camp followers who went after Him

for the loaves and fishes. And this sets forth the grievous guilt of those who wear their Prince's regimentals and then turn aside to false doctrine or sin. 3. It was a defection on account of doctrine because of the preceding discourse. 4. This defection was a "going back." They did not go off the straight road, they simply reversed their steps and went back to their old lives. 5. It was open defection. They once walked with Jesus in the public streets, but now they will have no more to do with Him. This was at least honest and better than many a modern hypocrite. II. THE QUESTION ITSELF. He might well press it for—1. One of them would certainly do so. He only chose twelve, yet one was a devil. 2. All of them might do so, and apart from His grace would. "Let him that thinketh he standeth." 3. If they turned aside it would be specially sad. The chaff had been blown away and only the wheat was left, and that mixed with a little tares. These were picked men. How sad when an office bearer falls! 4. Apostasy is very contagious. Like sheep who, if one goes wrong, the next will follow. 5. He wishes His following to be perfectly voluntary. None can walk truly with Jesus who walk unwillingly. III. THE ANSWER WHICH QUICK-VOICED PETER GAVE. It was threefold. 1. "To whom shall we go?" The thought was intolerable. Would you like to follow your old sinful life again? 2. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." We cannot go away when we think of eternity. Those who turn back from Christ, what will they do in eternity? 3. We believe, and are sure, &c. Do you believe that? How then can you go away? (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *A mournful defection*:—I. WHY DO MEN GO AWAY? 1. Because they cannot bear Christ's doctrine. "This is a hard saying." There are many points in the gospel offensive to human pride. 2. For the sake of gain. 3. Because terrified by persecution. Although the fires of Smithfield are extinguished there is much persecution still. Godless husbands tyrannize over their wives; employers over their servants; workmen over each other. 4. Out of sheer levity. In a list of wrecks you will find some which have gone down through collisions, or by striking on a rock; but sometimes you meet with one "foundered at sea"; how, no one knows, on a calm day. So there are many who make shipwreck of faith in easy circumstances. At the space of a moment they profess Christianity, and then suddenly, to everybody's surprise and without troubling themselves about it, renounce it. 5. Through wicked companions and unequal marriages. It is hard to keep religion when one pulls one way and one another. 6. For the sake of sensual enjoyments. 7. Through change of circumstances. (1) Some because they have become poor and cannot look and do as they did. (2) Some because they have become rich and religion is unfashionable with the set to which they now belong. 8. Unsound doctrine occasions many to apostatize. 9. Laziness causes others to turn aside. They do nothing, and as a consequence soon have nothing to do. II. WHAT BECOMES OF THEM? 1. Some are very unhappy, and return. 2. Others are hardened in their obduracy and go from bad to worse. III. WHY SHOULD NOT WE GO AS OTHERS HAVE GONE? Only because of the grace of God. IV. IF YOU WOULD BE PRESERVED FROM FALLING you must—1. Keep humble and rely on the Holy Spirit of God. 2. Be jealous of your obedience, be circumspect. 3. Watch and pray. 4. Shun profane company. (*Ibid.*) *Apostasy*:—I. OUR LORD'S QUESTION was—1. The language of affection. Spoken in view of the loss of friends and immortal souls He came to save. 2. An implied warning. The propriety of such a question now rests on two grounds. (1) The possibility, so far as they know, that professed disciples are not real disciples. (2) The possibility that if real disciples they may apostatize. How our Lord's declaration (ver. 70) must have constrained each to ask "Lord is it I?" 3. Anxious concern in view of abundant reasons for it. (1) Many disciples had already forsaken Him. (2) They were all the subjects of much weakness and prejudice. (3) They were to be exposed to many temptations and dangers. 4. They were ignorant to a great extent of the nature of Christ's salvation, and similar reasons exist in the present day for anxious concern and it may be useful to consider some of the sources of danger. (1) The deep depravity of the human heart. How easily does this depravity—(*a*) lead men to deny or disregard the great practical truths of the gospel; (*b*) to lose all just impression of the distinction between Christians and the world; (*c*) to disregard the comparative worth of temporal and eternal things; (*d*) to become insensible to the danger of small departures from duty; (*e*) to banish the thought of eternity; (*f*) to become more solicitous to preserve appearances before men than reality before God; (*g*) to neglect the means of grace. (2) The power of temptations without us, arising from wealth or poverty, business, society, &c. II. THE DISCIPLE'S ANSWER, which bespeaks a just sense of his wants as a sinner and of

his dependence on Christ as a Saviour. 1. As sinners we need the forgiveness of God, and can obtain the blessing only through Christ. 2. As sinners we need sanctification, guidance, support, consolation which no one but Christ can give. 3. We need eternal life: Christ only has the words of eternal life. (*N. W. Taylor, D.D.*) *The uses to be made of the falls of Christians*:—It behoves us—I. To THINK WITH GRATITUDE OF THOSE WHO YET STAND. Many went away, but some, and they of the most value, remained. To despond would—1. Unduly magnify the importance of the apostles. 2. Give too much pleasure to the enemies of God. II. To FEEL AND ACKNOWLEDGE OUR OWN DANGER. 1. Because others have gone their own way and there is no likelihood of our following them, that is not to say that we are not in danger of pursuing a way of our own from Christ. You are in no danger of drunkenness, are you in danger of pride? 2. This sentiment will provoke charitable sentiments respecting falls of others. III. To COME WITH ALL FAITH AND SUPPLICATION TO THE SAVIOUR FOR PROTECTION AND MERCY. Neglect of this is the fruitful cause of backsliding. (*S. Green, D.D.*) *Going and staying*:—I. THE SADNESS OF APOSTASY. 1. Many take up a profession of Christianity who afterwards go away. (1) The matter of fact. They ran well, and to all appearances, judged by outward standards, were excellent Christians. (2) To what this is owing. (*a*) Largely from the want of the root of grace within; (*b*) From insufficiently counting the cost. (*c*) The want of a sensible joy in Christ as soon as was expected. 2. The sadness of their case. (1) In general it is worse than if they had never made a profession of Christ (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21). (*a*) As the Holy Spirit is grieved, and it may be, retired, their recovery is more doubtful. (*b*) As they have put themselves out of the way of the Spirit's influence it cannot be expected that it should follow them. (*c*) As Satan has got faster hold of them. (2) As their case is now worse than it was at the beginning, so by forsaking Christ they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life and out of the way of heaven. In the day of judgment they will be convicted of base ingratitude, the greatest treachery and unfaithfulness and of the most unaccountable folly. II. CHRIST'S TENDER CONCERN FOR THE SAFETY OF HIS REAL DISCIPLES. 1. How this appears. (1) In His incarnation and death; (2) In His intercession; (3) In His approachableness. 2. Whence it proceeds from. (1) Their being ransomed by Him (1 Pet. i. 18); (2) Their being entrusted to Him by the Father (chap. vi. 38, 39); (3) Their being not only His servants and friends, but the members of His body; (4) Their being specially loved by Him; (5) Their danger through apostasy and their blessedness through abiding with Him. III. THE BELIEVER'S REASON FOR CLEAVING TO CHRIST. 1. They are sensible that they have no one but Christ to whom to go. 2. They dread the thought of going away, considering its sin, folly, misery and ingratitude. 3. How many soever revolt from Christ, sincere believers will and ought to cleave to Him still. (1) To repair the dishonour cast upon Him by apostates and to witness that He never gave any just occasion to leave Him. (2) To show that their choice of Him is not built on what others say, but upon what they know and experience of Him. (*D. Wilcox.*) *Experience and hope conservative of faith*:—1. In the discourse of this chapter we have many "dark sayings," which gave great offence to many, and were the occasion of the apostasy of some of our Lord's disciples. 2. The men who replied to our Lord felt the mysteriousness of His teaching as deeply as others, and at different times confessed as much. But in spite of all difficulties they did understand that their Master had what no other teacher had—"the words of eternal life," and for that reason they would cling to Him. So with many of His disciples in the present day. I. THE MEANING OF ETERNAL LIFE. 1. It has been said that "Eternal" is expressive of the character and quality of a thing not of its continuance, and stands for what is divine and spiritual in present enjoyment, *e.g.*—(1) If any being possessed of animal or intellectual life were to have its being perpetuated for ever, though this would be life everlasting it would not be life eternal. (2) If an angelic or human being possessed of this divine life were to be annihilated for a period it would still be proper to say that they had been made partakers of eternal life. 2. This is only half a truth and needs completing before we can grasp what was in the disciples' minds. Let all this be granted, yet the subject of our Saviour's teaching must have included perpetuity. He called them to a subjective life now, and declared that that in its ultimate issues, was to be their everlasting possession. II. LET US SEE HOW THIS MEANING MAY BE ILLUSTRATED IN THE ANSWER OF THE DISCIPLES. This answer could not have embodied all that we know. It was given previously to our Lord's redemptive work which throws such light on our Lord's teaching, and previously to the dispen-

sation of the Spirit. Moreover, they were slow to learn and misunderstood the meaning of much which our Lord did teach. Nevertheless, they knew something about eternal life from—1. Our Lord's teaching. (1) He demanded of them a present divine life in its origin, continuance, and outward graces. (2) He authenticated the popular belief in a life after death. 2. Our Lord's example embodied the first and was connected by Him with the prospect of entering upon an endless life which they were to share. There was no uncertainty about this, and when asked if they would abandon Him of whom they had learnt it, they felt it to be impossible. III. To WHOM COULD THEY GO? 1. To the Sadducees—the rationalists of the age? They rejected immortality, and this being gone, what room was there for the culture of a divine life, or even of secular virtue, seing that "we might eat and drink for to-morrow we die." 2. To the Pharisees—the ritualists of their day? They believed in a future life, but held such views of what constituted the present religious life of man as to rob it of everything, spiritual and divine. 3. To the Essenes—the ancient monks and ascetics? These went further than the Pharisees. They tried to reach the Divine by ceasing to the human, and by practices which, if universal, would have brought society to an end, showed that they could not have the words of eternal life. (*T. Binney.*) *A critical hour*:—What the first battle is to an army whose general wishes to test its courage, so was this trial to the disciples. In this crisis there were two causes of trouble and temptation for their faith. I. THE FORSAKING OF JESUS BY THE MULTITUDE. 1. The inclination of most men is to yield to the authority of numbers. This is seen in the camp of the freest philosophy as well as in that of religion. Nothing is more rare and difficult than adhesion to truth in the face of dominant opinions, as is shown by the history of great inventors, teachers, martyrs. In the eyes of the multitude truth, like victory, lies on the side of great battalions. 2. All is not absolutely false in this assumption. True religion should be the lot of all; and the gospel is universal. Yet it has never made any appeal or sacrifice to popularity and has triumphed in the teeth of antipathy and resistance. 3. On the other hand, as in the text, there are defections from it, and these defections severely try those who abide. II. THE STRANGE CHARACTER OF THEIR MASTER'S TEACHING. At present the subject of the discourse seemed fantastic and impossible. But by and by in the Cross they understood it, which teaches us that the gospel contains mysterious points which raise difficulties and objections which are only to be overcome gradually. Most accept it on a side which responds most to their inmost aspirations, and accept the rest on trust; and, after years of Christian experience, they come to a comprehension of the harmony of revelation. Suppose, then, one of you in a situation like the apostles, what must you do? 1. The partisans of absolute authority say, "Submit yourselves, and the more difficult the submission, the more valuable the faith." But it is never safe for a man to go against his conscience, and it is no honour to God to bring him the heart of a slave and the blind obedience of a fanatic. 2. Reject every doctrine that wounds the conscience or the reason. This is what these disciples did, and forgot many admirable discourses and works of mercy. And how many to day yield without a struggle, never trying to get to the bottom of their doubt, nor asking if there is not a deeper meaning! 3. The faithful apostles by their example seem to say, "Wait." Why? (1) Because religious truth must be full of mystery. A Divine revelation which should not surpass our comprehension would be no revelation. (2) Because the fault may be less in the doctrine than in our minds. (3) Because an experience a thousand times repeated proves that that which hurts us is precisely that which ought to heal us. Were the Pharisees right in being offended at the universality of the gospel? (4) Because the greater part of the gospel enlightens, consoles and sustains. Will you reject this for the fraction which you misunderstood? (5) Because experience may, and will, show you the futility of your objection, "If any man will do," &c. (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *The dividing point*:—In the state of Ohio there is a courthouse that stands in such a way that the raindrops that fall on the north side go into Lake Ontario at the Gulf of St. Laurence, while those that fall on the south side go into the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. Just a little puff of wind determines the destiny of a rain drop for two thousand miles. And how small apparently the influence which decides whether the current of our lives shall flow towards Christ or away from Him. *Speculation and faith*:—1. The chief cause of declension in the Church is the pre-occupation of the mind with an imaginary Christ. This narrative teaches us that a miracle is no match for a pre-determined judgment. These men believed on Christ because they saw His miracles, and they framed

in their minds a conception of what that Messiahship should mean; but when they found that Christ's conception differed from theirs, in spite of the miracles, they rejected Him. They could not understand a Messianic empire over the hearts of men. 2. But they ought to have understood something; that the position of Christ would invest Him with mystery, and that His teaching would be original, and that His disciples should have no pre-occupations and be able to distinguish between statement and parable, and that Jesus required childlike honesty and docility in his hearers. 3. The chief disputants on this occasion were leading Jews striving to turn the current of popular favour from Jesus. The declaration at which they affected to stumble was that of ver. 51. "How can this man," &c. (ver. 52), was the carnal reasoning of the adversaries. The Master's reply afforded no help, but rather otherwise (ver. 53). The disciples were silent, but these strange words shocked the men who had imagined that fellowship with Jesus would be a stepping-stone to power (ver. 60). His explanation (denied to incorrigible adversaries) to them preserved a medium between the indulgence of curiosity and the repression of an honest desire to learn the truth (vers. 62-65). 4. These "went away" because no proof could touch them which threatened their anterior conception of Christ. Not miracle, nor the unique personal influence of Jews. 5. This picture of the force of a pre-judgment inspired by passion will guide the Christian student in interpreting modern unbelief. Science is supposed to have no pre-judgments; but then it affirms that a miracle is inconceivable, and therefore no testimony can make the record of a miracle credible. What is this but a pre-judgment! And since Christianity is based upon the resurrection of Christ, then, according to this, it is logically a fraud. Let us now consider—I. THE APPEAL OF CHRIST. 1. It should be regarded as an appeal when the Church is surrounded by an unstable mood of thought concerning Christ. 2. This mood is highly dangerous and brings death with noiseless footsteps, and its ravages are seen, when, in connection with some sentiment of passion or selfishness, it puts back the faith or destroys it; and it is answerable for the loss to Christ of thousands of our youth, and the wide failure of initial steps of Christian profession. 3. It may be traced in modern secular literature when the writer simply refers to a Christian doctrine or fact, indicating no bias whatever, so different to those firm strokes which fifty years ago showed us if the public mind was pervaded by an impression of the Divine authority of the Scriptures. 4. Not that this necessarily threatens an unusual reverse to the Christian faith, but everything depends upon the way in which this unstable mood is dealt with during the next fifty years. 5. The appeal of Jesus is intended to bring into conspicuous contrast the immovable form of the Rock of Ages. II. THE ANSWERING CONFESSION OF THE CHURCH. Are we prepared to drift? or to prosecute a new search? If Christ has failed to give us the words of eternal life, where shall we go to for them? 1. To some ancient religion? Thanks to modern research, the new science of comparative theology is now accessible to every one. The question is not whether the religious systems of India or China are not possessed of fine sentiment, but whether they can compete with Christianity. (1) What are they all but at best obscure impressions of mysteries which in Christianity are definitely proclaimed! (2) What have they done for the people! Instead of elevating the general mind, they have narrowed, impoverished and depraved it. Modern research therefore pronounces that the religion of the future must be the Christian or none. 2. To modern philosophy? (1) Where is its moral power to come from? (2) How is this moral power to be disseminated? With all its boasts, it is built upon an hypothesis which, as yet, has constructed no thing: whereas we have a faith which has been attested by the history of centuries, whose Divinity is verified this day by the only civilization which is living. (*E. E. Jenkins.*) *Temporary discipleship*:—I. THAT JESUS CHRIST AND HIS DOCTRINES ARE NECESSARILY OFFENSIVE TO UNREGENERATED HUMANITY. But let us inquire what were the hard sayings, the unpalatable truths, that offended the crowd. 1. That Christ was greater than Moses. This was a mortal offence to the Jews. While Moses was yet alive the treatment he received was anything but respectful, but after his death their veneration for the great lawgiver knew no bounds. Again, they spoke of the manna in the wilderness very highly indeed, but their fathers had a very different opinion of it. 2. That God is the God of the Gentile as well as the Jew (ver. 37). Another hard saying—3. That the atonement (the bread from heaven) is the life of the world. Millions wilfully reject this heavenly food, to pine away and die on the unwholesome, adulterated fare dearly supplied by pleasure, ambition, and philosophy, falsely so called. Such were the hard sayings that made many of the

disciples turn back and walk no more with Jesus. But what offended the Jews is no longer offensive to us. Yet many forsake Him in our days. (1) Because they do not know Him. One may be acquainted with all the facts of His life, from the manger to the cross, and yet be totally ignorant of the principles that animated that life. (2) Because they cannot have Christ and their sins at the same time. The people of Rome demanded of Brutus why he had stabbed Cæsar, by his own admission "the foremost man of all the world"; and he answered to this effect, "Not that I loved Cæsar less, but that I loved Rome more." The surgeon of intemperate habits kills himself by degrees, and knows it; does he hate life? No, he loves drink more, and is content to fall into a premature grave. Men are loth to admit this, and many try hard to deceive themselves and others that they are kept away by doubt, as though intellectual pride was pardonable and praiseworthy. Samson perished under the ruins of his prison—why? Was it for the want of evidences? I trow not. His burning lust for Delilah brought him to that vulgar, shameful end. Demas turned His back upon the Redeemer, and forsook Paul and the churches when they greatly needed his sympathy and help. Was it "doubts" that caused his apostasy? No; he "loved the present world." "Your iniquities have separated between you and God." II. JESUS CHRIST HAS NO DESIRE TO SEE PEOPLE FOLLOWING HIM AGAINST THEIR INCLINATION. "Will ye also go away?" The question suggests two things—1. That the gospel is a moral influence, and not a coercive agency. In making a personal appeal to the undecided, once and again have I been told, by way of self-justification, that they expect some irresistible power, some messenger from the dead, to compel them to believe the gospel. Oh, false and foolish expectation! In a speech of the Earl of Chatham the following passage occurs, which, with a little modification, will help to illustrate this point:—George the Third endeavoured to give undue influence to the prerogative of the Crown; but the great orator strenuously opposed him, and stood up for the constitution, saying, "The poorest man may in his cottage bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail—its roof may shake, the wind may blow through it, the storm may enter—but the King of England cannot enter. All his forces dare not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement." You are at perfect liberty to stay with Him or go away with the multitude that do evil—choose ye. 2. That religion without love is no religion at all. In this commercial age people are apt to introduce a mercenary spirit even into spiritual things, and ask with the apostate Jews, "What profit shall we have if we pray to Him?" Many of us, in our visits to rural districts, where the inhabitants cling tenaciously to primitive customs, have been made sad and solemn by meeting a funeral procession bearing a dead one to his burial; and although strangers to us, no one need tell us who the relatives of the departed one are—they are easily distinguished from all others both by their nearness to the coffin and their willingness to endure any inconvenience in order to follow him they loved to his long, long home. Others may, and will, turn back half-way, if the distance be far and the weather foul, but such is their grief after the departed that, however rough the way and stormy the weather, they will walk to the brink of the grave, and shed the tears of affection on his coffin-lid as they look down and bid their last farewell. The relatives of the Saviour likewise are easily recognized by their nearness to Him in thought and duty, and also by their fidelity to their beloved Redeemer, through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, even unto death. III. THERE ARE A FAITHFUL FEW IN EVERY AGE AMONGST THE FAITHLESS MANY. "To whom shall we go?" Go to the service of mammon with boats and fishing-tackles, and leave others to become fishers of men. Go to swine-land, the far country of self-indulgence and carnal pleasures, and spend your substance with the prodigal in riotous living. Go to Vanity Fair and the City of Destruction: follow the crowd! No; we have already been to all those places, and failed to find a resting-place for a weary, heavy-laden soul. You had better stay, then. Peter's reasons for staying were—1. Because no one else could give such a clear account of the future. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." 2. Because He was the Divine Redeemer. "And we believe, and are sure, that Thou art Christ, the son of the living God." (*W. A. Griffiths.*)

Departing from Jesus:—In Mammoth Cave the old negro guide told us how people had been lost there from time to time. When found, they overwhelmed him with embraces and other demonstrations of gratitude. Some became insane through fright; some fled in terror from the guides. Once a woman was lost for about twenty-four hours. In that terrible darkness, in the silence in which hearts beat loud, she had waited in dreadful suspense. Superstitious dread filled her crazed

heart. At last the guide came, his footfalls echoing like whispers and groans, his lantern casting ghostly shadows upon the walls. The poor terrified creature arose, and fled away into the darkness. The guide pursued—a veritable black devil he seemed! At last he overtook her—unconscious, prostrate, ashy white. In his strong arms he raised her from the ground, and carried her out to safety and light and home! How often is it so! When the Saviour comes, we flee from Him. Misconceptions of Him, distortions of Him, shadows of Him in this dark world, fancies of Him in our sinful hearts, make Him seem other than He is. And we flee from our Saviour and our Guide—flee away into the darkness. And yet He came to find us, to save us, to bear us to the light. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." (*R. S. Barrett.*) *The physiology of backsliding*:—Within the body of the Hermit crab a minute organism may frequently be discovered, resembling, when magnified, a miniature kidney bean. A bunch of root-like processes hangs from one side, and the extremities of these are seen to ramify in delicate films through the living tissues of the crab. This simple organism is known to the naturalist as Sacculina: and though a full-grown animal, it consists of no more parts than those just named. Not a trace of structure is to be detected within this rude and all but inanimate frame; it possesses neither legs, nor eyes, nor mouth, nor throat, nor stomach, nor any other organs, external or internal. This Sacculina is a typical parasite. By means of its twining and theftuous roots it imbibes automatically its nourishment ready-prepared from the body of the crab. It boards, indeed, entirely at the expense of its host, who supplies it liberally with food and shelter, and everything else it wants. So far as the result to itself is concerned, this arrangement may seem at first sight satisfactory enough; but when we inquire into the life history of this small creature we unearth a career of degeneracy all but unparalleled in nature. When the young animal first makes its appearance, it bears not the remotest resemblance to the adult animal. A different name even is given to it by the biologist, who knows it at this period as a Nauplius. This minute organism has an oval body, supplied with six well-jointed feet, by means of which it paddles briskly through the water. For a time it leads an active and independent life, industriously securing its own food and escaping enemies by its own gallantry. But soon a change takes place. The hereditary taint of parasitism is in its blood, and it proceeds to adapt itself to the pauper habits of its race. The tiny body first doubles in upon itself, and from the two front limbs elongated filaments protrude. Its four hind limbs entirely disappear, and twelve short forked swimming organs temporarily take their place. Thus strangely metamorphosed the Sacculina sets out in search of a suitable host, and in an evil hour, by that fate which is always ready to accommodate the transgressor, is thrown into the company of the Hermit crab. With its two filamentary processes—which afterwards develop into the root-like organs—it penetrates the body; the sac-like form is gradually assumed; the whole of the swimming feet drop off—they will never be needed again—and the animal settles down for the rest of its life as a parasite. . . . There could be no more impressive illustration than this of what with entire appropriateness one might call "the physiology of backsliding." We fail to appreciate the meaning of spiritual degeneration or detect the terrible nature of the consequences only because they evade the eye of sense. But could we investigate the spirit as a living organism, or study the soul of the backslider on principles of comparative anatomy, we should have a revelation of the organic effects of sin, even of the mere sin of carelessness as to growth and work, which must revolutionize our ideas of practical religion. There is no room for the doubt even, that what goes on in the body does not with equal certainty take place in the spirit under the corresponding circumstances or conditions. The penalty of backsliding is not something unreal and vague, some unknown quantity which may be measured out to us disproportionately, or which, perchance, since God is good, we may altogether evade. The consequences are already marked within the structure of the soul. So to speak, they are physiological. The thing affected by our indifference or by our indulgence is not the book of final judgment, but the present fabric of the soul. The punishment of degeneration is simply degeneration—the loss of functions, the decay of organs, the atrophy of the spiritual nature. It is well known that the recovery of the backslider is one of the hardest problems in spiritual work. To reinvigorate an old organ seems more difficult and hopeless than to develop a new one; and the backslider's terrible lot is to have to retrace with enfeebled feet each step of the way along which he strayed; to make up inch by inch the leeway he has lost, carrying with him a dead weight of acquired reluctance, and scarce knowing whether to be stimulated or discouraged by

the memory of the previous fall. (*Prof. Drummond.*) *The effects of backsliding on the steadfast*:—When, at the close of the First Empire, our soldiers fought against united Europe, there frequently arose from the midst of the battle a cry that troubled all hearts. The reason was that a corps of the army, deserting the flag of Napoleon, had turned to the enemy. It was so at Leipsic: when the Saxons abandoned the French eagles the blast of ruin passed over the whole army, for treason was seen everywhere. And we also, in the desperate struggle in which the Christian army is engaged, we have often seen discouragement agitate the most steadfast, when in the front ranks of the enemy, to have to encounter those who but the day before helped our faith and stood close around our flag. Only yesterday our allies, to-day our implacable enemies, directing their sharp, haughty, and contemptuous criticism against a cause whose weak points were well known to them. The crisis has been a terrible one, and more than one heart has succumbed under the anguish. But in this heart-rending apostasy we seem to hear the voice of our Head say to us, as formerly to His disciples, "Will you also go away?" In reply to this appeal we have acknowledged our Master; shame has laid hold on us for having a moment submitted to the contagion of example; we have felt that never should His cause be more dear to us than when it was abandoned by the multitude; that the number and assent of masses are nothing and ought to be nothing; and with a more profound faith we have said to the Christ. "Lord, to whom can we go?" (*E. Bersier, D.D.*) *A backslider's end*:—Albert, Bishop of Mayence, had a physician attached to his person, who, being a Protestant, did not enjoy the prelate's favour. The man, seeing this, and being an avaricious, ambitious, world-seeker, denied his God, and turned back to Popery, saying to his associates, "I'll put Jesus Christ by for a while till I've made my fortune, and then bring Him out again." This horrible blasphemy met with its just reward; for next day the miserable hypocrite was found dead in his bed, his tongue hanging from his mouth, his face as black as a coal, and his neck twisted half round. I was myself an ocular witness of this merited chastisement of impiety. (*Luther.*) *A brave martyr*:—Anne Askew, when asked to avoid the flames, answered, "I came not here to deny my Lord and Master." *Where backsliding begins*:—In the Life of Philip Henry it is said, "He and his wife constantly prayed together, morning and evening." He made conscience of closet worship, and abounded in it. It was the caution and advice which he frequently gave to his children and friends, "Be sure you look to your secret duty; keep that up, whatever you do; the soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it. Apostasy generally begins at the closet door." Besides these, he was uniform, steady, and constant in family worship from the time he was first called to the charge of a family to his dying day. He would say, "If the worship of God be not in the house, write, 'Lord, have mercy upon us,' on the door; for there is a plague, a curse in it.'" *A backslider's misery*:—After poor Sabat, an Arabian, who had professed faith in Christ by means of the labours of the Rev. Henry Martyn, had apostatized from Christianity, and written a book in favour of Mohammedanism, he was met at Malacca by the late Rev. Dr. Milne, who proposed to him some very pointed questions, in reply to which he said, "I am unhappy! I have a mountain of burning sand on my head! When I go about I know not what I am doing." It is indeed "an evil thing and bitter to sin against the Lord our God." *Reasons for backsliding*:—Those who forsake God to return to the world, do it because they find more gratification in earthly pleasures than in those arising from communion with God; and because this overpowering charm, carrying them away, causes them to relinquish their first choice, and renders them, as Tertullian says, the penitents of the devil. (*Blaise Pascal.*)

Vers. 67–69. **Will ye also go away? . . . To whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.**—*Human destiny and its attainment through Christ*:—I. GOD HAS SET BEFORE US A DESTINY. "Eternal life." 1. The idea of a future world in the abstract is probably present to every man. 2. It is impossible for any one to entertain this idea without being haunted by the tremendous possibilities of its truth. A man may lose sight of it, or rush to escape it, but let it once have a lodgment within, and he cannot refuse it acknowledgment. 3. It does not require any argument to prove a future world—you know that there is one. 4. It is equally impressed upon the human consciousness that this future life (1) is one of conscious immortal existence; (2) has a retributive connection with the doings of the present life. II. HE HAS REVEALED TO US THE METHOD BY WHICH THIS DESTINY MAY BE ACHIEVED AND REALIZED. 1. The revelation of God's mercy in the

gospel proceeds on the assumption of this conscious immortal existence, and has furnished appliances by which the happiest conditions of that existence may be brought within the reach of all. It is not merely a manual of precept for this world; it is a treasury of hope and comfort for the world to come. Pointing to the Saviour, whose suretyship it announces, and from whose death it receives its validity and power, it says, "This is the true God and eternal life," and it proclaims to the troubled spirit that in Christ's possession are the words of eternal life. 2. Those words were never spoken in their fulness till Christ came. There were broken utterances about it, but He brought life and immortality to light. III. HE HAS LIMITED AN EXCLUSIVE SAVIOUR. "Neither is there salvation in any other." 1. To have allowed a plurality of Saviours would have indicated a faltering confidence or an unsatisfied claim. 2. There needs no other Saviour, so there is no other. 3. This conviction will force itself on all some day. 4. The experience of the past proves that none other has the words of eternal life. All ancient religion and philosophy are empty of information on eternal life. 5. The researches of the present can find no other Saviour. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *Two stages of spiritual life*:—(Text in conjunction with Luke v. 8). I. THE FIRST STAGE MARKED BY FEAR AT THE REVELATION OF DIVINE GLORY. It was not merely the wonder that produced the cry. This was not the first time that Peter had seen the power of Christ, and others had seen it who had not been affected. He saw in Christ the Holy one, and then came a sense of the chasm between Himself and Jesus. 1. Such a revelation does awaken the feelings of fear and awe. Before Christ came men had heard of holiness, but its awful presence was never fully felt until He crossed the path of the world. By Him the "thoughts of many hearts were revealed." Before the light of His holiness all lying hypocrisies quailed. And for eighteen centuries the world has been convinced of sin by the presence of the Holy One. When a man realizes a sense of the presence of this holiness his cry is that of Peter's. 2. Every one must have this feeling before He can cast himself utterly on Christ. II. THE SECOND STAGE—CONFESSION OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST OUR LIFE. This was a testing time for the disciples—a time when they were driven to feel that Christ was their life. And in Christian experience there are similar periods, and then we feel that everything but the perfect reception of Him fails to satisfy the heart. Our spiritual nature craves three things. 1. A knowledge of God the Eternal Truth. Christ has revealed the Father. 2. Reconciliation with God the Eternal Righteousness. Christ is life for the conscience. 3. A knowledge of God the Eternal Love. Christ brought God close to man's heart. (*E. L. Hull, B.A.*) *Reasons for continuance with Jesus*:—I. NO OTHER CHRIST WILL COME. II. NO ONE WILL BRING A BETTER WORD. III. THERE REMAINS NO OTHER FAITH. IV. THERE IS NO BRIGHTER KNOWLEDGE. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *If not to Christ then to whom?*—1. "To whom shall we go?" is his first question when a man awakens to moral consciousness, and feels within him those inarticulate longings which reveal that he is not what he ought to be. Plato accounted these yearnings the reminiscences of a former state in which the soul had seen the perfect ideas of things now lost—a near approach to the Bible doctrine of the Fall. The soul feels that it is not what it once was, and that it cannot make itself so; but it recognizes its forgotten greatness when it sees it again. It is not to be deceived. It says when one specimen is offered, "This is not what I seek;" but when it finds Christ it identifies its long lost manhood in Him. 2. Besides these longings there is within us a sense of guilt, and the spirit groans, "Who will help me?" As when the sick cry for a physician. Man must go somewhere. The Jews were confronted with four rival systems. Sadduceeism, Pharisaism, Essenism, Christianity, and these virtually confront the seeker to-day. I. Shall we go to SCEPTICISM? 1. That seeks to cure the soul's malady by denying it. That gives the same satisfaction as persuading a starving man that there is no reality in his hunger. How much more rational to accept the bread God has provided. Reject revelation and the same difficulties emerge in philosophy—so you only get rid of their only possible solution—just as sick men refused the doctor only throw away the chances of getting well. 2. The service of infidelity to man is well seen in the French Revolution. II. Shall we go to RITUALISM? To improve our spiritual nature by ceremonial means is to begin at the wrong end, for it is the character of the soul that gives quality to the rite. The root of the evil is in the soul, which no ceremony can touch. Witness the Pharisees who would not go into Pilate's Hall for fear of defilement, and yet could plot for murder. Witness the Italian brigand who gives thanks for a successful robbery. Witness the multitudes of formal worshippers on Sunday who take advantage of

their neighbours on Monday. Formalism only substitutes hypocrisy for religion. III. Shall we go to ASCETICISM? 1. It is useless in practice, because the heart cannot escape from itself, and no walls can exclude temptation. 2. The whole system is cowardly. 3. It is a negative thing. IV. Shall we go to JESUS? What are His qualifications? 1. He has the words of eternal life. By words man was lured to his destruction, and now by words he is to be saved. 2. What are His words. Their substance is, "God so loved the world," &c. Faith in these words gives certainty where before was doubt, and peace where formerly was despair. 3. See what they have done in the case of the apostles, heathens, drunkards, sinners of every age and degree. All that is noble and elevating in our modern civilization have come from Christ. Conclusion: When our modern prophets ask us to leave Him, we reply—1. Find us a better answer to the questioning of our spirits than He has furnished. 2. Show us a better ideal of manhood than He has given. 3. Bring us brighter light in the life beyond than He has thrown. 4. In a word, give us something better than Christ. (*W. M. Taylor, D.D.*) *Man's need of a Saviour*:—1. There is here one great assumption which, being removed, the whole drops to pieces. It is that man must have some one to go to. He cannot live without a master, a guide, a comforter. The soul cannot live alone or grope its own way. St. Peter's question evidently implies, "We cannot leave Thee till we have found another who shall outbid Thee in Thy offers, and outshine Thee in Thy revelations." 2. This is what we may call the argument from want. Man wants someone, and therefore God has someone for him. To whom is the only question, not whether we shall go. Was Peter right, or was he rash and wrong? (1) There are some suppositions which would be fatal to this argument. Supposing there be no God, or, at most, a God unconcerned about His creatures, then to say that man's spiritual thirst is any proof that God has provided spiritual water is a fallacy; it only proves that to want and to have not is man's pitiless destiny. But if there be a God such a conception is revolting to our best instincts, and dishonouring to God Himself. Far worthier is that of One touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and if this be true, then provision is sure. (2) This argument is not weakened by sin's entrance. The fact that man was spared after he had sinned, and that he now needs God's care and love more than ever, strengthens the argument. What Peter wanted, and what we want is—I. SOME ONE WHO CAN RAISE US ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES. How many of our race suffer from poverty, anxiety, sickness, disappointment, the sense of inferiority, and the dullness of life's routine, &c. God designs that such should have independence, earth's giving or refusing: and there is only one person who goes to the root of the trouble, for He can say to us, "I came to you from heaven, and there we know of no such distinctions; there the only honour is humility, the only office self-sacrifice, the only distinction, the being nearest to and likest God. Cultivate these things over which tyranny has no power, and I will guide you by my counsel and afterward receive you to glory." II. SOME PERSONAL HELP TO LIFT US ABOVE SIN. Sin is an established fact, explain it, disguise it, extenuate it how we may. Christ's mission was to teach us the nature and guilt of sin. When this is brought home to the soul then indeed it cries, "To whom shall I go? Surely God must have some one for me?" He is in that sinless one who came into the world to save sinners. If we accept not Christ the voice of centuries tells us that there is no other. III. SOME ONE WHO SHALL RAISE US ABOVE DEATH ITSELF. This we find in Him who confronted death and conquered, and who is "The resurrection and the life." Has any one else, not the words, but even the hope and promise of eternal life? (*Dean Vaughan.*) *Christ the only source of religious life*:—1. There is a time when our religious thoughts and feelings undergo a strain. It may be in youth, when the world first lays hold of us: or in passing into manhood, when the intellect recoils from inherited thought; or under some terrible temptation. Then it seems doubtful whether we shall stay in the old house or "go away." 2. When this time comes, we must have an answer in our hearts why we should stay with Christ, or else we shall certainly go. 3. The idea of all religion is that of the higher "eternal" life of our text. "Let us eat and drink," &c., is common enough in practice, but no school advocates it. All schools maintain that there is a life of unselfishness which has as its vital principle the happiness of others. 4. The question, then, is not as to the need, but the sources of this higher life. The religion of Christ is said to be no longer effectual. Science, the religion of humanity, art, and culture, make their claims more or less to the exclusion of Christ. 5. How, then, can it be shown that in Christ alone is the true source of the higher life for man. By—I. THE

POWER OF CHRIST'S PERSONALITY. It was not a question of opinion as to whether the doctrines of Christ could be abandoned, an alternative between those of Christ and the Pharisees. The issue here, as ever, was a purely personal matter. 1. This assertion of authoritative personality is characteristic of Christ as a religious teacher. "I am the Way," &c. The words would have been profane boasting on any other lips. But when we see in Him what Peter saw in Him, we at once own the power and blessing of His words. 2. The consciousness of a Divine character in Christ is the most powerful root of the Divine life. We are moved by character as by nothing else. Truth on its intellectual side is hard to find, and may easily be eluded. It is this which makes the essential weakness of many modern schemes of religion. They are schemes of intellectualism, and, to the majority, are useless. They are incapable of being moved by science and art, because the motive power of life does not work in the main through the intellect or the taste. The higher life may be helped by them, but they do not give or quicken it. 3. But let the personal life in us be brought in contact with a higher personal life, and the springs of our higher life are at once touched. Place a noble human being amongst others, and how powerfully does his influence work! It is intelligible to all minds, and steals into all hearts. It was such a power as this, in a super-eminent degree, that Christ was felt to be. Behind all His kindness, there lay a depth of Divine personality. 4. All this Christ is still, and the higher life is realized by us when our character is moulded by His, and His mind is formed in us. II. THE DIRECT REVELATION OF THE HIGHER LIFE THROUGH HIS WORDS. The idea of Divine personality carries with it the idea of revelation. If the power behind the world is a personal power, it cannot but make itself known; and eternal life can only be known to us through its expressions in such a one as Christ. If we cannot find it here, we can find it nowhere. All Christ said or did was a revelation of it. Here is strength to resist evil and to make habitual in us the instincts of a higher life, and nowhere else. And if we have failed, our hearts tell us it is because we have gone back from Christ. (*Principal Tulloch.*) *The difficulties of disbelief*:—1. Suppose we give up the Christian faith, what shall we have instead? Wise men are bound to look at consequences. If you were asked to leave your house, would you not inquire where you were to go? And are we to concern ourselves more about shelter for the body than a home for the soul? 2. It is easier to pull down than to build up, to spoil a picture than to paint one, to tempt a man than to save one, to ruin life than to train it for heaven. Infidels are doing this easy work, and to them we must put the practical question, Give up religion, and what then? I. GIVE UP THE IDEA OF GOD, AND WHAT THEN? You would refuse to throw away the poorest covering till you knew what you were to have in return. Will you, then, recklessly give up the idea of the living, loving, personal God at the bidding of any man? Remember that you can put away the mystery of God, and you get in return the greater mystery of godlessness. The wax flower on your table was made, but the roses in your garden grew by chance, forsooth. II. GIVE UP THE IDEA OF THE FUTURE, AND WHAT THEN? If a man asked you to throw away a telescope, would you not inquire what you were to have in return? Will you, then, throw away the faith-glass through which you read the solemn and wondrous future. Christian revelation tells us that death is abolished, and heaven the goal of human spirits. Renounce this, and what can the sceptic give? III. SHUT YOUR BIBLE, AND WHAT THEN? The Bible says, "The Lord is my Shepherd," &c.; the tempter says, "Be you that shepherd." It says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c.; he says, "You have no thirst that you cannot slake at the muddy pool at your feet." It says, "God is a present help in time of trouble"; he says, "Dry your tears, and snap your fingers in the face of the universe." It proclaims the forgiveness of sins; he says, "You have never sinned." It says, "In My Father's house are many mansions"; he says "Your mansion is the grave; get into it, and rot away." Conclusion: 1. Keep this question straight before you. 2. Inquire of the tempter his power to provide an alternative. 3. Be sure that the alternative is worth having. And you will find—4. That if you leave the Divine life and aspect of things, there is nothing but outer darkness. (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *The disciples' reasons for cleaving to Jesus*:—I. Let us glance at THOSE SYSTEMS FOR WHICH WE ARE TEMPTED TO FORSAKE CHRIST. 1. Romanism. 2. Spiritualism. 3. Pantheism. 4. Secularism. 5. The world. II. Let us examine CHRIST'S SUPERIOR CLAIMS ON OUR AFFECTION AND FAITH. 1. He is a Divine Teacher. 2. An all-sufficient Saviour. 3. An Almighty Protector. 4. A Sovereign Lord. 5. The Rest of the weary soul. Conclusion: 1. Christ is infinitely worthy of our confidence and love.

2. Make yourselves better acquainted with Him, and your faith and love will be confirmed. (*Isaac Jennings.*) *Personal affiance in Christ the soul's safeguard* (Sermon to Young Men):—1. We can scarcely conceive of any one but Peter speaking these words. They would not have been the first answer of the critical Thomas or the more philosophical John. The truth they contain would at last have aroused the faith of Thomas, and have been the resting-place of the love of John. Their sudden, unqualified utterance could only have broken from the lips of Peter. At the bare mention of the possibility of departure from Christ, St. Peter's soul was on fire, and the utterance of his heart outran the slower processes of the intellect, and he spoke with the voice of one who had experienced the power of the words of eternal life. 2. Young men are specially tempted to go away. The distinctive feature of your age is that it abounds in temptations. There is—I. THE TEMPTATION TO A LIFE OF IDLE SELF-INDULGENCE. 1. With health strong, spirits high, and companionship abundant, the pleasure of merely living is so very great as for the time to seem almost satisfying. The facilities for easy living increases this temptation; but to yield to it is to kill the heart of your truest life. Though there may be nothing positively sinful in the separate acts of such a life, it is as a whole most sinful. You are guilty of the sin of omission, and rendering yourself unfit for the work of the future when it comes. For in such a life the seeds of all future evil are sown—softness, slothfulness, selfishness, &c. 2. This temptation is not to be overcome by the dull aphorisms of morality, nor by the festering pricks of ambition—the one all powerless against the other, as dangerous as the evil. What you need is to know Christ for yourself, so that love for Him becomes a real passion in your heart. Personal affiance brings you into His presence; and to be in His presence is to love Him, and love makes all labour easy. There is no limit to the height to which this may not exalt the most common-place life. II. THE TEMPTATION TO IMMORAL PLEASURES. 1. To attempt to restrain young men of strong passions by stoical philosophy or prudential maxims, is like throwing a little water on a great fire, which, hissing out its own feebleness, does but quicken the burning. 2. There is but one sufficient remedy: that which has turned the martyrs' flames into a pleasant whistling wind, and subdued the flesh in all the triumph of its strength—the love of Christ. Bring Christ by the cry of faith into thy life; set thy struggles against corruption in the light of His cross, and pardon, and purity, and power will come from the pierced hand. III. THE TEMPTATION TO SENSUOUS RELIGIOUSNESS. 1. Our worship may easily be smothered by the weight of its external adorning till it sinks into the death of mere formality, or is sentimentalized into the languid feebleness of an unmanly emotion. 2. The charm of such a temptation can only be broken by the knowledge of Christ on the cross dying for our sin, awakening by His word the sense of guilt, bringing the message of forgiveness, and holding communion with the reconciled spirit. When this mighty revelation comes, the soul cannot rest in outer things, nor allow the most beautiful symbol to intercept one ray of His countenance, who is fairer than the children of men. You cannot starve the busy, intrusive fancy into a heavenly affection. The love of Christ must so elevate the spirit, that it shall rest in no form, but in every form seek Him supremely. IV. THE TEMPTATION TO FREE-THINKING, AND THE LOSS OF ALL REALLY FIXED BELIEF IN CHRISTIANITY. 1. Ages have their own temper, and there is much that is noble in that of our own. It contrasts most favourably with sensual, dull, and easy-living times. Labour, conflict, victory, are its watch-words. But its victories breed in it a certain audacity, to which the authority and genius of the Christian revelation oppose themselves. 2. Safety is not to be found in sleepily disregarding what is passing around us, nor in setting ourselves against the temper of the day, or in inventing a concordat between it and revelation, nor in forbidding criticism and turning away from discoveries. The rock, whose rugged breast affronts the torrent, cannot stay, but can only chafe the troubled waters. 3. If there are hard sayings discovered in the Christian record, and many turn back because of them, this is but a sifting of the inner willingness of hearts to go away. What else do the many voices around us proclaim but that, more than ever, we need a personal knowledge of Christ to keep us safe amidst the strife of tongues? 4. The real talisman against unbelief is not in hard, narrow, exclusive views, but in personal love to Christ. This love will sweep away a thousand doubts and speculative difficulties, and supply a whole life of resistance which is quickened into action by the mere touch of what might harm the spirit. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *Whence the words of eternal life*:—I. THE ANSWER OF SCIENCE. By education, by learning the laws of nature and training oneself to obey them.

Professor Huxley likens life to a game at chess. The board is the world; the pieces the phenomena of the universe; the rules its laws. The player on the other side is hidden. His play is always fair, but he never overlooks a mistake. To the man who plays well the highest stakes are paid. The one who plays ill is checkmated without remorse. Education is learning the rules of this game. 1. This representation ignores the spiritual nature. That there is a spiritual nature and spiritual fact is attested by the consciousness and history of our race. 2. The God of Science is unknowable, without sympathy for the weak and erring, and compassion for the suffering. If this be all the God there is, how foolish to concern ourselves about the words of eternal life! 3. This theory of the highest living leaves out of the account the most startling fact of human life—sin. 4. This answer has been tested. Give us culture, say the scientists, and we will save the race, and usher in the long-looked-for Golden Age. Ah, yes, culture! that is what Athens had, and perished. That is what Paris has, and, as Carlyle says, is crazy. That is what Germany has, and still is full of the worst ills. That is what England has, and yet England is neither satisfied nor happy. That is what we have, and still these spirits of ours crave something higher, stronger, purer, better. That is what this age of ours has, and withal is blind and weak, and restless as the storm-tossed sea. Science may educate, but still sin remains, and conscience is not quieted. II. PETER'S ANSWER. What a mighty contrast between Christ and science. 1. Go to Jacob's well. "Whence has thou the living water?" The scientist would reply, "Out of the great well of nature. Study the laws of the universe." Would the woman's heart have been touched, and would she have obeyed? 2. Suppose it had been the scientist who had been dining at Simon's table; he would have said, "Woman, it is not scientific to weep. Be calm. Life is a game at chess; you have been checkmated because you didn't understand the rules of the game." Would she have gone away as she did disburdened and satisfied? 3. What would the scientist have done at the grave of Lazarus? 4. Where has science given us a parable of the prodigal son? (*S. A. Ort, D.D.*) *Jesus Christ the only source of rest and happiness:*— I. In this reply of the apostle's is implied A CONVICTION OF THE INSUFFIENCY OF ALL HUMAN MEANS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF SALVATION. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Shall we apply to the scribes and Pharisees? Shall we inquire of the ceremonial or moral law? Shall we submit to the decisions of reason? 1. The scribes and Pharisees, and other doctors of the law among the Jews, at that period were blind leaders of the blind. Their corruptions had darkened their minds, and thrown a veil over the sacred writings; so that the plainest prophecies were misunderstood, and the most important doctrines perverted by them. 2. The apostles were equally convinced that life and salvation could not be obtained from an observance of the ceremonial or moral law. (1) With respect to the former—they knew that the tabernacle service was chiefly typical, shadowing forth good things to come. (2) With respect to the latter—even if they could not recollect that they had been guilty of any gross immorality, yet they knew that they were far from that perfection which the law demands. 3. They were also persuaded of the entire insufficiency of reason to point out to them the path of life. Untaught by revelation, what knowledge can we obtain respecting the salvation of a sinner? II. The text implies that they had A FIRM BELIEF IN CHRIST'S PERFECTIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS AS A SAVIOUR. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." 1. This is the language of faith, and expresses the sentiments and exercises of every soul that flees to the Saviour for refuge. 2. In this confession they acknowledge, also, a belief in His ability to instruct men in the way of life. 3. It also implies faith in Him as the only atoning sacrifice. 4. To be a perfect Saviour, He must be able, also, to ensure everlasting life to those whose sins He expiated; and, therefore, He must be possessed of power to apply His purchased salvation to the souls of His people. III. From such a view of His offices, and a complete satisfaction in His undertaking and character, arises an unconquerable desire for the blessings which He has to bestow; and hence the words of the text are to be considered as expressing A FIRM RESOLUTION TO ADHERE TO HIM AS THEIR SAVIOUR AND LORD. "To whom shall we go," say the disciples, "but unto Thee." 1. United to Him they see safety; separated from Him they behold inevitable death. 2. This holy resolution is formed, not merely from necessity, but from a conviction of the honour, delight, and immortal glory which await the followers of the Lamb. (*W. L. Johnson.*) *Words of eternal life:*—I. A SEARCHING QUESTION PUT AT A CRITICAL TIME. 1. It is a question put at a time when there was a great falling off from the number of Christ's followers. Now was the time to show their colours—

now or never. The chaff was driven away. The wheat remained. Times of apostasy are sifting seasons for God's people, giving a renewed call to every soldier of the Cross to rally round the deserted banner. The example of others is no safe guide. Public opinion is often a feeble indicator of duty. There is one example, and only one, that we are safe to follow—the example of Christ. There is one standard, and only one, that never varies—the Word of God. Keep the infallible standard in your eye, and that will help to steady you amid the changes of men and time. 2. This question was put at a time when there was a fresh demand made on the faith of Christ's followers. It is obvious that our Lord's design was to lead His followers to a knowledge of the hidden mysteries of His kingdom; to set before them some of the deeper truths of revelation. Progressiveness marked all His teaching. Faith has often to surmount barriers which are impassable by the natural understanding. Duty is ever making fresh demands upon us, and as we advance we are ever finding out depths that we have not yet sounded, and heights of holiness we have not yet scaled. There are speculative difficulties that try our faith, and perplexing things in God's word that we cannot explain. In the face of such perplexities it will be our wisdom to hold fast what we can accept. "What we know not now, we shall know hereafter." 3. This question was put at a time when higher devotion was required in the life of Christ's followers. When God reveals Himself to His people, as He has been doing with increasing clearness at different stages in the world's history, it is in order to enable them to be more devoted witnesses for Him among men. All our knowledge ought to help us to live holier and nobler lives; otherwise it profits nothing. II. A NOBLER REPLY FOUNDED ON A WEIGHTY REASON. 1. Christ the highest of all teachers. We have many professing guides, but they all save One lead astray. Shall we follow our modern Pharisees and adopt the creed of the formalist? No, that will not satisfy the soul that longs for life. Shall we follow our modern Sadducees and adopt the creed of the atheist? No, that will not satisfy the soul that longs for God. Are we perplexed in our search for truth, and know not whose teaching to trust amid conflicting opinions? Let us learn to distrust, in matters of eternal moment, all human guides, and look to that Name beside which there is none other under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Then we shall have a Teacher to instruct us wiser than man, a Light brighter than the sun to shine on our path. 2. Eternal life the best of all possessions. Christ has something to bestow which no other claimant can boast of. He offers an inheritance that will outlast the sun, and live as long as God Himself. (*D. Merson, M.A.*) *Words of eternal life*:—What are any of these life-giving words? Here are a few. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," &c. "Seek ye Me, and your soul shall live." "Whoso eateth My flesh," &c. "God so loved the world," &c. What "potential energy" slumbers in those wonderful words! They carry within them to the guilty and the dying a Divine message fraught with saving and life-giving power. They are simple that a child may read them, but they hold, as it were in solution, the deepest thoughts of God. The mere words are often compared to the casket containing the gem. To find the gem you have to open the casket. Even so, to get at the meaning of Christ's life-giving words, you need the spiritual discernment, the key that will unlock the gospel casket. The application of its contents to the heart will result in life eternal. Or take another similitude: The words are like the title-deeds of an inheritance. The possession of the title-deeds settles the ownership of the property. So the man who appropriates by faith the truths of the gospel makes good his claim to the inheritance which the gospel promises. Accept these truths, hold fast the title-deeds, and the inheritance is yours—not simply will be yours at some future time, but is yours now. The moment you receive the words of Christ, you become possessor of the life of Christ. And this is what is here called "Eternal Life," which has been defined to be not simply endless being, but a life of perfect harmony with its environment, not subject to the changes and imperfections of this finite world. To be in harmony with Christ, otherwise called reconciliation with God—this is the aim of man's being, the noblest heritage of fallen humanity. Christ makes the offer of it to all His followers. In Him it is to be found, and those who are in Him have already entered into possession. But, so long as they are in this finite world, they are like the sons of Jacob in their posession of Canaan, surrounded by foes and exposed to changes, so that the circumstances are not favourable to undisturbed possession, the external harmony or environment not being perfect, but the time is coming when the harmony thus incomplete will be consummated in fairer worlds amid perfect and purer surroundings. (*Ibid.*)

Revealed religion the only source of true happiness:—Taking the gospel just as we find it, I shall show that all men's desires are to be met in it and in nothing else. If we reject it, whither shall we go for the fruition of our desires? Take—I. THE DESIRE OF CONTINUED EXISTENCE. That this is deeply seated in the soul is evident from the horror which annihilation awakens. Where shall we, then, find the evidence that the desire is to be gratified? 1. The senses only inform us that we shall die, and no disembodied spirit appears to contradict it. 2. Reason only speculates upon it as a probability, and those philosophers who most cleverly argued it out disbelieved their own reasonings. 3. But faith looks through the darkness and beholds in Christ "life and immortality brought to light." II. THE DESIRE OF ACTION. The gospel, and that only—1. Gives a right direction to the human faculties. Those faculties have acquired a wrong direction which reason, working through the highest civilization, could not correct; but just in proportion as the gospel has prevailed the standard of morality has been elevated. 2. Opens a noble field for their exercise. When the gospel is not known the social duties are but little understood or performed; but Christianity enjoins the doing of good to our fellow-creatures, not only as beings who are to live here, but for ever. 3. Enjoins employments which are fitted to improve man's faculties, and thus render him capable of some vigorous and successful action. III. THE DESIRE OF KNOWLEDGE. True, man may advance with no other light but the light of nature. But in that department which respects the character of God and man's eternal relations human reason is at best an inadequate instructor. The knowledge derived from the Bible is—1. Most practical, adapted to influence the affections, and through them the life. 2. Sublime. Its revelations are stamped with moral grandeur—God, creation, the soul, redemption, immortality, &c. 3. For ever progressive. The treasures of the Bible are inexhaustible, and he who walks by it here will walk in the brighter light of heaven hereafter. IV. THE DESIRE OF THE APPROBATION OF OTHER BEINGS. 1. Wherever the gospel has not existed, malice, hatred, envy, revenge, &c., have held the soul in dominion in spite of all that reason could do to redeem it. But the gospel brings into exercise the spirit of forgiveness and benevolence, and makes man a brother, instead of an enemy, to his fellow-man. 2. But this desire has respect to the favourable regard of God, and is met—(1) By the gospel proclamation of forgiveness; (2) The impartation of a character which renders man the object of Divine complacency. V. THE DESIRE FOR SOCIETY. There is an impression abroad that Christianity is unfriendly to social enjoyment. But monkery is a perversion of Christianity. Christianity is in its very nature social, for—1. A large part of its duties are social. 2. Its tendency is to refine and exalt the social affections. 3. It has established a society—the Church. 4. It meets this desire through every period of existence. Conclusion: 1. Does not this furnish a conclusive argument for the Divinity of the gospel? 2. How malignant the spirit of infidelity. (1) Even on the theory that Christianity is false, it can supply nothing in its place. (2) But on the theory that Christianity is true, it stands chargeable with opposing man's best interests in time and eternity. 3. How blessed the employment of extending the gospel! (*W. B. Sprague, D.D.*) *Christ the centre of Unity*:—An old Greek sage had a theory, and it must be admitted that there was a great deal of truth in his speculations. He had a notion that the history of the universe was composed of alternate cycles, covering vast periods of time—the cycle of love and the cycle of hate. Under the influence of love, when this cycle was being fulfilled which he supposed all came under, the mighty force and tendency of each was towards unity. Then came the cycle of hate when the centrifugal forces produced universal disintegration; parts flew off from the whole, from their proper centre, and from their proper relations to each other; and the various objects of beauty also began to disappear. This was a curious conception, but was there not a great deal of truth in it? May we not say that there are two laws in the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ? First, the love law, having for its centre God, who pervades the universe and tends to promote harmony and beauty and every other comeliness. The second, the law of hatred or self-assertion, by which the individual, breaking away from God, sets himself up as his god; from which will of necessity result the disintegration of society, confusion, anarchy, and the ruin of the universe. These two great laws are operating in our midst. (*W. Hay-Aitken, M.A.*) *Christ Himself the sole protection against the assaults of unbelief*:—It is not by limiting the intellectual side of our religion, but by exalting its spiritual side, that we can be safe and keep others safe. It is not by striving to repress intellectual activity, nor by jealously warning it off the precincts of revealed

religion; it is by lifting up before men's eyes the Cross of Christ, and teaching them personal affiance in Him, that we shall keep uninjured the great deposit of the truth. And this is the only talisman: without it all speculations upon the mystery of life and of God are full of danger; for though such peril is pre-eminently present in studies and inquiries which tend to shake received belief as to things sacred, it is not with them only that it is present. It is almost as easy for controversial orthodoxy, as for adverse speculative criticism, to land the spirit in the valley of the shadow of death. Nothing can more endanger the true life of the spirit than the cold charnel-house breath of a mere reasoning, unloving, uncharitable orthodoxy. Alas, the pathway of the Church, through times of great controversy, is marked by the mouldering corpses of such combatants for truth. This, and this only, can keep us safe amongst our own perils—to have known ourselves the love bred within the soul by a true belief in Christ's atoning blood, in Christ's perpetual presence, in Christ's abiding love. And of this we may be sure no speculative difficulties can endanger one soul, which has been taught by experimental knowledge to say in times of darkness, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *A reason against turning back:*—When Christian, in the "Pilgrim's Progress," thought about going back, he recollected that he had no armour for his back. Look at that fact whenever you are tempted. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ alone can satisfy the soul:*—Timour the Tartar desired universal dominion, saying the earth was too small for more than one master. "It is too small to satisfy the ambition of a great soul." "The ambition of a great soul," said the Sheik of Samarcand to him one day, "is not to be satisfied by the possession of a morsel of earth added to another, but by the possession of God alone sufficiently great to fill up an infinite thought." (*Lamartine.*) I have received from Taubenheim one hundred pieces of gold, and fifty pieces of silver from Schart, so that I begin to fear lest God be giving me my portion here below. But I solemnly declare that nothing can make me happy except God. (*Luther.*) *The world cannot confer happiness:*—"One should think," said I, "that the proprieter of all this (Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsfield) must be happy." "Nay, sir," said Johnson; "all this excludes but one evil—poverty." (*Boswell.*) *Christ only is worth serving:*—A great statesman, abandoned in his old age by his sovereign, lay dying one day in England; and it is recorded of him that he said, "If I had served my God as faithfully as I have served my king, He had not cast me off now." How true! Blessed God! Thou will never abandon any who put their trust in Thee. (*Dr. Guthrie.*) *The hopelessness of humanity away from Christ:*—"To whom shall we go?" Poor humanity, distracted by many perplexities, bleeding from many wounds, weeping over many griefs, must go somewhere: she cannot eat out her own heart with grief and consume her own life with sighing. Whither shall we go? Where shall the great mystery of our existence be unveiled to us? Is Nature to be the temple of our worship, with its skies, now bright and now cloudy, arching over us in alternate loveliness and terror? Ah, there is no gospel in her sighing wind, and all her resurrections die again, and all her waves break upon a strand that is unknown and far. Can infidelity reassure us? Is there safety in the everlasting "No?" Can we vanquish the danger by denying it? Can we overcome the peril by putting it far away? Men try this sometimes, but it is a sombre region to dwell in where dead leaves crackle under foot. Ah, no! there is a shuddering and sickly air, as of some ghost-haunted wood or precincts stern and savage; and it is useless, for Death will come, although society join us in the conspiracy to cheat him, and although friends forbear kindly to inquire about our age, and although decay can go and rouge over its wrinkles, and compliment itself into youth again, Death will come; and there is something in all of us that will keep on asking, "What then? what then?" "What after death for me remains?" Oh, it is wiser surely even with the Egyptian to shape the coffin in the lifetime, or with the Jew to build the sepulchre in the garden. Speaking of Jews, would Judaism serve to shelter us? It has glorious types—a wonderful history, many lighted windows of worship. Shall we enter the door? Nay, don't exhume it: it has been in the sarcophagus, a corpse, now for more than a thousand years. Christ would have been the soul of it once, but it rejected Him, and struck its own suicide in a mistaken chivalry which preferred death to what it deemed to be dishonour. Judaism can do nothing for us. Then shall reason light us down the vale, or morality put a staff in our hand, or superstition torture us into safety, or formalism ferry us over the swellings of Jordan? Alas! they are all miserable

comforters; they lift no cloud; there it hangs, mysterious and solemn, over the passage into eternal life. Jesus of Nazareth, Divine human Saviour! we come to Thee: we pray to Thee. In Thee is all the beauty which the Greek worshipped: in Thee is all the law which the stern Roman loved. Thou art Nature's great interpreter; and infidelity shrinks away from Thy presence; and Judaism is fulfilled in Thee; and superstition becomes reverence as Thou speakest; and formality gets an inner spirit; and faith in Thee is the highest reason; and love to Thee is the grandest morality. (*W. M. Punshon, LL.D.*) *No retreat*:—When Garibaldi sailed from Genoa in 1860 he took with him a thousand volunteers. They landed at Marsala almost in the face of the Neapolitan fleet. When the commander of Marsala, returning to the port, saw the steamers, he gave orders to destroy them. Garibaldi having landed his men, looked with indifference, almost with pleasure on the work of destruction. "Our retreat is cut off," he said, exultingly; "we have no hope but in going forward: it is to death or victory." (*H. O. Mackey.*)

Ver. 69. **We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.**—*The Christ of God*:—Faith without knowledge is mere fancy. For the want of knowledge the faith of the ancient Jews gave way in the wilderness. So here the nominal disciples went away because they did not know who He was from whom they went. To the apostles this knowledge gave stability to their faith and they remained. I. THE TESTIMONY. That Christ was the Messiah. 1. The provision that is by this Christ could not be by any other. (1) His sacrifice is of eternal worth. (2) It eternally satisfies the soul. (3) It is the ground upon which all things work together for good. (4) We should labour by faith and prayer for this meat. 2. By partaking of this provision we shall never come to want. Away then with anxieties and fears. 3. To accept this provision is the counsel of God to man. II. THE SONSHIP. Christ is the Son of God in a way no other can be. 1. Because He was born as no other was ever born. 2. Because He was a complex person—God and man. 3. Because of His infallible purity. 4. Because He embodies blessings which no other person ever did. 5. Because He included in His sonship millions of others. III. THE NOTE OF DISTINCTION. "Living" in contrast to idols and false religions (Isa. xxvi). Because God never dies His people can never die. IV. THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH. (*James Wells.*) *The threefold Christ*:—I. THE CHRIST OF PROPHECY. 1. Christ was the Desire of all nations, the Saviour for which all nations yearned. 2. His coming was in accordance with the plan of God from the first. Hence then were preparations not only among the Jews but in general history for His coming. 3. But the Christ who was blindly felt after by sage and seer was the Christ of an assured prophecy in Judæa. Abraham had seen His day. Even earlier to Adam and Noah the promise had gone forth. You know the tenor of Isaiah, Daniel and the minor prophets. II. THE CHRIST OF HISTORY corresponds in every particular to the Christ of prophecy. Eight different writers record His life, but they all agree in saying that Christ was what many more before He came said He was to be. III. THE CHRIST OF EXPERIENCE. 1. Christ's promise was that He would manifest Himself to and live in His people. The Apostles point out this as the central Christian privilege. It therefore becomes our duty, that as there is an indwelling Christ in every true believer, to bring out in ourselves the Christ should be our end and aim. 2. The Christ of prophecy was needed as the initiation of the Divine plan for our salvation. But the benefits of the Christ of prophecy to us are simply that they confirm our faith and raise in us a more exalted idea of His excellence. 3. The Christ of history, too, has passed away, but the Christ of experience is based upon and modelled after and by the Christ of history. (*A. B. Livermore.*) *A simple confession*:—I. AN ANTECEDENT FAITH. The disciples commenced their investigations into the theme of Christ's personality. 1. Not by practising unlimited credulity as opposed to sober inquiry. 2. Not by superstitiously committing themselves to extravagant conceptions as to His rank. 3. By accepting honestly and trustfully the evidence placed before them in the character and works of Jews without partiality or prejudice, and then forming their conclusion. II. A CONSEQUENT KNOWLEDGE. The result was that they arrived at a clear and intelligent judgment as to who Christ was. The glory of the Incarnate Son having shined into their souls they were enabled to realize the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Vers. 70, 71. **Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?**—*Judas Iscariot*:—I. WHO THEN WILL SAY THAT THE MEN WITH WHOM CHRIST BEGAN HIS

NEW KINGDOM WERE MORE THAN MEN; not bone of our bone, but a princely sort, quite away from the common herd? On the contrary, they fairly represented human nature in its best and worst aspects—gentleness, ardour, domesticity, enterprise, timidity, courage, and one of them was a devil—a man like the others, but in him a pre-eminent capacity for the foulest mischief. II. A wonderfully instructive fact is this that JESUS DID NOT POINT OUT THE SUPREMELY WICKED MAN, but simply said, "One of you is a devil." Thus a spirit of mournful self-suspicion was excited, culminating in the mournful "Is it I?" It is better not to know the worst man in the Church: to know only that judgment will begin at the House of God, and to be wondering whether that judgment will take most effect on ourselves. No man fully knows himself. The very star of the morning fell from heaven: why not you or I? III. ISCARIOT'S WAS A HUMAN SIN RATHER THAN A MERELY PERSONAL CRIME. Individually, I did not sin in Eden, but humanly I did; personally, I did not covenant for the betrayal of my Lord, but morally I did; I denied Him, and pierced Him; and He loved me and gave Himself for me. IV. WHY DID CHRIST CHOOSE A MAN WHOM HE KNEW TO BE A DEVIL? A hard question, but there is one harder still. Why did Jesus choose you? (*J. Parker, D.D.*) *A solemn warning*:—I. FOR THE TWELVE. Peter had spoken in their name as well as for himself: Christ replies that nevertheless there is ground for self-examination. Their honour and the position they enjoyed as apostles, and possible future heads of the Church, was no infallible guarantee of their sincerity. There was, therefore, with a devil in their midst, room for heart-searching before God. II. FOR JUDAS. How Christ came to elect him presents no more inseperable problem than that involved in any attempt to harmonize Divine sovereignty and human freedom. Why should God employ wicked men anywhere, particularly in His Church? All men are dealt with as free agents. If Christ elected Judas, it was probably because—1. He recognized that to be the Father's Will. 2. He would rescue if He could a soul as black as his. 3. He would make it clear that Judas was self-destroyed. The warning was manifestly for the sake of Judas to discover to Him his awful danger. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Judas*:—Did Christ know the character of this man of Kerioth (chap. ii. 24, 25; xiii. 11)? A number of questions will suggest themselves; but we note only the brief account given in the Bible. I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS DEPRAVITY. As treasurer, he develops selfishness, avarice, thievishness: a typical defaulter. The anointing at Bethany showed satan in possession. Conference with the chief priests, and the compact with them. The upper room, the betrayer revealed. The kiss, and the cowardly disappearance. II. HIS DREADFUL DEATH. The accounts in Matthew and Acts are not contradictory: one is supplemental to the other. Conviction, remorse, suicide (Matt. xxviii. 3–5.) III. HIS DOLEFUL DESTINY. "Own place" (Matt. xxvi. 24). The two Scripture hints indicate his dark doom. Remarks: 1. This betrayer a minister. Official prominence has special dangers. Hierarchies have been traitors, in destroying foundation doctrines, and individuals have pierced Christ in the house of his friends. 2. But the loyal far outnumber the betrayers. Do not forget the faithful standard-bearers. 3. A warning to all against making worldly gain out of professed godliness. Let avarice be shunned. 4. Each impenitent sinner will have his "own place." Remorse will be his constant companion. 5. Contrast the joy in prospect of departure which a loyal faith yields (2 Tim. iv. 6–8). (*H. F. Smith, D.D.*) *Why Judas was chosen*:—In reference to the apostleship of Judas, certain questions are eagerly pressed. If Jesus knew all men, was He deceived in Judas? If not deceived, why did He call him? When He discovered his true character, why did He not dismiss him? In view of such questions, it is to be noted (1) that he attached himself to Jesus as a disciple before he was made an apostle; and for his profession of discipleship he is himself responsible; (2) that, being a professed disciple, Jesus appointed him to be one of the twelve; (3) that Jesus, on whom no mock faith could impose, knew what manner of man he was; and (4) that his testimony in favour of Jesus, in its own place, and within its own limits, is as valuable as that of any. Had there been fault in Jesus, he was the man to find it out and tell it; indeed there was the strongest possible reason why he should have told it, to quiet his own conscience and justify his conduct. Not one of the twelve has borne more distinct testimony to the truth—vital to the Christian system—that Jesus is the Sinless One. (*J. Culross, D.D.*) *The character of Judas*:—If the choice of the false disciple was not due either to ignorance or to foreknowledge, how is it to be explained? The only explanation to be given is that, apart from secret insight, Judas was to all appearance an eligible man, and could not be passed over on any grounds coming under ordinary

observation. His qualities must have been such, that one not possessing the eye of omniscience, looking at him, would have been disposed to say of him what Samuel said of Eliab: "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him" (1 Sam. xvi. 6). In that case, his election by Jesus is perfectly intelligible. The Head of the Church simply did what the Church has to do in analogous circumstances. The Church chooses men to fill sacred offices on a conjunct view of ostensible qualifications, such as knowledge, zeal, apparent piety, and correctness of outward conduct. In so doing, she often makes unhappy appointments, and confers dignity on persons of the Judas type, who dishonour the positions they fill. The mischief resulting is great: but Christ has taught us, by His example in choosing Judas, as also by the parable of the tares, that we must submit to the evil, and leave the remedy in higher hands. Out of evil God often brings good, as He did in the case of the traitor. Supposing Judas to have been chosen to the apostleship on the ground of apparent fitness, what manner of man would that imply? A vulgar, conscious hypocrite, seeking some mean by-end, while professedly aiming at a higher? Not necessarily; not probably. Rather such a one as Jesus indirectly described Judas to be when he made that reflection: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." The false disciple was a sentimental, plausible, self-deceived pietist, who knew and approved the good, though not conscientiously practicing it; one who, in æsthetic feeling, in fancy, and in intellect, had affinities for the noble and the holy, while in will and in conduct he was the slave of base, selfish passions; one who, in the last resource, would always put self uppermost, yet could zealously devote himself to well-doing when personal interests were not compromised. In thus describing Judas, we draw not the picture of a solitary monster. Men of such type are by no means so rare as some may imagine. History, sacred and profane, supplies numerous examples of them, playing an important part in human affairs. Baalam, who had the vision of a prophet and the soul of a miser, was such a man; Robespierre, the evil genius of the French Revolution, was another. The man who sent thousands to the guillotine had, in his younger days, resigned his office as a provincial judge, because it was against his conscience to pronounce sentence of death on a culprit found guilty of a capital offence. A third example, more remarkable than either, may be found in the famous Greek Alcibiades, who, to unbounded ambition, unscrupulousness, and licentiousness, united a warm attachment to the greatest and best of the Greeks. The man who in after years betrayed the cause of his native city, and went over to the side of her enemies, was in his youth an enthusiastic admirer and disciple of Socrates. How he felt towards the Athenian sage may be gathered from words put into his mouth by Plato in one of his dialogues, words which involuntarily suggest a parallel between the speaker and the unworthy follower of a greater than Socrates: "I experience towards this man alone (Socrates) what no one would believe me capable of: a sense of shame. For I am conscious of an inability to contradict him, and decline to do what he bids me; and when I go away, I feel myself overcome by desire of the popular esteem. Therefore I flee from him, and avoid him. But when I see him, I am ashamed of my admissions, and oftentimes I would be glad if he ceased to exist among the living; and yet I know well, that were that to happen, I should still be more grieved." The character of Judas being such as we have described, the possibility at least of his turning a traitor becomes comprehensible. One who loves himself more than any man, however good, or any cause, however holy, is always capable of bad faith more or less heinous. He is a traitor at heart from the outset, and all that is wanted is a set of circumstances calculated to bring into play the evil elements of his nature. (*A. B. Bruce, D.D.*) *Treachery is not hidden from Christ*:—Alexander I. of Russia professed a strong friendship for Napoleon, but when nearly all Europe had turned against him, he also became his enemy. An Austrian courier was taken prisoner. There was found in his possession a letter from the commander of the Russian forces, addressed to the Archduke Ferdinand, congratulating him upon his victory, and expressing the hope that very soon the Russian Army would be permitted to co-operate with the Austrian's against the French. Napoleon immediately sent the letter to Alexander without note or comment. (*Abbott's "Napoleon."*) *The baseness of treachery*:—Of all the vices to which human nature is subject, treachery is the most infamous and detestable, being compounded of fraud, cowardice, and revenge. The greatest wrongs will not justify it, as it destroys those principles of mutual confidence and security by which only society can subsist. The Romans, a brave and generous people, disdained to practise it towards their declared enemies; Christianity teaches us to forgive

injuries: but to resent them under the disguise of friendship and benevolence, argues a degeneracy at which common humanity and justice must blush. (*L. M. Stretch.*)

CHAPTER VII.

VERS. 1–13. **After these things Jesus walked in Galilee.**—*The situation surveyed:*—I. THE SCENE IN GALILEE: the attitude of Christ's brethren. 1. The counsel they offered. That Christ should repair to the centre of the theocratic kingdom and make His Messianic claims where they could be competently examined (ver. 3). 2. The argument they used. He could not acquire fame in Galilean obscurity, but only in the metropolis (ver. 4)—a perilous temptation He had twice encountered (Matt. iv. 9; John vi. 15). 3. The spirit they cherished. They disbelieved in His Messiahship, but could not deny His miracles. Hence they wanted His true character settled. If He was the Christ they wanted to see Him crowned, if not, the bubble should burst. 4. The reply they received. Christ was not going up for the purpose suggested. (1) His hour for that had not come—there being for every purpose under heaven (Eccles. iii. 1), much more for this, a seasonable moment. (2) To go before that time would not secure what they desired—the great world of Jerusalem not being prepared to welcome Him (ver. 7). Any time would do for them, but not for Him. II. THE SCENE AT JERUSALEM. 1. The blood-thirsty Sanhedrists—(1) Searched for their victim among the city throngs. (2) With unsleeping hostility, which they had nursed for eighteen months. (3) With murderous intent. (4) With eager inquiry. (5) With contemptuous scorn. "That celebrity who has been dazzling you with His wonders." 2. The whispering multitudes. These were—(1) Divided in their judgments concerning Him, as Simeon had predicted (Luke ii. 34), and Christ affirmed they would be (Matt. x. 34, 35), and as history proves they ever have been. (2) Afraid to speak openly about Him, which betokened insincerity as well. They were prepared to do as their leaders bade them. Miserable crew! Learn: 1. It is becoming and right to walk prudently: Christ did so. 2. In religion the wisdom of this world is almost wholly wrong. It was so with Christ's brethren. 3. A man's friends are often the last to believe in His greatness and goodness. It was so with Christ. 4. The more a man resembles Christ, the more he will be hated by the world. 5. The best of men may be evil spoken of. Christ was. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Infidelity*:—I. SELDOM LACKS EVIDENCE. These brethren must have had ample evidence of Christ's Messiahship. As boys they must have seen something of His transcendent character. No doubt many had pointed out to them extraordinary phases of His birth and life, and how they had witnessed His public life for a considerable time, with its teaching and miracles. So infidels have plenty of evidence. All nature is full of proofs of God; and as for Christ the congruity of His biography with contemporaneous history, and of His system with the conscience, reason, and wants of humanity, and the immense and growing influence of His gospel upon the sentiment, spirit, and character of mankind are evidence enough. The cause of infidelity is in the heart rather than the head. II. IS ALWAYS VAIN. His brethren mainly from vanity counsel Him to make a display in Jerusalem on a great national occasion (ver. 4). His life was too obscure and His works too unostentatious. They wanted to share the honour that would accrue. Infidelity is always vain. The vainest speakers, authors, members of society, are those who profess infidel opinions. They are vain of their imaginary intellectual independency, of their superior mental insight and grasp, of their superiority to current creeds. It must be so. The man who believes in nothing greater than himself, will have both space and aliments in his mind in which his egotism can grow to the most offensive proportions. Faith in the infinitely great and good can alone burn out the native vanity of the corrupt heart. Infidelity is a negation. "Light empty minds," says Leighton, "are like bladders blown up with anything." III. IS EVER IN AGREEMENT WITH THE WORLD (ver. 6, 7). By the world is meant the prevailing ideas, spirit, and aims of corrupt humanity. And the mind of His brethren was in accord with this, but it was dead against Him. What is the spirit of the world? Materialism—the body is everything. Practical atheism—God is ignored. Regnant selfishness—self is supreme. Infidelity agrees with all this; there is no moral discrepancy, no reason for mutual antipathies and

battling. IV. NEVER THWARTS THE DIVINE PURPOSE (ver. 10). Christ's plan was not to go up to Jerusalem at the time they requested Him; but in His own time. Their counselling influenced Him not. Infidelity can never modify, check, or retard the decrees of heaven. Conclusion: Such is infidelity in some of its phases. It is a wretched thing, however enriched with learning, energized with logic, embellished with culture and genius. "I seem," says Hume, "affrighted and confounded with the solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad on every side I see dispute, contradiction, and distraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I? What am I? From what cause do I derive my existence? To what condition shall I return? I am confounded with questions, I begin to fancy myself in a very deplorable condition, surrounded with darkness on every side." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Christ and man:*—I. THE DESPERATE HARDNESS AND UNBELIEF OF HUMAN NATURE. Even His brethren did not believe in Him, who should have been the first to do so. This was worse than the unbelief of the Jews. 1. The doctrine of man's need of preventing and converting grace stands out here as a sunbeam. Seeing Christ's miracles, hearing Christ's teaching, living in Christ's own company, were not enough to make men believers. The mere possession of spiritual privileges never made any one a Christian. All is useless without the work of the Holy Ghost (chap. vi. 44). 2. Christians in every age will do well to remember this. They are often troubled to find that they stand alone, and are ready to blame themselves because their families remain worldly and unbelieving. But let them look at the case before us. In our Lord Jesus Christ there was no fault either in temper, word, or deed. Yet even Christ's own "brethren did not believe in Him." 3. Christ has truly learned by experience how to sympathize with His people who stand alone. He has drunk this bitter cup. Let all who are cast down because relations despise religion turn to Him for comfort (Heb. ii. 18). II. THE REASON WHY MANY HATE CHRIST (ver. 7). 1. It was not so much the high doctrines He preached as the high standard of practice; not so much His Messianic claims as His protest against their wickedness. They could have tolerated His opinions if He had spared their sins. 2. This principle is of universal application and holds good to-day. Men dislike the gospel because of its holy demands. Teach abstract doctrines, and few will find any fault. Denounce the fashionable sins of the day, and call on men to repent, and thousands at once will be offended. The reason why many profess to be infidels and abuse Christianity is the witness that Christianity bears against their own bad lives (1 Kings xxii. 8). III. THE STRANGE VARIETY OF OPINIONS ABOUT CHRIST, WHICH WERE CURRENT FROM THE BEGINNING (ver. 12). The words which old Simeon had spoken thirty years before were here accomplished (Luke ii. 34–35). 1. In the face of such a passage as this, the endless modern divisions about religion ought never to surprise us. The open hatred of some towards Christ—the carping, prejudiced spirit of others—the bold confession of the few faithful—the timid, man-fearing temper of the many faithless—the war of words and strife of tongues—are only modern symptoms of an old disease. Such is the corruption of human nature, that Christ is the cause of divisions among men, wherever He is preached. So long as the world stands, some, when they hear of Him, will love and some will hate—some will believe, and some will believe not (Matt. x. 34). 2. What think we of Christ ourselves? This is the one question with which we have to do. Let us never be ashamed to be of that number who believe, hear, follow, and confess Him before men. While others waste their time in vain jangling and unprofitable controversy, let us take up the cross. The world may hate us as it hated Him because our religion is a standing witness against them. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Christ an example of prudence:*—Our Lord's example recorded in this verse shows clearly that Christians are not meant to court martyrdom, or wilfully expose themselves to certain death, under the idea that it is their duty. Many primitive martyrs seem not to have understood this. (*Ibid.*) *How Christians should act in times of danger:*—The Roman rule in battle was neither to fly from dangers nor to follow them. The Christian's motto is, "Neither timorous nor temeranous." We must not basely desert the cause of Christ when called out to defend it. "Either vanquish or die," the Black Prince's father said to him. Either live with the gospel or die for it. Yet we may not rashly run ourselves upon unnecessary dangers, but decline them when we can with a good conscience. Christians are permitted to fly when they are sought for to the slaughter, so it be with the wings of a dove, and not with the pinions of a dragon. (*J. Trapp.*) *We must not seek martyrdom:*—In Tourney, about 1544, a very noted professor of the Protestant religion, being earnestly sought after, had

concealed himself so closely that his persecutors were unable to discover where he was hid. Contrary, however, to the advice and entreaty of his wife and friends, he gave himself up, desirous of the glory of martyrdom; but being adjudged to be burnt, he recanted, and abjured the faith in order to be beheaded. The Papists improved this in order to decoy his fellow-sufferers to the like recantation; but they replied, "He had tempted God by rushing upon danger without a call, but they had to the utmost of their power shunned it, and hoped that, since He had called them to suffer, He would support them under it." And it so happened they went to the fire in solemn pomp, and were consumed loudly singing the praise of God even in the flames, till their strength was exhausted. We are not to court sufferings; it is enough if we cheerfully endure them when, in the providence of God, we are called to it. Our Lord Himself says to His disciples, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another." **The Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.**—*The feast of tabernacles* (Levit. xxiii. 34–43; Exod. xxiii. 16; Deut. xvi. 13–15) lasted seven days, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the seventh month, Tisri, October. An eighth day was further celebrated as a closing festival, like the first day, with a Sabbath rest and a holy convocation. The feast served as a thankful remembrance of God's gracious protection of the nation during its desert wanderings, and as a joyous celebration of the harvest then completed with the gathering in of the fruit and wine. It was therefore considered by the Jews after the exile to be the greatest and most glorious feast, and its celebration was distinguished by various customs. 1. By an arbitrary interpretation of Levit. xxiii. 40, those who visited the feast carried in the left hand a lemon, and in the right a palm branch, bound with sprays of willow and myrtle. 2. At every morning offering, a priest, amid music and songs of praise, poured into two perforated vessels on the next side of the altar water which he had drawn in a golden pitcher from the fountain of Shiloah (comp. Isa. xii. 3). 3. On the evening of the first day of the feast—according to later Rabbinical accounts, on each of the seven days—there was an illumination in the court of the women by means of a great golden candelabra, accompanied by a torch dance before them. (*Prof. Luthardt.*) This was perhaps the most joyous of all the Jewish festivals—the great annual holiday of the nation. During this festive period the people all left their houses and lived in tents or booths, which were erected in the streets and market places, and on the flat terraced roofs of the houses. From this circumstance it was called the "feast of tents" (text and Lev. xxiii. 34). It was likewise named the "feast of ingatherings" (Exod. xxiii. 16, xxxiv. 22), because it took place at the close of the vintage, when the fruits of the year were gathered in. It was designed as a sort of a national praise-offering. The people assembled in the courts of the sanctuary to adore the bountiful providence of God which had crowned their labours with success, to rejoice in His goodness, and to implore His blessing on the following year. Josephus calls it "a most holy and eminent feast." (*J. T. Bannister, LL.D.*) *Church festivals*:—Let it suffice men of sober minds to know, that the law both of God and nature alloweth generally days of rest and festival solemnity to be observed, by way of thankful and joyful remembrance, if such miraculous favours be showed towards mankind, as require the same; that such graces God hath bestowed upon His Church as well in later as in former times; that in some particulars, when they have fallen out, Himself hath demanded His own honour, and in the rest hath left it to the wisdom of the Church, directed by those precedents and enlightened by other means, always to judge, when the like is requisite. Touching those festival days, therefore, which we now observe, what remaineth but to keep them throughout all generations holy, severed by manifest notes of difference from other times, adorned with that which most may betoken true, virtuous, and celestial joy. (*Hooker.*) **His brethren.**—The family dispute which John relates from personal knowledge, with the frankness and simplicity of a genuine historian, gives us an insight into the domestic trials of our Saviour. The unbelief of His brothers need not surprise us any more than the unbelief of the Nazarenes generally (chap. iv. 44). Not unfrequently the nearest relatives throw more obstacles in the way of God's children than strangers. Christ entered into the condition of fallen humanity with all its temptations and miseries. Hence His sympathy in this as in all (Heb. ii. 17, 18; v. 7, 8). But the full significance of the passage depends upon the proper view of the brothers of Jesus. Here I must dissent from the cousin theory of Jerome, which assumes that three of them, James, Simon, and Jude, were apostles. This passage is one of the strongest arguments in favour of the more natural view that they were members of the Holy family, and under the care of Joseph and Mary, in whose com-

pany they constantly appear. 1. It is plain that John here, as in chap. ii. 12, and in harmony with the Synoptists and Acts i. 13, 1 Cor. ix. 5, distinguishes the brothers of Jesus from the apostles. 2. But what is more conclusive, John represents the brothers as unbelievers, and as using irreverent language against Christ, which could not have been the case had they been apostles. Not that they were unbelievers in the same sense as Jews or pagans, but not believers as the apostles must have been, at least from the miracle at Cana (chap. ii. 11; comp. ver. 22; xvi. 17; xvii. 8). It would have been easy for John to have said, "some" of His brethren did not believe, had the others been believing apostles. John recognizes different degrees of belief (comp. chap. ii. 23; iv. 39; viii. 31; xii. 42), and of unbelief, but he never confounds the sharp lines between belief and unbelief. Moreover, the language of the brothers contrasts with the reverence shown by the apostles on every occasion, even when they could not understand His conduct (chap. iv. 27). 3. Our Lord characterizes them as men of the world whom the world cannot hate (ver. 7); while He says the very reverse of the apostles (John xv. 18; Matt. x. 5, 22, 40). We infer, then, that all the four brothers were distinct from the apostles, and not converted till after the Resurrection (Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 7). As to the other question whether they were older from a former, otherwise unknown, marriage of Joseph (the Greek tradition defended by Epiphanius), or younger children of Mary and Joseph (the view held by Tertullian and Helvidius, and denounced first by Jerome as heretical and profane, because of its conflict with the tenet of Mary's perpetual virginity), the passage gives no decisive answer. The patronizing tone of the brothers seems to favour the former view; but may be found also with younger brothers. (*P. Schaff, D.D.*) *Jesus and His brethren*:—The injunction was neither inspired by a too impatient zeal for the glory of Jesus, nor by the odious desire of seeing Him fall into the hands of His enemies. The truth lies between both these extremes. They seem to have been puzzled by the claims of their brother. On the one hand, they could not deny the extraordinary facts which they every day witnessed; on the other, they could not decide upon regarding as the Messiah one with whom they were accustomed to live upon terms of the greatest familiarity. They desired, therefore, to see Him abandon the equivocal position in which He placed Himself, and was keeping them, by so persistently absenting Himself from Jerusalem. If He were really the Messiah, why should He fear to appear before judges more capable of deciding on His pretensions than ignorant Galileans? Was not the capital the theatre on which Messiah was to play His part, and the place where the recognition of His mission should begin? The approaching festival, which seemed to make it a duty that He should visit Jerusalem, appeared, therefore, to make a favourable opportunity for taking a decided step. There is a certain amount of similarity between this and Mary's request (chap. ii.), as there is also between our Lord's conduct on the two occasions. (*Prof. Godet.*) **For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.**—*Show thyself to the world*:—A single word will often lay bare a man's object, habit of mind, whole bent of nature. This is a revealing sentence involving a perpetual principle of the carnal mind. Christ had been doing and saying great things, but of the latter these people made no account. They fix upon that which struck the eye. I. THIS IS A SPEECH OF WORLDLY MINDED MEN, and presents to us the worldly mind in its foolishness, making false deductions because unable to understand the things of God. Rising no higher than Christ's outward deeds, no wonder that they anticipated no nobler result than the world's praise. It is just the old story—"What will the world say?" It is sad to judge and live with a false standard of value. Were a man to go about with a piece of straw and measure men and even principles by his worthless standard we should think him mad; and yet this is the world all over. It takes its own empty opinion as the standard of all things. What did this involve? It put before Christ a false end of action, and had He gone on the principles here suggested, He would have become alienated from the Father, and been "of the world," and so no Saviour. For there is here involved an entire perversion of His mission. His whole life was a testimony against the world, but His brethren say, "Go and take its admiration by storm with your wonderful deeds." Note the following lessons—1. How entirely the things of God are mistaken by the world, and not only by the profligate, but by the simply unbelieving. 2. How foolish for the people of God to be led by the world's opinion. 3. How it requires sympathy with the mind of Jesus to detect and repel the mind of the world. 4. What mischief results from ignorant or bad advice, even when well meant and of friends. 5. What a warning against what is merely colourably good! 6. What little im-

portance is to be attached to the terrible formula, "What will the world say?" 7. Beware of mistaking the end of your position, life, gifts, none of which is given to gain the world's praise. 8. Beware of reasoning on the world's principles. 9. Be wary when a course of action has as its simple end your own honour. 10. In all solicitations of the world go down into the mind of God and your relationship with Him, and judge each by the light you have of them. II. THE WRONG THOUGHTS WHICH, IN CONNECTION WITH THIS MATTER, RISE IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD. 1. Discontent at being put and kept in the background—and hence discomfort and weakness in work. This arises from exaggerated views of our importance, and from not seeing that God will appoint what is best, and from that superficiality which prevents our seeing that show and noise are not power, and that many of the greatest processes which issue in manifold results are secret. We do not understand the beauties of the background of the Christian life where Jesus was for many a long year. This background is at least safe, and many of God's dearest walk there unnoticed of men but honoured by Him. 2. Discontent at there being so little to show. What is this but coming into the world's court and pleading for a verdict there. The believer must have no care about his work being seen by the world. If he live there will be no occasion for him to thrust himself forward. He must by his life condemn it, and that will create sufficient attention. God's child must not be discontented at seeing honours and riches flowing in upon those who serve the world. "The world loves its own." Let us calmly live before God. Here is comfort for those who are laid aside too weak or poor to do aught that can attract observation. They are seen by God in secret and will be rewarded openly. (*P. B. Power, M.A.*) *Self revelation:*—Cnidius, a skilful architect, building a watch-tower for the King of Egypt, caused his own name to be engraved upon a stone in the wall in great letters, and afterwards covered it with lime and mortar, and upon the outside of that wrote the name of the King of Egypt in golden letters, as pretending that all was done for his honour and glory. But herein was his cunning, he very well knew that the dashing of the water would in a little while consume the plastering (as it did) and then his name and memory should abide to after generations. Thus there be many in this world, who pretend to seek only the glory of God, the good of His Church, and the happiness of the state; but if there were a window to look into their hearts we should find nothing there within but self-seeking. (*J. Spencer.*) **For neither did His brethren believe in Him.**—The prophecy that the Messiah should be "despised and rejected by men" was here fulfilled to the very letter. His brethren, who should have been the first, were the last to believe on Him. I. HOW STRANGE THIS WAS. 1. They had heard His doctrine, not as strangers or near neighbours, but in the familiar intercourse of home. 2. They had seen His miracles (chap. ii. 11, 12). 3. They had known the circumstances and manner of His life. They had heard no doubt of the marvels attendent on His birth, and had watched His pure and benevolent life for thirty-three years. II. HOW IT MAY BE ACCOUNTED FOR. This is necessary, for the text is a great favourite with modern Jews and infidels, who hold that His brethren could not have been more incredulous than others. It is singular, however, on this theory, that John should have made so damaging an admission. But—1. It is no uncommon thing for men to disbelieve in the face of the clearest evidence. To the Jews we reply that the Israelites did not believe in the Lord and Moses, though they could not deny the miracles; and to the deists that many deny God and immortality, notwithstanding the variety and strength of arguments in favour of both. 2. These men had strong prejudices against Christ. (1) Some were common to them as sinful men, arising from the purity of His doctrine and the stringency of His demands. (2) Some were peculiar to them as Jews arising from their conceptions of a temporal Messiah. They did not contest His miracles but thought that they should be displayed, if Messianic, at Jerusalem, so as to receive the suffrages of the great, and not in the obscurity of Galilee. 3. They were under the influence of an ambitious worldly spirit as Christ intimates in the next verse. Application: 1. Let us not wonder if some, who have enjoyed the greatest religious advantages, do not believe. What advantages these brethren must have had! And yet how little the impression produced. Do not wonder then, Christian parents, if, with the best of training, your children are not yet converted. But do not despair. Remember that Christ's brethen eventually became His disciples (Acts i. 14). 2. See what an enemy to Christianity a worldly spirit is. With their views Christ's brethren held that if He were Messiah they would share His temporal glory. A worldly covetous disposition hinders multitudes from believing and obeying Christ,

3 How much better is a relation to Christ by faith than by nature. (*J. Orton.*) *The unbelief of Christ's brethren*:—The subject suggests that—I. CHRIST OWED NOTHING TO MAN'S SYMPATHY. A man's own relations of all men ought to manifest this. They are his own flesh and blood. To feel for him is only a step beyond feeling for selves. We do for the inner circle of our relatives what we should never think of doing for outsiders. But this common privilege was denied our Lord. We gather that His brethren were aware of His pretentions and of His works in support of them. But all they do is to dare Him to go to Judæa (ver. 4). An enemy might have spoken so, as indeed the Pharisees (Matt. xvi. 1), the chief priests (Matt. xxvii. 41-43), and the soldiers (Matt. xxvii. 29). In all cases He was treated as one who had His claims to make good, so great was the chasm between those nearest to Him and Himself. There was one world of feeling within Him, and another around Him. How much went out from the One; how little came in from the other. II. HE OWED NOTHING TO MAN'S HELP. The rare instances in which He received a little sympathy show this. The confession of Peter (Matt. xvi. 16) fell on His heart like cold water on a thirsty tongue; but like water spilt on the ground, so the next moment it was gone. In Gethsemane the disciples so far sympathized with Him as to catch the infection of His grief, but that which made Him watch made them sleep. It was not by His disciples, or mother, or brethren (Luke ii. 49; John ii. 4), but notwithstanding them that He effected His great work. Consider the cost of that work to Himself. It was one continuous sacrifice, and through the whole He was unaided and alone. (*Mathematicus.*) *An unsuccessful ministry*:—I. THE UNSUCCESSFULNESS OF OUR SAVIOUR'S MINISTRY. 1. The causes of our unsuccessful ministry. (1) Ignorance of Scripture truths. (2) Lack of effective expression. (3) Want of harmony between the minister's private life and public teaching. (4) Absence of a prayerful spirit. 2. These causes did not operate in the case of Christ. He knew the Scriptures, spake as never man spake, was blameless, and went about doing good, and was mighty in prayer. Still, His brethren did not believe in Him. 3. The lessons which the Saviour's unsuccessful ministry suggest. (1) That a man should not always be held responsible for the unreligiousness of his family. (2) A true ministry may be unsuccessful when the greatest success may be expected. (3) Success is no proof of the true value of a ministry. II. INFIDELITY EXISTING IN THE MOST FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCES TO BELIEF. This must be because of—1. Prejudice. 2. Intellectual pride. 3. Hardness of heart. (*D. Lewis.*) *Unbelief an obstruction*:—An empty vessel capable of holding water, if tightly corked none can enter it, though water is poured upon it in abundance; nay, it may be thrown into the sea and still remain empty. So it is with our hearts. Unbelief closes them so that overwhelming evidence can bring no conviction of the truth, and the most powerful influence can secure no entrance for the grace of God. *Want of religious sympathy at home*:—When Bunyan's Pilgrim became alarmed about his state he found no sympathy from his friends. He told them of his fears, but "at this his relatives were sore amazed, nor for that they believed what he had said to them was true, but because they thought some frenzy distemper had got into his head, therefore, it drawing toward night, and they, hoping that sleep might settle his brains, with all haste they got him to bed. When the morning was come they would know how he did. He told them worse and worse. They thought to drive away his distemper by harsh and surly carriage to him; sometimes they would deride; sometimes they would chide, and sometimes they would quite neglect him." (*"Pilgrim's Progress."*) **My time is not yet come; but your time is alway ready.**—I. GLORIOUS DANGER. 1. Jesus was in extreme peril. The storm, the first mutterings of which had been heard long before seemed now to concentrate its violence upon Him. Derision had become inveterate hatred. The scribes, &c., now longed to kill Him, and were doing all in their power to compass that end. That end was only a matter of time, and the limit was only imposed by Christ Himself. 2. He might have escaped it all, and been the leader and King of the people had He conciliated, compromised, and compounded. 3. But He would not. "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." His danger was glorious, because it arose from a persistent refusal—(1) To live any life lower than the highest. (2) To accept any modification of the supreme law of righteousness. (3) To become anything less than the Saviour of the world. II. INGLORIOUS SAFETY. His brethren were safe. They might go when and where they liked. They would meet with no exasperated enemies, but rather with their true relations—unbelievers. They were safe because—1. They were not opposing evil. Their true kinship was with the world, and the world would love and spare its own (chap. xv. 19; *cf.* 1 John

iv. 5). They were going with the stream. 2. They were not accomplishing any high mission in life. Having no work of Divine appointment—their "time was alway ready"; they had no "hour," no climax. III. IN VARYING DEGREES THE CHOICE BETWEEN GLORIOUS DANGER AND INGLORIOUS SAFETY LIES BEFORE EACH ONE OF US, in regard to—1. Business. Which shall we conform to, the average standard of commercial morality or the highest? 2. Politics. Shall we merely follow the party, or be true to our deepest conviction of rights? 3. Religion. Shall we accept doctrines and creeds that are simply popular, or stand by that which in our heart we feel to be the truth? Conclusion: 1. To live the high life, to be true to conviction, to dare to stand alone—if need be, oppose evil, breast the stream—this is hard, painful, dangerous, but gloriously so. 2. To live the average life, to accept the present condition of things, to conform, to compromise, to go with the tide; this is easy, generally pleasant, profitable, and for awhile safe, but inglorious. (*L. Shackleford.*) *Salvation*:—The world never ready for Christ's salvation, but always ready for its own secular pleasures and profit. I. The ABSORBING EXCELLENCE of Christ's salvation. 1. We fail to properly esteem it. 2. Or, confessing its excellence, we are too indolent to give it the preference over our other pursuits. Other things take our time and energy. 3. Or, proposing to pursue it, we do not make it our sovereign pleasure. (1) This is because of our vitiated taste. (2) We do not acquire the liking for religious duties by sufficient practice of them. (3) Or, if we give them time, we do not give to them more than half our hearts. II. HELPFUL RULES. 1. Study the reasons for Christian life until you have a strong conviction regarding them. 2. In all doubt, be reminded that Christian life alone has a hope set before it. Let this determine the scale. (*Massillon.*) *Limitations of human greatness*:—1. Those who believe in the Divinity of Christ may wonder that He should be under the limitations of time. It was not until the time appointed that He was born, nor could He die till His hour was come. The Redeemer is put under sharper restrictions than are His disciples, for their time was alway. 2. Here was a focal centre to which preparatory events converged. The promise in the garden; the words of prophecy, the symbolism of ancient days—all were knit into the Redemption's plan. But why was salvation so circuitous? Why wait so long? 3. We cannot comprehend the secrets of the Infinite Mind, nor argue *a priori* in the matter. We must move from our standpoint upward. Consider the limitations of human greatness and, by inference, those of Omnipotence itself. I. INCREASE OF POWER DOES NOT INCREASE THE RANGE OF FREEDOM FROM LAW. It rather hinders. Power can do some things, and some things it cannot do. To weld iron to iron, a man needs a blacksmith's arm and muscle. To instruct a child's intellect or develop its moral nature, physical power is not counted. 1. We cannot argue from the almightiness of God, seen in the material creation, that He will force men into heaven. The order of things is a narrowing condition. For example, an act of parliament cannot banish the plague. The disciples would have called down fire from heaven and have honoured God by destroying His enemies. This spirit established the Inquisition. It would break through the order of the universe to accomplish a subsidiary end. But God does not propose to outrage man's faculties in man's salvation. 2. Increasing power puts under restraint, by making needful the hiding of power. The crowd would proclaim Christ king. He checked them. So, again and again, He said to those on whom He had wrought miracles, "Tell it to no man," knowing that the blazing abroad of it at that time would precipitate His conflict with the civil power. He also guarded these miraculous energies, so as not to paralyze human responsibility. Thousands of hungry ones were fed. Their horizon is opened and they thought, perhaps, that no more labour would be needful, now that the granaries of heaven were open by Divine power. "Gather up the fragments!" How strange, when there is such a power to create supplies! So, too, there was danger of becoming estranged from the practical duties of life, as in the case of Peter, who wished to abide on the mount. This was rebuked by Christ. He kept in the realm of humanity. He laboured to prove Himself human. Men were already convinced that He was Divine. 3. This necessary control and restriction of increasing power is seen among men. A little boat in the river moves hither and thither as its rower pleases, but the huge ocean steamer, with its vast momentum, must be guarded in its movements, lest its iron weight and onward speed send it crashing into other craft, like some blind Polyphemus to devour and destroy. A child's movements may not affect anything outside its home, but a Napoleon is watched by the nations with fear. How much more the tremendous power of God and His responsibility as related to the order

and harmony of the universe! II. THE INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE ALSO BRINGS RESTRICTIONS. 1. The child sees no significance in the congeries of forces about him. He moves about freely. He plays with water, and knows not that each drop is a universe, and that every motion of his finger is felt in Sirius. Higher knowledge puts us under sense of higher responsibility. 2. The power and use of speech is another field of illustration. As childhood ripens into manhood, this trust is more appreciated. Christ's use of parables is a solemn rebuke to those who, had they fully known the truth, would have abused it—would have "held down the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18). Throw pearls to swine, and they will rend you. Fools rush in where angels dare not tread. Knowledge dwarfs our self esteem. The more wisdom the more modesty. The ignorant look at the sky and see but specks of light, and fancy this globe great. The astronomer reveals a gigantic system. We shrink abashed before the Father of lights, and fear to despise His mercy or trifle away our probation. III. GOODNESS DOES NOT BROADEN, BUT LIMITS FREEDOM IN SOME RESPECTS. 1. The wicked have "no bands in their death," and in life they often revel in unlicensed liberty; but men like Paul deny themselves meat if it cause a brother to fall. Christ says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." The good man separates himself from luxury and ease, and from all that hinders his work. 2. The man obtuse through sin or self-will shuts his eyes and ears to the suffering. The good man is sensitive. "If any suffer, I suffer; if any is weak, I am weak." 3. A pure heart, too, is pained by sin, as a cultured ear is pained by the discords of music. The man who is destitute of musical sensibility is unaffected. Holiness, essentially, is a separating process. A Brahmin cannot touch food or drink prepared by one of lower caste. The shadow of such a one pollutes the air. He must therefore assume the burden of furnishing himself with food. Conclusion: 1. As obedient to the Father's will, Christ the Holy One was under restrictions the most exacting. Step by step He fulfilled His course. Christ could not wander a vagrant. He steered between those who, on the one hand, said, "Show Thyself," and those who, like Peter, cried, "Far be it from Thee," and kept to the lines appointed him. When the clock of the universe pointed to the hour, He must be put upon the cross. 2. Gaze into the heavens where stars are wheeling in courses, the delicacy and exactness of whose curves it takes pages of figures to compute. The safety of worlds depend on their perfect harmony of movement. The astronomer calculates, centuries in advance, their various intersections. But in the moral world there is the same exactness. Jerusalem had her "day of visitation." You and I have our day of mercy. The hour hastens when it will be said, "It is the last time." God will not then move back the index on the dial plate. (*J. B. Thomas, D.D.*) **Your time is alway ready.**—Did we see the husbandman dreaming away his time, when all his fields lay uncultivated; or the generals of an army trifling an hour at cards, when the enemy was preparing to storm the camp; or a pilot asleep, when the ship was running directly upon a rock; and did all these allege, as the reason of their behaviour, that they had "nothing to do," we should think a madhouse the only proper place for them: and we should think right. But why do we not perceive that there is not less of absurdity and madness in the conduct of that Christian who wastes his precious hours in idleness, and apologizes for it by saying in the same manner, that he has "nothing to do," when perhaps the work of his salvation, that greatest of all works, the very work for which God sent him into the world, is not yet so much as entered upon, or even thought of? (John xi. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 2). (*Bp. Horne.*) *Misused opportunity*:—Many do with opportunities as children do at the sea shore; they fill their little hands with sand, and then let the grains fall through, one by one, till they are all gone. (*T. Jones, D.D.*) *Opportunity unused*:—Opportunity is like a strip of sand which stretches around a seaside cove. The greedy tide is lapping up the sand. The narrow strip will quickly become impassable; and then how sad the fate of the thoughtless children who are now playing and gathering shells and seaweed inside the cove! (*Union Magazine.*) *Opportunities of doing good should be seized eagerly*:—When the earth is soft the plough will enter. Take a man when he is mourning, or newly stirred by some moving sermon, and then set it home and you may do him good. Christian faithfulness doth require us not only to do good when it falls in our way, but to watch for opportunities of doing good. (*Richard Baxter.*) *Christians may find opportunities of doing good at any time and anywhere*:—Some persons are so extremely particular as to where they begin to work for Christ that they lose much time in what they think is wise waiting for opportunities. But it was not so with Uncle John Vassar (the American colporteur). He would begin anywhere. One

day a minister met him at the railway station and was about to take him home with him before commencing his work. Uncle John proposed that they should work on the way home. "But where shall we begin?" said the minister. "Oh," he replied, "let us begin at the station-master's." They did so, and before ten minutes had passed one poor discouraged backslider had opened her heart to the stranger's earnest appeals and was kneeling in true penitence at the throne of Divine mercy. (*R. Brewin, "Lecture on Uncle John Vassar."*) **The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth.**—*The antagonism between Christ and the world*:—I. CHRIST'S POSITION ONE OF ANTAGONISM TO THE GENERAL CURRENT OF HUMAN THOUGHT AND FEELING. The great idol of humanity is self. Every one worships it in one form or other. Christ comes to overthrow this idol and to claim all men for His Father. This claim is resented. In other words, Christ, by His Person, teaching, example, testifies of the world that its works are evil. The light rebukes the darkness. Christ does not say, "You are very nearly right"; but, "You are altogether wrong." Nor will He rest until His statements are believed and His claims accepted. So He is hated. Men say they are indifferent, but they hate. II. IT IS THE FACT OF THIS ANTAGONISM WHICH MAKES MANY SHRINK FROM JOINING HIM. They dread running counter to general opinion. They cannot stand opposition or ridicule. They feel instinctively that the dislike with which the world regards Christ is extended to His disciples; and at this dislike they shudder. But their condition is a very perilous one. It is to Him that "overcometh" that the blessing is given. The "fearful" are cast out with the "false and abominable." Hence infer—(1) that weakness towards the world is hardness towards Christ; and (2) that Christ, if we look to Him, will give us the needful strength. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *The world's treatment of Christ*:—The world gave Him a cradle, but it was a manger; a throne, but it was a cross; a crown, but it was thorns; a sceptre, but it was a reed; homage, but it was derisive mockery and bitter scorn; companions, but they were crucified criminals; a kingdom, but it was a grave (James iv. 4). (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *The world's treatment of the Church*:—In Brazil there grows a common plant, which is called the *matodor*, or murderer. Its slender stem creeps at first along the ground; but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree than with clinging grasp it cleaves to it, and climbs it, and as it climbs, sends out at short intervals arm-like tendrils that embrace the tree. As the murderer ascends, these ligatures grow larger, and clasp tighter. Up, up it climbs, one hundred feet, nay, two hundred, if needs be, until the last loftiest spire is gained and fettered. Then, as if in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge flowery head above the strangled summit, and thence from the dead tree's crown, scatters its seed to do again the work of death. Even thus does worldliness strangle churches. (*S. Coley.*) Truth begets hate. (*Terence.*) **Go ye up to this feast. I go not up yet.**—Whether "not yet" or "not" be adopted as the true reading, the utterance is not to be explained as an indication of fickleness, or of honest purpose subsequently changed, or of intentional evasion as if He wished to leave His counsellors uncertain how He meant to act, or signified that though He was really going to Jerusalem He was not going just yet—with a mental substitution of a now, or with the public caravans and feast trains, or to attend the feast in a legally prescribed manner, all of which have been suggested. The sense Christ desired His words to bear was probably that He was not yet (though afterwards He would), or not (absolutely for the present) going up to manifest Himself unto the world; if He went up, it would not be yet for any such purpose as they contemplated, because His time was not yet fulfilled. The seasonable moment when He would manifest Himself into the world was not to arrive till the next passover. And, having said these things, He abode in Galilee, waiting the signal from His Father which determined all His earthly movements (chap. xi. 6). His brethren having gone, then went He also up, not publicly as they desired, but as a private person *incognito*. Whether or not Christ travelled through Samaria, thus avoiding the ordinary path, He did not accompany any of the public caravans, but selected a solitary route. The "in secret" shows that this was neither the journey mentioned in Luke ix. 51, nor the final departure from Galilee (Matt. xix. 1, 2), both of which were public. Though Christ's journey was in secret it is not said that His visit to the feast was. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) **Then the Jews sought Him at the feast.**—*Striking contrasts*:—I. BASE COWARDICE AND SUBLIME COURAGE. 1. Base cowardice (vers. 11–13). (1) For these chief men of the nation to be in cunning search for the life of one lonely man. "Where is He?" We want Him. What for? To listen to His doctrines? honestly to test His merits, to do honour to His person or His mission? No; but to kill Him.

Here are a number of influential men banded together to crush one humble peasant! (2) In the people meeting together in secrecy, and talking about Him. Why not openly? Sin is always cowardly: virtue alone is courageous. Sin's talk is swaggering, and its attitude often defiant; but it is essentially craven-hearted. "Thou wear a lion's hide! Doff it for shame, and hang a calf's skin on those recreant limbs" (Shakespeare). 2. In contrast with this, we have the sublimest courage (ver. 14). When the festival was at its height, and the concourse swollen to the greatest number, and national enthusiasm most intense, this poor peasant Reformer confronted public sentiment when its billows were thundering at high tide. Where in all history have you an example of courage comparable to this? II. CONVENTIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND DIVINE INTELLIGENCE. 1. Conventional scholarship (ver. 15). The question breathes contempt. The idea is, He has never been to our seats of learning and studied under our rabbis; what can He know? He is an uneducated man and, forsooth, presumes to teach. There is much of this spirit now. There are those who hold that a man cannot know much unless he has graduated at some university. This is a great fallacy; some of the most educated men have never passed the college curriculum. This idea fills society with pedants, and our pulpits with men who have neither the kind of lore, or genius to preach the gospel. 2. Divine intelligence. Note here that (1) God is the sole Teacher of the highest doctrine (ver. 16). Although I have not studied under you, rabbis, I have got my knowledge directly from the primal source of all true intelligence. Do not content yourself with sipping at the streams of conventional teachings, go to the fountain head. (2) Obedience is the qualification for obtaining the highest knowledge (ver. 17). Philosophy and experience show the truth of this. "The essence of goodness consists in wishing to be good," says Seneca. And well too as Pascal said, that "a man must know earthly things in order to love them, but that he must love heavenly things in order to know them." (3) Entire devotion of self to the Divine is necessary in order to communicate the highest knowledge (ver. 18). It is not only as a man becomes self-oblivious, and lost in the love and thoughts of God, that he can reflect the bright rays of Divine intelligence upon his fellow-men. We must allow ourselves to become mere channels through which the Divine will flow. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Why Christ hid himself*:—To kindle the desire of seeing and hearing Him so much the more; or to discover whether there were any numbers disposed by His first preaching to receive Him, to the end that He might not show Himself in vain. (*J. Trapp.*) **Where is He.**—Jesus went to the feast in secret, and the Jews sought Him. From differing motives they inquire for Him, but they did inquire. No man, having once heard of Jesus, can any longer remain indifferent to Him: he must take some sort of interest in the Lord Jesus. From many quarters come the question, "Where is He?" We will at this time—I. CONSIDER THE WAYS IN WHICH THE QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED. 1. Hate, ferociously desiring to slay Him, and overthrow His cause. Herod was the type of this school. 2. Infidelity, sneeringly denying His existence, taunting His followers because His cause does not make progress (2 Peter iii. 4). 3. Timorous fear, sadly doubting His presence, power, and prevalence (Job xxiii. 8, 9). 4. Penitence, humbly seeking Him that she may confess her sin, trust her Lord, and show her gratitude to Him (Job xxiii. 3). 5. Love, heartily pining for communion with Him, and for an opportunity to serve Him (Solomon's Song iii. 3). 6. Fear, bitterly lamenting His absence, and craving His return. 7. Desire, ardently aspiring to meet Him in His second advent, and to behold His glory (Rev. xxii. 20). II. GIVE THE SAINTS' EXPERIMENTAL ANSWER. He is—1. At the mercy-seat when we cry in secret. 2. In the Word as we search the sacred page. 3. In the assemblies of His people, even with two or three. 4. At His table, known in the breaking of bread. 5. In the field of service, aiding, sympathizing, guiding, and prospering. In all things glorified before the eyes of faith. 6. In the furnace of trial, revealing Himself, sanctifying the trial, bearing us through. 7. Near us, yea, with us, and in us. III. RETURN THE QUESTION TO YOU. Is He—1. At the bottom of your trust? 2. At the root of your joys? 3. On the throne of your heart? 4. Near by constant converse? 5. Is His Spirit manifested in your spirit, words, and actions? 6. Is He before you, that to the end of your journey, the terminus towards which you are daily hastening? IV. ASK IT OF THE ANGELS. They, with one voice, reply that He is—1. In the bosom of the Father. 2. In the centre of glory. 3. On the throne of government. 4. In the place of representation. 5. In the armoury of mercy. 6. Within reach of you and all needy sinners who will now seek Him. Conclusion: 1. Come, let us go and

find Him. We will hold no feast till He is among us. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Where is He?* I. Is He in your church on Sunday? 1. Do you thither repair expecting to meet Him? 2. Does His presence banish every irreverent and worldly feeling? 3. Does He meet out to you the Word of Life, and render it sweet to your taste, and nourishing to your soul? II. Is He in your prayer-meeting? 1. Do you, in company with others, meet together weekly and claim the fulfilment of His promise? 2. Is He then causing your hearts to burn within you, and strengthening your grasp on His promises? 3. When you leave does your conduct say, "We have been with Jesus"? III. Is He in your family? 1. Has he made your home His abode? 2. Does His presence refresh the weariness of toil, loosen the burden of care, and brighten the smile of affection? 3. Does He take your children in His arms and bless them? 4. Does He assure you that you shall form an individual family in heaven? IV. Is He in your heart? 1. If so He is ever near. 2. If not, seek the Lord while He may be found. (*Homiletic Review.*) *Motives for seeking Christ:*—How diverse were the motives from which men sought Jesus: the Magi to adore Him; Herod to crush a rival prince; Greeks to satisfy curiosity; Jews to see miracles, or to crown Him a king to promote their carnal interests; only a few hungry souls sought Him as the Bread of Life. Some seek Him to find ground of objection to His mission. How many frequent His church and ordinances but never seek Him. To how many of the earth's feasters would He prove an unwelcome guest? (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Christ found:*—Many years ago, there was a young man in Birmingham whose dissipation and excess had brought into a condition from which he endeavoured to extricate himself by crime. The fear of detection, exposure, and ruin goaded him on to such a pitch of desperation that he left his father's house resolutely bent on self-destruction. God's good providence led him through Bond Street; and, under some inexplicable impulse, he found himself sitting in the Baptist Chapel almost before he was aware. The minister, a Mr. Edmonds, was reading from the Book of Job, occasionally throwing in some shrewd parenthetic remark. Coming to verses 8 and 9, the young man's attention was irresistibly arrested: "Job, Job," the preacher cried entreatingly, "why don't you look upward?" These words were as nails fastened in a sure place, and the young man ever thanked God for the belief that he was unconsciously drawn by the Holy Spirit to enter that place, and that the preacher was impelled to the use of those words, to the end that his life might be redeemed from destruction, and crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercy. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Where to find Christ:*—I saw a young brother last Friday, and, in answer to the question, How were you converted? he said it was through reading Luther on the Galatians. I said, "I am glad to see the man that reads Luther on the Galatians." He was a young man employed in the city, and I admired him for preferring Luther to the wretched novels of the period. "I read it two or three times," he said, "and I saw the difference between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace; I saw how man was ruined by his works, and how he must be saved by faith, and I found the Saviour while reading that book." Oh, if people would but read the Bible, and books about the Bible, with the desire to know what the gospel is, they would soon find Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. (*Ibid.*) **And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him.** *Christ when He comes brings division:*—Describe the scene, the variety of characters and feelings and opinions, at this most popular of all the feasts; the movement, the stir, all circling round the central figure, Christ. Now discussion about Christ may be allowable enough, but as discussion proceeds the crowd takes sides, and there is a party for, and a party against, Christ. It is so now. The proclamation of truth separates men. Jesus is either a great foundation or else a stone of stumbling. Men are attracted or repelled, hardened or softened. Let us consider then—I. The Divine intention. This is that all men shall be saved. God so loved the world, and His goodness should lead to repentance. But—II. Such is the mystery that attaches to our creation, that man has it in his power to frustrate this intention of God. The Holy Spirit pleads with him, but he resists. He can resist. Were it not so, he would be but a machine. Hearts cannot be compelled; they can only be drawn. Christ knocks at the door; but we can, if we choose, keep it bolted on the inside, and Christ will not force the way in. We must be persuaded to admit Him. He wishes to be a guest. "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." III. God does all in His power to win the human heart. To say that He multiplies kindnesses is to say little. He sends, He gives, He spares not His own Son. This is His last effort. Beyond this there is nothing. And if the heart can resist such

an evidence of His love, its case is hopeless. There is nothing left that will touch it. How is it with us? Which side are we taking? For Christ? or against Him? "He that is not with Me is against Me." There is no intermediate region; no neutral ground. Men start in life as boys, hand-in-hand, but on opposite sides of a little mountain rill. The widening stream soon compels them to unclasp their hands; and the distance between them increases as they advance. Presently they are out of sight of each other; and at last a broad, impassable gulf rolls between them. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) *Diverse effects of contact with Christ*:—The coming of our Lord acted as a moral shock upon the existing fabric of thought and life; it broke up the stagnant, fixed modes of feelings and thinking; it set men in movement; it led to anxious self-questionings, to widespread anxiety of mind, to general unsettlement; it destroyed that tranquil satisfaction with things as they were in Israel which had secured so much repose of mind to so many classes. Such an event would reveal above all the true character of the time; it would act as many a flash of lightning on the crew of a wreck; it would dispel illusions somewhat rudely, often at the cost of happiness and temper, and as a result it would be regarded in more ways than one. Those who wish to know the truth and to live in it at all costs, would welcome it, and thank God for it; those who did not wish this would slink away from an influence which made them uncomfortable, even though they might have reason to think that in the end it would make them better than they were. In ordinary life there are occurrences which act upon men in different ways, which bring out unsuspected tendencies for good or for evil. A railway accident, a fire, the outburst of an epidemic, or the sudden inheritance of a fortune, are each in their own way revelations of character. They break through the ordinary habits, and surprise men for the moment into being perfectly natural. They reveal unexpected beauties in this man's character, heroism, generosity, &c.; or they bring any little weakness to the surface in that man, and show him to be selfish or cowardly, or in other ways unlike what he was supposed to be. In the same way a great controversy acts as a solvent upon all sorts of persons. It throws them back upon the principles which really rule them; it precipitates a great deal in them which else might have remained undecided; it forces them to take a side, and, by taking that side, to make a revelation of character. And much more is this the case when men are brought into contact with a mind and heart of unwonted greatness. Such a personality is too imperative to leave other men just as they were; such a personality sets feeling, thought, will, all in motion—not always in friendly motion—towards itself, not unfrequently in hostile and prejudiced motion. And this was especially the case with our Lord. Men could not, if they would, regard Him with indifference. They could not escape from some sort of profound emotion at coming into contact with Him. When He made His entry into Jernsalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?" And this was a sort of concrete representation of what took place on a vast historical scale on His entrance into the world. That event produced a varied and prolonged emotion in human souls. It stirred the lowest instincts as well as the highest thoughts of men. It was a fulfilment of that pregnant saying, "Yet once more do I shake, not the earth only, but heaven." But its result was not, could not be, uniform. It was for the rising or fall of many a human soul. (*Canon Liddon.*)

Howbeit no man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews.—*Moral cowardice*:—I. THE FACT—"No man spake openly of Him." To this there was a large exception. His friends were silent, not His enemies. They were loud enough in their reproaches, &c. This is the case still to a large and lamentable extent. How much there is said and written against Christ which His professed followers allow to pass without protest or counter demonstration! There is no lack of private confession it may be. They that fear the Lord still speak "one to another"; but those who love Him will surely speak to others also. What Christ wants is confession before men, for the defence of His honour, the confutation of unbelief, the extension of His cause. II. ITS EXPLANATION—"For fear of the Jews." This fear was and is twofold. 1. Nervous shrinking. To men, *e.g.*, in the position of Nicodemus, there was not much to dread from the hostile majority. So many to-day hesitate to confess Christ and rebuke sin, say, to relatives and intimate friends, not because of consequences, but because of the tax it would make upon a highly-strung nervous organization. Over sensitiveness an enemy to the cause of Christ. 2. Rank cowardice. Taking sides for and with Christ in the case of many then meant pains and penalties, and they were not prepared to pay the cost of their convictions. To some extent discipleship still involves tribulation, but of how much milder a

type! Yet men and women seal their lips because they are afraid of being called contemptuous names. III. THE LESSONS FOR US. 1. Our duty—to make a bold, manly, and decisive stand for Christ. (1) He deserves it. What a stand He made for us! No fear of the Jews deterred Him from pleading our cause. (2) He will reward it with present approval and final blessedness. 2. Our privilege. "God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice," &c. Christ does not ask us to undertake this or any duty without qualifying us for its discharge. 3. Our warning. "Whoso is ashamed of Me of him will I be ashamed." (*J. W. Burn.*) *The folly of moral cowardice*:—When the passengers gallop by as if fear made them speedy, the cur follows them with an open mouth. Let them walk by in confident neglect, and the dog will not stir at all. It is a weakness that every creature takes advantage of. (*J. Beaumont, M.D.*) *Cowardly Christians*:—What would Her Majesty think of her soldiers, if they should swear they were loyal and true, and yet should say, "Your Majesty, we prefer not to wear these regimentals; let us wear the dress of civilians! we are right honest men, and upright; but do not care to stand in your ranks, acknowledged as your soldiers; we had rather slink into the enemy's camp, and into your camp too, we therefore prefer not to wear anything that would mark us as being your soldiers!" Ah! some of you do the same with Christ. You are going to be secret Christians, are you, and slink into the devil's camp, and into Christ's camp, but acknowledged by none? Well, ye must take the chance of it, if ye will be double-minded; but I should not like to risk it. It is a solemn threatening—"Of him will I be ashamed when I come in the glory of My Father, and all His holy angels with Me!" It is a solemn thing, I say, when Christ says, "Except a man take up his cross and follow Me, he cannot be My disciple." (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *We must openly show our love to Christ*:—Some time ago, when in a mine, looking through its dark corridors, I now and then saw the glimmer of a moving lamp, and I could track it all through the mine. The reason was the miner carried it on his hat—it was a part of himself and showed where he was. I said, "Would that in this dark world every miner of the Master carried his lamp to show where he walks." (*Dr. Cuyler.*) *Openly religious*:—It is not sufficient to carry religion in our hearts, as fire is carried in flint stones; but we are outwardly, visibly, apparently, to serve and honour the living God. (*Hooker.*) *Christ must be openly praised*:—If people are loud in the praise of a physician who has cured them of some deadly malady—recommending others to trust and seek his skill, why should not Christ's people crown Him with equal honours, commend Him to a dying world and proclaim what He has done for them? (*Dr. Guthrie.*)

Vers. 14–16. **Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the Temple and taught.**—*Christ as a teacher*:—Whatever theory men hold respecting Christ's person and work, all regard Him as an unparalleled teacher. Four things distinguish Him from all His competitors. I. HE POPULARIZED RELIGION. The common people heard Him gladly. What audiences He drew! When He began to teach religion had lost its hold on the world. People were wearied of the parodies which went by the name. Christ taught that it was not a doctrine but a life; not a speculation, but a love; not conversion to a sect, but change of heart; and that teaching was at once a revelation and a revolution. What, in despair, the people had come to regard as dreary and repulsive, He made them feel was bright and beautiful, and so popularized religion. II. HE REVOLUTIONIZED THINKING. It is more important to make men think aright than to teach them what is right. You cannot ensure their believing or obeying your instruction, but if you can start them in conscientious search of what is good, you do them enduring service. Christ did both, but pre-eminently He liberated the intellect and rationalized its operations. There was plenty of colossal thinking before Christ, but it was simply constructive speculation or destructive criticism. And when He came, it was not as another philosopher, to build another stagey system. Men complain that His thinking is defective because fragmentary; but this is its strength. When men asked for His principles He threw in a simple sentence, "You must be born again," "Love your neighbour," some terse, pregnant phrase which has become the current mental coin of the leading people of the earth. Any other teacher would have said, "Come into my class-room and take my lectures; the curriculum is seven years." Christ could settle it in seven minutes. 1. He initiated spontaneous judgment. Instead of sending people to books, He sent them to their own hearts. 2. He introduced liberty of conscience. Whoever heard of men demanding freedom to think and judge for themselves before He came? And yet that freedom has been a ruling

maxim of society since. Out of these two changes have grown infinite results, and are quite sufficient to prove that He revolutionized thinking. III. HE REORGANIZED SOCIETY. The liberty He vindicated involved equality and fraternity. It is fashionable to denounce Socialism, and when it becomes Nihilism or Communism it is a senseless burlesque. He meant that men should serve each other, and not that the lazy should share with the diligent; that as there was a common Fatherhood in God there must be a common brotherhood among men. So He reconstructed society on the basis of mutual respect and reciprocal love. This reconstruction meant—1. That He recruited our hopes. He came to a weary world. Then a few proud, petrified men ruled, and the heart of the crowd was crushed and despairing. The Beatitudes fell on their sad hearts like rain on a drooping flower, and they looked up and felt that a new chance was open to them all. So it is wherever Christ comes now. 2. That He verified our aspirations. Men sighed for another world, but they scarcely knew whether or not to look for it. He came and said, "If it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you." IV. HE DIGNIFIED PASSION. Passion, whether good or bad, is the greatest power in the world. When He came it was everywhere disordered. He purified and released and transformed it into affection. Up to that time men knew not exactly what to make of the emotions implied by such words as sorrow, pain, suffering. He gave them at once a status and vindicated their place in the economy of God. The tendency previously was to stifle pathos, and sneer at sentiment. He sanctified and employed them for the noblest ends. (*W. R. Attwood.*) *Characteristics of Christ's teaching*:—Wherein did its peculiar power consist? The secret of its influence lies in no peculiar excellence of diction. Jesus was no poet, orator, or philosopher. It is not the charm of poetry that attracts us, not the ingenious application which surprises, not flights of eloquence which carry us away, not bold speculation which evokes our astonishment. No one could speak with more simplicity than Jesus, whether on the Mount, in the parables, or in the high priestly prayer. But this is the very reason of His influence, that He utters the greatest and most sublime truths in the present words, so that, as Pascal says, one might almost think He was Himself unconscious what truths He was propounding, only He expressed them with much clearness, certainty, and conviction, that we see how well He knew what He was saying. We cannot fail to see that the world of eternal truth is His home, and that His thoughts have constant intercourse therewith. He speaks of God and of His relation to Him, of the supermundane world of spirits, of the future world and the future life of man; of the kingdom of God upon earth, of its nature and history; of the highest moral truths, and of the supreme obligations of man; in short, of all the greatest problems and deepest enigmas of life—as simply and plainly, with such an absence of mental excitement, without expatiating upon His peculiar knowledge, and even without that dwelling upon details so usual with those who have anything new to impart, as though all were quite natural and self-evident. We see that the sublimest truths are His nature. He is not merely a teacher of truth, but is Himself its source. He can say "I am the Truth." And the feeling with which we listen to His words is, that we are listening to the voice of truth itself. Hence the power which these have at all times exercised over the minds of men. (*Prof. Luthardt.*) *Though criticised and ridiculed we must go on with our work*:—Suppose a geometrician should be drawing lines and figures, and there should come in some silly, ignorant fellow, who, seeing him, should laugh at him, would the artist, think you, leave off his employment because of his derision? Surely not; for he knows that he laughs at him out of his ignorance, as not knowing his art and the grounds thereof. (*J. Preston.*) **And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, never having learned.**—This testimony of enemies to a fact well known to them strongly confirms what we otherwise must know or must conjecture concerning Christ's education, or rather the absence in His case of the ordinary ways and means by which other men receive their knowledge. He was neither school-taught, nor self-taught, nor even God-taught (like inspired prophets), in the usual sense of those terms. No doubt He learned from His mother, went to the synagogue, heard and read the Scriptures, studied nature and man, and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him: yet the secret fountain of His knowledge of God and man must be found in His mysterious and unique relation to the Father, and derived from direct intuition into the living fountain of truth in God. He was and continued to be in the bosom of the Father, and explained Him to us as no philosopher or prophet could do. He spent His youth in poverty and manual labour, in the obscurity of a carpenter's

shop; far away from universities, academies, libraries, and literary or polished society; without any help, as far as we know, except that mentioned above. Christ can be ranked neither with the school trained, nor with the self-trained or self-made men; if by the latter we understand, as we must, those who, without the regular aid of living teachers, yet with the same educational means, such as books, the observation of men and things, and the intense application of their mental faculties, attained to vigour of intellect, and wealth of scholarship—like Shakespeare, Bœme, Franklin and others. All the attempts to bring Jesus into contact with Egyptian wisdom, or the Essenic theosophy, or other sources of learning, are without a shadow of proof, and explain nothing after all. He never quotes from books except the Old Testament. He never refers to any of those branches of knowledge which make up human learning and literature. He confined Himself strictly to religion. But from that centre, He shed light over the whole world of man and nature. In this department, unlike other great men, even the prophets and apostles, He was absolutely original and independent. He taught the world as one who had learned nothing from it, and was under no obligation to it. He speaks from divine intuition, as one who not only knows but is the Truth; and with an authority that commands absolute submission or provokes rebellion, but can never be passed by with contempt or indifference. (*P. Schaff, D.D.*) *The originality of Christ as a teacher*:—We have a great many men who are original in the sense of being originators, within a certain boundary of educated thought. But the originality of Christ is uneducated. That He draws nothing from the stores of learning can be seen at a glance. Indeed, there is nothing in Him that belongs to His age or country—no one opinion, taste, or prejudice. The attempts that have been made to show that He borrowed His sentiments from the Persians and the Eastern forms of religion, or that He had been intimate with the Essenes and borrowed from them, or that He must have been acquainted with the schools and religions of Egypt, deriving His doctrine from them—all attempts of the kind have so palpably failed, as not even to require a deliberate answer. If He is simply a man, as we hear, then He is most certainly a new and singular kind of man, never before heard of, as great a miracle as if He were not a man. Whatever He advances is from Himself. Shakespeare, *e.g.*, probably the most creative and original spirit the world has ever produced, and a self-made man, is yet tinged in all His works with human learning. He is the high-priest, we sometimes hear, of human nature. But Christ, understanding human nature so as to address it more skilfully than he, never draws from its historic treasures. Neither does He teach by human methods. He does not speculate about God like a school professor. He does not build up a frame of evidence from below by some constructive process, such as the philosophers delight in; but He simply speaks of God and spiritual things as one who has come out from Him to tell us what He knows. At the same time He never reveals the infirmity so commonly shown by human teachers. When they veer a little from their point or turn their doctrine off by shades of variation to catch the assent of multitudes, He never conforms to an expectation even of His friends. Again, Christ was of no school or party, and never went to any extreme, words could never turn Him to a one-sided view of anything. This distinguishes Him from every other known teacher. He never pushes Himself to any extremity. He is never a radical, never a conservative. And further, while advancing doctrines so far transcending all the deductions of philosophy, and opening mysteries that defy all human powers of explication, He is yet able to set His teachings in a form of simplicity that accommodates all classes of minds. No one of the great writers of antiquity had even propounded, as yet, a doctrine of virtue which the multitude could understand. But Jesus tells them directly, in a manner level to their understandings, what they must do and be to inherit eternal life, and their inmost convictions answer to His words. (*H. Bushnell, D.D.*) *The teaching of Christ the marvel of unbelief*:—The wisdom of Christ's teaching has proved a hard problem to infidels for 1,800 years. To this day it stands above the efforts of the mightiest and most trained minds. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) **And Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.**—*The teaching of Christ*:—I. ITS CONTENTS. 1. Concerning God. (1) His nature—spirit (chap. iv. 24). (2) His character—love (iii. 16). (3) His purpose—salvation (iii. 17). (4) His requirement—faith (vi. 29). 2. Concerning Himself, (1) His heavenly origin—from above (vi. 38). (2) This higher being—the Son of the Father (vi. 17). (3) His Divine commission—sent by God (v. 37). (4) His gracious errand—to give life to the world (v. 21; vi. 51). (5) His future glory—to raise the dead (v. 28). 3. Concerning man—(1) Apart from Him, dead (v. 24) and

perishing (iii. 16). (2) In Him possessed of eternal life. 4. Concerning salvation—(1) Its substance—eternal life (v. 24). (2) Its condition—hearing His word (v. 24), believing in God (v. 24), coming to Him (v. 40). II. ITS DIVINITY. Three sources possible for Christ's teaching. 1. Others. He might have acquired it by education. But this Christ's contemporaries negatived. He had never studied at a rabbinical school (ver. 15). 2. Himself. He might have evolved it from His own religious consciousness. But this Christ here repudiates. 3. God. This He expressly claimed, and that not merely as prophets had received Divine communications, but in a way that was unique (chap. v. 19, 20; viii. 28; xii. 49), as one who had been in eternity with God (i. 1, 18; iii. 11). III. ITS CREDENTIALS. 1. Its self-verifying character: such as would produce in the mind of every sincere person who desired to do the Divine will a clear conviction of its divinity (ver. 17). 2. Its God-glorifying aim. Had it been human it would have followed the law of all such developments; its Publisher would have had a tendency to glorify Himself in its propagation. The entire absence of this in Christ's case was a phenomenon to which He invited observation. The complete absorption of the messenger and the message in the Divine glory was proof that both belonged to a different than human category. 3. Its sinless bearer. This follows from the preceding. A messenger whose devotion to God was perfect as Christ's was could not be other than sinless. But if the messenger were sinless there could be no unveracity in His message or in what He said concerning it. Lessons: 1. The marvellous in Christianity. 2. The insight of obedience. 3. The danger of high intellectual endowments. 4. The connection between truth and righteousness. 5. The sinlessness of Jesus an argument for His divinity. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*)

Ver. 17. **If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine** (in connection with chap. viii. 47).—Our Lord asserts—First: That if a man is in a right state of mind, he will know and believe the truth. Secondly: That those who are in a wrong state of mind reject the truth; *i.e.*, the cause of faith, or the reason why a man believes, is to be found in his right moral state, and that the cause of wrong belief and infidelity is a wrong moral state. This, reduced to one proposition, is that the faith of a man, so far as religious truth is concerned, depends on his moral state. Proof that this is true. 1. The declaration of our Lord is sufficient proof. The expressions, "If any man," &c., and, "He that is of God," amount to the same. The one means if any one sincerely desires to please God, and the other if any man is godly—*i.e.*, of the same mind as God. Faith in the truth of God, He says, certainly flows from this congeniality with God; and, on the other hand, unbelief is due to, and therefore is the evidence of, a want of this congeniality. 2. This, however, is proved by other declarations. Christ says, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me." He uniformly refers the unbelief of the Jews and their rejection of Him to their wickedness; it was because they were of their father the devil that they rejected and hated Him. St. John asserts that, "He that knoweth God, heareth us," and that believers have the witness or evidence of the truth in themselves. The Holy Spirit, or an unction from the Holy One, is given to all God's people, whereby they know the truth. Paul says that the natural or unrenewed man, and because he is unrenewed, perceives not the things of the Spirit; whereas the spiritual man, and because he is spiritual, perceives all things. He elsewhere says, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." This is the constant doctrine of the Scriptures. 3. It is also the doctrine of experience. The good uniformly believe the truth; the wicked disbelieve or neglect it. Trace the history of the Church, and you will uniformly find truth and piety united on the one hand, and error and irreligion on the other. The more serious the error, the more clear the evidence of the sinfulness of the errorists. This is true everywhere. The infidels of England, France, and Germany, are uniformly irreligious, and generally immoral. On the other hand, you never find the evidence of godliness without finding with it the firm belief of all truth connected with religious experience. Experience, therefore, is in accord with Scripture. 4. A fourth argument is from analogy. There are different kinds of truth. Some are speculative and addressed to the intellect, as truths of mathematics, science, history. Some are æsthetic, as addressed to the taste or sense of the beautiful. Some are moral and suppose a moral sense for their apprehension. Some are religious or spiritual and suppose a religious or spiritual state of mind for their apprehension. The evidence of any one of these is suited to its nature. The evidence of speculative truths is addressed only to the understanding, and requires only intellectual ability to comprehend and receive it. They force assent.

The evidence of æsthetic truth supposes cultivation. If a man denies the beauty of what the mass of educated men pronounce beautiful, it is proof positive of his want of taste. So with morals. A good man inevitably approves of what is morally right and good. If a man pronounce the decalogue evil, or the Sermon on the Mount immoral, it is proof positive that he is immoral. If this is so, why should it not be true that the religious man should receive religious truth and the ungodly reject them? Inferences: 1. The folly of the opinion that a man is not responsible for his faith. This is transferring a maxim, true in one sphere, to another in which it is not true. Our character is determined by our faith, because our faith depends upon our character. Therefore we should be humbled because of our unbelief; consider it an evidence of a dull and sluggish heart. 2. We see the true way to increase the strength of faith. We must grow in holiness. 3. The consolation and security of believers. No speculative objection can subvert a faith founded on moral or religious evidence. Science can never disprove the decalogue. (*C. Hodge, D.D.*) *Obedience the organ of spiritual knowledge:*—1. The Jews marvelled at Christ's spiritual wisdom. The cause of wonder was His want of scholastic education. He said, "My doctrine is not Mine," &c. The principle whereby He attained spiritual wisdom (chap. v. 30) He extends to all, "If *any* man." Here, then, are two opinions respecting the origin of spiritual knowledge—the popular one relying on a cultivated understanding, "that of Christ which relied on trained affections and habits of obedience." What is truth? Study, said the Jews. Act said Christ, and you shall know. 2. Religious controversy is fast settling into a controversy between two extreme parties. Those who believe everything, and those who believe nothing, the credulous and the sceptical. The first rely on authority—Romanists and all who receive their opinions because their sect or their documents assert them. The second rely on culture. Enlighten, and sin, which is an error of the understanding, will disappear, and we shall know all that can be known of God. These disciples of scepticism easily become disciples of credulity. It is instructive to see how those who sneer at Christian mysteries believe in the veriest imposture. In opposition to both stands the Christianity of Christ. I. CHRISTAIN KNOWLEDGE. 1. Its object, "The doctrine." Doctrinal is now opposed to practical. We call the Sermon on the Mount practical, and Paul's epistles doctrinal. But Christ's doctrine means His teaching and embraces everything He taught. In two departments of doctrine the principle of the text will be found true. (1) In speculative truth. If any man will do God's will he shall know what is truth and what is error. How is it that men are almost sure to arrive at the conclusion reached by their party? Because fear, interest, and vanity bias them. This hindrance is not to be removed by culture. By removing self-will the way is cleared for an approximation towards unity on points speculative. (2) In practical truths. Our opinions depend on our lives more than our lives on our opinions. Men think in a certain mode because their life is of a certain character, and opinions are invented afterwards as a defence for their life. "Let us eat and drink," &c. First they ate and drank, then believed tomorrow we die. Slavery is defended philosphically. The negro on his skull and skeleton, they say, has God's intention of his servitude written. But did not men first make slaves, and then search for plausible reasons? So too a belief in predestination is alleged in excuse of crime. 2. Its certainty. "Shall know," not have an opinion. There is a wide distinction between supposing and knowing, fancy and conviction. Whatever rests on authority remains only supposition. You *know* when you feel. In matters practical you know only so far as you can do. Read a work on "Evidences," and it may become highly probable that Christianity is true. That is an opinion. Feel God. Do His will, till the Absolute Imperative within you speaks as with a living voice; then you do not think, you know that there is a God. II. THE CONDITION OF ITS ATTAINMENT. 1. The universe is governed by laws. By submission to them you make them your own. Obey those of the body—temperance and chastity; of the mind—fix the attention, strengthen by exercise; and then their prizes are yours—health, strength, tenaciousness of memory, nimbleness of imagination, &c. Obey the laws of your spiritual being, and it has its prizes too. The condition of a peaceful life is submission to the law of meekness; the condition of the Beatific vision is purity of heart; the condition of spiritual wisdom and certainty in truth is obedience to the will of God. In every department of knowledge, therefore, there is an appointed "organ" for the discovery of its specific truth. In the world of sense, the empirical intellect; here the Baconian philosopher is supreme. The religious man may not contravene his assertions; but in the spiritual world, the organ of the

scientific man, sensible experience, is powerless. If the chemist, &c., say we find in the laws of affinity, in the deposits of past ages, in the human frame no trace of God, no one expected they would. Obedience is the sole organ here. "Eye hath not seen it." And just as by copying perpetually a master-painter's works, we get at last an instinctive and infallible power of recognizing his touch, so by copying and doing God's will we recognize what is His—we know of the teaching whether it be of God, or whether it be an arbitrary invention of a human self. 2. The universality of this law. "If any man." In God's universe there are no favourites who may transgress its laws with impunity; none who can take fire and not be burnt. In God's spiritual universe there are no favourites who can attain knowledge and wisdom apart from experience. See the beauty of this arrangement. If the certainty of truth depended on the proof of miracles, prophecy, &c., then truth would be in the reach chiefly of those who can weigh evidence, investigate, &c.; whereas, as it is, "The meek will He guide in judgment." The humblest may know more by a single act of charity, or a prayer of self-surrender, than all the sages can teach or theologians dogmatize upon. 3. Part of this condition is earnestness. "Will" here is volition, not the will of the future tense. So it is not a chance, fitful obedience that leads to the truth, but one rendered in entireness and in earnest. (*F. W. Robertson, M.A.*) *An obedient spirit the key of truth*:—In judging the Bible, there is a great diversity of opinion. One regards it as a mass of contradiction and fable, which interest has imposed on credulity; while another receives it as the oracles of God. Some find in it the atonement and the necessity of a vital change, others see nothing of the sort. Yet these men may be of equally sound judgment in other matters. Nay, the same man views the Bible in all these varied lights at different periods. Does this diversity arise from the Bible or from its readers? If a number of men were placed at different heights, and one should declare that the sun had risen, another that he was rising, and a third that he had not risen, we should ascribe this diversity not to anything in the sun, but to the different altitudes of the observers. The varied judgments on the Bible are to be accounted for in the same way; for—1. Our text shows us that there is nothing in the Bible which necessarily leads men to err respecting its doctrines. If our Maker gave a revelation to man, we should expect that it should be attended with such evidences that every man might know that it really came from Him, and that every man might know precisely what it taught. And this has been done. "If any man will do His will, he shall" not be inclined to believe that the Bible is true, but "shall know," &c. The apostles echo this; they say, "We know." God does not make this revelation certain and clear, irrespective of character. We might as well expect the sun to be visible alike to the dwellers in caves or the open air. Both the sun and the Scriptures are so placed that all who place themselves in a proper position may know the truth of the one and see the light of the other. 2. What is this position? "If any man will do." An obedient spirit is the key of Divine truth. The holiest man will best understand the Bible. This is reasonable. Who would think of going to a wicked man to learn religious truth? We feel that he is best qualified to teach who has learnt to practice. The same qualification is necessary in the learner. A rebellious child is more likely to mistake his father's meaning than one who is obedient. 3. We need the aid of the Holy Spirit in discerning spiritual things. The Bible is clear, but we are dark. A man suddenly emerging from long imprisonment is bewildered by the light; so Bible perplexities are due mostly to our sinful blindness. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to cleanse and strengthen the spiritual vision. To whom, then, will God give His Spirit? Not to him who will not follow the light he has. The universal maxim is that to one who improves, more shall be given. And yet wicked men complain that they cannot understand the Bible. As well might a spendthrift complain because he did not receive his father's whole estate. Bishop Wilson says, "When religion is made a science, nothing is more intricate; but when made a duty, nothing is more easy." A French infidel once said to Pascal, "If I had your principles, I should be a better man." "Begin with being a better man, and you will soon have my principles," was the reply. 4. Our subject shows us what they must do who are troubled with doubts. Shall he read volumes of "Evidences"? The first step is to give up sin. Having done this, let him read the Bible with a mind open to conviction. Such a person begins to do the will of God, and he will become a believer in the Word. He hears that prayer is necessary ere he can understand the Bible, and consequently prays, and obedience is again rewarded. Admitting the truth of the Scriptures, he yet finds doctrines he cannot

understand. Let him do the will of God, and all that is necessary for him to know about the atonement, regeneration, assurance, &c., will be made clear. 5. We need not stop here. In heaven we shall know, because we shall follow on to know the Lord. (*W. H. Lewis, D.D.*) *Obedience not compulsion* :—It would have been as easy for God to fill the world with obedient subjects as it is for a man to fill his garden with flowers. If it is only flowers that he wants, he can get them at once and keep them for ever, without any trouble of raising or tilling. He has but to go to a milliner's shop, and take home his treasures and plant them. But suppose he wants living flowers. In that case he wants to know something more than the way to the milliner's shop. He has need of wisdom and patience. Flowers must be cherished and coaxed; they will not grow for the telling. If all that God wanted were obedience, He could make a splendid world to-day. He has but to will it, and all would be orderly in an instant. Not a thought, word, deed, misplaced. Kings and subjects, masters and men, ail at peace. No war, untruth, tears; sin and sorrow all gone. But it would be splendid death. No wrong and no right; no tears and no joy. The world would go as a sewing-machine, because it must. That is not the obedience God wants to see. He wants obedience with a heart in it. And so He waits and is patient. A thousand times He comes, and still the door is bolted and barred; and yet again He comes, if haply He may find it open. (*H. W. Burgoyne.*) *Via Intelligenticæ* :—The ancients tell us that when Jupiter saw men striving for Truth, and pulling her to pieces to secure her for themselves, he sent Mercury, who dressed Error up in the imagery of Truth; and though then men were sure to get but little truth, they were as earnest as ever, and lost peace, too, in their contentions for its image. This is no wonder; but when truth and peace are brought into the world together, to see men contending for the truth to the breach of the peace is the greatest wonder. Disputation cures no vice, but kindles a great many. Christianity is all for practice; and the time spent in quarrelling about it is a diminution to its interest. Christ's way of finding out truth is by doing the will of God. Consider—I. THE WAYS MEN HAVE PROPOUNDED TO FIND TRUTH, AND ON THAT FOUNDATION TO ESTABLISH PEACE IN CHRISTENDOM. 1. That there is but one true way is agreed upon, and therefore every Church propounds a system, and says that is the true religion; like Brutus and Cassius, of whom one says, "They supposed themselves were the commonwealth." But of this there can be no end; for divide the Church into twenty parts, and you and your party are damned by the other nineteen. 2. Others conclude that this evil must be cured by submission to an infallible guide; but this can never end our controversies, because the greatest controversies are about this guide, and because—(1) We cannot find any such guide. (2) Nor do we find one necessary. (3) Those who pretend to be such are deceived. (4) They do not believe in their infallibility, for they do not put an end to their own questions. (5) Given such a one, we should fail of truth, for perhaps he would not perform his duty, or we should at times misunderstand or be perverse. God is an infallible Guide, yet by our faults we are as far off from peace and truth as ever. 3. Some wise men have undertaken to reconcile the differences of Christendom, by projecting that each side should pare away something of their propositions, and join in common terms of accomodation. This has been tried, but has produced nothing but a fantastic peace. 4. Others, observing that many controversies are kept up by ill stating of the question, endeavour to make the matter intelligible; but we find by sad experience that few questions are well stated; and when they are not consented to, and when agreed upon by both parties to be well stated, are simply armies drawn up with skill and waiting to thrust their swords in each others' sides. 5. Some have propounded a way of peace rather than truth—universal toleration. This relies on a great reasonableness, since opinions cannot be forced; and when men receive no hurt, it is to be hoped they will do none. But there are many who are not content that you permit them; they will not permit you. Their way is not only true, but necessary, and all moderation is but want of zeal for God. What is now to be done? Must truth be for ever in the dark, and the world divided? We have examined all ways but one; and having missed in every other, let us try this. Let every man in his station do the duty which God requires of him, and then he shall be taught of God all that is fit for him to learn (Psa. cxi. 10; cxix. 100). Theology is rather a Divine life than a Divine knowledge. II. CERTAIN CAUSES OF OUR ERRORS ARE NOTHING BUT DIRECT SINS. 1. No man understands the Word of God unless he lays aside all affections to sin. "Wickedness," said Aristotle, "corrupts a man's reasoning," it gives him false principles and evil measures of things. A covetous man understands nothing

to be good that is not profitable. A voluptuary likes your reasoning well enough if you discourse of the pleasures of sense, but if you talk of religion he cries out, "What is the matter?" A man's mind must be like your proposition before it can be entertained. We understand so little of religion because we are in love with that which destroys it; and as a man does not care to hear what does not please him, so neither does he believe it. 2. He that means to understand the will of God must lay aside all inordinate affections to the world. A veil was on the hearts of the Jews (2 Cor. iii. 14), because they looked for a temporal prince and secular advantages, and so they would not accept the poor, despised Jesus. The argument of Demetrius is unanswerable, "By this craft they get their living." When men's souls are possessed by the world, their souls cannot be invested with holy truths, because a man cannot serve two masters or vigorously attend two objects. 3. No man, however learned, can understand God's word, or be at peace on religious questions unless he be a master over his passions. When a man is mingled with his congenial infirmities of anger and desire, he judges of heavenly things accordingly. Truth enters into the heart when it is empty, and clean, and still; but when the mind is shaken with passion, you can never hear the "voice of the charmer, though he charm very wisely." But all this while we are in preparation only. When we have cast off sin, the world, and passion, then we may say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth"; but we are not yet instructed. III. WHAT IS THAT PRINCIPLE OR MEANS BY WHICH WE SHALL CERTAINLY BE LET INTO ALL TRUTH? Do God's will and you shall understand God's truth. 1. This must be taken for a præcognition that every good man is taught of God, and unless He teach us we shall be poor scholars and worse guides. By how much nearer we are to God, by so much better shall we be instructed. This being pre-supposed, we can proceed by wonderful degrees in this Divine philosophy. 2. There is in every righteous man a new vital principle; the spirit of grace is the spirit of wisdom, and teaches us by secret inspirations, effects and energies (1 John ii. 27). Which principle divers fanatics, misunderstanding, expect to be conducted by ecstasy. But God's Spirit does not destroy reason, but heightens it. He opens the heart not to attend to secret whispers, but to hear the Word of God, and gives us a new heart to understand it, otherwise the gospel is a dead letter (1 Cor. ii. 14). When the wicked governor asked of Christ concerning truth, Christ gave him no answer. He was not fit to hear it. 3. A good life is the best way to understand reason and religion, because by the experiences and relishes of religion there is conveyed to us a sweetness to which all wicked men are strangers. When reason is raised by the Spirit of Christ, it is turned quickly into experience. So long as we know God only in the ways of men, by learning and dispute, we shall see nothing but a shadow of Him, but when we know Him with the eyes of holiness, we shall hear what we never heard and see what we never saw. 4. There is a sort of God's dear servants, who perfect holiness in His fear, who have a degree of charity and Divine knowledge more than we can discourse of. This is to be felt and not to be talked of. A good man is united to God as flame touches a flame, and combines into glory. He is the friend of God and best knows God's mind. IV. BY WHAT MEANS IS IT EFFECTED THAT A HOLY LIFE IS THE BEST DETERMINATION OF ALL QUESTIONS, AND THE SUREST WAY OF KNOWLEDGE? Is it to be supposed that a godly man is better enabled to determine the questions of purgatory and transubstantiation? Is a temperate man a better scholar than a drunkard! Answer: In all things in which true wisdom consists, holiness, which is best wisdom, is the surest way of understanding them. And this—1. Is effected by holiness as a proper and natural instrument, for naturally everything is best discerned by its proper light. As the eye sees visible objects, and the understanding intellectual, so the spirit the things of the Spirit. Who can tell better what is and what is not true reformation, than he who is truly reformed. He knows what pleases God and can best tell by what instruments He is reconciled (Prov. x. 31–32). 2. Holiness is not only an advantage to the learning all wisdom and holiness, but for discerning what is wise and holy from what is trifling, useless, and contentious. If God's Spirit be your teacher, He will teach you such truths as will make you know and love God, and become like Him and enjoy Him for ever. But what are you better if any man should teach you whether every angel makes a species, or what place Adam should have lived in if he had not fallen? 3. Holiness is the best way of finding out truth, not only as a natural medium, or as a prudent medium, but as a means by way of Divine blessing (chap. xiv. 21). Love is obedience, and we learn His words best when we practise them. 4. When this is reduced to practice and experience, we find not only in

practical things, but even in the deepest mysteries, not only the most eminent saints, but every good man, can best tell what is true and reprove an error. He that goes about to understand the Trinity by words of man's invention, he may talk something, but he knows not what. But the good man that feels the "power of the Father," to whom the Son has "become wisdom and righteousness," &c., and in whose heart "the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost," though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he only understands the mystery of the Trinity. Experience is the best learning. Application: 1. That is no religion whose principles destroy any duty of religion. 2. It is but an ill sign of holiness when a man is busy in little scruples and fantastic opinions about things not concerning the life of religion. 3. That is no good religion which disturbs governments and shakes the foundation of the public peace. (*Jeremy Taylor.*)

Faith culture:—It is quite possible for any one of us to go out on the street, and by a number of rapid and unnatural revolutions of the body, so to confuse the brain, that all the objects around us, and even the solid earth beneath our feet, will seem to dance before our eyes, and to whirl round and round in a most bewildering confusion. So, also, is it possible for a man to whirl round and round in an unworthy and bad life, until his moral nature is so confused that the most unmoving facts of the moral world will dance before his mental vision, and the very foundations of moral truth be broken up in a mocking, whirling, hopeless maze. But, in both of these cases, the disturbance is within, not without. It is in the eye which sees, not in the things which are seen. So in the case of the sceptic. His disobedience of moral law, the false and unnatural movements of his spirit, have set everything whirling and spinning. Eternal verities now dance before his mind as so many unsubstantial fancies, only because his moral vision has been deranged. And the remedy in both cases is the same. Let the drunken man become sober, and he will see things as they are. Let the sceptic turn to duty, and he will come to know truth. How can the impure man believe in purity? Is it for his interest to do so? Is it for his peace and happiness? Would not such faith work as fire in his veins? Faith fails, and must fail, when life withdraws its support. But a short time ago, I heard of a man whose antecedents were religious and whose own freely formed relations are such also, who publicly, and with all seriousness, questioned the truth of human immortality. Do you ask, What shall be said in explanation of such a phenomenon? Why this—there is no mystery about it. Let that man continue a few years longer in political life (such as he makes it), let him continue a few years longer to grow rich amazingly fast upon an amazingly small salary, and he will have no doubts upon the subjects which he is now debating. He will then be sure that there is no future life; probably also, that there is no God. How can such a man believe in heaven? Has he much interest in it? How can he believe in hell? Has he not too much interest in this? The truth is, the man has so abused his moral nature, so riddled it with transgressions, that it is no longer capable of holding faith—faith in a God who will punish sin. Faith leaks out of such a man, as water runs from the tub which has stood for weeks in the blazing sun. So there are scores around us whose immorality has made them sceptics. They have not grown beyond faith mentally, but they have sunk below it morally. First, the life was lowered, then the creed. First, practice was loosened, and then the creed was liberalized. They first trampled under foot a mother's example, and then into the same mire threw her Bible. The new crew was first received on board, and then the new flag was run up to the mast-head. They never thought of changing their views as to the obligations of the Sabbath until they had violated, or wished to violate, its sanctity. Search these persons out, and you will find that the atmosphere in which they live, and through which they look upon spiritual things, is by no means a pure one; and this is the reason why they do not see moral truth clearly, and hold it firmly. One has thickened his atmosphere with a conscienceless greed for gain. Another, with a fierce and unprincipled desire for power. Still another has poured round her the thickening, dead-sweet nebula of silly and senseless pleasure, and from the midst of this she looks out upon spiritual things; seeing them about as clearly as you see the leaves of the tree or the face of the sun through the medium of stained windows. I. First—A LARGE PART OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TRUTH IS PRACTICAL, AND CANNOT BE KNOWN EXCEPT THROUGH EXPERIENCE; THAT IS, THROUGH LIVING IT. You can believe in London—that there is such a place, without ever having seen it. It is a mere exercise of the intellect to do this. So you can demonstrate that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. There is no need, no place, for experience here But take this declaration—a pure

and good life is the happiest. How can you, how can any one, surely know whether this is true or not until by experience you test it? So Christ stands before the world and says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." But it is not possible for any one to know that this is true or not true until he makes trial—until he actually does come unto Christ. Or, take this declaration—God hears and answers prayer. There is no way of putting this to the test, except by living a life of prayer. And here let me say to those among you who, in the presence of neglected duty, are waiting for more light and stronger faith, that you will wait in vain. You may say, "If I believed all that the Christian does, I would commence." But I tell you that you shall never have more faith until you bow right loyally to the Right which you now see, to Duty already known. The starving man may not wait for more strength before he takes of the food placed before him. Every day that you deny to moral truth already known the obedience of your life, you do so much to obscure this truth. II. A second justification of the principle of the text is this—SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED. So it is with scientific things. Newton was living in the atmosphere of science, with the faculty of observation in fullest exercise, or he would not have seen the apple drop. An accident you may call it. But it was an accident which could only have happened to a Newton. So always scientific things are scientifically discerned. A blind man would never have recognized Frauenhofer's spectroscopic lines. Now, there is in man a moral faculty which is set into relation with moral truth. But this faculty, like all others, to be useful, must be exercised. The lapidary tells the quality of the stone by the touch of his tongue. So the tea-taster goes from box to box, by a single taste fixing the value of the box. So the moral faculty, exercised in the direction of truth and duty, becomes quick and unerring to detect them. The conscience, like Ithuriel's spear, discloses falseness and error by a single touch. Many a man who is in no sense intellectually great is yet wonderfully able to disentangle sophistry, to lift the truth which is covered over with error, to cut the path of duty plain and straight through the most tangled maze. You will readily recall here the old phrase of "threading the labyrinth." The one who desired to visit the dark and winding passages used to take the end of a spool of thread in his hand, unwinding it as he went into the maze. And when he desired to return to the light, all that he needed to do was to follow back his guiding thread. Now, to a good man, to an obedient spirit, conscience is this thread. Out of the darkest windings it leads unto the light. There is not that labyrinth of error on earth in which such a man can be lost. He will reach unto the day, as surely as the blind instinct of the cellar vine turns to the sun. I know faith is spoken of as the gift of God. But, like all other gifts of God, this has its conditions. God can no more give it unto a bad life, than He can give beauty and sweetness to the flower which never sees the light, or bone and muscle and strength to the man who will not allow food to pass his lips, or riches to the idler and the spendthrift. I turn now to make some applications of this subject. 1. First—It furnishes a solution of the scepticism of some men of science. Your power of observation may be good, but human eyes cannot take in God as they can a fossil or a planet. They are not the organ of reception here. A man who would come into the presence of God must walk the path which leads unto this presence. There is a hill of science, and there is another hill. We say not, that the former commands not a noble prospect. It does. Is well worth climbing. All that we affirm, and what the Bible declares is, that the outlook from it is not the same as that from the other hill called Calvary. Right living, not sharp thinking, is the condition here. 2. Again—This subject also helps to discern the origin, and to determine the value, of another very common species of scepticism, which we may term popular in distinction from scientific. Many men who are prominent in public life are more or less sceptical. The explanation of the scepticism which you see is to be found in the life, all of which you do not see. And this thought leads naturally to another application of the truth which we are considering. 3. It is this—the fearful danger which attaches to continued impenitence. This impenitence of yours, this holding back from duty, is the slow murdering of your faith. 4. I only add, as a closing application of this subject, that it is useful for direction to those who would enter upon the Christian life. The way to do this is not to wait for more feeling, not to delay for stronger faith, but to take up that duty or duties already known, already before you. (*S. S. Mitchell, D.D.*)

The true order of religious knowledge:—In this instance "will do" does not express future action simply. The "will" is not a mere auxiliary, it is an independent verb, and receives the main emphasis of the verse. The revised version correctly

renders it: "If any man willeth," &c. The true order of religious knowledge, then—(1) Willing. (2) Doing. (3) Knowing. Such an order, however, does not accord with man's preconceived notions. The first statement in the process seems to him superfluous, and the last two appear unnaturally reversed. He raises the objection: "I must know a doctrine before I attempt to put it into practice. For me to undertake to do what I cannot understand is absurd." But how is it in other departments of life and thought? Does theory precede practice, or does practice prepare for theory? Did men never sow and reap until they had analyzed soils and developed the whole system of agriculture? Did they never use wheat until chemistry had taught them just how much gluten, starch, and phosphate there is in that grain, and explained its wonderful adaptation to the human constitution? Did they never lay the four walls of a dwelling until they had reasoned out the geometrical truth that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, and had mastered the entire science of architecture? The question, in fine, resolves itself into this: Is science based upon art, or art upon science? Do children study grammar, or do they learn to talk first? Do they not walk until they have been instructed in the intricate physiological processes and mechanical principles involved in that act? Did men wait until Aristotle had constructed his logic, to reason? Did they write no poetry until the science of prosody had been perfected? Did they never paint pictures until the laws of perspective had been carefully studied, and the theories of combination and contrast in colours were well understood? Now there is a religious art and a religious science, the art of holy living and the science of theology. The relation between the two is most vital. The practice of the one is the indispensable condition of the successful acquirement of the other. As the practice progresses the doctrine develops. Knowledge grows from more to more, and clear conceptions and positive convictions become at length the priceless possession of the soul. But granting the reasonableness of the requirement that doing shall precede knowing, why is it necessary, it may be asked, to make this threefold division and to specify willing? Is not that already implied in the doing? Can there be doing without willing to do? Certainly there can be no rational and responsible action without the forthputting of volition. But this willing means more than that. It means willingness, the moral determination of the mind toward God, the complete submission of the affections and desires to His will, the making of that will our supreme and ultimate choice. Something like this is true of all knowledge. Its attainment is conditioned on the mind's receptivity and openness to the truth. It is only when the mind has divested itself of prepossessions and prejudices, and is supremely anxious to know the truth for the truth's sake, and is willing to follow wherever that truth may lead, that it can succeed in its search. Pascal truly says, "The perception of truth is a moral act"; and Fichte, "If the will be steadfastly and sincerely fixed on what is good, the understanding will of itself discover what is true." Similar testimony is borne by the two great masters of modern science. Prof. Tyndall says of inductive inquiry: "The first condition of success is an honest receptivity, and a willingness to abandon all preconceived notions, however cherished, if they be found to contradict the truth. Believe me, a self-renunciation which has something noble in it, and of which the world never hears, is often enacted in the private experience of the true votary of science." Prof. Huxley goes so far as to say, "The great deeds of philosophers have been less the fruit of their intellect than of the direction of that intellect by an eminently religious tone of mind. Truth has yielded herself rather to their patience, their love, their single-heartedness, and their self-denial, than to their logical acumen." Even the pagan poet, Sophocles, saw and stated this truth: "A heart of mildness, full of good intent, Far sooner than acuteness will the truth behold." This rightness of heart is the one and indispensable condition of all religious knowledge. There the moral disposition is everything. "With a heart man believeth unto righteousness." An absolute renunciation of self, and an unqualified surrender to the Divine will, must precede and give rise to all right doing and all real knowing. In the heart's unreserved consent to the will of God lies the secret of all attainment in religious knowledge. Here is the dividing line between the children of God and aliens. Here is the starting point in spiritual experience. Here is the beginning of true wisdom. In the heart's consent—when that is yielded all else will follow as naturally as noon-day follows the dawn. One who submissively consents to the will of God, will do that will, and in the doing will come to a knowledge of all essential truth. (*Christian Advocate.*) *Knowing by doing*:—1. It was a frivolous question those Jews raised. It was not whether there was anything in the

teaching worth heeding, but how had Christ learned it. Our Lord turns their thought to the question they ought to have asked: Is this the teaching of God? This is the first question that any new teaching should raise now; but now, as then, the question is, What is His school? The Bible test of all teaching is, Is it of God? Never mind the school. 2. The old question suggested by Christ is not yet laid. Teachers are in multitudes with all sorts of credentials. But earnest souls are asking, Whence is the teaching? Much of it is countersigned by the schools, but we find the schools wrangling. And not only rival books and systems make trouble for us. We are pointed to facts, and told that God teaches by providence as well as His Word, and yet many of the facts are ugly. The seething deeps of society throw to the surface horrible practical problems not classified in the canons of Westminster and Dort. The tendency of a good many minds is to set down the whole matter as a hopeless muddle. 3. And yet thus much is plain. Given the Being we are taught to believe in and worship, and obey as God, an intelligible revelation of His will follows of necessity, else loyalty and duty are the veriest farce. And if Christ is to be believed, all the teaching necessary to blessed and useful living is clearly given by God. "The light is with you," He tells the Jews, "walk while ye have it." Christ claims to be this light, and to meet the demand for God's teaching. "My teaching is that of Him who sent Me." "So far, well," says the world. "That is a fair response to our challenge; but how shall we test it? How shall we know?" Christ answers, "By experiment. Practice the teaching and it will vindicate itself as Divine." 4. Christ thus puts practice before knowledge, and as a means to it, and in this lays down no arbitrary or unfamiliar law. The best of our knowledge, all of it that is useful, is gained through practice. So the teaching of Christ will not vindicate itself as of God by merely studying it. No man ever learned to paint or play by mastering the theories of painting and music. He must handle the brush and finger the keys himself. Doing is a mode of study. Practice vindicates theory. Christ thus invites the fairest, simplest, and most decisive test of His teaching. Try and see if it works. I. THE FIRST STEP TOWARD KNOWING THE TEACHING OF GOD IS A DETERMINATION TO DO IT. Will means, not wish, but resolution. A man says, "I should like to know how to write shorthand." That is all it comes to. Another says, "I will learn shorthand," and goes to work at it. There is the difference. There is a great deal of vague wishing and talking about wanting to know God's will. Not a few take it for granted that the teaching of God is a hazy sort of thing, and rather comfort themselves with this haziness, and take refuge in it from clear dictates of duty. Christ nowhere concedes this haziness. He sets the teaching of God in the light, and says, "Man shall know," and the first step towards that is determination. Some people take the attitude of willingness to know if knowledge shall be forced on their conviction; but God's teaching is not brought in that way; it is something to be won, and a man's professed willingness is a sham if it do not translate itself into the energy of a resolved will. II. THIS ENERGY DISPLAYS ITSELF IN SUBJECTION. If one wills to do another's will, he puts himself under that will absolutely, and obeys it, surrendering his own. Christ here lays down no new or arbitrary law. Everywhere obedience is the first step in learning—doing what is told because another wills it. A child sits down to take his first lesson in music, and knows not what it tends to; but the teacher knows. By and by, through the mechanical drudgery, rudimental conceptions of harmony begin to take shape, and so on until he interprets the works of a Beethoven. Many fail in Divine knowledge because they do not like to obey without knowing the reason why. They want God to treat them as equals, not as inferiors. "Except ye become as little children," &c. There is a system and a plan-book of all the details of obedience, but the way to them is by these details. III. TEACHING YOU BY PRACTICE, GOD WILL GIVE YOU LESSONS OUT OF MUCH BESIDES BOOKS. You are resolved to follow Christ's method: well, the practical test is, are you ready to do the first thing Christ tells you? In that case your first teacher will probably be not a robed priest or grave professor, but some troublesome beggar or disturbing child. Your lesson-book may open at that commonplace occasion which calls for a kind word or deed, a restraint of temper or sacrifice of convenience. Through your bearing your brother's burden, and taking his sorrow on your heart, you have got a look into God's heart, and a conception of God's vast tender meaning towards humanity underlying His teaching about love, &c. And so, more and more, you find yourself, not only gaining new knowledge, but gaining it by a new and unsuspected way. (*M. R. Vincent, D.D.*) *Knowledge of the doctrine of Christ the fruit of willing to do it*:—I. THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE

KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINE THAT IS OF GOD IS REACHED. 1. This knowledge, though its propositions are to be received by the intellect, requires before the intellectual a certain moral capacity. The will must be set to do the will of God before the intellect can act without embarrassment, because the doctrine is not the teaching of a philosophy, but the revelation of a person. All the doctrine is impersonated in Him, so that to receive Him is to receive the doctrine, and to reject Him is to reject the doctrine. 2. Acts done by a person receive their truest significance from what we know of himself. The revelation of a person by his acts is often imperfect and misleading. We need to know that hidden link between the act and the motives. This is why historians, admitting the same facts, differ so widely in their estimates of the persons, *e.g.*, Henry VIII., Mary, Elizabeth. This must be so because the mystery of a second personality lies beyond the acts, and because it is apprehended by one possessing the same mysterious gift, and is therefore apprehended, not in its bare proportions, but according to the conditions of the receptive faculty. Even in the more delicate processes of modern art, with what care must the negative surface be prepared which is to receive aright the lines and proportion of the object it is to image forth. Now, in the living recipient of the impress of another's character the difficulty is immeasurably increased. There is formed a relation of concord or antagonism, and motives, and a meaning is attributed by the observer to the outward actions. The same act is welcome or intolerable as our minds picture the motive, and this affects the whole power of comprehending a character. This is the reason of the solitariness to which the greatest spirits are exposed. Such are almost always misjudged, not because they give occasion for it, but because in those around them the receptive faculty is not qualified to sustain the impress of their great being. It is only some one with a kindred gift of genius who is able to understand them. 3. Here, then, we may see why, from the laws of our own nature, it is true that he who wills to do the will of God comes to know the Lord. It is like which comprehends and is drawn to the like. Now the law of Christ's being was the doing the will of the Father. When, therefore, the will of any man is set not to do the will of God, there is a repugnancy between him and Christ which forbids his knowing the Lord of Life, and conversely. II. THE PROMISE OF A REVELATION AND OF POWER TO RECEIVE IT. Christ stood among men not so much their intellectual teacher as their renewer. These words are not only a mapping out of man's nature, but are also a promise of grace. That first turning of the will was itself, doubtless, in the mystery of the spiritual probation of one gifted with free agency, the yielding to grace already given: and this next step marks the increased gift of that same grace. It is the carrying out of the promise "to him that hath shall be given." "If any man love God," even in this first bending of the will to Him, "the same is known of Him," and such knowledge is but the first beginning of greater gifts; the pledge that forthwith the power of the receptive faculty is increased, and of a greater revelation (chap. xiv. 21). And in that is all that the soul needs (Rev. iii. 20). From its recipient many of the old difficulties which beset his belief melt away, like the mist of the morning before the sun; and even those which do remain, and must remain until faith is exchanged for sight, no longer hide from him the truth they once shut out; he has risen to a loftier elevation, and his eye now ranges freely over the intermediate heights, and takes in the fair proportions of the land which is very far off. Conclusion. 1. Encouragement. To every one who has that will, the text assures a certain grant of all he desires. If the Authorized Version were correct it would not speak in the same tone of comfort; for who would dare to decide that He did the will of the Father? But these words promise the great benediction to him who wills to do the Father's will; to him who, in the midst of failures and discouragements, still holds on because his will is set; to the beginner in the Christian course as well as to him who has reached furthest in it. And this it proposes to all. If there be one tried by intellectual difficulties concerning the revelation of Christ; if there be hearts longing for this revelation of Him who seems hidden, let them take comfort. The time of granting the revelation rests with Him, but granted it must be. It may be thou "couldest not bear it now"; that thou hast more to learn of thyself, a deeper self distrust; that thy imperfect graces need a higher training; that He would first strengthen thy spirit by wrestling with Him. But though the vision tarries, wait for it, for it is sure at last. 2. Warning. The text explains why so many miss God, not from lack of any mere power of intellect, not from mental perplexities, not from obscurity of texts or Bible difficulties, but from alienation of the soul, For it is not through a direct act of the will that a man can make himself believe or disbelieve; but under

the power of God's grace a man can by degrees so educate His will that it does one way or the other determine his belief. Any allowed habit of sin is whether we know it at the time or not, really hardening our will against the will of Christ, and so making a true filial trust impossible. (*Bp. S. Wilberforce.*) *Duty and knowledge:*—1. The doctrine here taught is that if a man be sincere and accept the truth that God's will is to be supreme, he shall be able to determine God's doctrine. The sufficiency of sincerity in religion is loudly proclaimed. It is supposed to be the solvent of all religious difficulties. It is set up as the antagonist of doctrine, and as performing a function the exact opposite of that assigned to it here. With Christ it was the high road to truth; with some modern thinkers it is its substitute. Where there is such a contradiction of view as to the function of sincerity there must be some difference of judgment as to its meaning. 2. The sincerity which alternates the importance of truth cannot be the same as that meant to find truth. A languid, sentimental desire to be right is far from a purpose to do the will of God. We may desire to be learned and yet not study, and desire to be wealthy without self-denial and enterprize. Consider some of the tests of true sincerity. I. IF A MAN BE WILLING TO DO GOD'S WILL HE WILL CONFORM HIS LIFE TO SUCH KNOWLEDGE AS HE POSSESSES OF THAT WILL. The text clearly supposes this. 1. No man is in complete ignorance of the Divine will; for no one is in complete ignorance of right and wrong, which have their roots in the Divine nature. Conscience is more or less a Divine witness within all men, and is supported by the facts of life, the consequences of actions; for we learn that that which is injurious cannot be His will, and that that which promotes the general happiness must. Our Saviour is contemplating the case of such as are in doubt whether His teaching on some matters be true, but who have some acquaintance with the will of God. The advice to the same class now-a-days is the same. Do the will of God as far as you know it, and you will know of the doctrine of which you are at present in doubt whether it be of God. 2. This is not exhorting a man to set about the work of saving himself instead of exhorting him to believe. The Saviour is dealing with doubters who think they have reasons for doubting. A man cannot drive out his doubts by a mere act of will. Besides, a man is morally bound to do God's will whatever the consequences. If he knows it to be the will of God that he should be truthful, sober, &c., it is his duty to eschew the opposite, whether he ever become a believer in Christ or not. If renunciation of evil will not help his salvation it will not hinder it; and it is obvious that no one can earnestly desire to know any doctrine whether it be of God unless he honours God by compliance with what he knows to be His will. For what can be a man's purpose in desiring to know any doctrine except that he may derive benefit from it? An inefficacious doctrine which impels no man to a Diviner life cannot be of any importance, and no one can sincerely desire to know a doctrine which constrains to a better life unless he is already yielding a loyal obedience to the laws he knows to be from God. 3. The difficulty of gaining admission for truth into the minds of men whose lives are in disconformity with it is proverbial. If a man's interests or pleasures are involved in his continuance of any course of action, you know what a mass of evidence is required to convince him that he is wrong. If a craft, however iniquitous, be in danger, how hard to convince those who are enriching themselves by its gains! Hence the opinions of men are as frequently the product of their practices as their cause. Thieves do not first excogitate evil maxims and then begin to steal. The worse the man the worse his principles, and the better the man the better his principles, as a rule. 4. If a man be willing to do the will of God he will be watchful against the prepossessions which would hinder him from knowing that will. We may inherit opinions from our fathers, as we inherit property, and there may gather around them a sort of halo. But hereditary beliefs, which are no more than notions, are of no value; and if any man be willing to do God's will he must be prepared to relinquish all traditions which are merely such. Christ contemplates the man to whom all light is welcome from any quarter. It may disturb old convictions, alter the proportions and relations of truths, but to know the will of God is worth it all. II. HOW THIS EARNEST PURPOSE OPERATES AND LEADS TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE DOCTRINE WHETHER IT BE OF GOD. 1. Who can set himself to this higher life without a sense of the contrast between it and that which he has been leading. The birth of this heavenly resolution is not unmixed pleasure. The man feels that, however he may do the will of God in the future, the claims of the past are not cancelled by this altered life. What has infinite Justice to say to it? Is it not just here that the soul welcomes the cry "Behold the Lamb of God," &c., and the assurance that

Christ has been set forth as a propitiation? Does he not feel that the doctrine is of God, whatever its mysteries, because it addresses itself to the awakened conscience and does not sweep justice away that it may find room for mercy, but blends the claims of both. 2. And we can see how this purpose leads to the knowledge of another doctrine—the necessity for the influence of the Holy Spirit. No one knows how much he needs supernatural help until he sets himself to lead a holy life, for not until then is he adequately conscious of the difficulties. But is it not just at this point that we welcome the doctrine that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and that we can be strengthened with might by that Spirit in our inner man? (*E. Mellor, D.D.*) *The tendency of religious practice to promote right sentiments*:—I. THE REQUIREMENT to do the will of God. Included in it is—1. A desire to have just and correct views of that will. 2. A disposition to acquiesce in it, and give it a cordial reception. 3. Practical conformity to it. 4. A willingness to surrender what is incompatible with obedience. 5. A sincere concern about real religion and the salvation of the soul. II. THE PROMISE—"he shall know," &c. 1. This alone will break the force of prejudice. 2. It will put restraint upon evil propensities, which, if indulged, cannot fail to obstruct the acquisition of religious knowledge. 3. It will lead to the right use of the necessary means. 4. It will direct the mind towards God, seeking His guidance and blessing. 5. It will give us a due impression of our responsibility. (*Congregational Remembrancer.*) *Honest seeking for the truth*:—Generally we mean by evidences of Christianity proofs which mostly appeal to the educated. What, then, are the illiterate to do? Have they no sufficient reason for believing the Bible to be God's Word, beyond the fact that it is received as such by their Church and country? This would be to place their faith on a very precarious foundation; and we know that cottagers and artizans have been as well able to withstand scepticism as "the wise and prudent." Our text satisfactorily accounts for the matter by declaring that a readiness to do God's will shall be followed by a discovery of the origin of the doctrine. It sets before us a method of demonstration which may be tried by the ignorant as well as by the learned, inasmuch as it must be worked out by the heart rather than by the head. I. WHY SHOULD THE BEING READY TO DO GOD'S WILL ENSURE THE ASCERTAINING WHETHER A DOCTRINE BE FROM GOD? 1. This readiness marks honesty of character and freedom from those prejudices which impede the search for truth. (1) A man who sets himself to investigate a doctrine may see that if established it will entail duties he has no wish to perform; and what chance is there of his deciding that the doctrine is true when he desires to prove it false? It would be greatly for the interest of a worldly-minded man to prove Christianity false; he would get rid thereby of much that menaces him in his pleasures, and secure himself against the pleadings of conscience. His disposition is opposite to that of our text: in place of a readiness to do God's will, whatever that may be, there is an eagerness to keep it out of sight whenever at variance with his own. How then can it be expected that, prejudiced against Christianity and inclined to its rejection, he could be a fair judge of evidences. (2) But suppose a man anxious to discover God's will that he may perform it: we may be sure that he is already striving to be obedient up to the full measure of his knowledge. There could not be this readiness if the conduct were not regulated by such portions of the Divine will as have already been ascertained. It follows from this that he will not be the slave of depraved inclinations, and therefore will search after truth with the clear-headedness of one whose understanding is not darkened by mists which rise from a heart in love with vice. And, further, it is evident that, as he is prepared to obey if he can determine what is truth, he will not be swayed by partialities; he has no private interest to serve, and we may therefore calculate on his conducting his inquiry with that fairness and integrity of purpose which almost ensure that his conclusions will be sound. Is it likely that such a man should fall into fatal error? Impossible, for—2. You must add to considerations drawn from the structure of the human mind that the special assistance of God may be expected. The attributes and Word of God clearly pledge Him to communicate a knowledge of His will wherever faithfully sought. If it be a principle in the Divine dealings to give over to a reprobate mind those who like not to retain God in their knowledge, and allow the understanding to be darkened to believe a lie, when they take pleasure in unrighteoueness, it must be equally a principle with God to guide the meek in judgment, and to teach the meek His way, so that they who heartily seek shall assuredly discover the will of God. Therefore we believe that the Holy Spirit will assist every man who, with readiness to obey, proceeds to examine the Bible. 3.

What does all this assume? That the Bible is its own witness, and can prove of itself that it came from God. There is an evidence of God speaking in the Bible, which is only to be found and appreciated where certain moral qualities are possessed, and is fully as convincing as the combined testimony of miracles and prophecy. (1) The Bible sets out with a broad statement of human corruption, and descending into particulars, it speaks of the deceitful heart; of the tendency of the affections to fasten on anything rather than God, &c. As the man of honest mind peruses this stern and revolting picture of himself, and compares what he reads with what he feels, the comparison assures him of the accuracy of the delineation. (2) The self-evidencing power of the Bible is seen further in what it says of our salvation. The man who has felt himself to be a sinner will be conscious of such a suitableness in the whole scheme of redemption as will be an irresistible argument in favour of its truth. If the adaptation of the material world to our natural circumstances be allowed as good evidence that God made the world, the just as exact adaptation of the gospel to our spiritual circumstances should be received as good evidence that God planned the gospel. (3) There is yet another evidence, that which results from putting Scripture to the proof, and finding it made good. If I act on the directions, and find myself a partaker of its promises, I am witness that both are of God. If the Bible tells me that if I pray in Christ's name I shall obtain what I need—if thus praying I receive—if it tell me that through believing in Christ I shall be progressively sanctified, and I find holiness following on faith, &c., there is a growing evidence of the Divine origin of Scripture. II. THE PRACTICAL INFERENCE—a readiness to perform God's will is the great security and guide to its discovery. If the doctrines of Scripture remain hidden it is not through deficiency of revelation or defect of intellectual power. The only reason for the rejection of those doctrines is one derived from the heart, not from the head. You would quickly comprehend the truth if you were prepared to make it the rule of your practice. Do I wish to be convinced? would be a hard question for many readers and hearers. Should I like to be taken at my word? would be a hard question in the hour of prayer. Men talk very plausibly of not being answerable for their faith, as though it were not optional to believe or disbelieve; but it is optional whether to mortify or indulge a passion, whether to persist in or abstain from practices which are sure to warp the understanding and influence its decisions. Let what will be said of Bible mysteries and the weakness of human faculties, regulate your life by what you know, and you will be sure to know more. So that in our text lies a principle on which the last Judgment may proceed, one on which every unbeliever may be tried and condemned. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*) *Christ's method of Christian evidence*:—The error of the Jews is the error of many to-day. The humblest class falls into it. They say, "We cannot be expected to have much religion; we were not educated." The intellectually proud make the same mistake. Both classes forget that, as Jesus reminds us, the first condition of certainty in Divine things is formed by the conscience, not by the intellect; and lies not in book learning but in the disposition of the soul, its willingness to do God's will. I. THE PRINCIPLE HERE ANNOUNCED. Lay emphasis on each word. 1. "Do His will." Doing is the way of knowing in things Divine. Lord Bacon discovered the instrument of the physical sciences—careful experiment and observation. Before his time men speculated and dreamed. Since his time men have learned to know. Jesus promises satisfaction in another region, and reveals a method adapted to the end. We are to know the teachings of God not by sensible experiment, "Eye hath not seen"; nor by mental toil, but by being true to God, conscience, life. There is nothing unreasonable in this. Pascal says, "In the things of men, by knowing we come to love; in the things of God, by loving we come to know." In things moral you cannot suspend action till you have learned. Some of you say that you have not settled, *e.g.*, if God hears prayer, if there be a day sacred to God, if there be a judgment, if Christ be the supreme Lord; and yet you are acting in your prayerless, sinful life as if these questions were settled on the negative side, and thus are daily annihilating your only excuse, viz., that you had not made up your mind whether the doctrine was of God. 2. "If any man be willing." It would have filled men with despair if Christ had made knowledge contingent on perfect obedience. Then the way of salvation would have been barred for ever to every child of Adam. What He says is, "If any man have this disposition, if it be his supreme desire to be right with God, then he shall know now. Only observe He requires not a fit of obedience in a life of disobedience, not a mood of willingness when things go well with us, but a constant and cherished disposition. 3. "His

will." What is that? Some say Christianity. But Jesus could not have meant, "first do what I tell you, and then you will know whether to believe what I say." They were in doubt about whether He was the Christ; but had they been willing to do the will of God as they knew it in their own Scriptures they would have had no doubt at all. "If ye had believed Moses ye would have believed Me." Now if any man presents himself in our day in this attitude, saying that he wants to be convinced of the truth of Christ and His gospel, the principle touches him exactly. Are you willing to do God's will as far as you know it? Are you living up to what is binding on conscience, then, fuller light will come and you will know of this doctrine. II. ITS APPLICATION. 1. To those who are anxious to escape the whirlpool of unbelief. Take some cases. (1) A man takes religion speculatively, as a thing chiefly of proofs, and says, "I will accept revelation when I am satisfied as to its claims." Now when a man's disposition is to throw the burden of proof upon God, and treats his Maker as bound to render him a reason in everything, and remove all possibility of mistake, he is hopelessly distant from salvation. If a man refused to enter upon any enterprise till he was ensured against all failure he would be reckoned a fool. The doubter is never the discoverer. It is the truth seeker that finds the truth. (2) There are others who are not so much sceptical as captious, and are apt to shift the real question. They think they have decided for "evolution," not knowing much about it. They have gathered from newspapers, &c., something of the controversies about some of the books of Scripture, and not having much furniture in their minds on the subject, they come more easily to a conclusion, and are inclined to decide against standard beliefs. Now, when such things are presented as serious difficulties we must instantly go deeper. The real question is not one concerning science or criticism, but how a man can be just with God. He has not lived so long in the world without sinning against the will of God as already known. Is his real anxiety to be at peace with God? If God has revealed His will at all it is to bring about this end; and if the end for which he desires to know God's will be not chiefly to this purpose, it matters very little what a man holds about the Bible or what he rejects. "Seek ye, then, first the kingdom of God," &c. (3) Here is another, who seems to be in earnest. He is a truth-seeker who examines as one whose life depends on the issue. So you found him in youth and find him still, giving his whole life so that he may be able to outsoar every doubt; but till then—What? Wasted youth, duty neglected—a vain and sinful dream. "Awake thou that sleepest," &c. If the truth is to be of any use to me whose life is but a breath, and I am to live by it, I must find it speedily. 2. This method of Christian evidence is of manifold application to believers. There are religious difficulties that all must meet in some form, which arise from the mysterious ways of Providence, the slow progress of the gospel, the fate of the heathen, &c. The principle of our text points to the right solution. "Lord, what shall this man do? What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Be saved, and then thou shalt know as much of salvation as can be understood on earth. 3. The action of this principle on those who have submitted to God is obvious. The longer I love my Friend, the closer I walk with Him, the better I get to know Him; because I learn to sympathize more thoroughly with Him as I grow more like Him. (*J. Laidlaw, D.D.*) *The certitudes of religion*:—KNOWLEDGE is not a mere possibility or privilege, but a fundamental, universal necessity. Matter is governed by natural laws, and the brute creature by instinct, but man can become what he ought to be by obedience to knowledge, and by the use of reason. The pebble, the lily, and the oak are what they are, with no conscious activity on their part. The beaver builds his dwelling place to-day as he did a thousand years ago; but man acts under higher laws. If he ignore knowledge, his powers become his shame. If they do not build him a throne, they will dig him a grave. He will sink even lower than the brute. Therefore it is incredible to suppose that certainty of knowledge is unattainable as to the life that is and that which is to come. Man lives not by bread alone. He must meet the burning problems of a higher life, and Christianity opens the door to certainty. He is not left in doubt, but "he shall KNOW of the doctrine." Four lines of argument, in the validation of religious truth, may be, though no one test alone may be capable of universal application. I. HISTORICAL. 1. The main facts of Christianity lie in the brief compass of the three years of Christ's public ministry—and these have been subjected to the severest tests of historic criticism. From out the fiery crucible the four gospels come unharmed. 2. The testimony which the conquests of the Cross afford, as those conquests spread throughout the Roman empire. All over the

known world the truths of Christ's death and resurrection were preached, revolutionizing the race by their peaceful triumphs. 3. The present energy of Christ in the world. The fame of Homer grows dim. Men have even questioned His existence; but Christ was never before so truly alive as to-day. We may rest upon the certainty of the gospel that centres in Him. II. MORAL, that which dwells on the beauty, purity and consistency of the teachings of our Lord. An immoral religion cannot endure. To the matchless glory and beauty of God, and of Christ His Son, the human reason and affections respond immediately. So, too, to the august dignity of the soul and its grand destiny, man's moral nature answers at once. These sublime, unique ideas are above the range of his unaided thought. They must be of Divine origin. This argument shades into another. III. HYPOTHETICAL, the argument from probabilities. This has a high place in science. We want a working theory. We collect facts, guess, and then verify. Nature is full of mysteries. We stand before closed doors holding a bunch of keys. We try one after another till we find one that will fit. Then the door swings open to us. How is sinning man to be saved? Theories of education, philosophy and politics have been tried in vain. The monk, ascetic, teacher, and statesman failed. Christianity solved the problem, and it alone. By it the work is done in the world, in society, and in man's heart. The fact we know, although the methods of God's Spirit are unknown. We know not how heaven's mystic fires were lighted, or how they now are fed; nor can we explain the coming or going of the Sun of Righteousness, who scatters the darkness of sin, and gladdens the earth as the garden of the Lord. Peace, hope and courage come where He is heard and heeded. IV. EXPERIMENTAL. Doing the will of God illumines the pathway of the obedient disciple. Jesus brings peace to the soul that trusts and serves Him. We may not appreciate other arguments fully, but this is both personal and practical. To the doubter we simply say, "Come and see"; "taste and see that the Lord is gracious." (*A. J. Behrends, D.D.*)

Scepticism: its cause and cure:—Christianity is emphatically a system of truth. But what gives it pre-eminence is that it is a system of saving truth. This being so, it is important that we should know how best to become aquainted with it. Man's mode differs from God's, man says "read, study," &c.; God says, "Obey." The truths of Christianity can only be understood by those who are willing to obey God, and who are in harmony with Him. Apply this to—I. THE DOCTRINAL TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY. No serious person can observe the prevalence of scepticism without asking the cause. 1. The doubters themselves say—(1) The surroundings of Christianity are so mysterious that there seems no way of getting at its truths. (2) Some of the doctrines are so inexplicable that there seems no possibility of obtaining a rational comprehension of them. (3) The evidences are defective. 2. These are not the real reasons. The real cause is not intellectual but moral. Christ settles that for us, "Men love darkness rather than light," "If any man will do His will." The condition is not perfect obedience; but full purpose to obey God's will as far as discovered. The sceptic's will is against Christianity. He does not wish it to be true, and therefore objects to its being proved true. A variety of motives lie behind. (1) Fear of old companions. (2) Self interest. A change of opinion would involve loss. (3) Vanity. A change of opinions would bring the imputation of fickleness. (4) Party spirit. (5) A bad heart and life. A true creed is a constant protest against evil. 3. In order to form a right conception of the doctrine of Christ, there are hindrances which must be removed. Self-will must be conquered, and prejudices laid aside. In scientific investigation, if your supreme object be the confirmation of your previous opinions, you will find it an agreeable task to lay aside every evidence that would overthrow them. But if your supreme object be truth, then you will not suffer yourself to be hampered by your old theory, but you will welcome light from whatever source. This is what Christ requires. Test His system by obeying its laws. In Corinth doubts had arisen about the Resurrection, and St. Paul constructs a magnificent argument to meet them. But in the midst he breaks off with "Be not deceived," &c., a statement around which the whole argument revolves. Corrupted by evil surroundings, their life had become wrong, and hence their creed became wrong. "Give yourselves to righteousness and you shall know of the doctrine." A young man brought up religiously leaves his rural home for the great city. He yields to temptation—does it a second time and a third, until it becomes a habit. It is thus inconvenient to retain his belief in the Bible because it protests against his wickedness. There may be cases in which creed influences life, but mostly life shapes creed. II. THE MORAL TRUTHS. These are acknowledged to be the noblest the world has known.

We hear no objection against Christianity based on their imperfection, but on their purity. There are commands, says the sceptic, that no man can comply with. The answer to this is not argument but facts. Men have embodied Christ's precepts. Godless surgeons have witnessed the peace and joy of their agonizing patient with amazement, because they did not themselves know of the doctrine. Men have suffered wrong with patience and returned good for evil, and have confounded their unchristian neighbours for the same reason. How are they to learn the secret? Not by reading essays or hearing orations on submission and forgiveness, but by practising these things in humble dependence on God's Spirit. "Exercise thyself unto godliness." Aristotle said, "Things we learn to know we learn by the doing of them." But men want to learn things without this—patience without being patient, meekness without forgiving, heaven without walking in the way, God without prayer. How can He? Christ's method is to learn by doing. Virtue must go before knowledge. "Grow in grace," &c. (2 Pet. i. 5, *cf* 8). III. THE EXPERIMENTAL TRUTHS. 1. There is in Christianity, not only something to be believed, but something to be felt. Some of its truths are beyond the range of the intellect. There is a "peace which passeth understanding," "joy unspeakable," "love which passeth knowledge." These belong to the heart, and to feel them is to know them. There is a great difference between having an opinion and knowing. You may master the "evidences," and believe that Christianity is Divine—but that is only an opinion. Feel God, realize His power, do His will until Christ is formed within you, then you know that Christianity is true. Fellow Christian! you are mourning the withdrawal of the Divine favour, your spirit is beclouded, you have faltered in some duty. What is the remedy? Return and run in the way of God's commandments and the sun will shine upon you again. 2. In a healthy body the organs are fitted for the discharge of their separate functions—the eye for seeing, the palate for tasting. But these are only witnesses, they report to the mind which can please itself about believing the testimony. I am jaundiced to-day and my eye tells me that the grass is yellow; or fevered, and my palate tells me that honey is bitter. So when a carnal man looks at religion he pronounces it sad. But the fault is not in religion but in himself. The fever of sin is in his soul, he has an evil eye. In order to know the truth of God he must have a heart in sympathy with holiness, then he will know of the doctrine. 3. Modern rationalists will not accept this testimony of experience. They judge of Christianity by the eye of reason alone But there is enough to demand both eyes. Take a man who has studied scientifically our coal formations. He can tell you its component parts, and discriminate between different kinds. But suppose that man crossing the Alps in a snow storm, of what avail is his theory when perishing of cold? Look, on the other hand, at the weary son of toil wending his way to his cottage home exposed to the bitter blast. He seats himself before the fire. He cannot tell what that is made of which warms him, but he knows something better. He feels the heat. So it is with religion. Let those who please take the theory; give me to feel the glow. Conclusion. 1. Let us admire the benevolence of God in making this the condition of knowing. It places the proof of Christianity within the reach of all. 2. But the truth is also very admonitory. "The wicked shall not understand." (*R. Roberts.*) *Why Christ's doctrine was rejected by the Jews*:—I. THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST. This consisted of—1. Matters of belief relating to His person and offices. These seemed such as not only brought a new religion into the world, but to require a new reason to embrace it. 2. Matters of practice, such as were enforced by the Sermon on the Mount—Self-denial, purity of heart, &c. These were what grated hardest on men. For their religion had degenerated into mere outward action, and when that failed, there was expiation ready. Amongst all their sacrifices they never sacrificed one lust. Bulls and goats bled apace, but neither the violence of the one, nor the wantonness of the other ever died a victim on their altars. No wonder, then, that a doctrine which arraigned the irregularities of the most inward affections raised such a disturbance. II. MEN'S UNBELIEF OF CHRIST'S DOCTRINE WAS FROM NO DEFECT IN CHRIST'S ARGUMENTS. 1. These arguments were in themselves convincing. (1) All the Divine predictions received their completion in Christ. In Him they met with such lustre as if the penmen of them were not prophets but evangelists. Could He have all the signs and not be the thing signified? Could all the shadows that were cast from Him belong to any other body? (2) He performed miracles, and surely there cannot be a greater reason for belief than for a man to say, "This is the Word of God, and to prove it I will do what nothing can do but the Almighty power of that God who can neither

deceive nor be deceived." And His enemies could not deny His miracles. 2. Their insufficiency, if there could be any, was not the cause of unbelief. (1) Because those who rejected Christ's doctrine and arguments believed other things on less evidence. They believed the miracles of Moses, but only by tradition, which, though sufficient, was not equal to that evidence of sense which supported Christ's. (2) They believed things which were neither evident nor certain but only probable; for they frequently ventured their fortunes upon a probable belief of the honesty of those they traded with. And interest in worldly matters, especially with a Jew, never proceeds but upon a supposal, at least, of a firm bottom. (3) They believed in things not so much as probable, but actually false, such as the absurd stories of their rabbins (chap. v. 43). III. THE TRUE CAUSE OF THIS UNBELIEF—the captivity of the will and affections to lusts directly opposite to the design and spirit of Christianity. To see this, notice—1. That the understanding in its assent to any religion is very differently wrought upon in persons brought up in it, and in persons converted to it. In the first it finds the mind unprepossessed, and so easily gains upon the assent and incorporates into it. But in persons adult and already prepossessed with other notions the understanding cannot change these without labour and examination. 2. In this great work the understanding is chiefly at the disposal of the will. For though it is not in the power of the will directly to cause or hinder the assent of the understanding, yet it is antecedently in the power of the will to apply the understanding to or take it from consideration of objects to which without consideration it cannot assent. From these two we have the true reason of the Pharisees unbelief; for they could not relinquish Judaism and embrace Christianity without considering both religions. And this their understanding could not apply to if it were diverted by their will, and their will would be sure to divert it, being wholly possessed and governed by their covetousness and ambition which abhorred Christianity. See John v. 44; Luke xvi. 14—in both of which there is an incurable blindness caused by a resolution not to see; and to all intents and purposes, he who will not open his eyes is as blind as he who cannot. IV. A PIOUS AND WELL-DISPOSED MIND, ATTENDED WITH A READINESS TO OBEY THE KNOWN WILL OF GOD, IS THE SUREST AND BEST MEANS TO ENLIGHTEN THE UNDERSTANDING TO A BELIEF OF CHRISTIANITY. That this is so will appear—1. Upon the account of God's goodness and the method of His dealing with men; which is to reward every degree of sincere obedience to His will with a further discovery of it. The Psalmist (Psa. cxix. 10) got the start of the ancients in the point of obedience, and thereby outstripped them at length in point of knowledge. And who in the old time were the men of extraordinary revelation but the men of extraordinary piety? The Enochs, Abrahams, Daniels, &c., who walked with God; and surely he who walks with another is likelier to understand another than he who follows him at a distance. 2. Upon the account of natural efficiency, for as much as a will so disposed will engage the mind in a severe search into the truths of religion, and accompany the search with two dispositions principally productive of the discoveries of truth, viz., (1) Diligence. Steady, constant study naturally leads the soul into the knowledge of that which at first seemed locked up from it, and keeps the understanding in that long converse with a subject that brings acquaintance. But the will is the great spring of this diligence, for no man can heartily search after that which he is not very desirous to find. Diligence is to the understanding as the whetstone to the razor, but the will is the hand that must apply one to the other. This is true in science, and it is true also in religion. (2) Impartiality. It is scarcely possible for him to hit the mark whose eye is glancing upon something beside it. Partiality is the understanding's judgment according to the inclination of the will and the affections, and not according to the exact truth of things. Affection is a briber of the judgment; and it is hard for a man to admit a reason against the thing he loves, or to confess the force of an argument against an interest. But impartiality strips the mind of prejudice and passion, keeps it right, and even from the bias of interest and desire, and so presents it equally disposed to the reception of all truth. Where diligence opens the door of the understanding, and impartiality keeps it, truth is sure to find both an entrance and a welcome. Conclusion: 1. The true cause of scepticism is not from anything wanting in religion. Men question its truth because they hate its practice. Few practical errors are embraced on conviction, but inclination. It is impossible for one engaged in an evil way to have a clear understanding of it, and a quiet mind in it. If men would change their lives there would be no difficulty in changing their judgments. For, notwithstanding all their empty talk of reason, persuade but the covetous man not to deify his

money, &c., and these objections would vanish. For a good man is three quarters his way to his being a Christian whatsoever he is called. 2. We learn the most effectual means for growth in the knowledge of religious truth. It is a knowledge that men are not so much to study as to live themselves into; a knowledge that passes into the head through the heart. And where a long course of piety and communion with God has purged the heart and rectified the will, and made all things ready for the reception of God's Spirit, knowledge will break in with such a victorious light that nothing shall be able to resist it. 3. If some should object that if these things are so the most pious are the most knowing which seems contrary to experience. So they are as to things necessary to salvation; as the meanest soldier that has fought knows more of war than he who has read or written volumes on it but has never seen a battle. Practical sciences are only learnt in the way of action. It is not the opinion, but the "path of the just," that shines more and more. The obedient are the "children of light," that shall outgrow all their doubts and ignorances until persuasion pass into knowledge, and knowledge into assurance, and all at length into the beatific vision. (*R. South, D.D.*) *The mutual relation of obedience and knowledge:*—Astronomy is a science. It teaches us the measurement and distances, and the nature and movements of the heavenly bodies. Navigation is astronomy applied to practice, and by the help of what astronomy tells the sailor, he is able to steer his vessel from one port to another, and ascertain exactly from his chart the position of his vessel. Is it not clear that every time out at sea the sailor unfolds his map and is enabled to mark on the chart the very spot where his ship is in the world's great space—every time he does that he has a fresh proof that astronomy is true. Every time he is able to bring his ship safely into port he has a fresh proof that science is true. (*Bishop Magee.*) *Importance of the will in religion:*—The stress is upon "willeth," which in our version reads as if it were only the auxiliary verb. It is not deed which is the outcome of faith; but will, which precedes it, that is here spoken of. This human will to do the Divine will is the condition of knowing it. The words are unlimited and far-reaching in their meaning. Those who heard them would naturally understand them, as it was intended they should, of the Divine will expressed in the law and the prophets (ver. 19); but they include the will of God revealed, more or less clearly, to all men and in all times. Our thoughts dwell naturally on representative lives such as those of Saul the Pharisee, Cornelius the centurion, Justin the philosopher; but the truth holds good for every honest heart in every walk of life. ("*Commentary for Schools.*") *The highest truths are only revealed under certain conditions:*—Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, once said to me, "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times: and it is very strange if the doctrine of the atonement you hold should not have been found by me." I am not surprised at this. I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it. Now, prejudice from education, learning, &c., often proves an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the candle: you must remove the extinguisher. *Obedience helps knowledge:*—If any man will know the will of Christ, let him do that will. When a young man is put to learn a trade, he does so by working at it; and we learn the truth which our Lord teaches by obeying His commands. To reach the shores of heavenly wisdom every man must work his passage. Holiness is the royal road to Scriptural knowledge. We know as much as we do. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Obedience the key of knowledge:*—There is a kind of Divine oracle within the self-resigning soul, which speaks clearly and plainly, not darkly and ambiguously, as that oracle in Greece. There is a spiritual priesthood, which hath the Urim and Thummim, not upon the breast, as Aaron had (Exod. xxvii. 30), but within the breast: light and integrity go together. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant" (Psa. xxv. 14); or, as it is better in the margin, "and His covenant to make them know it:" that is, it is part of God's gracious covenant not to conceal from them, but to make them know His will. That which concerns them to know and practice, God will not hide from the sincerely obedient. God makes such "to know wisdom in the hidden part" (Psa. li. 6); or, "in the hidden man of the heart" (1 Pet. iii. 4). (*Worthington.*)

Ver. 18. **He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory.**—The Jews marvelled that Christ had been educated in no school (ver. 15). This He contradicts (ver. 16), for the conclusion would have been that He was self-taught, and was therefore speaking His own theories, promulgating them on His own authority, and as a

further consequence seeking His own glory—faults into which self-taught superficial men often fall, whereas the profoundly learned, recognizing their indebtedness to others, are usually humble and self-abnegating. Whether this doctrine was His own or not could be tested in two ways. (1) By willingness to do God's will. (2) By an observation of His own character and aim. His words and works would show in whose name He spake and by whose power He wrought, and thus prove that His doctrine was of God. The text affords a basis for some remarks on—*Conceit and humility*:—I. CONCEIT. 1. Its nature "speaketh of Himself," which is true in two senses. The conceited man—(1) Speaks out of himself. He is known everywhere by his ostentatious parade of originality and infallibility. His own opinions evolved from his inner consciousness, in proud independence of other thinkers, are the standard of truth and untruth. His predecessors were all very well in their day; but their teaching is now obsolete. His contemporaries are right according to their light, but their light is only one remove from darkness. To raise the least objection against his *ipse dixit* is only an evidence of "knowing nothing about it." How many such original geniuses afflict the Church, the state, halls of science and schools of philosophy! (2) Speaks about himself. The conceited man is impatient of any talk that does not lead up to himself. He is known in the pulpit and literature by his extravagant use of the first person singular or plural. He is known in society by his monopoly of conversation, and his persistent obtrusion of his own opinions, achievements, property, &c. Who has not suffered from the infliction of his senseless and incessant babble! 2. Its aim—"his own glory." This is the end which the conceited man never loses sight of, and everything he does has as its motive the gratification of his own personal vanity. He dresses and attitudinizes for the purpose of attracting attention; he talks to secure praise for his sagacity or adventures; he schemes and works that he may be talked about, or to obtain gain. And verily he has his reward. II. HUMILITY. 1. Its nature. (1) Acceptance of a mission from God "that sent Him." To go because sent is an acknowledgment of servitude and obligation; and the consciousness of being sent by God can only convey the conviction of unworthiness. This is shown by the unvarying testimony of the greatest of God's servants—Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul. And then the missions on which God sends us are often of the humblest character—to teach in a ragged school, to visit an obscure invalid, &c. But humility accepts them unmurmuringly, and fulfils them diligently. (2) Giving all the glory to God. Sometimes the faithful discharge of some humble duty secures brilliant results. Here is the great test of humility. Men praise the missionary who, when he emerges from his obscurity, is found to have civilized a tribe of barbarians. Will he accept it or give it to God? 2. Its characteristics. (1) Truth. Truth is everywhere humble, and the humble man is usually safe from temptations to untruthfulness because he has no appearances to keep up, and no self-interests to secure. He has given himself to God and lives for God. The conceited man, on the contrary, has to resort to very questionable practices and professions to maintain a reputation for consistency, and is haunted with the fear of being found out. The humble man is afraid of nothing and no one. (2) Righteousness. God gave us our gifts whatever they are, and the opportunity for using them, and by His influence has produced what results crown our efforts. Humility recognizes His righteous due and gives it. Conclusion: 1. "Pride goeth before destruction" often in this life and at the hands of men; always in the next and at the hands of God. 2. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," perhaps by men, certainly by God. (*J. W. Burn.*)

Vers. 19–30. **Did not Moses give you the law?**—*Murder in desire*:—The desire to kill Christ—I. WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THEIR RELIGIOUS PROFESSION. They professedly believed in Moses, and esteemed him highly. But there was nothing in Moses to sanction their antagonism to Christ. 1. The spirit of their opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses (ver. 19). You seek to kill Me, when your moral master in God's name has said, "Thou shalt not kill." None of you keepeth the law in this respect. 2. The proximate cause of the opposition was inconsistent with the moral law of Moses—the healing of the impotent man at Bethesda on the Sabbath day. This was the "one work" which now fired their indignation. But what did Moses do? What might have been considered more objectionable than this. He circumcised children on the Sabbath day—a work that inflicted physical pain and manual labour. And not only did Moses do it, but Abraham, &c., whose authority is of greater antiquity. Could it be right for

them to do, on the Sabbath day, the work of mere ceremony, and wrong for Me to do a work of mercy? The crime and curse of religionists in all ages and lands have been the exalting the ceremonial over the moral—the local, the temporary, and contingent above the universal, eternal, and absolute. II. IMPLIED A GREAT INACCURACY OF JUDGMENT (ver. 24). Judging from appearance, they concluded—1. That a mere ordinary peasant had no Divine mission. Perhaps most of them knew His humble birthplace and parentage, and concluded from His lowly appearance that He was a poor man and nothing more. They were too blinded to discover beneath such apparently abject forms a Divine spirit, character, and mission. It has ever been so. Men who judge from appearances have always failed to discern anything great or Divine in those who occupy the humbler walks of life. And yet the men of highest genius, divinest inspirations and aims have been counted the offscouring of all things. 2. That a ritualistic religion was a religion of righteousness. Had there been in connection with the ceremonies of the Temple the healing of the sick on the Sabbath day, they would have esteemed the work as sacred. No ceremony could they allow as of secondary importance. But the ritualistic religion is sometimes immoral. When men observe even the divinest ceremonies as a matter of custom and form, they degrade their spiritual natures and insult omniscience. "God is a Spirit," &c. The religion of righteousness is the religion of love, not of law. 3. That by killing a teacher they would kill his influence. They sought to kill Christ because they knew if His doctrines spread their authority would crumble. Men who have judged from appearances have ever sought to kill unpopular teachers. But facts as well as philosophy show that such judgment is not righteous. The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the Church; their doctrines get free force and sweep from their death. It was so with Christ. III. INVOLVED THEM IN PERPLEXITY (vers. 25–27). There seems much bewilderment here. They thought they knew Him, yet they felt they did not know Him. They wondered, too, how a man whom their rulers desired to kill should speak so boldly without being arrested. Minds under a wrong leading passion are sure to get into confusion. No intellect is clear, and its path straight and sunny, that is not under the control of benevolent dispositions. All the conflicting theories of the world concerning God, spirit, and morals, have their origin in a wrong state of heart. The intellectual confusion of hell grows out of malevolence. What they could not see Christ explains (ver. 28). As they had no love in them, they could not see God; and as they could not see God, they could not understand Him that He came from God and was sent by Him. Observe what Christ asserts—1. That He knows the Absolute. He is the only Being in the universe that knows Him. 2. That He was a messenger from the Absolute. "He that sent me." This is the great spiritual ministry of the world. What are popes, cardinals, archbishops, to Him? "This is My beloved Son," says God; "hear ye Him." Whoever else you disregard, "hear ye Him." IV. Their desire to kill Him WAS DIVINELY RESTRAINED (ver. 30). Why did not their malignant desire work itself out at once? It was wide and strong enough. The answer is, "Because His hour was not yet come." There was an unseen hand that held them back. He who holds the wind in His fist turns the hearts of men as the rivers of water. With God for "everything there is a season." Men may wish to hurry events, and to go before the appointed time, but there is a power that holds them back until the hour comes. The power that governs every wavelet in the ocean controls every passing passion of mankind. Conclusion: Learn—1. That being hated by society is not always a proof of hate-worthiness. Here is one, "who did no sin," &c., hated with a mortal hate. To be hated by a corrupt society is to have the highest testimony to your goodness. The world loves its own, and hates all moral aliens. It worships the Herods, and stones the Stephens. "Marvel not if the world hate you, it hated Me before it hated you." 2. That being hated by society is no reason for neglecting our mission. Though Christ knew that in the leading men there flamed the fiercest indignation towards Him, yet He enters the Temple on a great public occasion and fearlessly delivers His message. That love for truth, God, and humanity which inspired and ruled Him raised Him above the fear of men, made Him fearless and invincible. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The assailants assailed* (vers. 19–24):—I. A FOURFOLD FACT PREMISED. 1. Moses gave the Jews the law, moral and ceremonial, with its statutes against murder, about the Sabbath and circumcision. 2. Moses incorporated circumcision in his statute-book to prevent the law in this item from being broken as it had been prior to his time. 3. The Jews were accustomed to administer this rite upon the Sabbath. 4. They

did so that the law might not be broken, as it would have been if delayed, to save the Sabbath. II. A SIMPLE ARGUMENT CONDUCTED. 1. The Jews were not wrong in their procedure with regard to circumcision. He taught that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark ii. 27, 28). 2. Christ, *à fortiori*, could not have been wrong in His work on the Bethesda cripple. If He suspended the law, so did they. If they had a good reason, He had a better. 3. The leaders of the people were wrong in seeking to kill Christ. This was obvious, since He had proved that He had broken neither the Sabbath nor the law. III. A NECESSARY LESSON TAUGHT. 1. Not to judge according to appearances. Neither men nor deeds can be safely estimated by their external aspects. As it is the man's interior that constitutes the man (Prov. xxiii. 7), so the motive enshrined forms the act. Appearances are frequently deceptive; *cf.* Hannah (1 Sam. i. 15) and Paul (Acts xxvi. 25). 2. To judge according to truth. In every instance there is a judgment of man or deed which corresponds with truth and justice. This is always the characteristic of the Divine (Psa. lxvii. 4; xcvi. 13; 1 Sam. xvi. 7; John v. 30; 1 Pet. ii. 23), and ever should be of human (Lev. xix. 15; Deut. i. 16; Prov. xxxi. 9; Phil. iv. 8) judgments. Learn: 1. Pretenders to the greatest reverence for Divine law are sometimes its most flagrant transgressors. 2. A man may meditate murder in his heart and yet think himself a saint. 3. It is easier to keep the law in the letter than in the spirit, to circumcise the body than circumcise the heart. 4. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 5. Nothing more attests depravity than to hate Christ and Christianity for their practical beneficence. 6. The only physician who can work a cure upon the whole man is Christ. 7. The propriety of setting in judgment on our own judgments. (*T. Whitelaw. D.D.*) *The law does not save men*:—This parlour is the heart of a man who was never sanctified by the sweet grace of the gospel. The dust is original sin and inward corruption that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep at first is the law. Now, whereas thou sawest that as soon as the first began to sweep, the dust did fly about, that the room by him could not be cleansed, but that thou wast almost choked therewith; this is to show thee that the law, instead of cleansing the heart by its working from sin, doth revive, put strength into, and increase in the soul, even as it doth discover and forbid it, for it doth not give power to subdue it. (*Pilgrim's Progress.*) *How to treat slander*:—"Thou hast a devil." This he passeth by as a frontless slander, not worth repeating. Sincerity throws off slanders, as Paul did the viper; yet, in a holy scorn, it laughs at them, as the wild ass doth at the horse and his rider. (*J. Trapp.*) **If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision**.—I healed a whole man (chap. ix. 34; xiii. 10), whereas circumcision inflicts a wound. And that is performed on the Sabbath. Which work is the more sabbatical of the two? Circumcision produces pain, but I have made a man free from pain. This illustrates the question of the relation of the Seventh-day Sabbath to the Lord's day. The law of the former gave way to the rite which took place on the eighth day. That rite was the typical forerunner of baptism, which is the sacrament of spiritual resurrection from the grave of sin into newness of life. Well, therefore, may the Jewish Seventh-day Sabbath give way to the festival of Christ's resurrection, which was on the eighth day, *i.e.*, on the octave of the first. (*Bp. Wordsworth.*) *Every whit whole*:—I. THE GREAT WANT OF MAN. To be made "whole." Man is unsound in every part. 1. Corporeally. Some physical organizations are healthier than others; but even the strongest is unsound. The seeds of disease and death are in all. The strongest man is, as compared to the weakest, like an oak to a fragile reed; but ever at the roots of the oak there is a disease that is working its way up. 2. Intellectually. The man who has the strongest mind is subject to some mental infirmity. He lacks elasticity, freedom, clearness of vision, courage, and independency. He cannot see things completely, or hold them with a manly grasp. The strongest intellects are the most conscious of their unsoundness. 3. Socially. Men were made to love their fellow-men and to be loved by them, and thus be harmoniously united in reciprocal affection and services of mutual goodwill and usefulness. But socially man is unsound in every point. The social heart is diseased with greed, envy, jealousy, ambition, and malice. So that the social world is rife with discords, contentions, and wars. 4. Morally. Man has lost at once the true idea of true sympathy with right. His conscience is dim, infirm, torpid, buried in the flesh, carnally sold unto sin. Thus man in every part is unsound. He is lost, not in the sense of being missed, for God knows where he is; nor in the sense of being extinct, for he lives a certain kind of life; not in the sense of being inactive, for he is in

constant labour; but in the sense of incapacity to fulfil the object of his being. He is lost, in the sense that the gallant ship is lost when no longer seaworthy; that the grand organ is lost that has no longer the power to pour out music. II. THE GRAND WORK OF CHRIST. To make "man every whit whole." He makes man whole—1. Corporeally. It is true that He allows the human body to go down to dust; but that dust He has pledged to reorganize "like unto His glorious body." "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," &c., &c. How sound will the resurrection body be! 2. Intellectually. Here He begins the healing of the intellect. He clears away from it the moral atmosphere of depravity, and opens its eyes so that it may see things as they are. In the future world it will be "every whit whole," free from prejudice, errors, and all depravity. 3. Socially, by filling them with that spirit of true philanthropy which prompts them not to seek their own things, but to labour for the common good of men as men, irrespective of creeds, countries, races, or religions. This He is doing now, this He will continue to do on this earth until men shall love each other as brethren and nations beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and hear of war no more. He will make the world, even here, "every whit" socially whole, and in the Heaveuly Jerusalem above the social soundness and order will be perfect. 4. Morally, by bringing him under the control of supreme love for the Supremely Good. Thus: He will take away the heart of "stone" and give it a heart of "flesh." At last He will cause all men to stand before Him without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Conclusion: What a Physician is Christ! He cures all manner of diseases. No malady can baffle His skill. The world has never wanted men who have tried to make people sound. It has its corporeal, intellectual, social, and moral doctors; but those who succeed most in their respective departments only prove by their miserable failures that they are miserable empirics. Here is a Physician that makes a "man every whit whole." (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *Every day is a fit day for doing good:*—As burning candles give light until they be consumed, so godly Christians must be occupied in doing good as long as they live. (*Cowdray.*) Appelles the painter much lamented if he should escape but one day without drawing some picture outline; so ought a Christian to be sorry if any day should pass without doing some good work or exercise. (*Ibid.*) *Doing good a blessed work:*—Dr. Guthrie once said: "I know a man (Thomas Wright) who, at the close of each day's work, turned his steps to the prison, and with his Bible, or on his knees on the floor, spent the evening hours in its gloomy cells, seeking to instruct the ignorant and redeem the criminal and raise the fallen. The judgment day shall show how many he restored, penitent and pardoned, to the bosom of God; but it is certain that alone and single-handed he rescued and reformed four hundred criminals, restoring them, honest and well-doing men, to the bosom of society." **Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.**—Judging according to the appearance led the Jews into error—I. RESPECTING THE LORD HIMSELF. 1. They never got deeper than the surface of His Person. The Christ they were expecting was one pieced up of mere outsides of the reality. What resemblance had that sorrow-stricken prophet of Nazareth to the glare and splendour of the Christ of their imagination? He came poor to look at and poor as He seemed. They had no eyes for the Divinity within. 2. There is the same shutting of the eyes now to the Divinity in His person; the same refusal to receive Him as Lord. (1) By how many is nature regarded as greater than Christ! (2) Many accept the opinion of the world for their idea of Christ. (3) Some habitually exclude from their thoughts the presence of Jesus in providence. (4) Others, staggered at their sinfulness, are blinded to the fact that in Jesus there is cleansing for all their vileness. 3. Some scriptural views which will counteract these errors and lead to a righteous judgment. (1) It ought not to seem strange to a human being that a Divine Saviour should be human also. Man cannot draw near to an abstract God. We need one who has dwelt on earth, who has known our sorrows, and is as near to us as our nature is; and such a one is Jesus. (2) But a merely human Saviour would not meet our need. Only God can save us. This Jesus claims to be, and the Gospels say He was, and prove it on every page. II. RESPECTING THE WORKS OF THE SAVIOUR. 1. It was one of these that called forth the unrighteous judgment He here rebukes. About six months before He had healed the impotent man (chap. v. 1–9). According to appearance He had violated the Sabbath. But in the strictest sense that was such a deed as the Sabbath was appointed to suggest and promote. And the misjudging eye followed Him wherever He went, and adjudged

the miracles, which were manifestations from heaven, to be a sign from hell. 2. Similar errors are found among us. (1) His work on the cross has been judged according to appearance, and set down as martyrdom and as the last manifestation of that obedience which is a model to us. Neither of these views enter into the inner meaning of the transaction. As for the first, it is not in harmony with the law of Jesus: "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another." But our Lord sought death. As for the next, the Bible leaves no room for doubt that there was more in Christ's death than that "Christ died for the ungodly." "We have redemption through His blood," &c. The primal and essential aim of Christ's death was atonement for sin. (2) His work in carrying on His providence. There may be an appearance of evil to God's people, while we know that "no evil shall happen to them." The Lord's dealings with them are transacted beyond the range of the outward eye. Jesus cannot be unkind to them. III. RESPECTING THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL STATE. 1. They did not suspect their own wickedness, but seemed to themselves to be animated by zeal for God's law. There was much in appearances to foment this delusion. Had we arrived on the scene when these words were spoken, we should have concluded that some grand act of national worship was going forward; and had we heard this reference to Sabbath violation, we might have thought the people no respecters of persons in their zeal for God's law. But underneath all that show of worship was hollow unbelief, and all that zeal for "Remember the Sabbath" was a cloak for their transgression of "Thou shalt not kill." 2. Our circumstances are not dissimilar to theirs. Our Lord's day is a festival as really as that feast; but is our heart in Sabbath worship, and while we bow the head, are we bowing the heart? Excellent though Sabbath-keeping and Church-going are, they are apt to deceive us. And so with other religious acts. We may be very scrupulous outwardly, and yet inwardly be far from God. Conclusion: 1. The world is full of people who seem as though they were all journeying in one direction; yet part is travelling to heaven and part to hell. Whatever the outside of our lives may seem to say, we belong to one or the other. Let us ascertain by the test of a righteous judgment to which we belong. 2. We are all hastening to a day when judgment will not be according to appearance. 3. But why appeal to the future? God is passing His righteous judgments on our state and actions now. Let us be judges with God in this matter, and be satisfied with nothing that will not satisfy Him. (*A. Macleod, D.D.*) *Hiding behind others*:—Here is administered a rebuke to the injustice and peril of making the apparent inconsistencies of Christians the apology for delay in beginning a religious life. I. THE INJUSTICE OF JUDGING THE MERE APPEARANCE OF OTHERS. 1. One cannot always know the actual facts as to another's inconsistent behaviour. 2. Nor the balances of better behaviour behind it. 3. Nor the unseen spiritual struggle against it. 4. Nor the penitence and prayer which may have followed it. II. THE PERIL OF HIDING BEHIND THE MERE APPEARANCE OF OTHERS. 1. It is itself inconsistent; would men follow Christians who are correct? 2. It is evasive: men only mean to stop appeal. 3. It is illogical: it pays the highest compliment to real religion. 4. It is unreasonable: men know they are independently responsible to God. 5. It is unsafe: it shows men they know the right way of living when they criticize what is inconsistent with it. (*Charles S. Robinson, D.D.*) *Judging by outward appearances*:—I. IS NOT A TRUE WAY OF JUDGING. Some of the most delicious fruits are encased in rough and unsightly coverings; and one who had not tasted them before, would be likely to pass them by, and go on to others which seemed to be better. One day a man dressed in plain, coarse clothes walked into a little English village, carrying a bundle tied up in a handkerchief. No one noticed him, or cared for him. After a while the stage-coach drove up; the little way-side mail-bag was thrown off, and all the idlers of the village assembled about the post-office. The contents of the bag were soon assorted, and there was nothing deserving of notice, except a formidable-looking letter, with a large seal, directed to Lord Somebody. The postmaster examined it, and read its superscription aloud. Everybody was on tip-toe of expectation, and for giving the nobleman a grand reception. Meanwhile, the stranger in the homespun dress sat silently watching the proceedings; and, when the public curiosity had worn itself out over the letter, he claimed it as his own. Astonishment, indignation, and a variety of other emotions, took possession of the crowd. But when the postmaster, who had seen the nobleman somewhere before, and now recognized him in his plain clothes, handed him the letter, every one began to try and do away with the unfavourable impression which had been made on the stranger by the cool contempt with which he had been treated so long as

he had been thought to be only an ordinary traveller. Lord Somebody, taking his bundle in his hand, left the village, giving the advice contained in the text as his parting legacy to its mortified inhabitants. II. Is NOT A JUST WAY OF JUDGING. Many hundred years ago, when the Tabernacle of the Lord was at Shiloh, a good woman, named Hannah, went into pray, and to ask for a special blessing which she greatly longed for. It was in her heart that she spake to the Lord, and no loud word was uttered. But He who knoweth all things could hear her. Eli the priest saw her come in, and, judging from outward appearance, he judged unjustly, rashly concluding her to be tipsy. How Eli's heart must have been wrung by the reply (1 Sam. i. 15). People who wear the longest faces, and who talk the most religiously, have not always the most of the love of God in their hearts. As Shakespeare has worded it—"A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain." III. Is NOT A SAFE WAY OF JUDGING. The ice on the river appears to be as safe as the earth, but how many who venture upon it pay for their temerity! "Oh! how I wish I could ride in a carriage, like that gentleman!" exclaimed a little fellow, one day, as a handsome coach and four dashed rapidly by him, while he trudged along the dusty road. "I am sure that man must be as happy as a king. O that I had been born so lucky!" At no great distance from the spot where the carriage passed him, it suddenly stopped, and the complaining and envious boy arrived just in time to see the happy owner of the carriage descend from it. Alas! little of happiness was to be seen. The rich man was a cripple, and before he could move a step, a pair of crutches had to be brought to him, and, as he cautiously raised himself from the seat, his face was distorted with pain. The little boy was thus taught the lesson of the text. (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Appearances*:—A traveller showed Lavater two portraits—the one a highwayman who had been broken upon the wheel, the other was a portrait of Kant the philosopher. He was desired to distinguish between them. Lavater took up the portrait of the highwayman, and, after attentively considering it for some time, "Here," said he, "we have the true philosopher. Here is penetration in the eye and reflection in the forehead; here is cause, and there is effect; here is combination, there is distinction; synthetic lips and analytic nose." Then, turning to the portrait of the philosopher, he exclaimed, "The calm-thinking villain is so well expressed and so strongly marked in this countenance that it needs no comment." This anecdote Kant used to tell with great glee. *Judge not by appearances*:—At one of the annual Waterloo banquets the Duke of Wellington after dinner handed round for inspection a very valuable presentation snuff-box set with diamonds. After a time it disappeared, and could nowhere be found. The Duke was much annoyed. The guests (there being no servants in the room at the time) were more so, and they all agreed to turn out their pockets. To this one old officer vehemently objected, and, on their pressing the point, left the room, notwithstanding that the Duke begged that nothing more might be said about the matter. Of course suspicion fell on the old officer; nobody seemed to know much about him or where he lived. The next year the Duke at the annual banquet put his hand in the pocket of his coat, which he had not worn since the last dinner, and there was the missing snuff-box! The Duke was dreadfully distressed, found out the old officer, who was living in a wretched garret, and apologized. "But why," said His Grace, "did you not consent to what the other officers proposed, and thus have saved yourself from the terrible suspicion?" "Because, sir, my pockets were full of broken meat, which I had contrived to put there to save my wife and family, who were at that time literally dying of starvation." The Duke, it is said, sobbed like a child; and it need not be added that the old officer and his family suffered no more from want from that day. Appearances are often deceptive. We don't know all. Therefore "Judge not, that ye be not judged." *We must not judge by appearances*:—Whatever truth there may be in phrenology, or in Lavater's kindred science of physiognomy, we shall do well scrupulously to avoid forming an opinion against a man from his personal appearance. If we so judge we shall often commit the greatest injustice, which may, if we should ever live to be disfigured by sickness or marred by age, be returned into our own bosom to our bitter sorrow. Plato compared Socrates to the gallipots of the Athenian apothecaries, on the outside of which were painted grotesque figures of apes and owls, but they contained within precious balsams. All the beauty of a Cleopatra cannot save her name from being infamous; personal attractions have adorned some of the grossest monsters that ever cursed humanity. Judge then no man or woman after their outward fashion, but with purified eye behold the hidden beauty of the heart and life. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The folly of judging by appear-*

ances:—Two knights met in a wood one day, and saw between them a shield fastened to a branch. Neither knew to whom it belonged, or why it was there. "Whose is this white shield?" said one. "White? Why it is black!" replied the other. "Do you take me for blind, or a fool, that you tell me what my own eyes can see is false?" And so words were bandied about until the dispute became so violent that swords were drawn, when a third knight came upon the scene. Looking at the angry men, he said, "You should be brothers in arms. Why do I see these passionate gestures, and hear these fierce words?" Each knight made haste to explain the imposition which the other had tried to practice upon him. The stranger smiled, and riding to one side of the shield, and then to the other, he said, very quietly, "Do not charge with your weapons just yet. Change places!" They did so, and, behold, the knight who had seen the white side of the shield saw now the black side also; and the knight who had been ready to do battle for the black stood face to face with the white side. Ashamed of their hot haste, they apologized one to the other, and rode out of the greenwood as good friends as ever. The lesson taught in this story is very important. Half the misunderstandings and quarrels which disturb the peace and destroy the happiness of families and neighbourhoods might be prevented, if those who engage in these disputes could see both sides of the question at once. How wise, then, are those people who are careful never to form hasty opinions, and who wait until they have seen or heard both sides, before venturing to determine which is right! (*J. N. Norton, D.D.*) *Deceptive appearances*:—Rabbi Joshua, the son of Chananiah, was a very learned and wise man, but he was ugly. His complexion was so dark that he was nicknamed "The Blacksmith," and little children ran away from him. One day, when the Rabbi went to court, the Emperor Trajan's daughter laughed at his ugliness, and said, "Rabbi, I wonder how it is that such great wisdom should be contained in an ugly head." Rabbi Joshua kept his temper, and, instead of replying, asked, "Princess, in what vessels does your august father keep his wine?" "In earthern jars, to be sure, replied she. "Indeed," exclaimed the Rabbi, "why all the common people keep their wine in earthern jars; the Emperor's wine should be kept in handsome vessels." The princess, who thought that Joshua was really in earnest, went off to the chief butler, and ordered him to pour all the Emperor's wine into gold and silver vessels, earthern jars being unworthy of such precious drink. The butler followed these orders; but when the wine came to the royal table it had turned sour. The next time the princess met the Rabbi she expressed her astonishment at his having given her such a strange piece of advice, and mentioned the result. "Then you have learned a simple lesson, princess," was the Rabbi's reply. "Wine is best kept in common vessels: so is wisdom." The next time the princess met the Rabbi she did not laugh at his ugly face. (*W. Baxendale.*) *Deceptive appearances*:—I have heard of one who felt convinced that there must be something in the Roman Catholic religion from the extremely starved and pinched appearance of a certain ecclesiastic. "Look," said he, "how the man is worn to a skeleton by his daily fastings and nightly vigils! How he must mortify his flesh!" Now the probabilities are that the emaciated priest was labouring under some internal disease, which he would have been heartily glad to be rid of, and it was not conquest of appetite, but failure in digestion which had so reduced him; or possibly a troubled conscience, which made him fret himself down to the light weights. Certainly I never met with a text which mentions prominence of bone as an evidence of grace. If so "the living skeleton" should have been exhibited, not merely as a living curiosity, but as the standard of virtue. Some of the biggest rogues have been as mortified in appearance as if they had lived on locusts and wild honey. It is a very vulgar error to suppose that a melancholy countenance is the index of a gracious heart. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Sometimes hard to judge*:—An ingenious device is attributed in the Talmud to King Solomon. The Queen of Sheba, attracted by the reputation of his wisdom, one day presented herself before him, holding in her hands two wreaths, the one of exquisite natural flowers, the other of artificial. The artificial wreath was arranged with so much taste and skill, the delicate form of the flowers so perfectly imitated, and the minutest shades of colour so wonderfully blended, that the wise king, at the distance at which they were held, was unable to determine which was really the work of the Divine Artist. For a moment he seemed baffled; the Jewish court looked on in melancholy astonishment; then his eyes turned towards a window, near which a swarm of bees were hovering. He commanded it to be opened; the bees rushed into the court, and immediately

alighted on one of the wreaths; whilst not a single one fixed on the other. **Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He whom they seek to kill?** I. THE OBSTINATE BLINDNESS OF THE UNBELIEVING JEWS. They defended their denial of our Lord's Messiahship by two assertions, both of which were wrong (ver. 27). 1. They were wrong in saying that they knew whence He came. They meant that He came from Nazareth; but He was born at Bethlehem, and belonged to the tribe of Judah, and was of the lineage of David. The Jews, with their carefully-kept family histories, could have found this out. Their ignorance was, therefore, without excuse. 2. They were wrong in saying that "no man was to know whence Christ came." This was in flat contradiction to Micah v. 2 (see Matt. ii. 5; John vii. 42), which they found it convenient not to remember (2 Pet. iii. 5). How common is this habit to-day! "There are none so blind as those who will not see." II. THE OVER-RULING HAND OF GOD OVER ALL HIS ENEMIES (ver 30). 1. Our Lord's sufferings were undergone voluntarily. He did not go to the cross because He could not help it. Neither Jew nor Gentile could have hurt Him, except power had been given them from above. The passion could not begin until the very hour which God had appointed. 2. Christ's servants should treasure up this doctrine. Nothing can happen to them but by Divine permission (Psa. xxxi. 15). III. THE MISERABLE END TO WHICH UNBELIEVERS SHALL ONE DAY COME (ver. 34). It is uncertain whether our Lord had in view individual cases of unbelief, or the national remorse at the siege of Jerusalem. There is such a thing as finding out truth too late (Prov. i. 28; Matt. xxv. 11). Therefore decide for Christ now. (*Bishop Ryle.*) *The origin of Jesus:*—I. THE COGITATIONS OF THE JERUSALEMITES. 1. Wonder. (1) The fearlessness of Christ (ver. 26) startled them, considering that He was a marked Man (ver. 25). Being themselves destitute of moral courage (ver. 13), they had no idea of such fortitude as innocence and truth could inspire, and that he whom God shields is invulnerable (Isa. liv. 17) until his work is done (Deut. xxxiii. 25) and his hour is come (John ix. 4; Heb. ix. 27). (2) The timidity of the rulers (ver. 26) puzzled them. They had as little comprehension of the essential cowardice of wickedness (Prov. xxviii. 1; Job xviii. 7–21) as of the majesty of goodness. 2. Suspicion. Ruminating on the inaction of the authorities, they began to whisper that something had occurred to change their tactics; that perhaps they had ascertained that Jesus was the Messiah (ver. 26)—a conjecture that was immediately dismissed, little guessing that truth often presents itself in such seemingly involuntary suggestions. 3. Decision. Who Jesus was they could settle in a moment. (1) When Messiah came, no one would be able to tell whence He came, or His parentage (ver 27), though His birthplace would be known (ver. 42). (2) Everybody knew Jesus' birthplace and parentage. (3) Therefore He could not be Messiah, but only "a man," like His fellows. Good logic, it is obvious, is not the same thing as sound Divinity. II. THE DECLARATIONS OF JESUS. 1. A concession. Their knowledge of His origin was—(1) Ostensibly complete. (2) Essentially erroneous, since they had no acquaintance with His higher nature. 2. A proclamation. (1) Concerning Himself. (*a*) His Divine Mission. "I am not come of Myself." "He sent Me." (*b*) His Divine knowledge. "I know Him," the Sender. (*c*) His Divine essence. "I am from Him." (2) Concerning them. (*a*) Their ignorance of God. "Whom ye know not." (*b*) As a consequence, their non-recognition of Him. Lessons: 1. The true humanity of Jesus. 2. To know Christ after the flesh only is to be ignorant of Him in reality. 3. No one knows Christ who recognizes not His Divine origin and mission. 4. A knowledge of the Father necessary to a true acquaintance with the Son (Matt. xi. 27). 5. It is not possible for wicked men to do all they wish except God wills. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Knowledge of Christ must be more than critical:*—I heard two persons on the Wengem Alp talking by the hour of the names of ferns; not a word about their characteristics, uses, or habits, but a medley of crack-jaw titles, nothing more. They evidently felt that they were ventilating their botany, and kept each other in countenance by alternate volleys of nonsense. They were about as sensible as those doctrinalists who for ever talk over the technicalities of religion, but know nothing by experience of its spirit and power. Are we not all too apt to amuse ourselves after the same fashion. He who knows mere Linnæan names, but has never seen a flower, is as reliable in botany as he is in theology who can descant upon supralapsaranism, but has never known the love of Christ in his heart. True religion is more than doctrine; something must be known and felt. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Howbeit we know this Man whence He is; but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is.**—Note the ineffable self-complacency of spiritual ignorance and pride.

Although His miracles made Him famous, yet they neither know nor desired to know His real nature. 1. Knowing God's power, they would not have resisted His Son. 2. Knowing God's justice, they would not have rejected His warnings. 3. Knowing God's mercy, they would not have grieved His Spirit. 4. Knowing God's wisdom, they would not have trusted their folly. So far from knowing, they have never carefully inquired into His life and birth. Indeed, they did not know that He was born at Bethlehem. Had they known Him, they would not have felt angry at Sabbath healing. (*W. H. Van Doren, D.D.*) *Jewish theories about Christ's origin and coming* :—When the wise men came, the scribes at Jerusalem averred that the Messiah should be born "in Bethlehem of Judæa," and adduced in proof the words of Micah. But here we find that Micah's words were by no means universally held as conclusive. Some held—and many famous Jewish expositors have since maintained—that the Messiah would come suddenly, like a bright and unexpected meteor, as here. The popular opinion, however, agreed with the answer of the scribes above (ver 42). Now it would be erroneous to suppose that the opinion expressed in the text was groundless or fanciful. It rested on all those passages in the Old Testament which refer to our Lord's Divine origin. To us the doctrine of the Divine and human natures in Christ is a cardinal article of faith; and, trained in this belief, we reconcile by its aid many statements of the prophets which externally are at variance with one another. But this twofold aspect must have been a serious difficulty to those who had only the teaching of the prophets, without the New Testament exposition of that teaching; nor can I see anything absurd in the expectation that, like a second Melchisedek, He would appear suddenly, with no human lineage, and no place of earthly birth and education. More correctly, we may regard this idea as only a confused anticipation of the truth that the Messiah was not only David's Son, but also "the Son of God." This very title is more than once given to our Lord (John i. 49; Matt. xvi. 16; xxvi. 63). In the latter text, Caiaphas probably put the question contemptuously, as representing what he deemed to be the most extreme form of Messianic doctrine; but there were other and better men who held it devoutly as a truth. But could these noble souls make it harmonize with the equally plain prophetic teaching that the Messiah was to be a Man, a descendant of David, and born at Bethlehem? Many attempts were no doubt made to harmonize this apparent discrepancy. One such we read in Justin Martyr's dialogue with the Jew Trypho. Trypho there affirms "that the Messiah at His birth would remain unknown and unacquainted with His powers until Elias appeared, who would anoint Him and proclaim Him as the Christ." In the Talmud the most conflicting opinions are found respecting the Messiah's advent. In one place it is said that He will first manifest Himself at Rome; in another, that the place will be Babylon; in a third, that He will not appear at all unless the Jews reform their manners. More frequently, however, it asserts that Jerusalem would be the place of His birth. Who could read such passages as Psa. lxxvii. 5; Isa. ii. 3; Psa. l. 2, and not draw from them the conclusion that the Messiah would be born on Zion's Holy Hill (2 Esdras xiii. 6, 35, &c.). (*Dean Payne Smith.*) **Then cried Jesus in the Temple.**—*Christ grieved by misconceptions about Himself:*—Nathanael had a technical objection (chap. i. 46); but it was swept away at once by the moral impression produced by Jesus. These Jews had also a technical objection ("when Christ came, no one was to know whence He was"), and this served to neutralize, for them, all the effect of the Saviour's teaching. They were bond-slaves to the letter; and this not the letter of Scripture, but of their own interpretation of Scripture. Let us consider—I. THE ATTACK UPON CHRIST. Just before His teaching had been assailed; now His person and mission. "He cannot be the Christ, because we know all about Him." Recall circumstance. The speakers are Jerusalem Jews, who are well acquainted with the animus of the rulers towards Him. "How is it, then," they ask, "that He is allowed to speak so fearlessly? Are the rulers coming round to believe in Him? But when we think of it, that cannot be. They are aware, as we are, that one over whose antecedents no obscurity rests can be no Messiah." All neutralized by a notion! This pains and distresses Jesus, and He "cries out" loudly, with emotion, seeking to rectify the mistake. II. THE DEFENCE. Jesus admits the truth of what they say, so far as it goes; they have an outward knowledge of Him and His origin. But this is only what appears. There is something beyond of which they are ignorant, and that is the Divine mission. But this mission is a fact. "He that sent Me is real"—*i.e.* (probably), "really exists." Why, then, do they not recognize the fact? Because they, little as they think it, are ignorant of God. With this ignorance of God, He

contrasts His own inward consciousness of God and His relation to Him. "I know Him." III. RESULT OF THE DEFENCE. The extreme irritation of the Jews at being told that they did not know God, and their indignation at Jesus' assumption of a peculiar relationship to the Father. They consider Him to be at least touching upon the confines of blasphemy, and "seek to take Him"; but they could not, because His hour was not yet come. IV. FOR PRACTICAL INFERENCES, let us—1. Recur to the thought that Christ is pained by misconception of His person and work, because He knows how ruinous such misconceptions are to mankind. 2. That He speaks severely, because it is necessary to do so. In no other way could He hope to obtain for the truth admission into the hearts of His hearers. (*G. Calthrop, M.A.*) **Then they sought to take Him; but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come.**—*The hour of destiny*:—I. CHRIST'S HOUR WAS DIVINELY PREDESTINATED. This is proved by—1. The numerous predictions of Scripture. 2. The long suffering of God in the preservation of the human race. 3. The influences which this hour has exerted on the condition of the world. II. CHRIST'S HOUR WAS ABOVE ALL CONTINGENCY AND HUMAN INTERFERENCES. This fact shows—1. The universality of Divine providence. 2. The futility of human opposition to the ways of God. 3. The steadfastness of the Divine plan. III. HIS HOUR DID NOT AFFECT THE MORAL FREEDOM OF HIS CONDUCT. 1. He chose the hour. 2. This choice proves His infinite love for us. 3. The manner in which He submitted to His destiny is a sublime model for us. (*P. L. Davies, A.M.*)

Vers. 31–36. **And many of the people believed on Him.** *The favourably disposed, and the malignantly opposed to Christ*:—I. THOSE WHO WERE FAVOURABLY DISPOSED (ver. 31). The commonalty, who were more or less unsophisticated and free from religious prejudices. These "heard Christ gladly." This favourable disposition—1. Was founded on facts. There does not seem to be any question, even among His opponents, as to the reality of His miracles. 2. Intensified the opposition of His enemies (ver. 32). They felt that if the people believed in Him their influence, honour, &c., would vanish; and so they were inflamed. Through all Christendom there has always been a large class favourably disposed towards Christ; and this upon a basis of facts. This class still intensifies the opposition of enemies when the atheist, the worldling, &c., mark this disposition they, too, become the more anxious to banish Him from the world. But popular sentiment is our bulwark against infidelity. II. THOSE WHO WERE MALIGNANTLY OPPOSED. Pharisees and chief priests. 1. They were to be deprived of the fellowship of Christ (ver. 33). But six months after this Christ returned to the bosom of the Father. It was only "a little while" He was in their midst, it would have been well had they availed themselves of it. The period of redemptive mercy with all men is but "a little while." 2. They would vainly seek the help of Christ (ver. 34). The hour was approaching for the fall of Jerusalem, and when the Romans were at the gates they would look for deliverance and not find it. There is a time to seek "the Lord, while He may be found"; and there is a time when He will be sought and not found. "Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord!" &c. 3. They misunderstood the meaning of Christ (vers. 35–36). (1) They started from His words an ungenerous conjecture, "Will He go" &c., *i.e.*, amongst the Jews scattered among the Gentiles, or to the Gentiles. In either case He will go to a contemptible class, and leave our glorious country. (2) They failed to attach to His words the true idea, "What manner of saying is this." They were carnal and judged after the flesh. Thus is it ever with this class. They are deprived of His fellowship. By their corrupt natures they are excluded from the sublime region of purity and benevolence in which He lives. They must all seek His help when too late. They all misunderstand Him. "They have ears but hear not." Conclusion: To which class do you belong? 1. Probably to the former. But to be favourably disposed is not enough; there must be decision, consecration, vital affinity. 2. If to the latter, ponder your condition ere it be too late. (*D. Thomas, D.D.*) *The coming of the bailiffs*:—I. A HOSTILE EMBASSY. 1. Its occasion—the favourable impression made on the multitude. 2. Its promoters. The chief priests and the Pharisees, who resolved to take a forward step by dispatching their constables to the Temple (ver. 32). 3. Its object. To mingle with the crowd, show as much favour as possible, so as to throw them and Christ off their guard, and then embrace the first opportunity of detaching them from Him, or Him from them, and took Him prisoner to the council chamber. II. AN UNEXPECTED GREETING. Having observed the officers and their intention, our Lord replied to this forward movement by announcing His

departure. 1. It would be soon, "a little while." The increasing hostility of the rulers, and the fickle character of the populace, made it apparent that the final collision could not be long delayed. 2. It would be voluntary. The designs of the rulers would in the providence of God lead to His departure but would not be its cause (chap. x. 18). "I go." 3. It would be a homegoing (ver. 33; chap. vi. 62), like an ambassador to report about His mission, or like a Son to the presence of His Father (chap. xiv. 2). 4. It would terminate their day of grace. His appearance had been a day of salvation (Luke xix. 42), which at His departure would be over (ver. 34; Luke xvii. 22). 5. It would place an impassable gulf between Him and them (ver. 34). Without foreclosing heaven's gate upon the crowd, many of whom were probably afterwards converted (Acts ii. 41), or upon individual members of the Sanhedrim (chap. xix. 38, 39; Acts vi. 7), the words announced that when Christ departed their day of grace as a nation would be over for impenitent individuals. III. A MELANCHOLY RESULT. 1. Perplexity. They failed to understand the Saviour's meaning, or pretended to do so (ver. 36); as the apostles did an analogous expression (chap. xvi. 17). Yet Christ's language was plain. But they did not wish Christ's words to have the sense they conveyed, and so pronounced them nonsensical. 2. Ridicule. They endeavoured to sport with Him and His words. To-morrow they will ask Him if He purposes to commit suicide (chap. viii. 12), to-day they inquire if He contemplates playing at Messiah among the Greeks (ver. 35). 3. Rejection. The true reason why they could not understand Him was, that already in their hearts they had rejected Him and them. Lessons: 1. The day of grace to all is of limited duration. 2. Those who improve that day so as to find Christ will ultimately be with Him. 3. To such as find Christ, death will be going home. 4. Those who reject Christ here will not be able to accept Him hereafter. 5. Christ's sayings are enigmas to those who do not wish to understand Him. 6. Scoffing at good men marks the last stage of depravity. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *The boldness of Christ*:—The officers were after our Lord, and He knew it. He could spy them out in the crowd, but He was not therefore in the least afraid or disconcerted. He reminds me of that minister who, when he was about to preach, was stopped by a soldier, who held a pistol at his head, and threatened that if he spake he would kill him. "Soldier," said he, "do your duty; I shall do mine"; and he went on with his preaching. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) **Then said Jesus unto them, yet a little while am I with you.**—*One saying with two meanings* (text and chap. xiii. 33):—1. No greater contrast can be conceived than between these two groups. The one consists of the officers sent to seize Christ, but were restrained by an awe inexplicable even to themselves. The other consists of the little company of His faithful, though slow scholars. Hatred animated the one, love the other. 2. Christ speaks to them both nearly the same words, but with what a different tone, meaning, and application. To the officers they exhibit the triumphant confidence that their Maker is omnipotent. When He wills He will go, not be dragged, to a safe asylum, where foes cannot follow Him. The officers do not understand. They think, that bad Jew as they have always believed Him to be, He may consummate His apostasy by going over to the Gentiles altogether; but at any rate they feel that He is going to escape their hands. The disciples understand little more, and though the upper side of the saying seems to be full of separation, there is an underside that suggests reunion. 3. The words are nearly the same, but they are not quite identical. I. THE TWO SEEKINGS. 1. The enemies are told they will never find Him. (1) No man with hostile intent seeking for Christ can ever find Him. All the antagonism that has stormed against Him and His cause has been impotent and vain. The pursuers are like dogs chasing a bird which all the while carols in the sky. As in the days of His flesh His foes could not touch His person till He chose, so ever since no weapon that is formed against His cause or His friends shall prosper. All Christian service is a prolongation of Christ's, and both are immortal and safe. (2) But it is not only hostile seeking that is vain. When the dark days came over Israel, and amidst the agonies of that last seige, do you not think that many of these people said, "Ah! if we had only Jesus back for a day or two." They sought Him not in anger any more, nor in penitence, or they would have found Him, but simply in distress, and wishing that they could have back again what they had cared so little for when they had it. And are there none to whom the words apply, "He that will not when he may, when he will it shall be nay." (3) There is another kind of vain seeking—intellectual, without the preparation of the heart. Many a man goes in quest for religious certainty and looks at, if not for Jesus, and is not capable of discerning Him when He sees Him because His eye is not single, or his

heart is full of worldliness and indifference, or he begins with a foregone conclusion. He will never find Him. 2. The seeking that is not vain. "Ye shall seek Me," to any heart that loves Christ is not a sentence of separation, but the blessed law of Christian life. (1) That life is one great seeking after Christ. Love seeks the absent. If we care anything for Him at all our hearts will turn to Him as naturally as when the winter begins to pinch, the birds seek the sunny south. The same law which sends loving thoughts across the globe to seek husband, child, or friend, sets the Christian heart seeking for Christ. (2) And if you do not seek Him you will lose Him, for there is no way of keeping a person who is not before our eyes near us except by diligent effort—thought meditating, love going out towards Him, will submitting. Unless there be this effort you will lose your Master like the child in a crowd loses his nurse if his hand slips from the protecting hand. (3) And that seeking in this threefold form is neither a seeking which starts from a sense of non-possession, nor one which ends in disappointment. We seek Him because we possess Him, and that we may have Him more abundantly, and it is as impossible that such a search shall be vain as that lungs dilated shall not fill with air. A mother will sometimes hide that the child's delight may be the greater in searching and finding; and so Christ has gone away for one thing that He may stimulate our desires after Him. II. THE TWO CANNOTS. "Whither I go ye cannot come," says He to His enemies, with no limitation or condition. To His friends He only says, "now," and "thou shalt follow Me afterwards." So then Christ is somewhere, He has gone into a place as well as a state, and there friend and enemy alike cannot enter while compassed with "the earthly house." But the incapacity goes deeper, no sinful man can pass within. Heaven is a prepared place for prepared people. Our power to enter there depends on our union with Christ by faith, and that will effect the preparation. (*A. Maclaren, D.D.*) **I go.**—Three Greek words are thus translated in St. John, and two of them in similar connections. Each expresses a distinct aspect of departure, and its special force must be taken into account in the interpretation of the passage in which it is found. 1. *ὑπάγω*, which is used here, emphasizes the personal act of going in itself, as a withdrawal (chap. viii. 14, 21; xiii. 3, 33, 36; xiv. 4, 28; xvi. 5, 10, 16). 2. *πορεύομαι* marks the going as connected with a purpose, a mission, an end to be gained (ver. 35; xiv. 3, 12, 28; xvi. 7, 28). 3. *ἀπέρχομαι* expresses simple separation, the point left (vi. 68; xvi. 7, "go away"). The differences are very clearly seen in a comparison of chap. xvi. 10 (*ὑπάγω*) with chap. xiv. 28 (*πορεύομαι*) and the succession of words in chap. xvi. 7–10. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *While Christ is near we must cry to Him for pardon:*—A few years ago, when Pennsylvania had a Christian governor, there was a young man down in one of the counties who was arrested for murder. He was brought before the Court, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death. His friends thought there would be no trouble in getting a reprieve or pardon. Because the governor was a Christian man they thought he would not sign the death warrant. But he signed it. They called on the governor and begged of him to pardon the young man. But the governor said "No; the law must take its course, and the man must die." I think the mother of the young man called on the governor and pleaded with him; but the governor stood firm and said, "No; the man must die." A few days before the man was executed, the governor took the train to the county where the man was imprisoned. He went to the sheriff of the county and said to him, "I wish you to take me to that man's cell, and leave me alone with him for a little while; and do not tell him who I am until I am gone." The governor went to the prison and talked to the young man about his soul, and told him that, although he was condemned by man to be executed, God would have mercy upon him and save him, if he would accept pardon from God. He preached Christ, and told him how Christ came to seek and to save sinners; and, having explained as he best knew how the plan of salvation, he got down and prayed, and after praying he shook hands with him and bade him farewell. Some time after the sheriff passed by the condemned man's cell, and he called him to the door of the cell and said, "Who was that man who talked and prayed with me so kindly?" The sheriff said, "That was Governor Pollock." The man turned deathly pale, and he threw up both his hands and said, "Was that Governor Pollock? was that kind-hearted man the governor? Oh, sheriff, why did not you tell me? If I had known that was the governor I would have fell at his feet and asked for pardon; I would have pleaded for pardon and for my life. Oh, sir, the governor has been here, and I did not know it." Sinner, I have got good news to tell you. There is one greater than the governor here to-night, and He wants to pardon every one. (*Moody.*) *Seeking*

in vain:—A young policeman was in the Edinburgh infirmary with an injured leg. There was a man lying on the next bed to him exceedingly ill, and his life despaired of by the physicians, but who would not allow any one to speak to him on religious subjects, or pray either for his recovery, or for the salvation of his soul. At first he himself had no idea that death was so near him; but when its ghastly presence could no longer be denied, then this bold impenitent sinner became a victim of despair. Again and again did he cry out for the chaplain to pray for his soul. Of course there were many prayers offered for him, but his day of grace was over, and he continued to shriek aloud for mercy, until finally his voice became too weak for utterance, and full of dreadful apprehensions of "the wrath to come," he expired. (*T. Mahon.*) *Resisting the light will prove our undoing*:—It is related of Jeine, the chief of one of the South Sea Islands, who had offered no small amount of opposition to the introduction of Christianity, that, during a sickness which terminated in his death, he manifested more mental distress than is usually seen in a heathen. He often expressed a wish that "he had died ten years before." And why? The light of life and love had been shining around him, but he had opposed its entrance into his heart, and its power over his people. And now, having loved darkness, in darkness of soul, stung by an upbraiding of conscience, he must die. (*Biblical Museum.*) *Those who refuse Christ when offered may soon seek Him in vain*:—I was once called upon to visit a dying man in Bristol, under the following circumstances: He had not entered the church for many years. At last he made up his mind to go, and on the morning of the Sabbath he and his wife went. But the door was closed, the church being under repair. They returned home disappointed. In the evening they went to another church. But it was so crowded that they could get no farther than the doorway, and were unable to hear a word. On the following Sunday he resolved to make another effort; but while he was dressing he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and never spoke again! He knew me when I entered his chamber. I preached the gospel in his dying ear, but he was speechless, and I could not learn the state of his mind. This case illustrates some parts of the first chapter of Proverbs: "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." The procrastinating sinner may say, "I will serve God by and by. He shall have the services of my age:" and God may say, "No; thou shalt not have old age to offer Me." (*J. East.*) *The imperilled condition of the impenitent sinner*:—Two friends were in the Highlands recently, shooting, and one of them observed an animal on a jutting rock. He inquired, "Is that a sheep?" and looking through his field-glass he saw that it was. In search of herbage the sheep had descended from one grass-covered ledge to another, and found it impossible to return. No shepherd in Scotland dare risk his life by going down the declivity. The sheep must remain there till an eagle observed it, when in eddying circles it would hover over the poor animal, drawing nearer and nearer, until at last the affrighted sheep would take a dreadful leap into space, to be dashed to pieces on the rocks below, and then become the eagle's prey. (*W. Hay Aitken.*)

The dispersed among the Gentiles, or simply the *Dispersion* was the general title applied to those Jews who remained settled in foreign countries after the return from Babylon, and during the period of the second Temple. The Hebrew word applied to these foreign settlers (see Jer. xxiv. 5; xxviii. 4; Ezra vi. 16) conveys the notion of spoliation and bereavement, as of men removed from the Temple and home of their fathers; but in the LXX. the ideas of "sojourning," and of a "colony," were combined with that of a "captivity," while the term "dispersion" (Deut. xxviii. 25; *cf.* Jer. xxxiv. 17), which finally prevailed, seemed to imply that the people thus scattered (Deut. xxx. 4) in bondage (Macc. i. 27), and shut out from the privileges of the human race (text), should yet be as a seed sown for a future harvest (*cf.* Isa. xlix. 6, Heb.) in the strange lands where they found a temporary resting-place (1 Pet. i. 1). The schism which had divided the first kingdom was forgotten in the results of the general calamity. The Dispersion was not limited to the exiles of Judah, but included "the twelve tribes" (James i. 1), which expressed the completeness of the whole Jewish nation (Acts xxvi. 7). The Dispersion really dates from the Babylonish exile. Uncertain legends point to earlier settlements in Arabia, Ethiopia, and Abyssinia, but these must have been isolated and casual, while the Dispersion was the outward proof that a faith had succeeded to a kingdom. Apart from the necessary influence which Jewish communities, bound by common laws, ennobled by the possession of the same truths, and animated by kindred hopes must have exercised on the nations among whom they were scattered, the difficulties

which set aside the literal observance of the Mosaic ritual led to a wider view of the scope of the law, and a stronger sense of its spiritual significance. Outwardly and inwardly, by its effects, both on the Gentiles and on Israel, the Dispersion was the clearest providential preparation for Christianity. But while the fact of a recognized Dispersion must have weakened the local and ceremonial influences which were essential to the first training of the people of God, the Dispersion was still bound together in itself and to its mother country by religious ties. The Temple was the acknowledged centre of Judaism, and the faithful Jew everywhere contributed the half-shekel towards its maintenance (Matt. xvii. 24; Jos. Ant. xvi. 6). The tribute was indeed the simplest and most striking outward proof of the religious unity of the nation. Treasuries were established to receive the payments of different districts, and the collected sums were forwarded to Jerusalem, as in later times the Mohammedan offerings were sent to Mecca. At the beginning of the Christian era the Dispersion was divided into three great sections, the Babylonian, the Syrian, and the Egyptian. Precedence was yielded to the first. The jealousy which had originally existed between the poor who remained in Jerusalem and their wealthier countrymen at Babylon had passed away. From Babylon the Jews spread throughout Persia, Media, and Parthia; but the settlements in China belong to a modern date. The Greek conquests in Asia extended the limits of the Dispersion. Selencus Nicator transplanted large bodies of Jewish colonists from Babylonia to the capitals of his western provinces. His policy was followed by his successor, Antiochus the Great, and the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes only served to push forward the Jewish emigration to the remoter districts of the empire. In Armenia the Jews arrived at the greatest dignities, and Nisibis became a new centre of colonization. The Jews of Cappadocia (1 Pet. i. 1) are mentioned in the Mishna; and a prince and princess of Adiabene adopted the Jewish faith only thirty years before the destruction of the Temple. Large settlements were established in Cyprus, in the islands of the Ægean, and on the western coast of Asia Minor. The Romans confirmed to them the privileges obtained from the Syrian kings; and though they were exposed to sudden outbursts of popular violence, the Jews of the Syrian provinces gradually formed a closer connection with their new homes, and, together with the Greek language, adopted in many respects Greek ideas. This Hellenizing tendency, however, found its most free development at Alexandria. The Jewish settlements established there by Alexander and Ptolemy I. became the source of the African Dispersion, which spread over the north coast of Africa, and perhaps inland to Abyssinia. At Cyrene and Berenice (Tripoli) the Jewish inhabitants formed a considerable portion of the population. But the distinction in language led to wider differences, which were averted in Babylon by the currency of an Aramaic dialect. The Scriptures were no longer read on the Sabbath, and no fire signals conveyed the dates of the new moons to Egypt. Still, the spirit of the African Jews was not destroyed. After the destruction of the Temple the zealots found a reception in Cyrene, and in A.D. 115 the Jewish population in Africa rose with terrible ferocity, and were put down by a war of extermination, and the remnant who escaped established themselves on the opposite coast of Europe, as the beginning of a new Dispersion. The Jewish settlements in Rome were consequent on the occupation of Jerusalem by Pompey B.C. 63. The captives and emigrants whom he brought with him were located in the Trans-Tiberine quarter, and by degrees rose in station and importance. They were favoured by Augustus and Tiberius after the fall of Sejanus, and a Jewish school was founded at Rome. In the reign of Claudius the Jews became objects of suspicion from their immense numbers; and the internal disputes, consequent, perhaps, upon the preaching of Christianity, led to their banishment from the city (Acts xviii. 2). But this was only temporary, for in a few years the Jews at Rome were numerous (Acts xxviii. 17), and continued to be sufficiently conspicuous to attract the attention of the satirists. The influence of the Dispersion on the rapid growth of Christianity can scarcely be overrated. The course of apostolic preaching followed in a regular progress the line of Jewish settlements. The mixed assembly from which the first converts were gathered on the day of Pentecost represented each division of the Dispersion, and these converts naturally prepared the way for the apostles. The names of the seven deacons are all Greek, and one was a proselyte. The Church at Antioch, by which St. Paul was entrusted with his great work among the heathen (Acts xiii. 1), included Barnabus of Cyprus, Lucius of Cyrene, and Simeon, surnamed Niger; and among his fellow labourers at a later time are found Apollos of Alexandria, Urbanus, and Clement, whose names, at least, are Roman. Antioch

itself became a centre of the Christian Church, as it had been of the Jewish Dispersion; and throughout the apostolic journeys the Jews were the class to whom "it was necessary that the Word of God should be first spoken" (Acts xiii. 46), and they in turn were united with the mass of the population by the intermediate body of "the devout" who had recognized in various degrees "the faith of the God of Israel." (*Bp. Westcott.*)

Vers. 37–52. **On the last day, that great day of the feast.**—*Jesus the Christ:*—I. PROFFERING BLESSINGS. 1. Water for the thirsty (ver. 37; Exod. xvii. 6; Num. xx. 11; Psa. lxxviii. 15, 20; cv. 41; Matt. v. 6). 2. Usefulness for the believing (ver. 38; Prov. iv. 23; xviii. 4; Acts iv. 20; Rom. xiv. 7; 1 Cor. vi. 20; Jas. iii. 10). 3. Divine aid for men (ver. 39; Isa. xliv. 3; Joel ii. 28; Zech. xii. 10; John xvi. 7; Acts ii. 33; Phil. ii. 13). II. AWAKENING THOUGHT. 1. The prophet (ver. 40; Deut. xviii. 15, 18; John i. 21; vi. 14; Acts iii. 23; vii. 37). 2. The Christ (ver. 41; Matt. xvi. 16; Mark xiv. 61; Luke iv. 41; xxii. 67; John i. 41; iv. 29). 3. The seed of David (ver. 42; Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxxiii. 22; Luke i. 69; Rom. i. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 8; Rev. v. 5). III. BAFFLING FOES. 1. Bitter enemies (ver. 44; Matt. xxi. 46; Mark xi. 18; Luke xix. 47; xx. 19; John vii. 19, 30). 2. Perplexed officials (ver. 46; Matt. vii. 28; xxvii. 22, 24; Mark xv. 14; Luke xxiii. 22; Acts xxiii. 9). 3. Raging Pharisees (ver. 47; Luke v. 30; vi. 7; vii. 30; John vii. 32; xi. 47; Acts xxiii. 9). (*S. S. Times.*) *Jesus the Christ:*—I. JESUS' CLAIM TO DIVINE FULNESS (vers. 37–39). 1. It was tabernacles. The last day had come. It was Sabbath. All hearts overflowed with joy. With water from Siloah the priest came, pouring it upon the altar in the presence of all the people. That water was a symbol of salvation (Isa. xii. 3). Seeing it, Jesus makes, regarding Himself, this proclamation: "If any man thirst, let Him come unto Me and drink." How emphatic the word "thirst!" It means all the needs of the soul and the deep cravings of mankind. The word "drink" is equally strong. Jesus here offers Himself as a complete satisfaction to man. The claim here set forth is one and the same thing with Isaiah lv. 1. The same person speaks in both places. Jesus thus declares Himself to be God, *i.e.*, the Christ. 2. The same thing is claimed in ver. 38. The believer, having received Jesus, becomes himself a fountain of eternal life—rather is he a channel through which the grace of God flows to bless other hearts. This is the effect of the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit is secured for the sinful world by the atonement of Jesus Christ. The cross has two sides—one turned towards God the Father, reconciling Him to man a sinner; the other turned towards man, securing for him the Holy Ghost. Under these two aspects Christ's sacrifice is always presented in the Bible. It is to the last of these that vers. 38, 39 refer. Hence Jesus declares Himself the Christ. II. THE PEOPLE CLAIM JESUS AS CHRIST (vers. 40–44). 1. Some declared that He was "The Prophet" (Deut. xviii. 15). The person here spoken of was held by the Jews to be the coming Messiah (Acts iii. 22, 23). 2. Others bolder, pronouncing His name: "This is the Christ" (ver. 41). 3. A third party, while they seemingly rejected Him, bore a testimony to His being the true Messiah (vers. 41, 42). He had both the lineage and birthplace which they required to convince them. Only their own ignorance stood in the way. Observe: (1) It was Christ's strong claim regarding Himself that won Him confessors. So in teaching, we must present the truth in strong terms, leaving results with the truth itself. (2) A little ignorance often prevents men from receiving the gospel (ver. 42). (3) Anything for an excuse is the motto of some persons. The cry now is, "He is a Galilean!" If not this, then something else, equally untrue. (4) The plain teaching of the Word is apt to attract the attention of all and cause divisions among the people (ver. 43). Nothing is talked about so much as Christianity. (5) No one can damage the truth, except so far as God gives him permission, and then it is for a wise purpose, as the future will show (vers. 32, 44). His hour did come. Then He was crucified. The greatest crime secured the world the greatest blessing! III. THE OFFICERS CLAIM JESUS AS CHRIST (vers. 45–49). Their testimony in His behalf is contained in ver. 46. It was the same as saying: "His speaking is that of a Divine person." Those hard men, that went to arrest Him, were overcome by the love shown in His speech; by the truth which impressed them; by the persuasion His words carried with them and by His authority as a teacher. These all were so marked that, returning, His enemies had to declare: "Never man so spake"—none, save God, could show such love, truth, persuasion and authority. 1. These are all divine qualities, man having them in proportion as he is "endued with

power from on high." 2. The gospel has these four great elements—Love, Truth, Persuasion, and Authority. 3. Those who will not receive the gospel pronounce such testimony as this "deception" (ver. 47). The belief of the humble-hearted is foolishness unto the intellectual-proud (ver. 48, 49). IV. NICODEMUS CLAIMS HIM TO BE CHRIST (vers. 50–53). The charge against Jesus by the Pharisees was that He claimed to be from God, the true Messiah. Nicodemus virtually said this: "You have not disproved this claim; nothing has been done to prove the falsity of Jesus' words" (ver. 51). He might have made His testimony stronger. We must remember that a secret disciple is not bold in word or deed. The reply of the Pharisees was weak, showing that their cause was based on ignorance and prejudice (ver. 52). Such is the cause of unbelief to-day. (*A. H. Moment, D.D.*) **If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.**—*The thirst of humanity anticipated and met*:—On the last day of the feast of tabernacles the priests stood near the altar and poured water over it copiously from large capacious vessels. Perhaps the day took its name "the great day" from that circumstance. It was a symbolical act intended to connect itself with the predictions that in the days of the Messiah God would pour out His Spirit, and was something like a prayer that they might live to see those days and share that blessing. It was our Lord's custom to connect His teaching with occurrences before Him, and so, perhaps pointing to that act, He said, "If any man," &c., proclaiming His Messiahship. I. HUMANITY IS THE SUBJECT OF INTENSE SPIRITUAL DESIRES. We know how intense the animal appetite of "thirst" may become. How terrible it has been in the burning desert or the besieged city! That is here taken to indicate the character of spiritual desire, and is an ordinary rhetorical figure used by our poets and philosophers when they speak of the thirst of gold, ambition, &c. But Christ offers no drink for the appetites or passions. 1. There is the thirst of the intellect—the desire for truth. It is very wonderful how soon the mind of a child will begin to speculate about the mystery of life, of death, of God, and the soul. 2. There is the thirst of conscience in two forms. (1) There is the consciousness of moral weakness. A man feels the moral obligation he is under, sees the beauty of duty, has a conviction of right, but a sense of infirmity of purpose—makes his strong resolutions and scatters them the next day. And so the moral nature thirsts for strength to perform. (2) The conscience is burdened by a sense of sin, and yearns for its forgiveness and removal. This has given rise to priests. The people create the priests. No priesthood ever yet originated itself for the purpose of trampling on the people. 3. There is the thirst of the heart: not merely a desire for happiness. You are made for something greater than that. There is a thirst in looking at the dislocation of things around us. What tears of soul bereavement and pain let out the waters of bitterness in times of darkness! So the soul wants something to rest upon, to feel that we are not in a neglected and fatherless world. II. JESUS CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL MEETS THESE DIVERSIFIED WANTS. 1. Christianity professes to be a revelation of spiritual truth. It interprets nature and adds communications of its own about all that it is necessary for us to know. 2. Christianity meets the thirst of conscience in a special way. (1) By the revelation of the Person of Christ. The gospel does not come as a system of thought, nor are its preachers philosophers; it presents a Saviour, through whom we may obtain forgiveness of sins. (2) Connected with this is the mission of the Spirit to renew, to strengthen the will, to purify the affections, to make duty a delight, and bring the whole man into harmony with duty and God (Rom. viii. 3–4). 3. Christianity meets the thirst of the heart by providing a large measure of rational and manly happiness, and that in two ways. (1) By the life of faith—faith as a daily habit, looking to God in all things; and along with that it gives spiritual consolation and grace. (2) By the character it creates and sustains, delivering us from the torments which attend passion, sin, disharmony with God. III. CHRIST NOT ONLY MEETS THE THIRST OF HUMANITY, BUT IS URGENT TO MEET IT. "Let Him come." Do not mystify yourselves with the metaphysics of the Divine decrees. Take Christ in His plain utterances and remember that secret things belong unto God. He says, "if any man will, let Him come"—believe in His honesty of purpose, and that He means what He says, "It is not the will of my Father that one of these little ones should perish." "You may perish, but that will be from your own acts, not God's." IV. CHRIST IN MEETING THIS THIRST DOES OF SET PURPOSE MAKE US A BLESSING TO OTHERS. "Out of Him shall flow," &c. (*T. Binney.*) *Thirst relieved*:—"A word spoken in season how good it is!" Much of the force of an observation depends upon its being well-timed. The orators of Greece and Rome attended to this. But there was One who "spake

as never man spake," who seized all occasions. Here is an instance of it. I. THE APPETITE SUPPOSED. 1. Let us account for it. When man proceeded from the hand of God he was a stranger to thirst. He was formed for the enjoyment of God, and God became the source of his enjoyment. Then he was in his element. But sin has removed man from the fountain, and he now wanders through a parched wilderness. "My people have committed two evils," &c. 2. Its nature. It includes—(1) Want and emptiness. The mind has an aching void. We might as well expect light in a beam cut off from the sun, the source of all radiance, as expect satisfaction of mind without God. (2) Restlessness—the fever of the mind. Hence the anxiety of change, "seeking rest and finding none." (3) Misery. Disappointed in the objects of pursuit men turn away in disgust, saying, "miserable comforters are ye all." Hence despondency and suicide. 3. Its universal prevalence. It is felt more or less intensely, but none are strangers to it. (1) The inquiries of men prove this. "Who will show us any good." (2) The pursuits of men prove this. The toils of the studious, the slumbers of the voluptuary, the cell of the hermit, the hoards of the miser, all say, "I thirst." (3) The regrets of men prove this. "Vanity of vanities," &c. II. THE SATISFACTION PREPARED. 1. The person who offers the refreshment. The eternal Son of God who became man, to die for sin and rise and ascend into heaven to "receive gifts for men," even the Holy Spirit. The "living water." Christ has the Spirit without measure for the enlightenment and salvation of men. Here is all that can satisfy the thirsty soul—pardon for the guilty, liberty for the enslaved, peace for the distracted, and finally heaven. 2. The means of getting the living water. Note—(1) the approach of faith, "let him come." (2) The application of faith, "drink." III. THE EXTENT OF THE INVITATION. "If any man." 1. As to character. There is no description of the persons invited. "If any man," be he who he may, whatever his age, country, condition. This is better than any specification of name, for others might bear the same. 2. As to the simplicity of the qualification. All men thirst. Don't say I am not thirsty enough. If you thirst at all you are meant. 3. As to the sincerity of the Inviter. Can we doubt this? Is He not able, and willing to relieve us. Conclusion: 1. Learn why Christ is imperfectly appreciated—because men do not realize their moral condition. 2. If this is not assuaged here it never will be in eternity. Read the parable of the rich man. (*G. Clayton.*) *Rivers of living water*:—1. These words were spoken on the last day of the feast—therefore on the last opportunity for doing good to that multitude. The dispersion of a mighty crowd is always affecting, as we forecast that it is a final parting with some, and see in it a foreshadowing of that last separation. Our Lord was sensitive to such feelings, and could not suffer the vast assemblage to break up without giving them something which might reveal itself in their hearts when far from the excitement of the city. 2. It was the great day, when, after the solemnities of the previous week and their august associations and suggestions, all susceptible souls would be open to elevated thoughts. So Jesus, seizing the moment when the metal was molten to give His own impress to it, cried, "If any man," &c. 3. Christ's gift is living waters. He speaks to us as subject to desires for which nature has made no provision, and offers Himself as a fountain of relief and eternal satisfaction. His words sweep the entire circle of humanity, for every man thirsts. The only question is, Can His religion do what everything else confessedly fails to do? "Yes," said Jesus. The Holy Spirit as given by Him is as rivers of living water, because—I. THE SPIRIT IS THE CHANNEL OF GOD'S LOVE TO SOULS. 1. Man thirsts for love. It is the nobleness of our nature that food and raiment and gross pleasures do not satisfy it. What makes childhood's blessedness, but that its whole atmosphere is love? Yet how far all human love comes short of satisfying our craving all know. But let a man be thoroughly certified that God loves him to save him, and that every moment he has access to God to tell Him all his griefs, what a river of refreshment must this love prove in his heart. 2. God's love to us is His love in Christ—love, the most ample in its measure, the most intense in its power, the most complete in its adjustments to our condition. But it is not this love in a book that will give us relief. The testimony of the Book must be transferred to the heart to become a living reality there. The Spirit adds nothing to its dimensions, but makes it approved and accepted to the soul. Divine love is the sovereign element of all blessedness: Christ is the Divine Vessel holding that love which flows over with sweet waters, but it is the Spirit which witnesses of this to the soul. II. THE SPIRIT IS THE CREATOR OF BLESSED AFFECTIONS IN THE SOUL. "Shall be in Him." Man thirsts for an inward blessedness. Not in his

circumstances but in his heart, in noble views, pure affections, generous aspirations, lies the true well-being of man. He may have millions and yet be haunted with fears of starvation. He may allow himself every luxury, and yet his soul be a level of monotonous wretchedness. Malignant self-centred passions are the fever of the soul. Place a man amidst the splendours of royalty, and a jealous spirit will make him miserable. It is from a right state of the heart that its blessedness must flow; therefore the true salvation of man is not outward but inward. It has its outward elements in an alteration of man's relation to God; but what were it worth for the outcast to be delivered from his rags and poverty, and be received back if he retained all the evil passions which ruined him? He must become an altered man to become blessed. All experience and Scripture bear witness that this is a work not for man but for the Spirit of God. It is the almighty spirit of love, whose living waters flowing into the heart destroy its bitterness and impurity, and make it a fountain of brightness. III. THE SPIRIT IS THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATION. 1. As the waters of a fountain gush forth by their own pleasure, so do the living waters of spiritual life impart themselves to all around. Every refreshed soul is constituted a well of refreshment, like a fertile spot in the wilderness. How is this done? By the gifts and service which it prompts. Whenever He is in the heart, our families, neighbourhoods, churches will be refreshed. Stagnant waters which have no outlet become corrupt and bitter like the Dead Sea. 2. Man thirsts for successful, useful action. You are not content with the result which your daily calling gives you. Without despising common duties, you feel that you were made for nobler things. Well, the noblest course is open to all. You need not acquire rank or money. If renewed by the Spirit, you can make your course as a shining river. No other life is worth living: all other is vanity and vexation. 3. This blessedness and usefulness must be habitual, a river not a brook. Nothing can be more remote from the true idea of the Holy Spirit than transcient excitement. Conclusion: 1. This gift of the Spirit is acquired by faith. "Coming" is "believing." 2. This gift assumes different forms in different believers. 3. This gift every believer is bound to use. (*J. Riddell, M.A.*) *The incident:*—While the morning sacrifice was being prepared, a priest, accompanied by a joyous procession with music, went down to the pool of Siloam, whence he drew water into a golden pitcher capable of holding three log (rather more than two pints). But on the Sabbath they fetched the water from a golden vessel in the Temple itself, into which it had been carried from Siloam on the preceding day. At the same time that the procession started for Siloam, another went to a place in the Kedron valley, close by, called Motza, whence they brought willow branches, which, amid the blasts of the priests' trumpets, they stuck on either side of the altar of burnt offering, bending them over toward it so as to form a kind of leafy canopy. Then the ordinary sacrifice proceeded, the priest who had gone to Siloam so timing it that he returned just as his brethren carried up the pieces of the sacrifice to lay them on the altar. As he entered by the "water-gate," which obtained its name from this ceremony, he was received by a threefold blast from the priests' trumpets. The priests then went up the rise of the altar and turned to the left, where there were two silver basins with narrow holes—the eastern, a little wider, for the wine; and the western, a little narrower, for the water. Into these the wine of the drink offering was poured, and at the same time the water from Siloam, the people shouting to the priest, "Raise thy hand," to show that he really poured the water into the basin which led to the base of the altar. . . . As soon as the wine and water were poured out, the Temple music began, and the Hallel (Psa. cxiii.–cxviii.) was sung. . . . Salvation in connection with the Son of David was symbolized by the pouring out of water. . . . Thus the Talmud says distinctly, "Why is the name of it called the drawing out of water? Because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.'" . . . We can now in some measure realize the event. The festivities of the week of tabernacles were drawing to a close. "It was the last day, that great day of the feast." . . . It was on that day after the priest had returned from Siloam with his golden pitcher, and for the last time poured its contents to the base of the altar; after the Hallel had been sung to the sound of the flute, the people shouting and worshipping as the priests three times drew the threefold blasts from their silver trumpets—just when the interest of the people had been raised to its highest pitch, that from the mass of the worshippers, who were waving towards the altar quite a forest of leafy branches as the last words of Psalm cxviii. were chanted—a voice was raised which resounded through the

Temple, startled the multitude, and carried fear and hatred to the hearts of their leaders. It was Jesus who "stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." Then by faith in Him should each one truly become like the pool of Siloam, and from his inmost being "rivers of water flow." "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." Thus the significance of the rite, in which they had just taken part, was not only fully explained, but the mode of its fulfilment pointed out. (*A. Edersheim, D.D.*) *The significance of the incident and Christ's use of it:*—In the latter days of Jerusalem, as we learn from the history of the period, a ceremony was added to those of the ordained feasts of booths, intended, evidently, to commemorate the thirst in the wilderness, and the supply that was provided from the rock in Horeb. On the last day of the feast, towards evening, the priests formed a procession, and, having drawn water from the pool of Siloam, bore it to the Temple, and poured it on the ground, so that it should flow down to the lower streets of the city. This symbol pointed, probably, to Ezekiel's grand vision of waters issuing from the Temple, small at first, but rapidly increasing, until they became a river that could not be passed over—a river to swim in. The procession of priests has gone to Siloam and returned to the Temple. They have poured the water from the golden vessel, and a rivulet is making its way along the unwonted channel, forth from the hallowed courts towards the city. The assembled crowds are ranged on either side, watching the progress of the mimic stream. The beams of the setting sun strike the water, where in a hollow it spreads into a pool, and golden glory flashes for a moment from the spot that had been dull dry earth before. The multitude gaze in ignorant superstition; but some of the Lord's hidden ones are there, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and spelling painfully out of these dead letters the name of their living Redeemer. Jesus looked on the crowd as they gazed wistfully on the symbolic water. His heart was yearning for them. He knew what was in man: He knew that the Jews made idols of these significant signs, as they made idols of the scriptures which were printed on their clothing. He saw them drinking that which cannot quench the thirst of a soul. He pitied them, and came to the rescue. (*W. Arnot, D.D.*) *The Preacher's last sermon for the season:*—I. THE INQUIRY FOR THE THIRSTY. 1. It is very wide. "Any man" of all that heterogeneous mass. 2. It is anxiously narrowed down. "If"—as if He had said the mass of you do not thirst; do any of you thirst? He reads their general indifference only too well. Alas! the thirsty are few: self-content possesses the minds of many, and world content steals over others. They are in a desert; no drop of dew falls about them, and the water-bottle has long since been dry; but they are mocked by the mirage, and they put aside their thirst with the fond idea that they can drink to the full. 3. It is painfully clear. The thirsty know what thirst is. It is a self-explaining pain. 4. It is being continually repeated. It is as urgent to day as then. 5. What is this thirst? Nothing actual or substantive; it is a lack crying out of its emptiness. When our system needs drink, a merciful providence creates a pang which drives us to a supply. Thirst rings the alarm bell, and mind and body set to work to supply the demand. It were a dreadful thing if the system needed water and yet did not thirst; for we might be fatally injured before we knew that any harm was happening to us. So with spiritual thirst. II. THE ONE DIRECTION FOR THE RELIEF OF ALL SUCH THIRSTY ONES. "Let him come," &c. 1. Christ who gives the water which quenches spiritual thirst, invites us to Himself personally. What creed you are to believe will do by and by, just now your duty is to come to Christ. At this time Christ had not been crucified, risen, &c., but the text was spoken with a foresight of all that should transpire up to His glorification. Come directly to Him, who by all this has become a fountain of living water—not to creeds, ceremonies, sacraments, priests, services, doings, or feelings. Salvation lies in Him only. 2. All that a sinner wants is to be found in abundance in Him, and all that every sinner wants. 3. In Jesus is a varied supply. The thirst of the soul is not like the thirst of the body which is quenched with one liquid; the soul thirsts for many things—peace in distraction, pardon of sin, purity from pollution, progress in grace, power in prayer, perseverance; and all this is in Christ. 4. We must come to Christ and bring nothing of our own except our thirst, and that coming is believing. 5. Having come we must drink—the first action of the infant, the easiest act of the man. III. THE PERMISSION HERE GIVEN FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION. 1. There is no limit as to what thou has formerly done, in the way of sin, unbelief, hardness, denial. 2. There is no limit put as to where thou hast been before. A man went to a merchant to ask the price of a certain article. He

then went to others and tried to buy at a cheaper rate, but found that the first had quoted the lowest price. So he went back, but the merchant refused to serve him, not caring for such customers. But if you have been to Moses, to Rome, yea, even to the devil, Christ still says, "Come unto Me." 3. There is no limit because of any kind of lack. Some think themselves deficient in tenderness, or penitence, or disqualified by age, poverty, illiterateness. Some are locking the door with the very key that was meant to open it. "I am afraid I do not thirst;" "I have not the sense of need I ought to have;" but this means that you are sensible that you are more needy than you think you are. The fact that you need a sense of need proves how horrible is your need. Would you come if you did thirst? Then come and you shall thirst. The more unfit the more you are invited; your very unfitness is your fitness. 4. When Christ says "Come" nobody else can say "Nay." IV. THE ENTREATY FOR THEIR COMING. "Jesus stood and cried." It was the last opportunity, hence the urgency. Surely we ought to entreat Him to let us come. Instead of that we are callous. When a man has charity to give does he entreat people to accept it? How strange that you should be so unwilling and Christ so anxious! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The great invitation:*—I. WHO THEY ARE WHO ARE INVITED. The thirsty. 1. In all thirst there is—(1) A sense of want. Every man is sensible that he is not self-sufficient. (2) Desire of supply. The soul of man is ever desiring. 2. The object of this thirsting—(1) The end where the soul may rest, and that is happiness. For this every man thirsts. (2) The means leading to the end. He that desires refreshment, desires also to drink, though he may by ignorance take a cup of poison. 3. There is a two-fold thirst—(1) Natural and common to all men. It is as natural for a man to desire happiness as it is for him to breathe. But men miss the way and seek it in the world, and hence, disappointed, say, "Who will show us any good?" (2) Supernatural, experienced by those only whose heart God hath touched. "My soul thirsteth for the living God." There is no happiness unless this is satisfied. II. TO WHAT THEY ARE INVITED. 1. To come to Christ, *i.e.*, to believe on Him (ver. 33). Unbelief is a departing from the living God: faith is coming back. 2. To drink, *i.e.*, to actually make use of Christ for the supply of this need. This points out three things in Christ. (1) The fulness of Christ for needy sinners. (*a*) In Him there is a fulness of merit to take off the fulness of our guilt. (*b*) A fulness of the Spirit to take away the power of sin, and to actuate us in all good. (*c*) A fulness of grace. (2) The suitableness of Christ. In Him there is a remedy for every disorder. (3) His satisfactoriness. This drinking also implies three things in us. (*a*) The soul going out for a supply of its particular wants, renouncing all confidence in itself or any creature (Jer. xvii. 5). (*b*) The soul's going out in desire after supply from Christ upon His invitation. (*c*) Believing application of Christ to the soul in—(i) catching hold of the promise suited to our case. (ii) Venturing our case upon the promise and proposed supply. (iii) Confidence in Christ answering our necessities. III. MOTIVES FOR ACCEPTING THE INVITATION. 1. The supply of the needs of sinners is the great end of the mystery of Christ. 2. He is able to supply all needs however great they may be. Christ is a fountain that is never dry. The creatures are broken cisterns and soon exhausted. 3. Consider your need of Him. 4. If you come now you will drink of the rivers of God's pleasures for evermore. (*T. Boston, D.D.*) *We must drink in the gospel:*—A celebrated minister was once taken ill, and his wife requested him to go and consult an eminent physician. He went to this physican, who welcomed him very heartily. The minister stated his case. The doctor said: "Oh it is a very simple matter, you have only to take such and such a drug and you will be right." The patient was about to go, but the physician pressed him to stay, and they entered into pleasant conversation. The minister went home to his wife and told her what a delightful man the doctor had proved to be. He said, "I do not know that I ever had a more delightful talk. The good man is eloquent, and witty, and gracious." The wife replied, "But what remedy did he prescribe?" "Dear!" said the minister, "I quite forgot what he told me on that point." "What?" said she, "did you go to a physician for advice, and came away without the remedy?" "It quite slipped my mind" he said, "the doctor talked so pleasantly that his prescription has quite gone out of my head." You must receive Christ by faith. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christ a Divine Fountain:*—"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." What man would dare to say of merely physical things, "If any man lacks knowledge, let him come unto me." Neither Humbolt, nor Liebig, nor Agassiz would dare to say this, even of the departments in which they are pre-emi-

nent, how much less of the whole range of learning! yet Christ, disdaining physical things, appeals at once to the soul with all its yearnings, its depths of despair, its claspings—like a mother feeling at midnight for the child whom death has taken—its infinite outreachings, its longings for love, and peace, and joy, which nothing can satisfy this side of the bosom of God, and says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." He stands over against whatever want there is in the human bosom, whatever hunger there is in the moral faculties, whatever need there is in the imagination, and says, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The gospel a general offer of grace*:—I was travelling some time ago, and I had a little child with me, and I was not acquainted with the law of the railroad respecting children, but I happened to see this announcement, "All children under five years of age free." I did not ask any questions. My child was under five. Neither did I buy a ticket. I took the announcement to mean what it said, and did not pay a halfpenny. (*D. L. Moody.*) *We must feel our need of Christ before we come to Him*:—Suppose a man were to call upon the physician and say, "Well, sir, I want your services." "Are you sick?" says the physician. "No; not that I know of." "What, then, do you want of me?" "Oh! I want your services." "But what for?" The man makes no reply. "Are you in pain?" "No." "Is your head out of order?" "No." "Nor your stomach?" "No; I believe not. I feel perfectly well; but still I thought I should like a little of your help." What would a doctor think of such a case as this? What must Christ think of those that ask His help, not feeling that they really need it? (*H. W. Beecher.*) *The thirsty should drink*:—During a revival in a town in Ohio, a man who had been very worldly minded was awakened, but for some time concealed his feelings, even from his wife, who was a praying woman. She left him one evening in charge of his little girl of three years of age. After her departure his anxiety of mind became so great that he walked the room in his agony. The little girl noticed his agitation, and inquired, "What ails you, pa?" He replied, "Nothing," and endeavoured to quiet his feelings, but all in vain. The child looked up sympathizingly in his face, and inquired, with all the artlessness and simplicity of childhood, "Pa, if you were dry, wouldn't you go and get a drink of water?" The father started as if a voice from heaven had fallen on his ear. He thought of his thirsty soul famishing for the waters of life; he thought of that living Fountain opened in the gospel; he believed, and straightway fell at the Saviour's feet. From that hour he dates the dawning of a new light, and the beginning of a new life. *The patience of Christ*:—It was the last day of the feast of tabernacles. It was the eighth day which was spent as a Sabbath, but the Saviour did not cease to preach because the festival was almost over. Till the last day He continued to instruct, to invite, to entreat. It is but one instance out of many of the Saviour's pertinacity of lovingkindness. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Faith is easy*:—Drink! That is not a difficult action. Any fool can drink; in fact, many are great fools because they drink too much of poisonous liquors. Drink! Thou canst surely do that. Thou hast only to be as a spunge that sucks up all that comes near it. Put thy mouth down and suck up that which flows to thee in the river of Christ's love, open wide thy soul and drink in Christ, as the great northern whirlpool sucks in the sea. If any man thirst let him receive Christ. (*Ibid.*) *The spirit dwelling in, and flowing from, the Christian man*:—Now was the time of the autumn heats. The effects of the harvest rains had long passed. The crops were just removed from the face of the ground. Above was the burning Syrian sun. Beneath—as with us, now—was the scorched and arid soil. All was dust, and weariness, and heat. It was the time of a great festival—the great autumnal feast of tabernacles, commemorative of the fruits of the earth now gathered in. I. Here you may observe we have AN INVITATION—"Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let Him come unto Me, and drink." 1. There seems to me something emphatic in that word, "stood." It expresses in a teacher the attitude of prominence, energy, aggression. It was well suited to Him, who, as He was there placed amidst that perishing throng, came "to seek, and to save that which was lost." 2. And the voice is still more marked than the attitude. "Jesus stood and cried." This term is applied to those who are labouring under some strong passion or affection of the mind, whether of grief, fear, desire, or other. Here it expresses earnestness and energy. At least, let ministers show by their manner that they have a deep interest in the salvation of those they address. 3. But from the attitude, and the voice, turn we to the words themselves, to the gracious

invitation of the Lord. Whom does He address? Those who thirst. A large class, as many will testify. For they who thirst include all who are not satisfied. (1) There, for example, are they who are disappointed. On them life opened fairly and brightly, but its horizon became overcast. Full of joyous anticipation they sprang forward with alacrity in the race of life. But unlooked for difficulties arose. They experienced treachery and falsehood. Life to them lost its charm. They found not what they sought. They thirsted, but were not satisfied. (2) Then there are the prosperous who cannot be satiated with prosperity. In their fulness they are empty; in their joyfulness they are sad; pleasure pleases not; slumber soothes not. (3) And there are those, too, who, having tried to slake the thirst of their undying souls with dying things, and discovering their error, are now seeking in things heavenly, unfailing sources, and perennial fountains. These do not, now, thirst for the creature. They have found out their error, and plainly see that the creature cannot satisfy. Now to these, and to all others, unsatisfied, anxious, craving, desiring, thirsting, Jesus cries, "Come unto Me, and drink." And it is thus that Jesus meets the cravings of our humanity; His providence supplies our bodily wants. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." In the same way man's intellect meets in his God, that on which it can repose. Who should satisfy mind but He who made mind! But, oh! the storms and tempests of thought! Then there is the way in which the Saviour meets man's spirit. The heart of man must have something whereon to repose, something to love, something wherewith to sympathize. The Saviour in His humanity here meets the heart of man. II. Nor must we omit to notice THE EXTENT OF THE LORD'S INVITATION—"Any man." "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." III. Having thus spoken of this invitation of our Lord, we have now to notice HIS PROMISE, WITH JOHN'S COMMENT THEREON. 1. "Water." Refreshment and purification are presented to us in this figure. 2. "Living water." Not stagnant, much less putrescent. Life belongs to the Christian; and this life he must seek to impart to others. 3. "Rivers of living water." Here are presented to us ideas of depth, copiousness, perpetuity. Eternal life in believers is not to be scant, or shallow. A joyous and abounding river, it is to flow with waters exuberant and vivifying to all around. 4. They are "flowing waters." "Out of Him shall flow rivers." The Spirit which God has given is not to be restrained. IV. But in WHAT MANNER may this water of the Spirit in a man be said to flow out of him? 1. One main method of the manifestation of the Spirit has already been alluded to—by the words of our mouth. But we would not restrain the symbol of these flowing waters only to a man's words. 2. His actions also may be included. The Christian's life should be a continual call to turn from the path of death. 3. Influence we would also name as another most effective mode of making these waters flow to the benefit of our fellow-men. Influence! Influence voluntary, and involuntary! How wide its extent, and how incalculable its power! V. We have expounded and illustrated the text. Let us conclude by some INSTRUCTIONS drawn from it. 1. See the diffusive character of the dispensation of the gospel! A man is not made partaker of the Spirit of God for His own mere individual salvation, but for the salvation of others also. 2. But let us be careful to avoid a common error. The water of life must be put in us for our own salvation before it can flow out of us for others' good. It is not like the spider's web which she spins out of herself. 3. But how encouraging the promise, "He that believeth on Me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water." Christ here expressly declares that if we believe on Him we shall be made partakers of His Spirit. 4. How gracious the invitation! "If any man thirst let him come unto Me, and drink." If our lips are to feed others, those lips shall themselves be first fed. 5. Contrast here these living waters of the soul with that perishing water of Shiloah of the ceremonial before alluded to. Here is the contrast between religion spiritual and religion ceremonial—between sacraments (or signs) and the things by them signified. The Jewish populace saw nothing but the water—heeded for the most part nothing but the ceremony. (*M. Brock, M.A.*) *The affinity between God and man in regard of man's wants and God's fulness:*—1. This saying of our Lord's produced among some the conviction that He was the Christ (vers 40, 41). We gather from hence that it met some instinct of the human heart. He struck a note which vibrated in their inmost souls. What was the secret of this effect. It was no doubt that many of the audience felt that they were spiritually athirst, that there was a craving in them after light, truth, love which nothing on earth met. They felt that He was making an offer of which hey had need to avail themselves. They are convinced of His claims by offering

them exactly what they had felt the want of. 2. In order to the existence of love between two parties, there must be a secret affinity between them in virtue of which one supplies what the other needs. Take the case of friendship between the sexes. The man needs sympathy and confidence, which the woman supplies; the woman needs support, protection, counsel, which it is the man's part to furnish. This principle lies also at the foundation of commercial intercourse. A. produces what B. wants, and B. what A. wants; and this mutual want draws both together. The same mutual interdependence is observable in nature. Plants are fed by the light and air of heaven, and return the perfumes which some of them exhale. It is so with man and God. I. MAN HAS AN URGENT NEED OF GOD. When this makes itself felt he cries, "My soul is athirst for God," and then he is arrested by the offer of the Son of God, "If any man thirst," &c. Of course all things need God for their continuance, but man has needs which distinguish him from the inferior creation. 1. His understanding is never satisfied with the truth it contrives to reach. (1) There is nothing more interesting than discovery. It is as if God had proposed to us in nature and life certain enigmas, and had challenged human ingenuity to the solution of them. But observe how, upon a discovery being made, it loses its interest, and we immediately go in quest of fresh truth. Just as the pleasure of hunting is not derived from the game which is caught, but from the excitement of the pursuit, so with the quest of truth. You see this restlessness in the pursuit of religious as well as scientific truth. The inbred curiosity of the mind, which desires above all to know where it is precluded from knowledge, is the fruitful source of heresies and fantastic speculations. (2) But is there nothing corresponding to this restless thirst? Is the mind to fret itself for ever and never reach the goal? Is there no highest truth in which the understanding may at length acquiesce? Not so. The Scriptures say that God is Light, and that in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. When, therefore, man displays an insatiable desire to know, he should remind himself that God is its only satisfaction, and this Light is to be enjoyed, not by any painful straining of reason, but by entire submission of the will to God's will. 2. Man craves after Infinite Good. (1) This is attested—(*a*) By the mischievous excesses of intemperance. The instinct that prompts man to this is peculiar to him. There is nothing of it among the lower creatures. The real account of it is that by the constitution of his mind man thirsts after a good he finds in no created object. The instinct misdirected by the Fall, goes astray. Having a hungry spirit, he makes a desperate effort to extract from bodily enjoyments what may appease its cravings, but the body, like a people, is impoverished and enfeebled by excessive taxation. (*b*) But there are more refined ways in which men endeavour to satisfy this craving. They seek pre-eminence of ability or position or wealth; the flattering speeches which are a sort of homage to superiority—how dear are these things to the soul! Not that the soul rests on them; having tasted them it immediately craves for new enjoyments, a wider reputation, a higher pre-eminence. (*c*) The best of earthly good with which the spirit seeks to satisfy its thirst is human sympathy. It plants for itself a domestic and social paradise, but the trees, alas! like Jonah's gourd, are apt to be smitten. And, independently of this, no mere natural affection can satisfy the craving for love. (2) But the Creator can satisfy every craving. Do we long after a joyous exhilaration of the Spirit which shall tide us over our difficulties? "Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit." Do we thirst after esteem? Human esteem is but a taper; the real sunlight of the soul is the smile of God's approbation. Is pre-eminence our aim? He is the Fountain of Honour. Do we long for sympathy? He is Love. II. DOES GOD DEPEND ON MAN? Yes, as a field of display for the Divine perfections. God longs to surround Himself with intelligent and joyous creatures to lavish on them the resources of His infinite goodness. Here we may catch a glimpse of the reason why evil was permitted. To be bounteous to creatures retaining their integrity is a very inadequate effect of God's goodness. Mercy could never have poured itself forth, had there not been vessels of mercy to receive it. And vessels of mercy could never have existed had there been no transgression. We may therefore recognize between God and man a natural reciprocity. He is the only Being who can satisfy the deep wants of the soul. And from His intrinsic goodness He longs to satisfy them. (*Dean Goulburn.*) *Christ our fountain head*:—I. CHRIST THE CLOVEN ROCK. 1. The smitten rock. Moses smote and Christ was smitten to save a perishing people. 2. The spring of life flowing therefrom. 3. Its inexhaustible fulness (chap. iv. 14). The spring in the desert is now dry. 4. Its wonderful adaptability. Tropical suns cannot evaporate it, nor

Polar breezes freeze it. It is adapted to every climate, and wise and foolish, rich and poor, must drink and cleanse themselves here. II. THE SINNER AND THE FOUNTAIN. 1. The sinner thirsts. Life is a desert, provoking craving for satisfaction. 2. His consciousness of it. Desire for higher, purer experiences will awake in every rational soul. Then do what he will he cannot reason it away. 3. Its evidences. Man's endeavour to find rest somewhere; unnatural activity of mind and body; oft a desperate effort to drown the voice of God. 4. False waters. (1) Wilful blindness. (2) So-called innocent pleasures. (3) Sinful indulgence—Marahs, or Dead Seas. 5. The thirst assuaged. (1) By recognizing the terrible malady of sin. (2) By confessing guilt. (3) By coming to the fountain. The first draught allays the burning fever of the soul. III. THE BELIEVER AND THE FOUNTAIN. 1. The disciple's thirst. Every draught creates a new longing. He thirsts for a sanctified life, for Christian work, for victory over sin, for conformity to Christ. 2. His need for the fountain. Only near the fountain can he live and grow. 3. Its reflecting power. Here he learns to know himself; what he ought to be and what he is. 4. Its purifying power. 5. The visits to that fountain the thermometer of the Christian's inner life. (*H. Dosker.*) *Come and drink* :—I. THE TIME. The last and great day of the feast when Israel's joy, in appearance, was at the fullest, and when there seemed least need of any other joy. II. THE PLACE. Jerusalem—the Temple. What need of anything else than what the Temple afforded: particularly through the teachings of this feast. III. THE GIVER. The Son of God, and not merely a prophet, who knew what they needed, and what He had to give; Himself God's own gift. To Himself He, as ever, turns their eye. "Come unto Me." Feasts, altars, sacrifices, doctrines, ceremonies, were all vain. IV. THE GIFT. Living water; the Holy Spirit; a gift sufficient to fill the soul of the emptiest, and to quench the thirst of the thirstiest, and then to overflow upon others. There are two gifts of God which stand alone in their priceless greatness—the gift of His Son and the gift of His Spirit. V. THE PERSONS. Not heathen and irreligious, but religious Jews, engaged in Divine worship. Before it was to the Samaritan that He presented the living water. In Rev. xxii. it is to Jew and Gentile alike. So also in Isa. lv. But here the thirsty one is the Jew. His rites and feasts cannot quench his thirst, which calls for something more spiritual and Divine. So to those who frequent the sanctuary—who pray and praise outwardly—the Lord now speaks. External religiousness may help to pacify conscience, but it does not confer happiness. Only Christ can do that. VI. THE LOVE. It is all love from first to last. In love Christ presents the full vessel of living water, and presses to their parched lips. (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) *Christ's call to thirsty souls* :—1. These are bold words, and they would be as false as bold if He who speaks them were no more than man. Shall a mere man presume to invite, not a small number for knowledge and sympathy—that we might understand—but the whole race for the satisfaction of their most vehement and spiritual ideas. The presumption would be as blasphemous as absurd. But He who thus speaks has a right to speak, and is conscious of it. 2. All human desire and need is expressed in the one word "thirst." Consider the different kinds of thirst, and see how coming to Christ will satisfy them. I. The lowest and commonest of all, the thirst for HAPPINESS. 1. A man may come with a desire which is not gracious, but simply natural, since every creature desires to be happy, and which is universal, since no man is perfectly satisfied, and drink the cooling waters of the gospel. Those who limit the invitation to the graciously thirsty undo the grace they seek to magnify, and take all the freeness from the gospel. The words "any man" shatter such a fancy in pieces. Let him come with the feeling he has. It may be inward disturbance, brooding fear, gnawing heart pain, weariness of disappointment, inner longing—whatever it be he is welcome. 2. If he does not see how Christ can be of any service let him trust Him as he would a man who has the credit of being trustworthy, so far as to try His specific. Two men once followed Jesus because they heard another speak well of Him. They did not know very well what they wanted, so they asked Him about His home. He gave an answer He is giving to all the thirsty, "Come and see." They went, and never left Him more. 3. But coming so, a man soon begins to be conscious of higher desires. II. Thirst for RIGHTEOUSNESS. If the desire for happiness is to be fruitful it will and must take this form. 1. A moral creature can never be happy without rectitude. If a man has the feeling "let me be happy, but let me enjoy the pleasures of sin," he either does not come or coming does not drink. The thirst therefore continues, and becomes a pain. 2. But to come to the righteous one is to see righteousness and to become conscious of un-

righteousness. 3. Can I be right, and How? How can these stains be cleansed? Christ alone can answer these questions, and satisfy this great desire. His blood cleanses. His righteousness avails. It is to be in them as a principle as well as on them as a garment. III. The thirst for LOVE—the love that shall love us, and the love that shall go out to those who love us. When this desire is fully aroused it will not rest until it finds Jesus Christ. It is but a little way when you can say, "He or she loves me," "I am loved of husband, wife, parents, friends." This will never satisfy an immortal nature. Take the earthly love that is good and pure. It is the gift of God. But that you may have that faculty fully developed take first the love that passest knowledge. IV. There is a thirst profounder and vaster which Christ alone can satisfy—the thirst for LIFE. The others may be traced back to this. It is the deep organic desire which has been implanted by its Author for its perpetuation. Every man has it. The shrinking from annihilation is instinctive. Out towards the realm of life it stretches imploring hands. But where? Reason cannot demonstrate its existence; imagination cannot find it in her loftiest flight. Philosophy says, "You give me no data, and I can give you no conclusion." Ah, yes! no data; for the departed never return. And yet we thirst for them; and, if we are Christians, we are sure we shall see them again. But how? By His word who is the Life, and drinking of Him we live indeed. "Any man." That is you. (*A. Raleigh, D.D.*) *The soul's thirst satisfied in Jesus*:—I. MAN AS A THIRSTY CREATURE. Every man thirsts. 1. Constitutionally. Not as accidentally excited, but as made by God to thirst. It is in our nature to thirst. (1) For life. In deep sorrow we may cry, "O that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave!" In unrest we may say, "I would not live alway." With heaven opened, we may desire to depart and be with Christ. But Satan spake truly, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." (2) For pleasure; according to our idea of felicity and our capacity for bliss. Man is not naturally a lover of misery. (3) For activity. Men are not naturally lazy. (4) For society. The results of the solitary system in our prisons show that the desire for association is constitutional. (5) For knowledge. The subjects upon which we seek information vary; but all men desire to know. (6) For power, from the moment in which we seize and shake the rattle to the hour in which we dispose of our property. (7) For the esteem and love of others. (8) For the possession of objects of beauty. (9) For God. That this thirst is natural is proved by the fact that religion of some kind is universal. There is not a nation of Atheists. 2. There are derived thirsts, dependent upon the particular condition of the individual, and grafted on the natural thirst. Thus a desire for wealth may arise from a thirst for enjoyment, or power, or honour, or social connections. A thirst for freedom may arise from desire for activity, and for religious unity by desire for religious enjoyment. Any natural thirst creates others. 3. The natural, and many of the artificial, thirsts would have existed had man kept his first estate; but the entrance of sin has produced depraved thirsts. Sin itself is a morbid thirst, and actual sin is the offspring of such thirst (James i. 14, 15). Covetousness, envy, &c., are depraved thirsts. 4. The return of man to God and his salvation by Christ involve new thirsts. There is the thirst—(1) Of the quickened spirit for particular religious knowledge. (2) Of the penitent for pardon. (3) Of the new born for righteousness. (4) Of the child of God for being filled with all the fulness of God. 5. There are a few facts connected with these thirsts that we may not overlook. (1) Those thirsts which are natural cannot be evil in themselves; and those which, being artificial, are lawful expansions of the natural are equally good. (2) The influence of our thirsts is most extensive and important. In some cases our thirst is a ruling passion; but in all cases they govern thought, prompt the imagination, affect the judgment, awaken or quiet the emotions, guide the will, lead to action, and form our characters. (3) Most potent, therefore, are they. A man is raised or cast down, destroyed or built up by his thirsts. (4) When a man is sick, he needs not medicine irrespective of its nature, but the specific for his particular disease. Poisoned food is more dangerous than continued hunger. He is blessed, not whose thirsts are for the moment slaked, but whose thirsts are slaked at Divine fountains. II. JESUS CHRIST AS THE FOUNTAIN OF SUPPLY. Take the invitation in connection—1. With our lawful natural thirsts. We thirst—(1) For continued life, and Jesus says, "Come unto Me and drink" (1 Cor. xv. 21–22; John xi. 25, 26). (2) For activity, and Jesus says, "Come," &c. (John xiv. 12). (3) For enjoyment, and Christ gives joy in every gift, and promises it in every promise, and makes every duty its instrument (Matt. v. 1–8; John xvi. 24; 1 Pet. i. 8). (4) For power, and Jesus makes His disciples the salt of the earth, the light of the world,

and kings and priests unto God. (5) For society, and Christ satisfies it (Heb. xii. 22, 23). (6) For the love of others, and Christ directs streams of kindness to every one who comes to Him by means of His new commandment (John xiii. 34, 35). (7) For knowledge, and Jesus is Himself the Truth, in the knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life (John xvii. 3). (8) For God, and He manifests God's name to us, and shows us the Father. 2. If we here speak of depraved tastes, it must be to say that they who thirst morbidly cannot come to Christ and drink; but they may come to Him and be cured of their evil craving. As the thirst of a fever may be removed by a physician, so sinful thirsts may be removed by our Saviour. 3. The thirsts of the returning prodigal and repentant sinner are specially recognized in these words (Psa. li. 1, 8, 9; Luke xviii. 13; Mark ii. 5, v. 34; John viii. 11). 4. All the thirsts of the God-born spirit are here recognized. Conclusion: From these words—1. We might preach humanity, and show what is in man. We might exhibit him as a dependent, receptive, desiring being; that he is not like his Maker, self-sufficient. 2. But we will rather preach Christ. Here we see—(1) The knowledge which He had of human nature. He knew the thirsts of the multitude in whose midst He spake. (2) His recognition of all that pertains to man. His words and works meet most entirely all human needs. They are not like flowers given to the starving, or gauze raiment to the naked in winter; but like bread to the hungry and clothes to the beggar. (3) But what must be the resources of one who is justified in speaking thus? Can any individual be a fountain of supply to every man? There is One continually named by the sacred writers who is a Sun, Fire, Door, Rock, Bread, Fountain. To Him, who can be represented by these figures, any man may surely come and drink. No creature imparts all, or even many, kinds of good; but God is the spring of all that is beneficial, and Christ is the manifested God. To how few of our thirsty fellows can any of us say, "Come to me and drink"? But Jesus says that, and standing in the centre of all time, as in the midst of all men. Did we need proof of the Deity of Jesus Christ we have it here. (4) But what shall we say of His love? "Any man." The man may be Atheist or idolater, broken-hearted because all his cisterns are broken, be conscious that he deserves only to die with thirst; yet Jesus means him. (5) But the thirsty have to come. The sole condition is coming, and the only limit to the ministrations of the Saviour is our receptivity. (*S. Martin.*) *Man's thirst quenched by Christ:*—1. An artist once painted a famous picture for an altar-piece, and called it the Fountain of Life. It represents the Sacrificed Redeemer stretched in His mother's arms. From the rock beneath their feet flow the abundant waters of salvation, which are received into a great cistern. Saints, martyrs, apostles, evangelists, are drinking of the water, or filling their vases and handing them to each other. From the cistern flows a stream into a lower place, where a family of poor, humble people are drinking with grateful looks. Then the stream flows away among meadows, where the little children can reach it, and they are taking up the precious water in their tiny hands, and drinking it with smiling lips. We can all see the meaning of that picture, which tells us that the salvation of Jesus is for all who will accept it, high and low, young and old, rich and poor. (*H. J. W. Buxton.*) *Christ's satisfactions full and real:*—Not like a shallow brook, that runs in winter and is dry in summer; but a fountain that the frost never binds, and that the hot, thirsty day never drinks dry, that is ever full and ever flowing. In the regions of the burning desert they tell me that skeletons lie thick, not only in the paths to the fountains, but lie ghastly white and withering, with the naked skulls looking over the banks into the very waters. With the tongue cleaving to the roof of the mouth, they press on, guided by the green pasture that lifts its head above the sand, and shows where the fountain is. They drank the water in anticipation, but will they reach it? Alas! with what horror in their eyes they gaze on the empty bed, and fight with man and beast for some muddy drops that but exasperate their thirst! The desert whirls around them; they stagger, they fall; hope expires, and they expire themselves; and by and by the sky drops, lightnings flash, thunders peal, and rain pours down, and the water rises in that fountain, and plays in mockery with the tresses of dead beauty, and kisses the faces of the dead. Such things happen. But see you yon cross standing up yonder? It marks a fountain where never man went in vain. No dead souls lie around that cross. Calvary was once a Golgotha—a "place of skulls." It is so no longer. Where men once went to die, men now go to live; and a man never went for mercy there, and for grace to help, and found none. There is now in America a great revival; there was in my own country a great revival. God send us all such revivals! In every church and every country

there are times and seasons of revival, when the peace of believers is like a river in glorious flood, rolling beneath bank and ridge; like the sea in a storm, when it sends its waters beyond its common bounds, and overflows the boats that lie highest and driest on the beach. But at all times and in all seasons, I say, that if you will search you will find fulness of mercy to pardon and "grace to help in time of need." The supply, in fact, is inexhaustible. I know mountains have been exhausted of their gold, mines of their diamonds, and the depths of ocean of their pearly gems; but the riches of mercy and of grace in Christ are inexhaustible. They are no less to you than to those who went before you, and there will be no less for those who come after you; and when unborn millions have come, and the world's last man, with a dying sun above him and a reeling earth beneath him, comes up to that blessed Fountain, oh! he will find it as full as it is this day, in its fulness inviting you to wash and be clean, to drink and live, to believe and be forgiven. (*T. Guthrie, D.D.*) **He that believeth on Me.**—I. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH THE WORK OF CHRIST. It is a great pity when persons preach the Holy Spirit's work so as to obscure the work of Christ—*e.g.*, by holding up before the sinner's eye the inward experience of believers, instead of lifting up the crucified Saviour, to whom we must look and live. It is an equal pity when Christ is so preached that the Holy Spirit is ignored, as if faith in Christ prevented the necessity of the new birth. The two works are so joined together that—1. The Holy Spirit was not given until Jesus was glorified. The original has it simply "was not." Of course this does not mean that He was non-existent, for He is eternal; but that He was not in fellowship with man to the full extent He now is, and could not be till the redeeming work of Christ was finished. You read of the prophets, &c., that the Spirit of the Lord came upon them and moved them, but He did not dwell in them. His operations were a coming and a going. They knew not the "communion of the Holy Ghost." But since Christ's glorification, the Spirit is in His people, and abides with them for ever. 2. The Holy Spirit was given after the ascension of Christ unto His glory, to make that ascension more renowned. "When He ascended on high . . . He gave gifts to men." Those gifts were men in whom the Spirit dwelt, and who preached the gospel to the nations. The shedding of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was the glorification of the risen Christ upon earth. What grander celebration could there have been? 3. The Holy Spirit was given as an evidence of our Divine Master's acceptance, the gift being a consequence of Christ's finished work. 4. It is the Spirit's work to bear witness of Jesus. "He shall take of Mine." Hence He comes to convince of sin, to reveal the sacrifice for sin; of righteousness, that we may see the righteousness of Christ; of judgment, that we may be prepared to meet the Judge. He has not come, and never will, to teach a new Gospel. 5. It is by the gospel of Jesus that the Spirit works in the hearts of men. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." 6. The Spirit's work is to conform us to the likeness of Christ, not to this or that human ideal. 7. Evermore it is for the glory of Jesus that the Spirit works—not for the glory of a church, or a sect, or a man. "He shall glorify Me." II. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S OPERATIONS ARE OF MARVELLOUS POWER. They are—1. Inward. The rivers are to flow out of the midst of a man, from his heart and soul, not from his mouth; the promised power is not oratory, talent, show. 2. Life-giving "living water." When the man speaks, prays, acts, there shall be going out of him emanations which are full of the life of grace and godliness. 3. Plentiful. Not a river, but "rivers." 4. Spontaneous. "Shall flow." No pumping is required—the man does not want exciting and stirring up. Does the sun make a noise that men may be aware of his rising? No, he shines and says nothing about it. So does the Christian. 5. Perpetual: not like intermittent springs. III. THESE OPERATIONS ARE EASILY OBTAINED. 1. By believing in Jesus. It is faith which gives us the first drink and causes us to live, and the more abundant blessing of being ourselves made fountains come in the same way. With Christ is the residue of the Spirit. 2. By prayer. "If ye being evil," &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Christians are not ponds, but spring-heads*:—I have heard of William Gadsby, that, travelling on a coach one day, he asked two heretical divines to tell him how a sinner is justified in the sight of God. "No," said they, "you don't catch us in that fashion. Whatever answer we gave you would be repeated all over Manchester within a week." "Oh," he says, "then I will tell you. A sinner is justified in the sight of God by faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ. Go and tell that all over Manchester and all over England as quickly as you like; for I believe nothing that I am ashamed of." (*Ibid.*) *Believers are springs of living water*:—

One summer day, a few years ago, strolling for rest and pleasure near the mouth of the Columbia river, where there is a large rise and fall of the tide, I came, at low tide, upon a splendid spring of pure, fresh water, clear as crystal, gushing up from between the rocks that two hours before had formed a part of the river's bed. Twice a day the soiled tides rise above that beautiful fountain and cover it over; but there it is, deep down under the salt tide, and when the tide has spent its force and gone back again to the ocean's depths, it sends out its pure waters fresh and clear as before. So if the human heart be really a fountain of love to Christ it will send out its streams of fresh, sweet waters, even into the midst of the salt tides of politics or business. And the man who carries such a fountain into the day's worry and struggle, will come again at night, when the world's tide has spent its force, with clean hands, sweet spirit and conscience void of offence towards God and man. (*Sunday School Chronicle.*) *Believers have a perennial spring within them:*—The Christian has a *fons perennis* within him. He is satisfied from himself. The men of the world borrow all their joy from without. Joy wholly from without is false, precarious, and short. Like gathered flowers, though fair and sweet for a season, it must soon wither and become offensive. Joy from within is like smelling the rose on the tree, it is more sweet and fair, and I must add that it is immortal. (*H. G. Salter.*) **As the Scripture hath said.**—The reference is not to any one isolated passage, but to the general tenor of such passages as Isa. lviii. 11; Zech. xiv. 18, taken in connection with the original image (Exod. xvii. 6; Numb. xx. 11). (*Bp. Westcott.*) **Out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water.**—*Water an emblem of the Spirit:*—Why has He called the grace of the Spirit by the name of water? Because by water all things subsist; because of water are herbs and animals created; because the water of the showers comes down from heaven; because it comes down one in form, yet manifold in its working. For one fountain watered the whole of the garden (Gen. ii. 10), and one and the same rain comes down upon all the world; yet it becomes white in the lily, and red in the rose, and purple in the violets and pansies, and different and varied in each several kind; so it is one in the palm tree, and another in the vine, and all in all things; being the while one in nature, not diverse from itself; for the rain does not change, when it comes down, first as one thing, then as another, but adapting itself to the nature of each thing, which receives it, it becomes to each what is suitable. Thus also the Holy Ghost being One, and of one Nature, and undivided, divides to each His grace "according as He will," and in the name of Christ works many excellencies. For He employs the tongue of one man for wisdom; the soul of another He enlightens by prophecy; to another He gives power to drive away devils; to another He gives power to interpret the Divine Scriptures. He invigorates one man's self-command; He teaches another the way to give alms; another He teaches to fast and exercise himself; another He teaches to despise the things of the body; another He trains for martyrdom: diverse in different men, yet not diverse from Himself (chap. iv. 14; v. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 11). (*S. Cyril.*) *The abundance and vitality of the Spirit's operations:*—Rivers, not river, to show the copious and overflowing power of grace; and living water, *i.e.*, always moving; for when the grace of the Spirit has entered into and settled in the mind, it flows freer than any fountain, and neither fails, nor empties, nor stagnates. The wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the strength of Paul, are evidences of this. Nothing hindered them; but like impetuous torrents they went on, carrying everything along with them. (*Chrysostom.*) *Diversity of the Holy Spirit's operations:*—There is one Spirit, but divers operations; one fountain, many rivers. Moses mighty in miracle, Isaiah glorious in prophecy, apostles convincing in eloquence, Paul powerful in reasoning. A Howard for benevolence, a Luther for reformation, a Calvin for theology, a Huss and a Jerome for martyrs. No place having one believer is without a living well. (*W. H. Van Doren, D. L.*) **The Holy Ghost was not yet given.**—The addition of the word "given" expresses the true form of the original, in which "Spirit" is without the article. When the term occurs in this form, it marks an operation or manifestation, no gift of the Spirit, and not the personal Spirit (comp. chap. i. 33; xx. 22; Matt. i. 18, 20; iii. 11; xii. 28; Luke i. 15, 35, 41, 67; ii. 25; iv. 1). (*Bp. Westcott.*) "Because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (comp. chap. xvi. 7; xx. 17). The necessary limitations of Christ's historical presence with the disciples excluded that realization of His abiding presence which followed on the Resurrection. It is impossible not to contrast the righteousness of this utterance with the clear teaching of St. John himself on the "unction" of believers (1 John ii. 20, &c.), which forms a commentary gained by later experience upon the words of our Lord, (*Ibid.*) *The fulness of*

the Spirit the gift of the glorified Christ:—The Holy Ghost was not yet with men in such fulness of influence on their minds, hearts, and understandings, as the Spirit of adoption and revelation, as He was after our Lord ascended up into heaven. It is as clear as daylight, from our Lord's language about the Spirit, in John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7–15, that believers were meant to receive a far more full and complete outpouring of the Holy Spirit after His ascension than they had received before. It is a simple matter of fact, indeed, that after the Ascension the apostles were quite different men from what they had been before. They both saw, and spoke, and acted like men grown up, while before the Ascension they had been like children. It was this increased light and knowledge and decision that made them such a blessing to the world, far more than any miraculous gifts. The possession of the gifts of the Spirit, it is evident, in the early Church was quite compatible with an ungodly heart. A man might speak with tongues and yet be like salt that had lost its savour. The possession of the fulness of the graces of the Spirit, on the contrary, was that which made any man a blessing to the world. (*Bp. Ryle.*) *The glorification of Christ*:—This is the first distinct reference to the glorification of our Lord. The conception is characteristic of this Gospel (comp. chap. i. 14; ii. 11), and includes in one complex whole the Passion with the triumph which followed. Thus St. John regards Christ's death as a victory (chap. xii. 32), following the words of our Lord, who identified the hour of His death with the hour of His glorification (chap. xii. 23, &c.). In accordance with the same thought, Christ spoke of Himself as already "glorified" when Judas had gone forth to his work (chap. xiii. 31); and so He had already received His glory by the faith of His disciples before He suffered (chap. xvii. 10). In another aspect His glory followed after His withdrawal from earth (chap. xvii. 5; xvi. 14). By the use of this phrase the Evangelist brings out clearly the absolute Divine unity of the work of Christ in His whole "manifestation" (1 John iii. 5, 8; i. 2), which he does not (as St. Paul) regard as distinct stages of humiliation and exaltation. (*Bp. Westcott.*) *The Holy Spirit must be received by us*:—The sea enters into the rivers before the rivers can enter into the sea. In like manner God comes to us before we can go to Him, and heaven enters into our souls before we can enter into heaven. (*Drelincourt.*) *The Holy Spirit sustains the inward life of believers*:—Grace in the saints is not like light in the sun, that springs from itself, but like the light of a lamp that is constantly fed with supplies of oil, otherwise the weak light will faint and die. (*H. G. Salter.*) **Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.**—*Christ the Prophet*:—I. HIS FITNESS AS A PROPHET. 1. Foretold (Deut. xviii. 15; John i. 45). 2. Typified (Deut. xviii. 18; Acts iii. 22). 3. Anointed (Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 17–21). 4. Competent (Matt. xi. 17; John iii. 2, 34). 5. Faithful (John viii. 26, 28; xii. 49, 50). 6. Wise (Luke ii. 40, 47, 52; Col. ii. 3). 7. Mighty (Matt. xiii. 54; Luke iv. 32). 8. Meek (Matt. xi.; 29 xii. 17–20). 9. Sympathetic (Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15). II. HIS TREATMENT AS A PROPHET. 1. Rejected by His own people (John i. 11). 2. Rejected at His own home (Luke iv. 28–30). 3. Rejected before Pilate (John xviii. 39, 40). 4. Followed by multitudes (Matt. v. 1; John vi. 2). 5. Believed by many (John iv. 41, 42; xvii. 8). 6. Trusted by some (Acts vii. 59; 2 Tim. i. 12). 7. Commended by some (John i. 26, 27, 45). 8. All should hear (Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Heb. ii. 2, 3). 9. All should trust Him (Psa. xxxvii. 5; 1 Pet. v. 7). III. HIS LESSONS AS A PROPHET. 1. On sinfulness (John iii. 18, 19; xv. 22). 2. On salvation (John iii. 16; v. 24). 3. On judgment (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). 4. On reward (John vi. 47; Matt. xxv. 34). 5. On penalty (Matt. xxv. 41, 46). 6. On heaven (John xiv. 2, 3; Matt. xxii. 30). 7. On victory (Luke xii. 32; Matt. x. 22). This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him (Matt. xvii. 5). (*Sunday School Times.*) *Christ the cause of division*:—Even when Jesus preached so sweetly His meek and loving doctrine there was a division among the people (ver. 43). Even about Himself there was a schism. We may not, therefore, hope to please everybody, however true our teaching or peaceful our spirit. I. THERE WAS A DIVISION AMONG THE NEW DISCIPLES. We may view the parties formed in His day as symbolical of those in our own. 1. Some admitted none of His claims. 2. Others admitted a portion, but denied the rest. 3. Certain admitted His claims, but neglected to follow out the legitimate consequences of them. 4. A few became sincere hearers, going as far with Him as they had yet learned of Him. Let us view persons who have thoughts about Jesus with considerable hope. Though they blunder now, they may yet come right. Let us not frighten away the birds with imprudent haste. Let us pray for those who deny His claims, and resist His kingdom. Let us aid those who come a little way

towards the truth, and are willing to go all the way if they can but find it. Let us arouse those who neglect holy subjects altogether. II. THERE WAS A DIVISION OF BELIEVERS FROM NON-BELIEVERS. This is a great and wide difference, and the more clearly the division is seen the better; for God views it as very deep and all-important. There is a great division at this present hour—1. In opinion; especially as to the Lord Jesus. 2. In trust; many rely on self; only the godly on Jesus. 3. In love. Differing pleasures and aims prove that hearts go after different objects. 4. In obedience, character, and language. 5. In development, growth, tendency. 6. In destiny. The directions of the lines of life point at different places as the end of the journey. This cleavage divides the dearest friends and relatives. This is the most real and deep difference in the world. III. YET WHEN FAITH COMES, UNITY IS PRODUCED. There is unity among the people because of Him. 1. Nationalities are blended. Calvary heals Babel. (1) Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ. (2) The near and the far-off as to spiritual things are brought nigh in Him, who is the one and only centre of grace and truth. (3) Believers of all nationalities become one Church. 2. Personal peculiarities cease to divide. (1) Workers for Christ are sure to be blended in one body by their common difficulties. (2) Position, rank, and wealth give way before the uniting influence of grace. 3. Mental specialities feel the touch of unity. Saints—(1) of varying creeds have an essential union in Christ; (2) of all the changing ages are alike in Him; (3) of all styles of education are one in Him; (4) in heaven will be many as the waves, but one as the sea. Ambitions, which else would disintegrate, are overcome, and laid at Jesus' feet. Let us divide, if there be a division. Let us closely unite, if there be real union in Christ. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *Division of feeling and opinion about Christ*:—Here we see our words literally fulfilled. He did not bring "peace, but division" (Luke xii. 51). It will always be so as long as the world stands. So long as human nature is corrupt Christ will be a cause of division and difference among men. To some He is a savour of life, and to others of death. Grace and nature never will agree any more than oil and water, acid and alkali. A state of entire quiet, and the absence of any religious division, is often no good sign of the condition of a Church or a parish. It may even be a symptom of spiritual disease and death. The question may possibly be needful in such cases, "Is Christ there?" (*Bp. Ryle.*) *Various opinions*:—We often speak of the great changes and revolutions which have occurred in the world. But through the long series there may be traced much that is permanent, so that probably uniformity is as truly the characteristic of human history as variety. It may, *e.g.*, be always ascertained that the same principles have pervaded God's moral government. It may also be perceived that the elements of human character have throughout been the same. Our text, relating as it does opinions of the Jews regarding our Lord, will give us opportunities of observing this sameness in particular cases. We may be compelled to say that men are what they were eighteen hundred years back, on discovering that modern indifference and unbelief borrows from ancient its form and apology. I. The first parties introduced are THOSE DISPOSED TO RECOGNIZE CHRIST AS A TEACHER SENT FROM GOD. 1. The cause of this conviction was not any action of Christ's, but a "saying" of His. Then surely the saying must have been one of extraordinary power, some assertion of Divinity, or some verification in Himself of ancient prophecy too complete and striking to be resisted. No; the wonder-working saying was that of ver. 37, which the Evangelist thought so obscure as to require an explanation. Yet simple as it seems to us and dark as it seemed to St. John, it succeeded at once in wringing the confession that He was a Divinely-sent Teacher. 2. The saying is one of those gracious invitations into which are gathered the whole gospel. It demands a sense of want, a feeling of thirst, but proffers an abundant supply, and by adding a reference to Scripture, which could only be interpreted of some measure of supernatural influence, our Lord intimated that His promise was a spiritual gift, satisfying desires after God and immortality. Here is the moral thirst which is not to be slaked at the springs of human science and theology. And as there must have been many in the crowd dissatisfied with the traditions of the elders, and feeling a need of higher teaching, the promise would come home as meeting their wants, and the suitableness of the offer would pass as an argument for Christ's Divine mission. 3. There is no difference here between past days and our own, for the argument is but that based on the self-evidencing power of the Bible. A religion may commend itself either by prodigies wrought in its support, or by the nicety with which it fits in to the mental and moral constitution, to the wants and cravings of a soul which sought in vain everywhere else for

supply. And this latter is the standing witness for the Bible. The sinner, conscious of exposure to the wrath of God, and of inability to ward off destruction, will find in Christ the Saviour he needs, and in the aid of the Spirit the help he wants, so that there will seem to him no room for doubt as to the truth of the gospel. II. Mix again with the crowd and hearken to SOME OTHER OPINIONS. 1. Those who are inclined to conclude that Jesus is the long promised Christ, find themselves met with objections, formidable because professedly grounded on Scripture (ver. 42). There is no attempt to depreciate Christ's teaching, but there was a fatal argument deduced from prophecy which has expressly fixed the birthplace and lineage of Christ. But this is one of the most surprising instances of ignorance or inattention, if we may go no further. It is hardly possible to imagine a fact more readily ascertainable than that our Lord was born at Bethlehem, and was of the lineage of David; for the massacre of the innocents had made His birth so conspicuous, and now there was no one left but our Lord who could prove Himself to have been born at Bethlehem on the expiration of Daniel's week of years. Therefore either He was the Messiah, or prophecy had failed. Yet so great was the popular indifference or prejudice, that a statement seems to have gone uncontradicted that the pretended Messiah was a Galilean. He passed as "Jesus of Nazareth," and this was proof that He was not born in Bethlehem; and men were so glad of some specious excuse for rejecting Him, that they made this shallow falsehood a pretext for rejecting Him. It looked very fine to have Scripture on their side; the devil used the Bible in tempting Christ, and they could now use it in justifying their unbelief. The "Sword of the Spirit," like every other, may be used for suicide as well as for war. 2. The like of this is of frequent occurrence amongst ourselves. What is that scepticism which is often met with among the boastful and young? Is it the result of careful investigation? No. The fashionable young man, the orator at some juvenile literary club, gets hold of some objection against Christianity which has a specious sound and formidable look—all the better if it come out of the Bible, in the shape of an alleged contradiction and this is enough; he has his "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" and with so decisive an argument, why should he trouble to search further? This is our quarrel with him. He wishes to continue deceived. The sceptic, like the Jew, has only to look around him and he would find that Jesus did not come out of Galilee, but out of Bethlehem. God suffered infants to be slain that Jewish unbelief might be inexcusable, and He has raised up giants in His Church whose writings render modern unbelief the same. (*H. Melvill, B.D.*)

The wonderful nature of Christ's teaching:—His mode of speaking is like that of a prince, who, having been educated in a splendid court, could speak with ease of many magnificent things, at the sudden view of which a peasant would be swallowed up in astonishment, and would find himself greatly embarrassed in an attempt to explain them to his equals at home. (*P. Doddridge, D.D.*)

Then came the officers.—It is not clear what interval of time elapsed between ver. 32, where we read that the officers were sent by the priests to take our Lord, and the present verse, where we are told of their coming back to their Master. At first sight, of course, it all happened in one day. Yet, if we observe that between the sending them to take our Lord and the present verse there comes in the remarkable verse, "In the last day, that great day of the feast," it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that an interval of two or three days must have elapsed. It seems highly probable that the officers had a general commission and warrant to take our Lord prisoner, whenever they saw a fitting opportunity, about the fourth day of the feast. They found, however, no opportunity, on account of the temper and spirit of the crowd, and dared not make the attempt. And at last, at the end of the feast, when the multitude was even more aroused than at first by our Lord's open testimony, they were obliged to return to those who sent them, and confess their inability to carry out their orders. (*Bp. Ryle.*)

The return of the bailiffs:—I. THE MAJESTY OF JESUS CONFESSED (ver. 47). One almost wishes that the officers had been more specific. Perhaps it was the same qualities that had affected Christ's listeners from the first. 1. Openness (ver. 26). No greatness, criticism, danger, daunted Him. Before the hierarchs (chap. xviii. 20), the hostile mob (xviii. 5), and Pilate (xviii. 33), He was ever the same resolute and outspoken preacher of the truth. 2. Authority. There was not a solitary realm in which He did not reign supreme—the kingdom of nature (Matt. viii. 26; xiv. 32), the world of humanity (Matt. viii. 8), the empire of devils (Mark i. 27; Luke iv. 36), the region of the dead (Matt. ix. 25; Luke vii. 15; John xi. 44), the innermost domain of the conscience (chap. viii. 9). 3. Graciousness (Luke iv. 22). II. THE FRIENDS OF JESUS SILENCED.

1. The bailiffs rebuked (vers. 47–49). They were reminded that they were only menials, who had no right to think, &c.; hearing which, no doubt, crestfallen, they slunk away; let us hope rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him (Acts v. 41) and following up the favourable impression. 2. Nicodemus put down (vers. 50–52). The Sanhedrists could not frown at him as ignorant of the law (ver. 51), but they could sneer at his sympathy with the Galilean Preacher, and stopped his mouth by delicately hinting that he was growing old and did not know his Bible as accurately as he should (ver. 52). Exactly so have Christ's champions in all ages been treated. III. THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST HARDENED. The hierarchs, determined on Christ's removal, are henceforth impervious to everything advanced in His favour. The light that was in them became darkness. Lessons: 1. The power of Christ's words over honest and sincere hearts. 2. The doctrine of Christ an argument for His divinity. 3. The superior religious instincts of the masses as distinguished from the classes. 4. The certainty that Christ and His cause will never lack defenders. 5. The downward course of those who wilfully oppose Christ. (*T. Whitelaw, D.D.*) *Opposition to the truth*:—I. GENERALLY SERVES TO ELICIT THE MOST IMPORTANT TESTIMONY IN ITS BEHALF. The officers could have no possible interest in Christ, but were, if anything, prejudiced against Him. Hence their testimony was disinterested. It was—1. To the justice of His claims as a Divine messenger. Unless aided by Divine influence, there was the difficulty the Jews themselves started (ver. 15). 2. To the earnest persuasiveness of His manner. He spoke the truth, but in love. He concealed nothing to soften prejudice, but clothed warnings, &c., so as to win conviction (ver. 46). 3. To the force of His reasoning on conscience. What but this could have induced the officers to risk disapproval? II. GENERALLY IGNORES MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS BELIEF (ver. 48). We are told that we are not competent to judge for ourselves, and therefore should believe what our superiors bid. Some submit from indolence; others for the sake of a good appearance, "willing to be damned for fashion's sake, and to go to hell out of compliment to the scribes and Pharisees"; others from policy. How is it that so many of the great ones are arrayed against the truth? Because—1. It is independent of their patronage. 2. It is indifferent to their prejudices. 3. It promises no worldly rewards. Hold to your personal responsibility. III. IS ESPECIALLY CAREFUL TO CONSERVE ADVENTITIOUS DISTINCTION (vers. 48, 49). Truth is levelling in its influence. It debases the great and exalts the humble. It destroys caste. Error, on the other hand, preserves it, for it is essential to its continuance. IV. FREQUENTLY CALLS OUT THE SYMPATHIES OF ITS SECRET DISCIPLES (ver. 50). If we resolve never to do less for Christ than Nicodemus did, we shall be of service. Whatever we are not able to do, we can prevent a vote of censure on Christ unanimously. V. IS GENERALLY MARKED BY RIDICULE INSTEAD OF ARGUMENT (ver. 52). This method is often successful, or it would not be employed. Truth revolts from levity. VI. IS GENERALLY CONDUCTED IN VIOLATION OF EVEN ITS SELF-CONSTITUTED STANDARDS. These men, who professed to go by the law and sneered at the people as ignorant of it, were themselves convicted of violating it (Deut. xix. 15–18). VII. WILL FINALLY BE SILENCED AND OVERCOME. The assembly, unable to answer Nicodemus, broke up with every mark of haste and confusion. (*J. W. L. M.*) **The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.**—*The circumstance*:—Our Lord's ministry was now nearly completed; the effects of His example and preaching were so manifesting themselves that the Sanhedrim had become desperate. The prey was about to slip from their grasp, and they must either lose their position or silence the Preacher. They accordingly sent their officers to apprehend Him. They were accustomed to obey such orders, and were selected because naturally possessed of more firmness than sensibility, and because the more insensible by having practised the duties of their office. Like other Jews, they had heard much preaching by their rabbis, and therefore expected to find a ranter. The idea they had must have been that the apprehension of a fanatical preacher, disturbing the public peace, would be an easy task, and rather a pastime. So they may have gone jocularly on from street to street until they had come to the immense multitudes gathered in and around the Temple celebrating the feast of tabernacles. But the chief interest of that multitude seems to radiate from the vast circumference to Christ as its centre. They press through the throng, and approach the hallowed spot. But what checks their rude steps? Why do they not advance to seize their prey, please their masters, and secure an extra fee? They are confounded, not with fear, but with amazement, reverence, and an unwonted human sympathy. There He stands, incarnate Deity! No fierceness of a mob

leader is seen in Him, no cringing to formidable enemies, no caressing the populace. He stands alone and lofty in the meek dignity of a descended God. And they might first have said, "Never man looked like that man." But they felt the attractive force of the very power that disarmed them. There was a presence that annihilated the authority of Sanhedrims; there was a manifest virtue that acquitted Him at the bar of their consciences. And before it they laid down their vile commission, and joined the devout and admiring hearers. This added to their wonder and reverence. Surely Moses never spake more according to the mind of God. Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, never spake with more authority than this man. He is a prophet of the living God; and surely the elders of Israel never intended to arrest such a man; and they returned, not with a prisoner, but with a *nolle-prosequi*, a report that there was no ground of arrest. "Never man spake like this man." (*E. N. Kirk, D.D.*) *Similar but contrasted incidents*:—Plutarch mentions it as a memorable proof of the extraordinary eloquence of Mark Antony, that, when soldiers were sent to kill him, he pleaded for his life in such affecting language that he totally disarmed them of their resolution, and melted them into tears. But these officers are vanquished, not by the forcible arguments of a man pleading for his life, but by hearing one of the ordinary discourses of our Lord, not particularly directed to them, but to the people at large. (*G. Burder.*) In the troublous times that closed the great Republic, amongst the men that arose and made themselves masters of the world there was hardly a greater than Caius Marius. The conqueror of Jugurtha, the conqueror of the Cimbri, he was looked upon as the shield and sword of Rome. Six times he sought and six times he obtained the consulship, and bid fair to die as he had lived, the ruthless lord of the eternal city. But God decreed otherwise. A rival appeared upon the scene, and after chequered fortunes Marius had to fly. In the romance of his wanderings we read that he was once put on shore unattended and unarmed. He was seized and flung into prison, and an edict came from Rome that he must die. A Gaulish slave was sent to the dungeon to do the deed. Marius, sitting in a gloomy corner of the prison, with his bloodshot eyes glared on the man, and with his terrible voice demanded, "Canst thou kill Caius Marius?" And the slave, fearing the prisoner more than the gaoler or the judge, flung down his sword and fled away, crying, "I cannot kill Caius Marius." Put side by side with this story of a sanguinary life the incident of the life the most submissive and self-denying the world has ever seen, and the very likeness of the latter will make the unlikeness of the spirit greater. In both murder was meant. In both the presence and words of the intended victim postponed the murder. In both the assailants turned craven. But the shield that turned the edge of their sword in the one case was terrific rage, in the other placid mercy. (*J. B. Figgis, M.A.*) "*Never man spake like this man*":—1. Jesus was a popular preacher. The synagogue was full when He spoke, and men went out in crowds into the fields to listen to Him. 2. He was a powerful preacher. Extraordinary changes of character were wrought by His sermons. The tax-gatherer left his money-changing and the fisherman his boats to follow Him. All classes were affected by it, from the most cultured and religious to the most abandoned. 3. Whatever theory men may have respecting His person, there can be no doubt that the world has been revolutionized by His teaching. What, then, were the elements of His power? (1) He spoke to the common in their vernacular, using illustrations from common life, but He never descended from the high place of a noble instructor. The demagogue flatters the prejudices and appeals to the passions of his audience, but Jesus never did this. (2) He used no arts of elocution. Men did not flock to Him as they flock to an actor. He told them stories, but they were simple stories, and not dramatically, for He taught sitting. (3) Nor did He use the arts of rhetoric. He employed no ornament for the sake of ornament. You find nothing that could be called out and recited. (4) There are no literary classics in His sermons. His was not the power which comes from scholastic learning or position. Men have shrugged their shoulders at lay preaching, but Christ was a lay preacher who had never graduated and become a Rabbi. His style was simple and transparent. Sometimes the waters are so deep that one cannot see the bottom, but they are never muddy. 4. We must look elsewhere for the sources of the eloquence of Jesus. If we look over the history of oratory, we find that three elements enter into it: I. A GREAT OCCASION. All the great masterpieces were the offspring of great occasions—the orations of Demosthenes, when Greece was battling for its liberty; of Cicero, when the free institutions of Rome were threatened; of Chatham, at the time of the American revolution. Jesus had a great occasion. The world had reached its

lowest ebb—politically, intellectually, socially, morally. Yet there was one little province which kept the light of hope burning, one little people who had an expectation of deliverance. A great need and a hope—these formed the occasion of Jesus. II. A GREAT THEME. The greatest orators, on the greatest occasions, have broken down, because they have ranged themselves on the wrong side and failed to rise to the occasion with a great message. Not so Jesus. He proclaimed "The kingdom of God is at hand." This was a message of hope, and one which called men with a trumpet-call to battle. In this kingdom all could take part; it was one that was for all, and one that defied the gates of hell. This message is for all the centuries and for to-day. When the ship was on the sands at Malta the crew did not stop to study the rhetorical form of Paul's message. When the soldiers in the Shenandoah valley were in flight they did not stop to study the elocution of Sheridan when, waving sword in air, he bade them turn and follow him to victory. And when the world felt the darkness of night resting upon it, it was not the eloquence of drama; it was the eloquence of this great truth—the hope that there is in God and in immortality—that made Christ eloquent then and has made His words eloquent from that day to this. III. For behind the words was A GREAT PERSONALITY—a personality so great that when He first rose in the synagogue of Nazareth all eyes were fastened upon Him; that when the mob gathered to stone Him as He passed they parted and let Him go; that when they rose to lead Him to the precipice He passed uninjured through them; that when these police came to arrest Him they went away saying, "Never man spake," &c. This we cannot analyze, and must therefore leave it. (*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*) *Christ a preacher*, as contrasted—I. WITH THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES. 1. In the spirituality of His instructions. The Jewish teachers and their modern imitators are distinguished by their degrading conceptions of religion, morality, and worship. The Scriptures are made a cumbrous book of court etiquette; the heart is ignored; judgment and mercy pass for trifles as compared with ritual; and theology is turned into hair-splitting casuistry. But what a Teacher is this! With Him a broken heart is a sacrifice; a believing heart a sanctuary; love to God and man all duty. 2. In the dignity of His instructions. Rabbinical teaching, ancient and modern, is gravely puerile, and as you pass from it to Christ's you pass from a prison to a mountain top. Contrast with His their notions of (1) Jehovah—the national patron with the Universal Father. (2) The Messiah—the Jewish conqueror with the Saviour of the world. (3) The law overwhelmed with traditional burdens and superstitions, with the law as pointing to and fulfilled by Him. II. THE POETS. Apart from Christ's influence, their teaching has no concrete reality nor anything to meet the deepest wants of the soul. Which of the non-Christian poets has sung anything calculated to make men holy, bring God near, secure pardon, lift the veil from the tomb, respond to any one of the queries of the human soul? But Christ says, "God is a spirit," &c. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." "In My Father's house are many mansions," &c. "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c. Where in uninspired poetry shall we find lines like these? Christ was a true poet, but He gave truths adapted to meet the urgent necessities of the soul. III. THE PHILOSOPHERS. 1. They can do no more than conjecture in regard to religious truth. But here we must have authority absolutely Divine. Socrates confessed this necessity but could not meet it. Christ confessed it and met it. "No man hath seen God at any time," &c. He did not reason, He affirmed. 2. They can only talk of abstractions, such as deity, laws of nature, &c., good words in their place, and so is "humanity," and if you should call your friend "humanity," you would deal with him as philosophers deal with God. But Christ teaches a personal God. Abstract teaching has its place, but to teach therapeutics to a man in a fever is as cruel as to mock at disease. Christ was a practical teacher, and told us not only what to believe, but what to do. IV. THE PRETENDERS. 1. His claim, the loftiest ever made, was put forth under circumstances which fully attested its genuineness. It was open, in the presence of enemies, without human help. These and other tests would have detected imposture. 2. Imposters chiefly address the senses and the imagination, but Jesus' whole manner is that of one who would win man's intelligent confidence, and all He said was to give a basis to intelligent faith. (*E. N. Kirk, D.D.*) *Christ the standard of preaching*:—Long before the Messiah appeared it was foretold that He should sustain the office of preacher. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon Me." Consequently the Jews expected that He would appear in this character. "When Messias cometh He will teach us all things." This general expectation Christ did

not disappoint. As soon as He appeared He drew the attention of admiring multitudes, but His addresses were too galling not to rouse the resentment of the enemies of truth. Hence the incident before us. But how did Christ preach to make such impressions on those who had resolved to resist Him. I. Christ was a PLAIN Preacher. His ideas lay clear in His own mind. He was master of every subject on which He preached. He knew the whole character and counsel of God, the frame and constitution of the human mind, the circumstances of all mankind. Upon these subjects He expressed Himself in a style which was not only intelligible but agreeable to persons of every capacity. Sensible that figurative language is the voice of nature, He made free use of images, not borrowed from the arts which are confined to the learned few, but from the air, light, water, &c., which were familiar to all. Hence "the common people heard Him gladly." II. Christ was a SEARCHING Preacher. He knew the heart, and so was able to speak to the heart. This gave His preaching irresistible force, and men felt their whole souls to be naked before the all-seeing eye, and as they will feel at the day of judgment. Christ never drew a bow at a venture, but always sent His arrows home. Witness His dealings with the Pharisees, the rich young man, Martha, the woman taken in adultery, &c. III. Christ was a SENTIMENTAL Preacher. His teaching was replete with interesting truths which not only enlighten the mind, but find the nearest passage to the heart. He urged, *e.g.*, the necessity of disinterested love upon all His followers as the essence of true religion. IV. Christ was a MOVING Preacher. He is the most moving Preacher, and possesses the power of persuasion in the highest degree, who is best able to convey His own views and feelings to the minds of His hearers. This Christ was able to do, and was thus able to move the minds of His hearers with whatsoever passions He wished to excite. What could equal His language to hardened hypocrites, and what could be more melting than His invitations to penitents! (*N. Emmons, D.D.*) *The teaching of Jesus Christ*:—I. ITS OBJECT. There is a primary sense in which Christ taught as never man taught, viz., in that He was Himself its object. Others, even the greatest, convey the truth, but are not that truth. Jesus alone could say, "I am the Truth." The whole of Christianity is in Christ, neither He nor His disciples taught any other. The two terms of the religious problem are God and man. To know them is the whole of religious truth. 1. An apostle said, "Show us the Father." Christ responded, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." All that we can know of God Christ has taught, or rather shown us. All His perfections and all His works. 2. In the same way all concerning man, his true nature and high destiny, we see in Him who is the perfect man. 3. Not only so, but He reveals the true relations of God and man. He is the Mediator between the two. On the one hand, by the fact of His mediation He manifests man's fall and his inability to save himself, and on the other, the love of the Father who gave His Son that whosoever believeth in Him, &c. 4. All that we can know of the work of salvation is bound up in the person of Christ. He is "made unto us wisdom and righteousness," &c. 5. Christian morality, through sanctification, is entirely referred to Him. 6. As to the future, all depends on Christ, who will raise the dead, judge the world, and bring His own to glory. Are we not justified in saying with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory," &c. Let us beware of withering this living teaching by our abstractions! Every doctrine, if separated from Christ, is smitten with barrenness. II. The incomparable excellence of Christ's teaching results also from its PERFECT FORM. The perfection of human words is measured by the fidelity with which they manifest the human soul. A man may be very eloquent and yet his words be a brilliant lie, because not in harmony with his moral state. Perfectly sincere words are perfect words, and they are only so when it can be said: As are the words so is the life. If this be the case our text is justified, for never was man sincere like Christ. He lived His words and spoke His life. His life was the perfect life of love, and His words were the perfect language of Divine love. 1. The love of Christ rested on His humility, and never man spake like this Man in respect to humility. Compare His words with the despotic authority or pompous solemnity of the Jewish doctors. Their teaching was like their persons, clothed with long robes and phylacteries, and sitting in Moses' seat. Christ sat not on the benches of a Jewish school, had no official title, spake in the streets or by the sea side, and rendered homage to truth without exercising compulsion. And what could be more simple than His words. They were free from all solemn form. No doctor ever taught more in the style of a layman. He spoke as a friend to friends, without any rhetorical embellishment, and without aiming at effect. The simplicity of Christ's words is what

constitutes their perfection. By resting on external authority He would have confessed that His doctrine needed foreign aid; by enveloping it in solemn forms He would have suggested a doubt of its intrinsic value. Christ knew that nothing is so beautiful or powerful as truth, and He wished that it should appear alone in His teaching. 2. Christ's love was especially characterized by mercy, which is love to the unfortunate and the poor, and the merciful character of Christ's teaching is evinced by its popularity. It was admirably suited to the wants of the simple and ignorant many. For Christ never admitted that distinction between the profane and the initiated which is always found in the religions and philosophy of antiquity, but rather gave special attention to the former. Not that He rejected the enlightened; but He knew that a doctrine which suits the poor is a truth for poor and rich, ignorant and learned alike. He could speak, then, to the people without fear of restricting His mission; and who has ever spoken to them like the Saviour? In bringing the truth to the feeblest reason Christ took nothing from the truth, nor subjected it to any alteration. It is very easy to gain the goodwill of men if we flatter their errors and their prejudices, but Christ never employed that accommodation which is treason against the cause of God. If then He rejected this we can only explain the popularity of His teaching by the form He gave to it. He ever found means to connect the truth with some feeling, idea, or fact in harmony with itself. And so He made constant appeals to conscience, conviction of sin, need of deliverance, sorrow and suffering. Nor was He content to rest on general dispositions, He knew what was wanted by each, and He addressed to each the precise teaching that was made for him. Recall the numerous persons who conversed with the Saviour. You will not find a word that is not the most affecting that could have been pronounced. Is He talking to fishermen? He says, "I will make you fishers of men." Is He addressing a doctor of the law? He makes constant allusion to his dignity. Is He speaking to a great multitude that He has just satisfied with food? He discourses of the bread of life. It was with the same design that Christ multiplied His admirable parables. None of His hearers, after listening to Him, could look on the external world without reading His doctrines there afresh, something to raise the thoughts to God. Never man spake like this man because never man loved our poor humanity like Christ. 3. The teaching of Christ was full of love also in that it was essentially creative and fertilizing to the mind of His hearers. A teacher not impelled by love does not tolerate spontaneity of thought in his disciples; but Jesus' method was to give men a glimpse of the precious mine of truth that they might dig and search for themselves. He did not hurry anything, wishing to prepare the new bottles for the new wine, and pour it into them drop by drop. With what gentleness did He endure their slowness of understanding and weakness of faith. 4. The words of Christ were the expression of perfect love, because never was there addressed to man language so consoling as His. (*E. De Pressense, D.D.*) *Our Lord as a Teacher*:—No one can read His discourses without seeing that He differs generically from all other teachers. He is an order by Himself (chap. iii. 11–13). I. Compare Him with SOCRATES, whom we know well, and have a full record of his teaching and methods. Like our Lord his one aim was moral improvement. His end in discovering truth was conduct. To know, with him, was but the way to live. But when we come to his method it contrasts sharply to that of Jesus. For he affirmed nothing, professed himself ignorant, but thought that by inquiry and consideration it might be possible to find out what ideas were just and what were false, and so to establish a sound healthy knowledge that might be the guide to a sound and healthy life. But he dreaded to say "I have the truth" about anything. This is the method of Acts xvii. 27. Our Lord's method is at the opposite pole. It is calm, convincing affirmation. It is entirely unparalleled. It is the word of one who *does* know; who has not to argue and inquire, but to declare. Its simplicity arises from absolute certainty. Agnosticism, notwithstanding, this is the teaching for which the world yearns, and which can only meet the world's needs. II. COMPARE HIM WITH MOHAMMED. Christ dealt only with the highest spiritual truth—with ideas and principles of conduct alone. He did not occupy Himself in marking out safe paths for men; He gave them light that they might see their way (Matt. xi. 1–5; John x. 24). This is in striking contrast with Mohammed's method. The chances are that if any one had asked him, "Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," he would have had a revelation about it. The Koran is full of private direction and legislation, and it is that which has crippled the free development of Mohammedan society. Men go to it, not for principles of guidance,

but for particular precepts. With Christ there is always a breadth which transcends the need of the moment, and furnishes a principle which is good for all times. This is the reason for the largeness of the development of Christendom. Christ tells us not what to do, but how to be. Mohammed's words are full of direction. Christ's of inspiration. (*J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*) *Christ the incomparable Teacher*:—BECAUSE IN HIM—I. DOCTRINE AND TEACHER ARE ONE. Other teachers are different from what they teach, and never make themselves the object of their own instruction. Christ is the sole Teacher who is able to say, "I am the Truth," and as such the substance of His own teaching. Christ's purpose was not to give a right conception of God, or to lead men to rightly know themselves. We have this in the Old Testament. His purpose was to reconcile men to God. Hence He required not faith in God—this the Jews had long ago—but in Himself. II. DOCTRINE AND LIFE PERFECTLY HARMONIZE. This can be said of no other. However careful the teacher, his life falls behind his teaching. He could alone say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" When He said, "Be ye perfect as your Father," &c. He could also say, "I and My Father are one." If He exhorted to resignation He said, "Thy will be done." His requirement of self-denial was illustrated in His actual bearing of the cross. Of His new commandment He was the model, "As I have loved you." He went about doing good to those who rejected Him, to enforce the duty of doing good to those who hate us, and prayed, "Father, forgive them," that we might pray for our persecutors. III. THE DOCTRINE AND THE GROUNDS OF THE DOCTRINE COINCIDE. Other teachers convince their scholars by proofs, and prophets by "Thus saith the Lord"—Christ simply says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He is the ground of His teaching just as certainly as when the Lord God confirms His words by saying, "As surely as I live." IV. HIS DOCTRINE AND ITS EFFECTS ARE IN FULLEST UNISON. Every teacher aims at this, but no one fully reaches it. As the husbandman often finds that his seed does not germinate, so there are many whose teaching has not the desired results. One does not speak intelligibly, another wants impressiveness, a third dies prematurely. But Christ speaks so that even fishermen understand Him; so attractively that crowds press upon Him, and authorities envy Him; so irresistibly that friends cannot be turned from Him by threats. And now He speaks through a thousand tongues, in pulpits, schools, and homes. You who are burdened, do you not find rest in Christ's teaching? You who suffer, comfort? You who are guilty, pardon? You who are dying, triumph? Verily the result of Christ's teaching is not to be doubted. Conclusion: If, then, after eighteen centuries we are compelled to confess that, despite all the wonderful advances in knowledge, never man spake like Christ, it must be clear that He was more than a child of man. Were He only this we must have outstripped Him. (*R. Nesselmann.*) *Incomparableness of Christ's teaching* in—I. ITS MANNER. It was this which struck His hearers when on the mount (Matt. vii. 29). It is no less striking to us who compare the "I say unto you" with the prophetic "thus saith the Lord." II. ITS MATTER. "Never man spake"—1. Such wise words. There have been many wise men, but as Solomon excelled all the children of the East, so may we say of the great Teacher "a wiser than Solomon is here." His words were those of one who "knew what was in man." How admirably does He lay open human hearts! With what Divine skill did He answer all questions! How suitably and readily—His enemies being judges (Luke xx. 39). 2. Such holy words! He never spoke one that was idle or unprofitable. 3. Such gracious words (Psa. xlv; Luke iv.)! III. ITS EFFECT (Luke iv. 32). 1. It was a wonder-working voice which Jesus uttered. Devils fled before it, diseases vanished; it called the dead out of their tombs; the winds heard it and were still, the fig-tree and was withered. Yet what was so wonderful as its effect upon men's consciences! What terror and confusion it struck into His enemies (John xviii. 4), &c.! 2. It wrought wonders in those whom it called to mercy. (1) Of conviction (John iv. 29; Heb. iv. 12; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25). (2) Of conversion (John v. 25). Look at the manner in which the disciples were called. (3) Of consolation (Matt. xiv. 26, 27). Conclusion: What, then, is our duty? 1. To hear and obey (Heb. xii. 25; John xii. 48; Prov. i. 24). 2. To imitate (Eph. iv. 29). (*A. Roberts, M.A.*) *The incomparable ministry*:—The text is one of the truisms of Christianity, but the confession came from men who were not the disciples, nor particularly the audience of Jesus. They were a band of ignorant men, the mere police of the Sanhedrim. And it is remarkable that not a word was spoken by Christ directly to them why they should not execute their mission. What was said was said to the multitude at large upon subjects entirely independent of His guilt or innocence. The purpose of their coming is simply ignored. There

were but two brief utterances after their arrival which the Evangelist has written down, and while it would be an improbable supposition that they were all that gave occasion for the confession, yet they were specimen utterances. They belonged to very different fields of thought and speech, and together go far towards giving an idea of Christ's teaching as a whole. I. (vers. 33, 34.) Try to hear with the ears of these men, and to imagine the impression. Must not any one have said, "What an independence of human enmity and human power." "A little while I am with you, and then I go," asking no questions, dreading no interference. The officers heard, and felt themselves impotent. This man speaks that He doth know; He has His own times and seasons; Sanhedrim and Procurator are alike nothing to Him. But is there not a deeper awe behind? We shall seek Him and not find Him. "Ye will be wanting Me one day. When terrified Jerusalem is crying for pity I shall be beyond the reach not only of violence, but of sight and access. Oh! in this day of your merciful visitation, be ye gathered under My wings." "Never man spake like this man," were it but for the DIGNITY. We were born to have some one over us; may it be the right one! Other voices, counterfeiting the true Voice, have had an easy sway. But there is a Voice which moves heaven and earth, and if that Voice makes itself heard in the living world, in conscience we feel that if we had been sent by ten Sanhedrims we, too, should exclaim "never man spake it!" II. (ver. 37.) Well He knew what was in man when He addressed this language to common humanity. If any man thirst, be it for comfort, rest, knowledge, holiness, or love, let Him come unto Me. Strange words these for these rough policemen to listen to when they came to apprehend this Man for a malefactor. And yet so simple were the words, so strong, so directly did they make appeal to the man within the man, finding him out in memory and conscience, reminding him of so many cisterns of human or sinful desire broken, awakening so many recollections of better impulses and higher aspirations, that they could not lay hands on Him. III. Dignity alone might be coldness, and tenderness effeminancy, but DIGNITY AND TENDERNESS combined are an irresistible strength; and He who could utter both these sayings had a key to man's heart as God made it, and as man had corrupted it is sure of a hearing. 1. "A little while," &c., He says to us, and it is well to hear Him sometimes speak in that tone. It is not true to represent Him as a mere humble suitor. The Voice which pleads is the Voice which made and which shakes heaven, and as He speaks now from heaven in heaven we must seek Him. 2. The dignity of Jesus is the one thought, and if He speaks of that it is to give energy to His tenderness. I will not affront any man by supposing that he thirsts not. He may tell me that he is satisfied—but all in the deep of their several hearts are athirst in one way or another. To how few of us is life as we would have it. Many delights once possessed have been lost. But there is a keener thirst, that of the spirit for the conscious love of its Maker. This Christ can quench. Try Him. (*Dean Vaughan.*) *The unrivalled eloquence of Jesus*:—The constables could not take Jesus for He had fairly taken them. Note by way of preface—1. That it is a sure sign of a falling Church when its leaders call in the aid of the secular arm. The Church which cannot maintain itself by spiritual power is dying, if not dead. 2. That in the end the spiritual power will baffle the temporal. The officers are fully armed, the preacher has no weapons, and yet they cannot arrest him. What stays their hand? It has come to be a combat between body and mind, and mind prevails. Abel may be killed, but from the ground his blood continues to cry. Martyrs have a greater power in their graves than in their pulpits. 3. That God can get testimonies to the majesty of His Son from the most unlikely places. Civil authorities do not employ the most refined and intellectual as officers, and the priests would naturally select those least likely to be affected by Christ's teaching. Yet these rough, brutal men felt his matchless oratory. Not only as in the case of Saul can God direct a high character into the right path. He makes the wrath of men to praise Him, and compels adversaries to do Him homage. Let us note—I. The PECULIAR QUALITIES of our Lord's eloquence, as among kings, He is the King of kings, among priests the great High Priest, among prophets the Messiah, so is He the Prince of preachers, *the* Apostle of our profession. Christ spoke—1. Clearly, and yet His matter is profound. Did ever man speak so simply? Even little children gathered round Him. He never gives forth dark sayings that His hearers may credit Him with vast learning and profound thinking. And yet there is in His teaching a depth that genius cannot fathom, but all the while He speaks in short sentences, with plain words and homely illustrations. The common people with their common sense heard Him gladly. 2. With authority. He was a master

dogmatist. It was not, "It may be so," but "Verily, verily," &c. And yet side by side with this there was an extraordinary self-sinking. He never assumed official dignity. 3. Faithfully, yet tenderly. Even Nathan could not be more true to human conscience. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees," &c. There was no mincing matters because wickedness was associated with greatness, no excusing sin because it put on sanctimoniousness. He neither fawned on the great nor pandered to the populace. Perhaps no preacher ever used more terrible words with regard to the fate of the ungodly. Yet He did not break the bruised reed. What a Son of Consolation He was! 4. Zealously, yet prudently. He was full of ardour, never preached a cold, dull sermon. Yet His fervour never degenerated into wild-fire. He was not afraid of the Herodians, yet how quietly did He allow them to walk into the trap. He was ready to meet the Sadducees, but He was on His guard so that they could not entangle Him in His speech. 5. Lovingly. He was full of tenderness even to tears, but was far removed from that effeminacy which sometimes passes for Christian love. He was manly all through. 6. His preaching was remarkable for its co-mingling of all the excellencies which are found separate in His servants. He addressed the head and the heart. He aroused the conscience, but was also great in the arts of consolation. 7. The main aspect of His eloquence, however, was that it was the vehicle of the greatest truths. II. PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS of this eloquence. 1. Do you remember when you first heard Him speak? Recall—(1) His words of pity. "Come unto Me," &c. (2) His words of persuasion. "Turn ye, turn ye," &c., "Come now let us reason together." (3) His words of power, "Awake thou that sleepest." (4) His word of pardon. 2. Since we heard His pardoning voice, we have heard many a time—(1) His word of promise. (2) His word of consolation. (3) His word of fellowship. 3. There are some words spoken long ago which have been so quickened by His presence that we number them among our personal recollections. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"; "It is I, be not afraid," &c., &c. III. PROPHETIC ANTICIPATIONS. 1. As long as you live you are to speak for Jesus, but your hope for His kingdom lies in His voice. And we expect Him to speak more loudly yet, for "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth." 2. We expect Him to speak sweetly to us in the hour of death. "Fear not, for I am with thee." 3. In paradise. 4. At the judgment. "Come ye blessed of My Father." Will He say that to you, or "Depart ye cursed." Anyhow your confession will be then if not now, "Never man spake," &c. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) *The words of Jesus*:—I. HIS TRIBUNE. Those whose words have moved mankind have for the most part addressed an audience in some chamber selected for the suitability of its construction or for the sanctity of its associations. Not so with the words of Jesus. His tribune was the plank of Peter's boat, the portico of Jerusalem, any place on which He chanced, to any person whom He met. He not only sought the people, but let the people seek Him; and some of His most striking utterances were addressed to a single auditor. The great orators of Nôtre Dame called their sermons "conferences." But they are no such thing, for Lacordaire or Hyacinthe had it all to himself, like the least of us. But the Master's sermons were "conferences" in truth. He let the people interrupt Him by their questions, by bringing their sick, by leading their little ones to His arms. And yet, in spite of these defects of His audience-chamber, and difficulties with the audience, the golden silence made the silver speech the brighter. II. CHRIST'S TEXTS are a marvel of beauty for their appositeness. The well of Sychar suggests a sermon on the water of life; the feeding of the five thousand and a reference to the fall of the manna, a discourse on the bread of life; the water in the priest's pitcher a promise of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. A corn-field was probably in sight when He said, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." And a vine may have trellised the window of the upper room, or a vineyard grown on the sunny slopes beneath, when He said, "I am the True Vine." Thus would the attention of His auditors be riveted while Jesus spoke; they would leave Him astonished and delighted, and they would never forget words founded on facts before their eyes. III. CHRIST'S TOPICS were as varied as His texts were timely, and the variety was as striking as the timeliness. Some distinguished preachers have really only one topic, and, begin where they will, you soon find them on their favourite subject. But Jesus of Nazareth had no beaten paths, or rather all paths were alike familiar to His feet. A very short index often suffices for a very large volume, but it would require a catalogue of some length to tabulate all the subjects on which even our four brief Gospels tell us that Jesus had something to say. Natural as the singing of the lark was His speech; but His strain, like the lark's, was never mono-

tonous. The many-stringed harp of human life was in His hands, and He touched every chord in turn. He has words to speak about Divine love, and words also about human charity. He has something to tell about the holiness of heaven, and something also about the happiness of earth: much about the Jerusalem above, and much about the earthly Zion. But how can we select where every stone is a gem, or to cull where every flower is an exotic? Enough that He touched upon everything in turn, and everything He touched turned to gold. IV. CHRIST'S MODE OF TREATMENT; we find this as varied as the topics. Sometimes there is the orderly succession of thoughts, built up into a harmonious whole, as in the sermon on the Mount. At other times there is a beautiful carelessness. Just as flowers and forest trees, creepers and mosses, are intermingled in nature, so amid stupendous subjects of appalling grandeur dealt with in the Master's teaching we find minute touches of gentleness and grace, which give the play of light and shade to the whole. 1. "He taught as one having authority." He spake as one who dwelt in very deed in the secret place of the Most High. To the question "How hath this man letters, having never learned?" the answer is "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." We do not wonder now that "never man spake like this man." 2. A very human interest belongs to the words of Jesus from the fact that they are full of illustration. Sometimes it is parable all worked out, like a broad lace of gold, sometimes mere metaphor, like a golden thread flashing through a silken mantle, but at all times instance or illustration is ready to relieve the dry details of doctrine or precept. Since His words were so sparkling, no wonder that "the common people heard Him gladly." 3. His words affect every faculty in succession. (1) He speaks to the intellect, His hand the while digging wells in the surface of the earth, in which you can see the stars by day. (2) He speaks to the heart, striking off appeal after appeal with a fervour that makes His words, not as the co steel of the armoury, but the flashing iron of the forge. (3) He speaks to the conscience a simple word, like a seemingly harmless wire, conveying an electric thrill to the soul. 4. Christ addressed mankind in many and varied capacities, but His versatility made Him equal to every occasion. (1) He spoke as a king, and never monarch "spake like this man," whether he is sending his subjects to the field, putting the sword into one hand and the cup of sorrow into the other, or welcoming them home from the war and garlanding their brows with the joy of their lord. (2) He spoke as a legislator, and never lawgiver "spake like this man." Few but lawyers read law books; even the legal parts of the books of Moses are sealed to most men. But the second Moses has given His laws in such language that, while statesmen learn wisdom from their pages, little children linger over their lines. His code was suited to His own age and suitable to every age succeeding. (3) He spoke as a teacher of morals, and never moralist "spake like this man." When He told men to mark the secrets of their hearts as the seeds of sin He put His hand upon the plague spot which physicians for ages had been seeking in vain. And when He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"—the mourners, the meek, the merciful—a new era dawned upon mankind. (4) He spoke as a teacher of wisdom, and never philosopher "spake like this man." His apostles, though they knew it not, were the esoteric disciples of a school destined to outlive the most celebrated of antiquity. How few now care to read "Aristotle," who wrote elaborate treatises, compared with the number of those who love to linger over the reported utterances of Jesus Christ, who never wrote a line! (5) He spoke as a brother born for adversity, and never friend "spake like this man." Do you yearn for sympathy? "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c. Do you ask for society? "Lo, I am with you alway." Do you seek for intimacy? "I have not called you servants . . . but friends." Do you pant for love? "Greater love hath no man than this.' And His promises are as full as His heart is large. Is your concern about earthly need? "The very hairs of your head, they are all numbered." About heavenly grace? "I am come that ye might have life." About death? "I am the Resurrection and the Life." About eternity? "Where I am there shall also My servant be." (6) He spoke as a revealer of secrets, and never prophet "spake like this man," for man never before or besides had such tidings to tell. He came, He said, because "God so loved the world." He came to die, giving "His life a ransom for many," shedding His blood "for the remission of sins." Conclusion: 1. Go to Him as a child of sin. A sinner went to Him once, and she came away amazed that He who was incarnate purity should notice her. Would not she say, "Never man spake like this man"? And if you, sinner, go you will say the same. 2. Go to Him as a child of sorrow. Jairus went to Him

bereaved, and he came away comforted. Mary of Magdala went in trouble, and she came away at peace. Mary of Bethany went weeping, and she came away rejoicing. The woman who had an issue of blood went trembling, and she came away triumphing. You go too, sufferer, and see if He has not reserved a blessing for thee that shall make thee say, "Never man spake like this man." 3. Go to Him as a child of man, and He will teach you about earthly duty; for He has words for parents, words for children, words for masters, words for servants, words for friends, words for enemies; and for all words such as "never man spake." 4. Go to Him as a child of God, and He will teach you about the beginning of the spiritual life, the progress of the spiritual life, and the perfection of the spiritual life, till at length, tired of leaving you to listen at a distance, He shall take you to Himself, and there as He leads you unto living fountains of waters, while you drink in every word you will exclaim, "Never man spake like this man." (*J. B. Figgis, M.A.*) *The testimony of sceptics*:—Is this the tone of an enthusiast or of a mere sectary? What sweetness, what purity of manners! What touching grace in His instructions! What elevation in His maxims! What profound wisdom in His discourses! What presence of mind, what acuteness, what justness in His replies! What empire over His passions! Where is the man, where is the sage who knew in this way how to act, suffer, and die? What prejudice, blindness, or bad faith does it require to compare the son of Sophroniscus with the Son of Mary! What distance between the two? They say that Socrates invented ethics; but others practised morality before he taught it. Aristides was just before Socrates described justice; Leonidas died for his country before Socrates taught the duty of patriotism; Sparta was temperate before Socrates praised sobriety; Greece abounded in virtuous men before he defined virtue. But Jesus—where did He find the lofty morality of which He alone gave both the lesson and the example? From the midst of a furious fanaticism proceeds the purest wisdom; among the vilest of the people appears the most heroic and virtuous simplicity. If Socrates lives and dies like a philosopher, Jesus lives and dies like a God. (*J. J. Rosseau.*) *The benefit of hearing the truth*:—It is good to come to the Word, though with ill intent; they that come to see only, as Moses did to the bush, may be called as he was. They that come to sleep may be taken napping, as Latimer saith.. They that come to catch may be caught as those in the text. (*J. Trapp.*) *Christ's matchless teaching*:—He spake with grace, and with gravity: they were all oracles that He uttered; honey-drops that fell from Him. Of Christ it might better be said than ever it was said of Crassus the Roman orator, "Cætaros a Crassa semper omnes illo autem die etiam ipsum a sese superatum." (*Ibid.*) *The power of Divine truth*:—There went a man out of this place one evening who was spoken to by one of our friends, who happened to know him in trade, and had him in good repute. "What! have you been to hear our minister to-night?" The good man answered, "Yes, I am sorry to say I have." "But," said our friend, "why are you sorry?" "Why," he said, "he has turned me inside out, and spoiled my idea of myself. When I went into the Tabernacle I thought I was the best man in Newington, but now I feel that my righteousness is worthless." "Oh," said the friend, "that is all right; you will come again, I am sure. The Word has come home to you, and shown you the truth: ye will get comfort soon." That friend did come again, and he is here to-night: he takes pleasure in that very truth which turned him inside out; and he comes on purpose that the Word of the Lord may search him, and try him, and be to him as a refiner's fire. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*) I knew a man who was of a fierce temper, a troubler to his own household when he happened to fall into his fits; he was so passionate at times that I should not like to tell all the wild things which he would do. I have seen that man since conversion, and he has had things to test him which might, as we say, have provoked a saint, but he bore them patiently, and in a manner which I desire to imitate. The lion has become a lamb, he is gentle and tender; no one could think that he was the same man; indeed, he is not, for grace has made him a new man in Christ Jesus. We have seen persons revelling in licentiousness, who sinned greedily, who could not be satisfied with any common sin; but they have heard the gospel, and become chaste and even delicate in purity, so that the very mention of their former crimes has shocked them and made them weep. Such persons have manifested a watchful care against the fault in which they once delighted. They have been afraid to go near their old haunts, or to mix with their old companions. What has wrought this? What teaching must that be which accomplishes such marvels? (*Ibid.*) **Then answered the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived?**—*The opponents of the truth*:—We have here a dramatic sketch of the opposition to

Christ and His gospel, which may stand, in part, or as a whole, for every subsequent scene in which error has been pitted against the truth. I. THE DEBATERS. 1. Their respective standings. (1) Unequal. The officers were no match for the Sanhedrim in point of social position, religious profession, wealth, and learning. How often in this great controversy has there been a clean cleavage between the masses and the classes, and how often has God chosen, as here, the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty? &c. (2) Equal. Nicodemus was the peer of his colleagues in all respects, and Christianity has seldom wanted defenders as completely equipped as their opponents, ready to fight them with their own weapons, and to meet them on their own ground. 2. Their qualities—(1) Interest and disinterestedness. The Jewish authorities had everything to lose by the success of Christ. The occupants of Moses' seat must needs tremble when the seat itself was undermined. The officers, on the other hand, had nothing to gain, except the anger of their masters, and the possible deprivation of their offices; while Nicodemus, from his pre-eminent position, was in greater danger. These two forces have been conspicuously displayed all through the great struggle. But in every religious crisis the truth has triumphed over the powerful vested interests by which it has been opposed. (2) Bigotry and candour. Selfishness blinds the eyes to the clearest evidence. The officers related simple facts, Nicodemus recited an incontestible principle. Both were plain, and were urged with obvious sincerity. But the chief priest would not see. The same fault marks the opponents of truth in all ages. There are sincere sceptics, men who cannot see, but these are never antagonists. (3) Ignorance and knowledge. The Pharisees had not heard these particular words, and had therefore not felt their power. Hence their controversial weakness, which showed itself in the blind rage which ever characterizes the defenders of a lost cause. As for the principle of equity stated by their colleagues, while not theoretically ignorant of it, they were practically unacquainted with it, for they never used it. But both the officers and Nicodemus were fortified with experimental knowledge, and it is with this weapon that Christianity has invariably conquered. There is no getting over the argument, "Once I was blind, but now I see." II. THE METHODS OF DEBATE. 1. As between the Sanhedrim and the officers. To the plain unwarranted report of the latter, the former oppose—(1) An imputation of intellectual weakness. "Are ye also deceived?" This is the standard calumny against Christians. They have weak heads, and so are imposed upon by specious arguments, or unread, and so led astray for want of knowledge. In some circles to be a Christian is quite synonymous with deficiency of intellect and susceptibility to delusion. (2) An assumption of infallibility—a characteristic of unbelief all through the ages. How can Christianity be true when the "modern," "advanced," "progressive," "ripe," thinker does not believe in it? (3) Scurrilous abuse (ver. 49)—the time-honoured method of argument when there is no case; the well-worn weapon of anti-Christianity. 2. As between the Sanhedrim and Nicodemus. The latter appeals to a simple principle of equity. To this the former oppose—(1) A base insinuation. To belong to Galilee was about the grossest insult that could be perpetrated on a Jewish gentleman—but Christians are by this time accustomed to be accounted the offscouring of the earth. The offence of the Cross, so far as outward profession is concerned, has well-nigh ceased, but let a man in certain circles put its principles into practice, or venture to assert them, and what epithets, such as "fanatic," "humbug," canter," will be hurled at his head! (2) A gratuitous assumption. Nicodemus had not said that a prophet had or would arise out of Galilee; nor had Christ asserted a Galilean origin. Because a man has lived in a certain locality that is not to say that he was born there. How often has the opponent of Christianity fought an enemy of his own making? How many caricatures of the Trinity, the atonement, heaven, hell, &c., pass muster as Christian doctrines, and are criticized as such? (3) The closure (ver. 53). The Sanhedrim having spoken there was an end of all discussion—a convenient course frequently adopted since. Christianity is not afraid of a patient hearing, but its opponents are. (*J. W. Burn.*) **Nicodemus saith unto them.**—*Nicodemus*:—1. A timid but honest inquirer after truth (chap. iii.). 2. A calm and decided advocate of justice (chap. vii.). 3. A heroic confessor of the Lord bringing grateful offerings (chap. xix. 39). Here he meets their boasts—(1) That no ruler believes in Jesus. (2) That they were zealous for the law. (*J. P. Lange.*) *Boldness best*:—Nicodemus got little favour from the Pharisees, though his favourable feeling towards our Lord was so cautiously expressed. This is generally the case with those who act timidly as he did. People may just as

well be out-spoken and bold. (*Musculus.*) ***Nicodemus and the Sanhedrim:***—Nicodemus does not announce himself a believer in Jesus but he lays down a general principle sanctioned by the law of Moses (Exod. xxiii. 1); and by the law of nature. His cautious answer may have been dictated by a constitutional timidity, or by a hope that if the Pharisees would only have the fairness to examine the doctrine and the claims of Jesus before they condemned Him they would not wish to condemn Him; that, like the officers who were sent to apprehend Him, they too would be filled with admiration for Him. But the Pharisees, who are blinded by envy and spite, see not the want of truth, or the falsehood as well as the irrelevancy of their answer to Nicodemus. Many prophets had come out of Galilee. But if not, that was no reason why prophets should not still arise in Galilee. Deborah the Prophetess was from the country of Galilee. She dwelt between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim (Judg. iv.). Anna the Prophetess was from Galilee, of the tribe of Asher (Luke ii. 36). The prophet Jonah was of Gathhepher, a town of Lower Galilee in Zebulun (2 Kings xiv. 25). There is also a general consent among commentators that the Prophecies of Hosea were delivered in the kingdom of Israel. It was also anciently believed that Hosea belonged to the tribe of Issachar, which would be included in the more modern district of Galilee. Nahum was born in Elkosh, a small village in Galilee; hence he was called Nahum the Elkoshite (chap. i. 1). The Prophet Elijah the Tishbite was born, according to some, at Thisbe, in the tribe of Naphtali, in Galilee; according to others in Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan. Elisha was born at Abel-Meholah, in the northern part of the valley of the Jordan. Though neither of these were strictly in the district called Galilee, they were neither of them in the country of Judæa, or in the kingdom of Judah, but both in the kingdom of Israel. Nicodemus simply asks that they should hear Him before they condemn Him. The answer of the Pharisees shows that they had already condemned Him, and unheard. It was impossible, they said, that He could be the Christ, because the Christ should come from Bethlehem, in Judah, and Jesus was born in Galilee. (*F. H. Dunwell, B.A.*) *Grace cannot remain hidden:*—Good blood will not belie itself: love, as fire, will not be long hid. Crœsus' dumb son could not but speak to see his father ready to be slain. Nicodemus, though hitherto a night-bird, now shows himself for Christ in a council. Nicodemus was but a slow scholar, Judas was a forward preacher; yet at last, when Judas betrayed Christ in the night, Nicodemus faithfully professed Him in the day. (*J. Trapp.*)

Ver. 53. **And every man went to his own house. Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.**—If we group together the scenes of these chapters we might treat them. 1. A day with Jesus; in which we have not merely His answers to the disputing Jews, but His proclamation of love. 2. A night with Jesus on the Mount of Olives. 3. Dawn with Jesus in the Temple, listening to His early teaching. 4. Sunrise with Jesus, as pointing to the East, He says, "I am the light of the world." These two verses suggest—*Man at home, Jesus not at home:*—The crowd which had surrounded Him all the day gradually drops off, one by one, as the evening draws on, and Jesus is left alone. Each one has a home to go to, and retires to rest with his family; Jesus has nowhere to lay His head; they go one way, He goes another; they keep within the city walls, He goes without the gate to Olivet, there to spend the night in prayer. He is not at home; even in the Temple which is His Father's house, He must not stay; its gates are closing, and He is shut out. He can only go to the places where man is not; to the solitudes where, outside of Jerusalem, outside even of Bethany, He can meet with God. This homelessness was for us; that we might have a home in His Father's house. He went without the gate that we might enter in. He became an exile, taking our place and life of banishment, that we might enter the celestial city, the paradise of God. Hast thou entered in? Or art thou still an exile from God though at home on earth? (*H. Bonar, D.D.*) ***The Saviour and the Sanhedrim:***—We have here a notable instance of the injury done to the Scriptures by the arbitrary division into chapters and verses. The severance here diverts the attention from the object which the writer had in view. The greater part of chap. vii. is occupied with the conflicting opinions of the populace respecting Christ, and closes with a striking representation of a scene which took place in the council chamber of the metropolis. The officers had returned without their prisoner, and one of their own number dared to protest against their injustice. The distracted council break up and go home to concoct fresh schemes; the tranquil Saviour quietly departs to Olivet to meditate and pray. What a contrast! Those seventy men crossed in their cruel project; that one harmless

wanderer, sustained by the conscious rectitude of His life! They seeking new channels for the pent up torrent of their wrath; He calm in the rich tides of peace that filled His soul; they to their luxuriant dwellings, whose enchantments were all marred by the day's discomfiture; He to the mountain and the midnight, whose dark shadows threw into bold relief the presence of God and His glory. On their side all worldly influence; on His side all heaven. Their purpose, murder, and suppression of the truth; His purpose, salvation, and God's eternal glory by His own self-sacrifice. (*W. G. Lewis.*) *The moral tangent:*—This "parting of the ways" exhibited—I. THE SEPARATENESS OF CHRIST AMID HIS OWN PEOPLE. It bears out chap i. 11. How could it have occurred in a region and amongst a race so noted for hospitality? Such experiences may have begotten the realization (Matt. viii. 20). Some offer may have been made, but, if so, it was either too half-hearted to tempt the great solitary, or still, night-wrapped Olivet exercised an irresistible fascination. 1. That the Founder of society in its true conception should have been Himself an outcast; imagination dwells on such a paradox. 2. To take the mildest view of the circumstance it was not to the credit of the social life of Jerusalem. Some defect in those home circles rendered them uncongenial. Hearts there were that hated Him, but the general sentiment was indifference. 3. And how did He regard their attitude? It was impossible for Him to be unconcerned. Not yet was the passionate wail, "O Jerusalem," &c., but the woeful sorrow of which it was the outcry was even then gathering. Incarnate love could not but desire to be loved by those for whom He had descended to such depths; but it must be on His own terms. II. A DIFFERENCE IN SPIRITUAL TENDENCY AND AIM. 1. The isolation of Christ did not arise from obscurity or insignificance. His departure must have been observed and felt. That lonely form, the centre of so much observation as with calm dignity it stepped from the wrangling crowd into the quiet fields, did it not judge them? 2. The mere departure convicted them of a lack of moral earnestness. The deadly conspiracy which had been hatched in their midst, and which had been arrested just when success seemed easy ought to have put every true man upon his honour, and made him open his doors to the homeless One. He had disturbed Judæan thought and life to its core. To an onlooker it might have seemed as if a moral revolution were impending. How near they were to the kingdom of God! But assenting to Christ's lofty truths their hearts were indisposed to receive them. They lacked the courage of their convictions. Good men! it did not impair their digestion nor break the continuity of their "little life." How trifling the spirit that can shelve the greatest question and stifle the grandest inspiration thus. 3. Not so easy was it for the Son of Man to put behind Him the strenuous controversy in which He had engaged. With Him heart as well as intellect were enlisted. Stung by their indifference, or horror-struck at their villany, the Great Sensitive Soul hurries forth to the only house of prayer where He can be alone with His Father, and to brace Himself for the effort of to-morrow. Yet how incomprehensible it must have been to minds so besotted with earthliness! They knew not that commerce with the skies. Conclusion: In every life there is such a moment quick with spiritual issues. Shall we follow Christ to Olivet or go to our own house? (*St. John A. Frere, M.A.*) *Diverging paths:*—I. EVERY MAN WENT TO HIS OWN HOUSE. A symbol of the general conduct of humanity. "We have turned every one to his own way." 1. Our house is where we live, and represents all that we live for. (1) Some men live for wealth and adorn their noble houses with elegant furniture and costly pictures. (2) Some men live for pleasure, and their houses will be supplied with all that gratifies the senses—luxurious couches, expensive wines, and elaborate *menu's*. (3) Some men live for learning, and the principal room in the house will be the well-furnished library, and every department will proclaim, "A scholar lives here." (4) Some men live for friendship, and keep "open house" for their boon companions. (5) Some men live for domestic felicities, and consult the comfort and fellowship of wife and children in all the appointments of the house. 2. We may go to our own house without Christ. A Christless house, a Christless life is that in which something else besides Christ predominates. Where wealth, pleasure, &c., are supreme Christ is not. He has gone to the Mount of Olives. II. JESUS WENT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. 1. Jesus went—(1) To cool His fevered brain and heart after the anxieties and labours of the day. (2) To pray, and realize more deeply His union and communion with the Father. (3) To brace Himself for the efforts of the coming day. 2. Jesus went alone, yet every member of the crowd He left needed to go with Him—and for the same reason. So do we. Only with Jesus shall we find rest, com-

munion, strength. 3. Jesus came back to judge those who had forsaken Him (chap. viii. 16), and will come to judge those who are forsaking Him now. III. THE ALTERNATIVE—1. Is not house or Christ. He does not require us to break up our homes or desolate our lives. Let it be remembered that one reason for going to Olivet was because there was not a home in Jerusalem that would take Him in. He would have supped with the meanest who would have accorded Him a welcome. 2. The alternative is house without Christ or house with Him. We must take our Saviour into our house, and then take our house to Olivet—make Him the sacred centre round which wealth, pleasure, &c., may cluster, and sanctify all by sympathy with Him, prayer and consecration. 3. Thus the alternative sharply put is self or Christ. Which? Conclusion: 1. If we let Christ alone He will let us alone. Hell in this life and in the next is abandonment by Christ. 2. Christ ascended Olivet—the Jews descended from Moriah. With Christ's companions it is ever a going up till heaven at last is reached. With Christ-forsakers it is ever down—down until the depths of the bottomless pit are fathomed. (*J. W. Burn.*)

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